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Messenger

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“No one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

—Matt. 24:36, WEB

How Much Longer?

In our mobile society, no matter what means of transportation we use, a familiar question always seems to come up: “How much longer ———?” And you can fill in the blank. It might be grandma’s house. Could be Hopewell Rocks. Or maybe the Okanagan. A journey always feels too long when we’re excited about the destination.

Each one of us who follow Jesus is on a journey. The destination is heaven. And Jesus is coming to pick us up, so we will be able to travel together! Amazing place. Incredible streets. Great neighbours. No vaccine passport needed. But I’ve heard about a tree whose leaves will heal the nations! Like you, I can’t wait to get there.

Frequently, I hear that plaintive question “How much longer till Jesus comes?” This isn’t a new question, by the way. The disciples asked the same question in another way when they first heard about the journey. Here’s what they said: “What will happen to show that it is the time for your coming and the end of the age” (Matt. 24:3, GNT).

Here’s what Jesus says: “No one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt. 24:36, WEB).

Grab a Bible and run through the pre-trip checklist in Matthew 24. I’ve done it. The prep is pretty well complete. Jesus is coming again. And that’s not just a song from the King’s Heralds.

So when the time seems long and you just can’t wait, courage, friend of mine. Jesus wants us just like we want Him!

There’s a book on the life of Christ in my library that’s nearly falling apart from use. I like this thought. It is underlined in my copy. “Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God’s purposes know no haste and no delay.”¹

If Jesus wants me and I want Him, I know that He’ll show up at the right time and that, together, we’ll head into an adventure that has no end.

Ready? We can be if we trust Him. ■

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

1 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), 32.





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FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *I keep hearing about Bill C-4 and that it will have an impact on freedom of religion in Canada. What can you tell me about it?*

A: Bill C-4 passed the House of Commons and the Senate very quickly in fall 2021 without much debate. It was effective on Jan. 7, 2022, and makes it a criminal offence to cause a person to undergo *conversion therapy*.

Conversion therapy is very broadly defined. It includes any “practice, treatment or service designed to ... repress or reduce non-heterosexual ... sexual behaviour.” It also criminalizes a practice or service that would reduce the extent to which a person expresses gender other than the sex assigned to that person at birth.

Unlike a prior version of the legislation, there is no exclusion for consenting adults. In other words, it has become a criminal offence for someone in Canada to provide any “practice” or “service” to an adult seeking to align his or her behaviour with personally held religious beliefs about the morality of non-heterosexual behaviour.

Public comments made by Justice Minister Lametti on the *prior* version of the legislation indicated that religious leaders and parents could have “open-ended and exploratory conversations” about same-sex issues. Similarly, the Justice Department indicated that “private conversations in which personal views ... are expressed” would not be criminalized, but again, this was in relation to the prior version. The changes to the criminal code actually imposed do not expressly protect private, personal, open-ended, or exploratory speech or discussion.

Given the breadth of this legislation, there are very serious questions whether a Bible study or other program on sexual morality offered or provided to those wanting to live their sexual lives in accordance with their religious beliefs are now contrary to Canada’s criminal law. The

same is true of parental guidance based on the family’s religious beliefs and commitments.

I am obviously not an expert on the effectiveness of efforts to change the sexual orientation of another person, but everything I have read indicates that such programs are ineffective. Further, most people will agree that coercive or abusive efforts to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity are simply wrong.

The concern with this legislation is that it may criminalize Christian discipleship efforts aimed at assisting people who voluntarily want to be helped living their lives in accordance with their deeply held religious beliefs, despite having an orientation that makes doing so more difficult for them.

Another concern is that this new criminal law will create a chilling effect on all religious expression pertaining to a traditional Christian sexual ethic. It is troubling that the legislation calls any belief that heterosexuality is to be preferred, for any reason, a “myth.”

The penalties are severe. The law imposes a sentence of up to five years in prison for causing a person to undergo “conversion therapy” and two years for even advertising or promoting “conversion therapy.”

Irrespective of one’s agreement with traditional biblical teachings on sexuality and gender, we are right to be very concerned with the criminalization of private discussions between consenting adults regarding a dissonance between same-sex attraction and their own religious beliefs. ■

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



Who is He?

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”—*Matthew 5:16, NKJV*

“We do not obtain a hundredth part of the blessing we should obtain, from assembling together to worship God,” Ellen White wrote.¹ And yet, most of our discussions about worship focus on worship style rather than on God. Our discussions on worship should begin with the *Who* of our worship.

Who is God? It's life's most profound question.

Dr. Kenneth Matthews writes in his commentary on Genesis, “The first two chapters of Genesis emphasize the character of God. Even while presenting the facts of creation, the emphasis is undoubtedly not so much on creation as on the Creator. God is the subject of the account.”

In Genesis 1 and 2, the two different names for God emphasize the qualities of God's character. In Genesis 1:1, He is introduced as Elohim (the all-powerful God). This emphasizes His transcendence as the universal God. Elohim—the transcendent God. The God who existed before Creation and exists above the creation. Elohim—the God Who effortlessly brought about the creation just by speaking things into existence. Elohim said, “Let there be light,” and immediately there was light.

What a privilege to be able to have this God as our God, whom we ought to approach with reverence and awe in worship.

The other name for God in the first two chapters of Genesis is YAHWEH, God's covenant name that presents God as a personal God. Not just a God for the universe but for you and me. A personal God who bends down as a potter over a lifeless lump of soil to shape, or form, Adam's body.

YAHWEH—the personal God. Verse 8 says that He planted a garden in Eden, and there He placed man. He is the Creator and the Provider. He is the God of relationship, and He created the Eve for Adam and officiated the first wedding.

Our duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence.

The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 are a serious call for us to worship God as our Creator. It's not just to show up at church or sing with others the

familiar hymns, but to actually, intentionally, worship God as the Creator.

Every day we live is because of Him, and every moment of our lives and every action should be a living testimony of who God is and for His glory. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, “... that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (NKJV).

Worship is about Him and for Him alone. It's not entertaining the congregation. God is the audience.

The purpose of the Sabbath is to remember and worship the Creator. It is “a sign ... that ye may know that I Am the Lord your God” (Ezek. 20:20, KJV).

Our God is the Living God:

- Hearing like no other—hearing our songs and measuring how sincerely we sing.
- Our Creator, who listens to our prayers and measures our belief in Him as Elohim, the transcendent, Almighty, unfailing God.
- Yahweh, the caring God who gave breath to every word and seeks to inhabit our praises.
- The God who listens to our testimonies of His lovingkindness toward us and sometimes turns away in disappointment.
- The God who sees, like no other, our actions and our motives.
- The God who feels, like no other, with a divine sensitivity.
- The God who looks on His children with favour. He sees the hearts that are dedicated to Him. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God. It is scary to think that Cain also worshipped but that his worship was not acceptable to God.

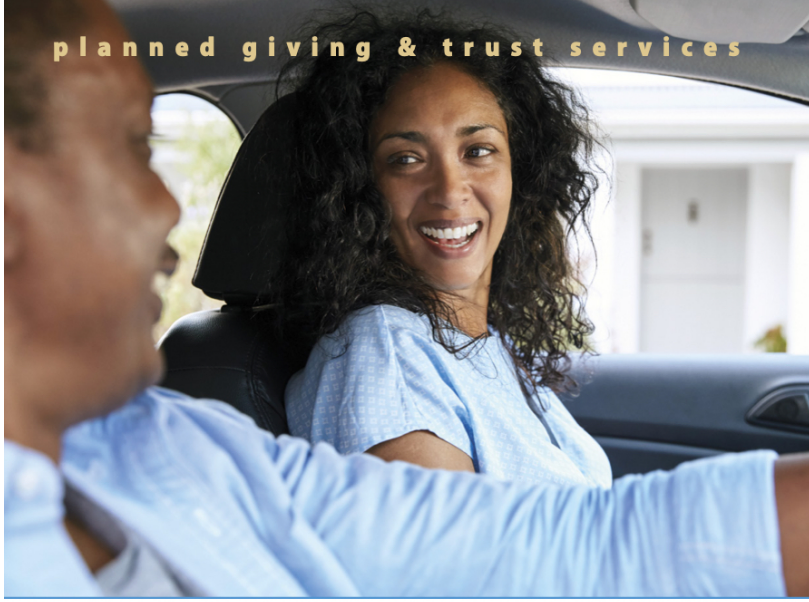
I pray that we will become the true worshippers who “will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks” (John 4:23, NIV). ■

Mansfield Edwards is president of the Ontario Conference.



¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:362.





Without Warning

BIRDS SANG AS a sunny, cloudless Sabbath day dawned. Brian and Shelley and their youngest son, Tim, piled into the car and headed for church. “What a gorgeous Sabbath,” Shelley remarked, pointing to the flowering trees dotting the passing hillsides.

After the church service and potluck, Tim pleaded to go home with a friend for the rest of the day. Brian was hesitant, due to the long drive to fetch Tim that evening, but Brian eventually agreed. Tim hugged his parents and everyone headed for home.

The highway appeared busy, so Brian decided to take the back roads. On such a lovely day, the scenic route seemed fitting. The road was empty, save for the occasional tractor. Brian and Shelley rolled down the windows and breathed in the fresh country air. They turned up an old gospel hymn and sang along.

Then, in an instant, it was all over. A semi hauling a flatbed loaded with farm machinery and travelling too fast had wandered into the oncoming lane as it crested a hill. Brian and Shelley did not make it home that day.

News of the accident and their parents’ deaths reached Brian and Shelley’s eldest three children later that day. Geoff, Charlene, and Max were shocked—and even more alarmed that their baby brother was unaccounted for. Had Tim been thrown out of the car? Six long hours passed before they learned Tim was safe and sound at his friend’s home.

The next several days were a blur—notifying family and friends, planning and attending the funeral services. Then Brian and Shelley’s eldest children began looking for their parents’ wills. They approached local banks and law offices with death certificates, hoping to locate the wills and other

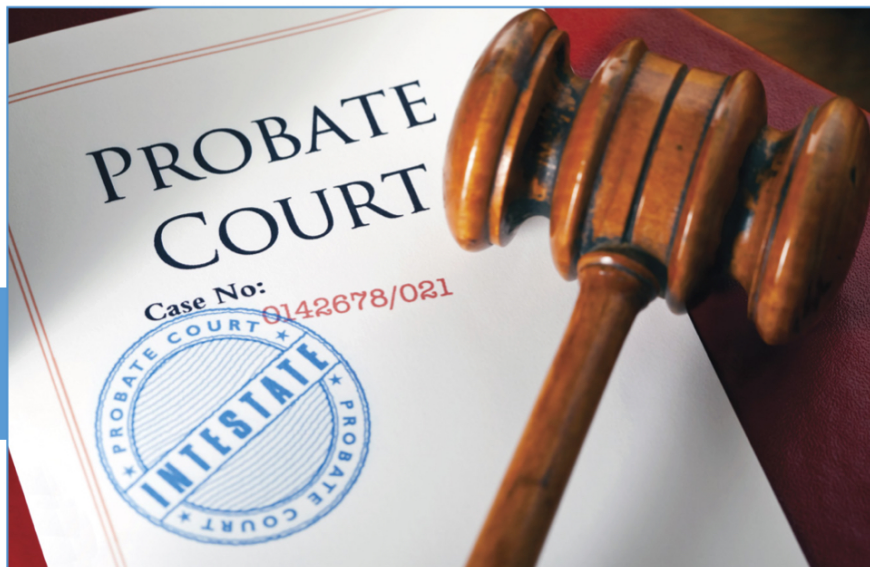
important papers, without success. They needed direction regarding their parents’ estate, and most importantly, they needed guidance with respect to nine-year-old Tim.

They contacted a lawyer and learned that they had to be granted a certificate naming them joint estate trustees in order to oversee their parents’ affairs. The most important decision was choosing a guardian for Tim. Max was in his last year of university and lived out of the country. Geoff and Charlene were both married, with children, and lived close to each other in a city several hours away. The siblings agreed that Charlene would apply for primary and Geoff for alternate guardianship.

Charlene moved into her parents’ home so that Tim could finish his school year, but this decision separated Charlene and her young son from her husband for several months. She and Geoff then began the slow process of liquidating the estate while also managing the ongoing expenses of caring for Tim. Because Tim is a minor, Tim’s portion of his parents’ estate must be held in trust until he is 18.

The experience of their parents dying intestate—without a will—has reinforced Brian and Shelley’s children’s decisions to make sure they each have wills that reflect their wishes. While we may think we have plenty of time to write a will, sometimes we don’t. And we may not think a will is very important until, as Brian and Shelley’s children learned, it is. ■

Reprinted from the May 2018 Canadian Adventist Messenger. Leah Keys writes from Newcastle, Ont., with notes from Frances Chant.



Creation Corner for Kids

He reached down from heaven. He took hold of me. He lifted me out of deep waters.

—Psalm 18:16, NIRV

Sea Turtle

When winter storms hit the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of southern Texas, thousands of sea turtles washed ashore. Thousands more floated helplessly on the tide, making them easy prey for predators. The sea turtles were so weak that they couldn't move. Why?

Reptiles like sea turtles can't control their body temperature very well. So when water temperatures fall below 10 °C (50 °F), sea turtles are cold-stunned. They get cold and weak. They need help. Hundreds of volunteers work to rescue the turtles and take them to a place where they can warm up and get strong again before being released once the water temperature rises.

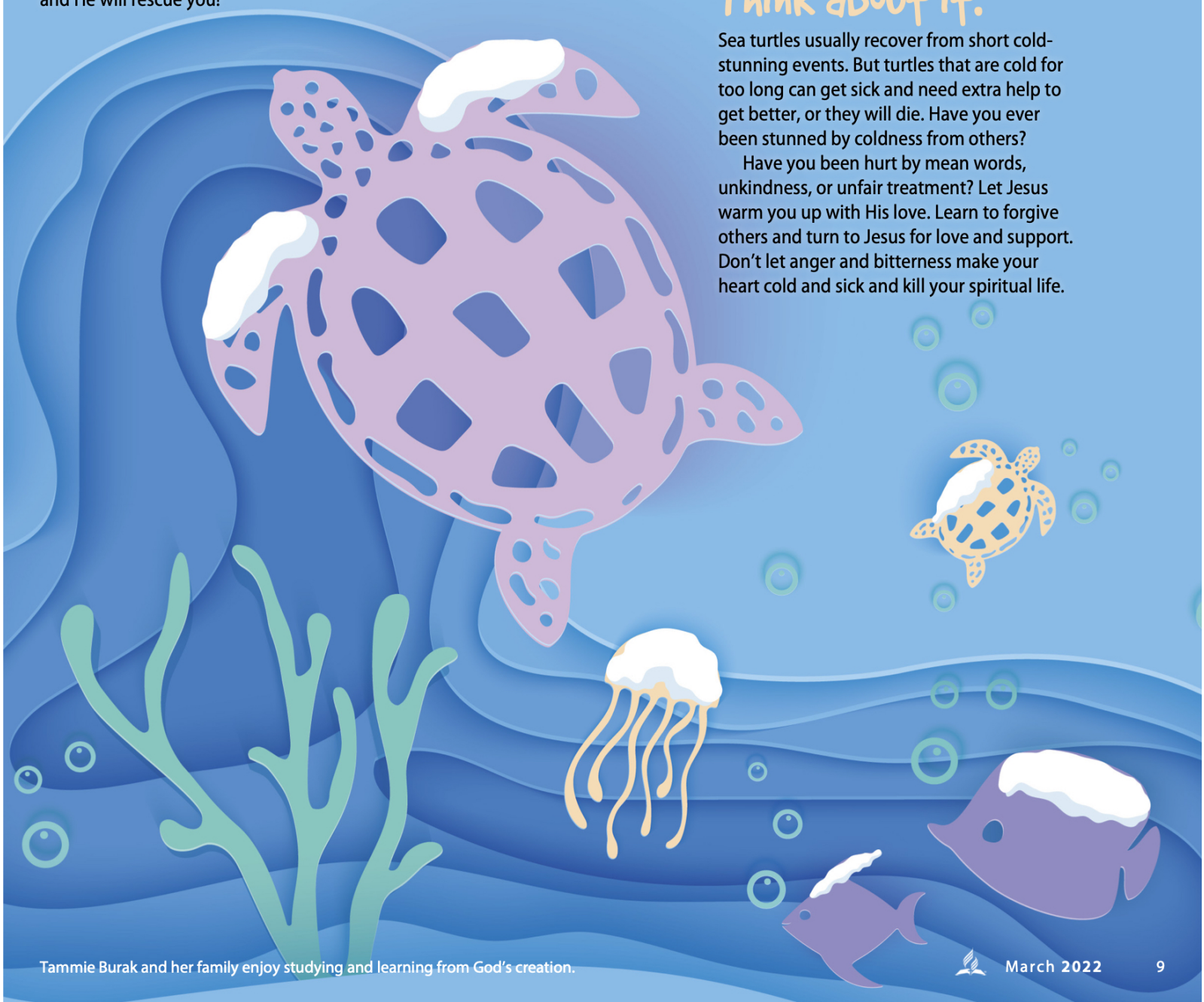
Do it!

Prayerfully study Matthew 18 and put Jesus' words into action whenever you feel the coldness of others. Don't let what others do to you give you a cold heart. Call to Jesus and He will rescue you!

Think about it.

Sea turtles usually recover from short cold-stunning events. But turtles that are cold for too long can get sick and need extra help to get better, or they will die. Have you ever been stunned by coldness from others?

Have you been hurt by mean words, unkindness, or unfair treatment? Let Jesus warm you up with His love. Learn to forgive others and turn to Jesus for love and support. Don't let anger and bitterness make your heart cold and sick and kill your spiritual life.



Summer Camps Gearing up for Summer Outreach

Every summer across Canada, our conferences host summer camp evangelism. With the impact of COVID-19 over the past two years, summer camps were either closed or modified to meet the COVID guidelines of each province. This resulted in fewer young people being able to experience Jesus at camp. With the uncertainty of how life will be throughout Canada this summer, Canadian summer camp directors and conference administrators are making hard decisions regarding the safety of young people and the operation of their summer camps. Your youth camp directors are anticipating and preparing for summer camp to open in 2022.

Within the SDACC there are six conference-owned summer camps: Woody Acres (N.L.), Camp Pugwash (N.S.), Camp Frenda (Ont.), Camp Whitesand (Sask.), Foothills Camp (Alta.), and Mountain View Summer Camp (B.C.).

While the camps may vary with activities and amenities, each is dedicated to affecting the whole person: physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Staff and counsellors are chosen who are growing and committed to help each camper have a full, enriching summer emulating the love of Jesus Christ. Nestled in picturesque,

rural settings, summer camps in the SDACC are places where children and youth can “get away from it all” and return home with a richer experience in Christ.

During the months of January to March 2022, camp directors hired potential staff for the summer season. Pray that the camps will open and reach young people for Jesus. Registration started in January. Contact your local conference youth director for more information. ■

Brian Wahl is the youth director at the B.C. Conference and youth camp liaison for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.



Master Guide Ministry for Youth and Young Adults

The year 2022 marks the 100th anniversary of Master Guide Ministry as a mentoring program for youth leadership within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

About Master Guides

1 They love God and have a heart for young people. Their loving relationship with God inspires them to share not only the gospel but also their lives with children and youth (see 1 Thess. 2:7, 8). They are patient with the youth and have their best interest at heart.

2 They are mentors (not “tormentors”). They teach young people life skills that are essential not just for their chosen careers but for ministry and missions as well. Through their godly example, they mentor the youth as Christ’s disciples.

3 They are influencers. Before there were social media influencers with millions of followers, we had Master Guides, who influenced and impacted millions of young people worldwide. Interestingly, Master Guides can explore digital ministry to widen their circle of influence and reach more people for Christ.

Master Guide Club Ministry

The Master Guide club concept was approved by the North American Division in 2020. Churches with Adventurer/Pathfinder

clubs are to organize Master Guide clubs intended for baptized members aged 16 and older.

Mission trips, community outreach/evangelism, outdoor adventures, and campouts are just a few of the many activities that Master Guides can participate in.

With Master Guides “Leading the Way,” more youth and young adults will be trained for service and thus contribute to the finishing of God’s work. ■

Edwin Martin is the Adventurers/Master Guide/Pathfinders director for the Ontario Conference.



FRESH FAITH

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, who is your favourite author, or what is your favourite book, and why?

A Living Health Message

by Alannah Tjhatra



The moment Ana-Maria Gascoyne took her first university nutrition course, she knew that she wanted to become a dietitian.

Though born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Ana-Maria grew up in Toronto. She and her family lived in Regent Park for most of her childhood and adolescence and, despite the urban poverty she was surrounded by, Ana-Maria recalls her loving family and friends, as well as the various opportunities she was given.

In terms of schooling, Ana-Maria explains that she attended public schools her whole life. "For me, it was a call to challenge my own beliefs and, eventually, a neutral space where

I could share my faith with non-believers." After high school, Ana-Maria attended the University of Toronto, where she completed her first degree. She then fast-tracked her second degree at Ryerson University.

"The field of dietetics is vast," says Ana-Maria. "I work specifically as a clinical renal dietitian, where my caseload includes dialysis patients and individuals living with all stages of chronic kidney disease." The work involves tasks such as dietary assessments, creating meal plans, and dietary recommendations.

When asked about the connection between her work and the Adventist health message, Ana-Maria states, "Meeting people where they are and helping [them] make healthier dietary and lifestyle choices are a testament to the health message's practical applications." She also explains that she would love to see more Adventist dietitians to help deliver this message.

Throughout the years, Ana-Maria has run various health programs at her church and has spoken on topics related to food and diet. She does cooking demonstrations (she's always keen on trying new recipes at home) and is also involved in distributing monthly food hampers to community members in need.

"I am very blessed that I feel very professionally fulfilled," says Ana-Maria. "I work with a great team, which makes all the difference. The job can sometimes be tedious... but when I make a difference in someone's life—those are the days worth coming to work for. If God has called you to a specific field within the health-care setting, take full advantage of the opportunities that lie before you—not only for your personal/professional growth, but for the ability to translate the character of God."

Ana-Maria continues to encourage others to live their healthiest, best lives. ■

Alannah Tjhatra

Currently, my favourite author is Toni Morrison. Her capacity for vivid imagery is unparalleled. She explores really profound themes through prose so beautiful it gives me shivers.



Elianna Fisher

How People Grow, by Dr. Henry Cloud and John Townsend. It's about the psychology that the Bible teaches and its parallels with modern psychology. It's really changed how I read and understand the New Testament.



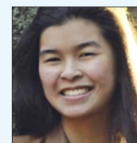
Grace No

I like the book *1Q84*, by Haruki Murakami, because of its absurdity. I read the translated English version, but the writing was still beautiful in a strange and sometimes simplistic manner. I still think about it often.



Izzy Koh

The Paper Menagerie, by Ken Liu. He writes sci-fi stories and also stories about people of Asian descent, and I really like the combination of how he thoughtfully integrates the two.



T Bruggemann

My favourite author is Brandon Sanderson. His worldbuilding incorporates magic as science, which means that he's able to set all his books in the same universe and have very different ideas explained through this science.



Karenna Lee

Six of Crows, by Leigh Bardugo. I like stories with multiple POVs, and the plot is fast-paced and engaging.





Ask Me Anything

Q: I struggle with things I can't control, especially the fear of one of my family members getting sick. I've been having a hard time focusing, as my thoughts often go to the worst that can happen.

A: One of the challenges I have found in my life has been letting God do His work. I'm a passionate person. I love to plan, work the plan, and see the plan in completion. However, I've been learning, especially throughout COVID-19, that the things that God wants are not found in the completion but in the process itself. I can trust that also involves realizing that when it comes to the people I love the most, although I love them and desire their good, *God loves them more than I ever could*, and He is actively moving heaven and earth to save them. So I need to allow myself to trust in God instead of trying to be controlling and fix everything.

Friend, let God do His work and trust that He has everyone's best interest at heart. The most frequent conversations I have often have to do with a prescriptive type of relationship with God. We want God to reveal who, what, where, when, why before giving complete trust in Him. Relationships don't work like that. Directly hearing God speak into our present daily life is not just for biblical characters or pastors. God deeply desires

an intimate relationship with us, one that brings us comfort, peace, and hope.

In the Bible, God calls a young man to lead the Israelites into Canaan. Considering the weight of expectation and responsibility, God gave him a personal promise of His presence. That no matter where he went or whatever troubles he would face, God would be right there with him. So, it says in Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (NIV). ■

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



Growing Up

Millennial



"We can't pour from an empty cup, and after a 70-hour week, my cup gets pretty empty."

Stress to Self-Care

I finish my master's soon. I'm busy, though. I'm studying for comprehensive exams for five to 10 hours a week. I'm working 10 hours a week to try and earn a little extra cash. I'm working at my internship for 20 hours a week. I'm in four classes, which means 10 hours of being in class a week plus about 25 hours of homework a week. So at minimum, my life has started to consist of 70 hours of "work" (school work, class work, work work, internship work) a week.

I feel like I'm drowning. And the ironic thing is that among all of this, my professors teach self-care, I teach self-care to my clients, and I know the importance of it. Why is it so hard to actually engage in what I know is extremely vital to keeping myself sane?

On top of being busy, I'm really introverted. So when the weekend finally does come around and I get to relax on Sabbath, I don't want to go out and see people or talk to people. I just want to sleep, go for walks, read books, and watch movies. I've had to say no to lots of things, like going out with friends, because if I don't, I'll be more exhausted and less prepared to combat the week.

This doesn't make me selfish. This makes me careful.

We all have to do things we don't want to do sometimes, but when the opportunity to do something for our own well-being comes around, we have to take it, because if we don't, we can't help others. We can't pour from an empty cup, and after a 70-hour week, my cup gets pretty

empty. And anyway, opportunities will come and go. Things in life aren't stagnant.

Self-care is still hard. It involves putting yourself first. But Jesus prioritized resting for oneself. He acknowledged that we need to care for our bodies and minds, that we have a whole day to rest, and we can kind of use that day to rest in the ways that will best help us. We know that it is our job to treat ourselves right physically (our bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit), and treating our minds in this way is no different. That means that sometimes we say no. Sometimes we put our needs ahead of something somebody else wants, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

So when no one hears from me over the weekend, it's because I'm engaging in self-care. My weeks are long and overwhelming. I feel exhausted constantly from the work I must do along with other responsibilities and activities that I'm part of. This way, my cup gets full again. I'm ready to take on the week again (most of the time). And if you need more than one or two days and say no to other events or tasks, that's OK too! We all require different levels of alone time or caring for ourselves. And again, I think that's something we need to accept more and acknowledge more within society, to accept that God wants this rest for us. ■

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





Tech SAVvy

BY SANDY AUDIO VISUAL

Embracing Technology: Getting a Handle on Audio

“Some have embraced technology full-on, while others have taken a wait-and-see approach with the hope that this crisis will soon end. However, what the last two years have taught us is that we may never return to worship as it was.”

We’re well into 2022 and the coronavirus pandemic is still underway. There have been fits and spurts of good news, but the way we worship has continued to be affected by COVID-19 variants—most recently, Omicron. To keep connected and faithful, many congregations have turned to technology. Some have embraced technology full-on, while others have taken a wait-and-see approach with the hope that this crisis will soon end. However, what the last two years have taught us is that we may never return to worship as it was.

So if there is no end in sight, and technology has proven its worth, it’s best to take steps to use these tools well. This article will go over a few very simple ways to improve one of the most important aspects of virtual worship: audio.

Let’s address some common audio issues and how to overcome them. Noise cancellation and automatic gain control can be useful tools, but for many worship scenarios they can become an unwanted distraction.

Noise Cancellation

Software such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams use noise cancellation or suppression to block out unwanted sounds. In Zoom, for example, in the audio settings you will find the option to “suppress background noise.” This ranges from low to high.

Noise cancellation can be a useful feature. But it can also be a great distraction. On occasion the feature can make music inaudible and render singing a jittery mess. This is because the math designed to remove noise from

your program has mistakenly identified music as noise and will often make drums and pianos and other percussion instruments completely silent or, worse, constantly turn on and off.

Automatic Gain Control

Automatic gain control, or AGC, raises or lowers the audio volume of participants in a video automatically. It relies on computer algorithms to determine a constant level of audio for your presentation. While the goal is to even out sound, it, too, can become confused, especially with a dynamic speaker or musical selection.

What to Do Instead

To fix both problems, it’s best to turn off these automated audio controls. In Zoom, enable “Original Sound.” Selecting this option will turn off noise cancellation, AGC, and other equalization controls. You will then be able to fully control the audio of your program with your church’s audio system.

Other systems have similar ways to turn off this automatic audio processing. Be sure to turn them off. ■

Colin Sandy (csandy@savweb.com) is an Oakwood University alumnus with a BA in communications.



SAVE MY

MARRIAGE! PT. 2

Last month I introduced you to a fictionalized couple representing several couples I have counselled. Jack and Jill¹ are frustrated with their marriage and feel hopeless about their future. The question I posed was *How can the local church provide support to couples like this in your community?*

There's no doubt that marriage is a valued institution that Christians hold as a sacred bond. With that being said, some studies have shown that Christians divorce at a rate of 51 percent—a high number—whereas some recent studies have the number closer to 35 percent as compared to non-religious.²

I wanted to provide some practical tips on how the local church can serve as a conduit that supports relationships in the community.

First, let's remember that even Jesus had something to say about this topic. While most contemporary issues are not directly mentioned by name in the Bible, this issue of divorce is addressed by Jesus (Matt. 5, 19). This topic is not a modern problem. The subject of healthy relationships has resounded throughout history. What can your church add to the current conversation about healthy relationships that will support your community?

Second, we must ask how we can provide a healthy, God-honouring understanding of sexuality in the church. Sadly, sexuality in many Christian circles has been closely aligned with shame and rape culture. Sheila Wray Gregoire performed a groundbreaking in-depth survey of 22,000 Christian women about their understanding of sexuality that has culminated into a book called *The Great Sex Rescue*.³

The results were shocking and horrifying. Gregoire conducts an autopsy of the top 10 bestselling Christian books on relationships and reveals innumerable examples of false teachings that lack research, project male-focused sexuality, and the dysfunctional attitude that women serve as “service providers” rather than mutual participants in the bedroom.

Finally, I would urge your church leaders to consider developing a robust premarital counselling program for the community. When I pastored in Vancouver, B.C., I sent several of my elders to get professional training so that a larger group of leaders would provide this service.

Sadly, many pastors I have met do not take premarital counselling seriously. Many have one or two sessions where sports and favourite television shows are discussed instead of diving into the hard work of relationship counselling. When a couple comes to me for marriage counselling, I inform them that I require a minimum of six sessions. I also reveal that I have been responsible for six couples breaking up during their premarital sessions with me, and I'm very proud of that number. (In every case, one person from the couple has thanked me for saving them from making a mistake.)

The local church has a tremendous opportunity to support couples before and during their marriage. Topics about morality, decision making, and financial readiness is something that the church is already an expert in—and can provide invaluable support to those in your community.

What steps will your church take to help build strong marriages in your community? ■

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 Names have been changed.

2 There have been numerous conflicting studies and reports that suggest that the divorce rate is higher than those who are non-religious. This is often attributed to a 2008 study by the Barna Research Group. More recent studies by Focus on the Family suggest the numbers are lower than previously believed.

3 Sheila Wray Gregoire, *The Great Sex Rescue: The Lies You've Been Taught and How to Recover What God Intended* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2021).



Looking Beyond the Horizon



It's All About the Land

Residential schools, along with every other act of colonization and assimilation and their dramatically unhealthy consequences on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada (IPOC), can be traced back to one issue: it's all about the land. Who owns it, who cares for it, who consumes it for its wealth. Settle that according to the treaties, and healing will come.

It's all about the land. We as believers in the Word of God should know this to our core. As Brueggemann says, "Land is a central, if not *the* central theme of biblical faith."¹

Being a follower of Creator should be deeply tied to our connection to the land. The land is sacred, gifted from the Great Spirit in His generosity. It is a benevolent and gracious act in opposition to the oppressive nature of the other gods of the time. It is also inclusive of all of creation, not just humanity. All of Creation is good. Creator has given us this gift, the source of all life, this planet. Then He gives us a sacred responsibility to take care of this land, its water, its plants, its animals, its people, that generation after generation might walk "in the garden in the cool of the evening" (Gen. 3:7).

Right from the start of Creation we are given a *responsibility* to the land, not a right to it. Yahweh/Creator creates the earth/*heretz* and then picks up earth/*adamah* and breathes into the *adamah* to make a living being that He calls "human/*adam*"—red human produced from the earth. Then He makes Eve out of the bones of red earth. Together He gives them His image and the responsibility to care (*reign*) for the land/earth. The "for" is so appropriate in that last sentence. Reigning here is reigning in God's image. God is "for" the world.

One might ask here, WWJD? How would Creator

care for the land? It is such a part of the whole plan of Creation and redemption that He redeems it (Rom. 7), restores it (Rev. 21), and makes it His eternal home (Rev. 22). It's all about the land—about God and His full Creation.

There is a deep connection between Creator, humanity, and the earth. The words used here in Genesis show God's image as a deep love and caring for the land, and not the rapacious consumption that's so closely tied with western Christian practice. How did we become so different than Him? Why do we continue misusing the earth while saying we follow its Creator? These acts of Creation are deeply tied to who we are as believers. We cannot divorce the Christ of the cross and the Yahweh of Creation, yet so often we do.

There is little here that most Indigenous people would disagree with, except the terminology used. Yet the IPOC have lived and practised the care for Mother Earth so much truer to Creator's design than most Christians. Maybe it is time for *Seventh-day* believers to sit down at Creator's feet, with an Indigenous person, and let God teach us through them how to care for the sacred land we live on. ■

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

¹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge*, rev. ed. (Augsberg Fortress: Minneapolis, MN, 2002), Kindle Edition (Kindle Locations 336-337).



Do You See His Presence?

"The more we acknowledge daily miracles in our lives, the more they will grow because our eyes will be opened."

"I can't breathe" said the voice on the other end of the phone call.

Laura¹ was going through a difficult time in her family life. I had been praying for her regularly for quite some time. We had talked a lot over the phone. During our talks I would encourage her to have faith in God and to find comfort in reading the Bible and listening to sermons and uplifting music. It was going well—some days better than others. But that particular day was the lowest point for her.

Laura was at work but couldn't concentrate. She felt as if a dark cloud was encircling her. That circle was getting tighter and tighter around her mind, her chest, and she couldn't even breathe. During the break, Laura's co-worker noticed she was really pale and asked her what was going on. Laura simply said she wasn't feeling well and was surprised that other people could notice it.

"I've tried everything," she said to me. "Listening and repeating Bible verses—it just doesn't work; I'm getting worse and worse by the minute."

I told her to call me after work and that I would pray for her in the meantime. As soon as I finished speaking with her, I started praying and continued throughout the rest of the day. I also prayed in the middle of the night whenever I woke up.

The next day Laura called me. "You won't believe what happened. I left work at noon and sat in my car. I was feeling so bad and didn't know if I could drive. While I was sitting in the car, I claimed God's promises again. As I was pleading with God, I felt light coming through me and darkness leaving my mind. It was amazing! God was working changes in me. He is so good and powerful! Thank you for praying for me."

You might be reading this and thinking, *Well, that's not a big testimony ... nothing grand.* But actually, it is. Every time we realize God's presence in our lives, it is a miracle! Every morning that we wake up, go to work, go to school, or stay home and do our daily duties is a miracle! The more we acknowledge daily miracles in our lives, the more they will grow because our eyes will be opened.

Unfortunately, many of us are waiting for big miracles to happen in our lives, and so when we gather at prayer meetings, we don't have anything to say. We think nothing big has happened, when in reality we have so much to tell what God has done for us.

In the book *A Call to Stand Apart*, Ellen White says:

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. ... Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice.²

"In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice" (2 Sam. 22:7). God hears every one of our prayers. He cares for us, as He knows even the number of strands of hair we have on our heads!

Come to Him freely and praise Him continuously. He is ready to do mighty things in your life! ■

Brankica Sremac is the prayer ministries director for the B.C. Conference.

¹ Name changed.

² Ellen G. White, *A Call to Stand Apart* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 27, [https://egwritings.org/read?panels=c2.2,p2.203\(2.204\)&index=1](https://egwritings.org/read?panels=c2.2,p2.203(2.204)&index=1).

Where Are They Now

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

Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer

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

Bob Tetz: As you know, my humility outweighs my sanctification—I'm just a country boy. Seriously, I was born in a schoolhouse. My dad was the teacher, and the schoolhouse also served as the teacherage.

Mrs. Maude Write, and Mrs. Rogers (from Rogers Foods) were the only witnesses at my birth, and it was with their help that I eventually was able to get a birth certificate. We lived in a little hamlet called Wanham (near Peoria, Alta). It was an Adventist community. Peace River was the nearest town.

We left when I was two years old. We moved to Beiseker, Alta., where my father took up farming so that my much older brother, Wilfred, could avoid the draft. I have only been back to Peoria once, to preach at a campmeeting—that is, before it became obsolete. From Beiseker we moved to Lacombe, Alta., where I supposedly and hopefully grew up.

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

B: Most of my education was obtained at Canadian Union College (CUC, now Burman University). I started there in elementary school when I was eight. Mildred Clark was my first teacher and is responsible for everything I know. In high school I probably wasn't considered a star pupil due to the fact that I was a village student—I was there for fun. I really didn't start to learn



Myrna and Bob Tetz



until college, where I met Jesus, who changed my life.

I graduated with a theology degree from CUC in 1962, and with a master's from Andrews University in 1963. It was also at CUC where I met Myrna, daughter of the college president at the time, H. T. Johnson. Myrna and I were married in 1959 in the CUC chapel. The Lake Louise mural was the backdrop.

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

B: It was at Madison College where I met Jesus. I was convinced in Ralf Martin's Bible class that Jesus was coming very soon, [and] I wasn't ready. Even though I may have started in a legalistic way, I was on the road—I wanted to do what God wanted me to do—emphasis on the *do*.

John Dovich and I decided to canvass in Nova Scotia. I want to be clear: I did not grow up with a passion to be a minister of the gospel. It was the last thing on my agenda. But I wanted to work for God. I was working on a music degree at Madison, but I didn't think I could do anything for God with that. But I liked singing, so I was convinced that I could be a singing evangelist. It never happened. I interned in Vancouver, B.C., and the rest is history that I don't regret.

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

B: I started out in Vancouver training under Elder Archibald, the senior pastor. I learned some things to do and not to do. I was on my own as a pastor for two years in the Langley, B.C., district. Then we moved to Williams Lake, B.C., for four. During that time, I thought I had opportunities to do singing evangelism, but alas, they always chose someone else. I wonder why! To this day I don't regret it. I was moved to the Vernon, B.C., district with six churches: Vernon, Grandview Flats, Cherryville, Silver Creek, Salmon Arm Company (which became a regular church under my watch), and then in the early 70s we started the church in Armstrong. So that makes six congregations, doesn't it?

Two years later I was asked to be youth director for the B.C. Conference. It was a great job even though I didn't know what I was doing. Five years later we moved to a self-supporting school at Little Creek, in Tennessee. My wife was the girls' dean, and I was the husband of the dean. After two years I was called to Vancouver as the senior pastor. I will say more about those 10 years later.

Another career change thrust me into "ingathering" all year round as the development director for CUC. After eight years of that, I followed my wife to Washington, D.C., where she took on the challenge as managing editor of the *Adventist Review*. She managed mostly men. I pastored and managed an inner-city project in Baltimore for five years. We then retired, and I did many things

part-time in the area of church collaboration under Monte Sahlin from the Columbia Union Conference. This work involved churches in Philadelphia and Baltimore.

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

B: The Lord never asked me to do anything without me kicking and screaming. Like I said, I never did want to be a pastor. But looking back, I wouldn't want to be relieved of any assignment. But the greatest challenge, and very rewarding, was the 10 years in Vancouver in the 1980s. There, a synergy developed that I have never seen duplicated since. This co-operation, thanks to the Lord first; my wife, Myrna; my associate pastor, Dirk Zinner; and the churches and pastors of Vancouver all working together, accomplished an awareness in the city that was unbelievable. Moving out of my comfort zone, I hosted a two-hour talk show called *Lifestyle Line* on CJOR, the third most popular radio station in the city. Yes, it was rewarding—and tiring. It makes me tired just thinking about it.

M: *Tell us about your family.*

B: My wife and I were blessed with two children. Our son, Gary, does marketing for a long-term company in Portland. He is involved with video and writing for *Marque* and has one daughter.

Our daughter, Linda, lives in Durham, N.C., with her architect husband, Keith Shaw. They have two children. Keith's brother Ken is president at Southern University.

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

B: We live in West Kelowna, B.C. I had been pastoring the Westbank and Orchard City churches part-time until several years ago when, due to my wife's health, it was necessary to become a full-time stay-at-home "mom." Ladies, I don't know how you do it. Unbelievably, the one who was the most involved and was the wind beneath my wings is now almost completely incapacitated. We will be moving, Lord willing, to our daughter Linda's place in North Carolina in April. By God's grace our next and permanent move will be to the New Jerusalem. ■

Note: *Bob's wife, Myrna, was featured in the September 2015 issue of the Canadian Adventist Messenger. She was a powerful worker for the church, having worked as an educator at both the high school and university levels, as a communications and health director, and later as managing editor of the Adventist Review. Bob is now caring for her full-time.*



Tofu Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package (375 g) extra firm tofu
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (175 ml) diced celery (organic if possible)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) finely diced red onion
- 1 or 2 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (70 ml) avocado oil or other light-tasting oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) unsweetened soy milk
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (2 ml) turmeric
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp (4 ml) salt

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Crumble tofu into a large bowl and squeeze out any excess liquid.
2. To the bowl add celery, onion, and garlic. Mix to combine.
3. In a blender, blend oil, soy milk, honey, turmeric, and salt until well combined.
4. Pour blended mixture into the bowl containing the tofu mixture. Mix until everything is evenly combined.
5. Chill in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Makes 6 servings (approx. $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per serving).

NUTRITIONAL INFO:

Serving Size 119 g
Calories 234
Total Fat 18.0 g
Saturated Fat 3.0 g
Cholesterol 0 mg
Sodium 316 mg
Total Carbs 5.9 g
Dietary Fibre NA
Sugars 3.4 g
Protein 10.3 g



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



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RAINMAK



Called Out of Darkness

Each time Yvonne Schoff offers one of God's children living on the streets of Nelson a bowl of steaming, nutritious soup or the warmth of a fleecy blanket, the thought flits across her mind, "There but for the grace of God, go I."

Situated in the exceptionally beautiful area of the Kootenay Mountains in British Columbia, Nelson's population of almost 11,000 is decidedly secular. Famous for its artisan, hippie vibe, all manner of New Age mysticism flourishes in its neighbourhoods. When Yvonne moved there in 1994 shortly after having her third child, it was just the kind of vibe she was looking for.

Growing up in rural northern Alberta in a very poor family, Yvonne longed to escape the confines of small-town living. After losing her mother and two brothers to a car accident at the tender age of three, she was sent to live with her paternal grandmother, a devout Baptist. She recalls, between ages 7 and 14, attending Baptist Bible camp activities only for the fun and friendships. Interestingly, one of the first books she ever read was *The Sweetest Story Ever Told*, about the life of Jesus. "I loved the Jesus character, but that was the end of it; I didn't think about Him after that," she says.

At another point, though, Yvonne remembers giving her heart to Jesus at church one Sunday when she was 14 but not really knowing what it all meant. Looking back, Yvonne ponders, "I always wonder what my life would have been like, had I stuck with God back then. Instead, I was worried about makeup, hair, clothes, and boys." In junior high,

she started partying, drinking, smoking marijuana, and fell away from going to church at all.

Unbeknownst to Yvonne, her mother had had four other sons from a previous marriage, and at age 27, Yvonne finally met the four, all career criminals. Before she knew it, she was on the same path as her brothers. "I got involved in some very bad things," she reminisces. "I carried on in criminal activity, shoplifting, doing drugs, alcohol, living on coffee and cigarettes. I wasn't eating healthy. I have a criminal record that will forever follow me, but at the time I was looking for the accolades of the wrong people." She continues, "I was into spiritualism and praying to dead ancestors. Some very demonic things happened in my life. For all my adult life I didn't like Christians. I didn't like to be in their presence, as I felt judged by them. No Christian had ever done anything wrong to me; it was just my own guilt. I did everything I could to avoid them like the plague."

October 2019 was one of the lowest points of Yvonne's life, but that's when God was able to catch her attention. "I was in a horrible relationship, I was drinking excessively, I was so underweight, I was so depressed and making so many wrong decisions. One night I had a dream, and when I awoke from this dream, I knew something awful was going to happen. In the dream I had been taken into captivity. It was the scariest, most hopeless feeling; there was nothing to live for anymore. The world was never going to be the same. A couple days later, the dream was still bothering me. I was so depressed, I went to my bedroom, threw myself on

a pile of dirty laundry, and fell into a deep sleep for about 10 minutes. When I awoke, I looked up and saw the kingdom of heaven coming down! God told me that the dream I had before was the end times that we are in now, and this new dream was the beginning of the kingdom of heaven. I've never hallucinated, even though I was taking drugs. I saw this beautiful city, and I thought, 'End times? Kingdom of heaven? That's God! That's the Bible God! I suddenly had the realization that God was real.'"

That was the beginning of God changing Yvonne's life. She marvels, "I knew all my previous prayers to dead ancestors and the universe, the enchantments, tarot cards, and smudging, I knew it was all a waste of time. I knew I had to read the Bible to find the truth. And I knew God wanted me to tell others that we are in the end times. I started watching videos and was absorbed in reading my Bible. As my relationship with Jesus grew, I learned about the health message. I trusted God so much and wanted to do everything to please Him.

"I told a friend one night, 'I'm not going to ask God to take away my addictions, because who would I be without them?' And then I realized how foolish that was. So I decided to ask God to take the addictions, if it was His will. I awoke the next morning with absolutely zero cravings. It's been 18 months, and I've had no desire to smoke cigarettes or marijuana. From that point, I was unstoppable to find out more about God. I knew I had to find a church to go to. Everything I was studying online was somehow Adventist! ... As soon as I



ERS



Yvonne Schoff ministering with her church family on the streets of Nelson, B.C.

walked through the doors of the Nelson Seventh-day Adventist Church, I felt like I was home."

Yvonne immediately began ministering. Having experienced homelessness herself for a time, she has a real heart for the less fortunate. Need A Hand Ministry was a vision of the Nelson church, and, after feeling convicted daily by the Holy Spirit to get it started, Yvonne used her own funds to purchase warm clothing and soup ingredients. She confesses, "It was especially after I read in Ezekiel that the reason for the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah was that they didn't care for the needy, the hungry, and the poor!" Yvonne and fellow church member Running Wolf

share the leadership.

She offers this praise report: "One way God blessed this ministry was the donation of a 1992 Astro minivan! That vehicle has been such a blessing because we throw in all the warm coats, boots, mittens, socks, toques, pillows, blankets, and soup, and then five to seven of us fit in there, and away we go. It's quite a sight, and it's so fun, and it's such a wonderful feeling to live and breathe this ministry. At church we can't wait for Sabbaths to go out on the streets, reflect the glory of Christ, and introduce the Adventist Church to the people.

"When we're on the streets, we're evangelizing, we're praying with people, telling them how much God loves them,

inviting them to church to share Sabbath with us. We eventually want to provide housing, teach life skills, and help people with living needs. We want to reach out to the elderly and inspire young people to minister."

Her parting words are "Never let go of God" and "Strive for a strong prayer life." Surely, Yvonne is living the promise of being called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. And she is determined, by God's grace, to share that light with everyone she can. ■

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.



A Buzzing Hive!



“At that time, I dreamed that I saw two beehives, one in San Francisco and one in Oakland. In the hive in Oakland, the bees were diligently at work. Then I looked at the hive in San Francisco, and saw very little being done. The hive in Oakland seemed to be far the more promising. After a time my attention was again called to the hive in San Francisco, and I saw that an entire change had taken place. Great activity was seen among the bees. They were earnestly at work.”—Ellen G. White¹

MESSENGER: *So what was this buzzing activity that Ellen White talks about here?*

MONIQUE LEMAY: One hundred and twenty years ago, the San Francisco church and the Oakland church, both known as “the beehive,” had established a centre of influence with various activities taking place in several locations. The San Francisco “beehive” operated various branches of Adventist work: a school, a house for working men, medical work, care of the sick under the supervision of St. Helena’s sanatorium, a health food store, a vegetarian restaurant, work for seafarers, workshops and conferences, etc.

More than six years ago, the members of the then Warwick Adventist group in Warwick, Que., decided

to go in this same direction. (Today the Warwick group has become a church, and it is called the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Bois-Francs.)

MESSENGER: *In other words, to launch their own centre of influence. And it’s done! What did you name it? And how did God lead the way?*

MONIQUE: It is named *Centre Vie Meilleure (CVM) des Bois-Francs* (Better Life Centre)! This centre is the fulfillment, as far as I am concerned, of a dream that goes back more than 30 years. I have always felt that evangelization must pass, among other things, through the field of health, family relationships, etc. But this dream has only been completely clear to me since 2010.





In September 2021, Centre Vie Meilleure entered its seventh year of operation.



Children love the CVM mascot!



CVM has a booth at the Festival de la Paix in Victoriaville, Que.

While translating articles for *Adventist World* magazine, I discovered that the Adventist Church promotes what are called “centres of influence.” With more than a century of effective global efforts for human health and well-being, the church is establishing various community service centres around the world where it offers a variety of community services, tailored, of course, to the needs of different populations. I was struck by the relevance of such an approach on the part of our global Church!

In 2014, the members of the Warwick group finally found a modern, decent-sized building in a good location that would serve as both our church and our centre of influence. We approached the Quebec Conference. One thing led to another, and everything fell into place. This building, if we were to build it today with its landscaping, would cost close to a million and a half dollars. Thank God we got it for a small fraction of that price! We were welcomed with open arms by the town of Warwick and received unexpected free publicity from the Bois-Francis regional newspaper.

MESSSENGER: *Could you give us an overview of the Centre Vie Meilleure?*

MONIQUE: With pleasure! CVM is a community service centre offered and supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Bois-Francis. Its mission is to offer activities corresponding to the different dimensions of the human being. We believe that the human being

has physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs and that one must take care of these four dimensions in order to live fully.

We also believe that empowering individuals in their personal and community lives directly supports their society. The more empowered an individual or community is, the less of a social burden they become.

Through this centre, we offer a range of services aimed at improving the overall health of the population. These services may take the form of educational workshops, practical courses, counselling services, or support network activities.

MESSSENGER: *What is your relationship with community organizations in the Bois-Francis region?*

MONIQUE: We work in collaboration with existing community organizations in order to respond more extensively to the needs of the population of the Bois-Francis region and beyond.

MESSSENGER: *What is CVM’s organizational structure?*

MONIQUE: Before launching the CVM, we developed a charter that clearly defines its nature and mission. It includes, for example, the general provisions, name of the service, purpose of the service; the board of directors (BOD) and its role, function, composition, and member eligibility. There is also a section on all matters relating to volunteering, and finally, a section on the financing of the CVM and its activities.

MESSENGER: *We can see that for Warwick church members, it is very important to be well organized!*

MONIQUE: Very important indeed! So, in light of the above, it is essential to offer quality services and credible information. CVM therefore ensures that the conferences, courses, and workshops offered are given by qualified people.

To this end, conferences and workshops in the medical and psychological fields are given by professionals who belong to a professional order. In the absence of such a qualification, the presenters present material pre-approved by a member of a professional order.

In the spiritual field, we make sure that people designated as spiritual accompanists are adequately trained to offer this service.

In terms of the activities offered, we always strive to meet the standards in effect in the province. For example, if we want to offer daycare services, our property, our service, and our personnel will have to meet the government requirements.

Finally, all our volunteers receive training to ensure the best possible service to the population. This training covers different topics, such as the mission and operation of the Centre Vie Meilleure, dress codes, public relations, sociocultural diversity, etc.

MESSENGER: *How important is this centre of influence to the community?*

MONIQUE: In the first year of CVM's launch, which took place in September 2015, the Town of Warwick liked the concept so much that in 2016, they taped a television segment of us to introduce the CVM to the public. In addition, they pass along our fall and winter/spring programming for free in their municipal

newsletter, which is distributed to every household in that town.

We are also present at public events. We have a booth at the Victoriaville Agricultural Expo. The Centre Vie Meilleure even has its own mascot! We also participate in the Peace Festival.

Many people have come to the CVM since its launch. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive! Everyone is extremely happy with the conferences, workshops, and courses offered. Some say that thanks to CVM, their lives have taken a new turn. Others talk to us spontaneously about God, without us bringing up the subject. Still others have even said—to our surprise—that they watch the French television broadcast *Il Est Écrit (It Is Written)*!

MESSENGER: *Can you give us an idea of how busy the Better Life Centre has been since its launch?*

MONIQUE: Of course! From Sept. 2015 to Oct. 9, 2019, we had 1108 registrations (Adventists and non-Adventists), about 800 of which were non-Adventists who came to the CVM. Even more importantly:

- Through its concept and activities, the CVM has been successful over the past six years in gaining the trust of the general population.
- Contacts and testimonials result from our involvement and contacts with influential people in other local organizations (City of Warwick, *Centre d'entraide Contact*, *Accès-Loisirs*, *Cuisines collectives*, professionals in different fields, etc.).
- The loyalty of individuals to our twice-yearly programming has been established, and friendships have been made.
- Currently, thanks to our activities, some people are studying Sabbath school, others are taking Bible studies, and still others are asking questions about the Adventist Church.
- The church members who are involved in the CVM, for the most part, say that their spiritual life has been enriched by it.
- There is complementary action between the CVM and the other evangelism initiatives of the



Seventh-day Adventist Church of the Bois-Francs in the journey of people who are either more directly interested in Christ or who wish to deepen their overall well-being.

MESSENGER: *You have several challenges ahead of you. How do you propose to meet them?*

MONIQUE: There are many challenges, of course. We must be constantly attentive to the needs of the population and be ready to respond to them as much as possible. Programming, in this sense, must be carefully prepared and use the resources available, both outside the church and within the church.

There is also the question of funding. The CVM has more and more projects on the table. We are praying that God will provide the funds to carry them out.

MESSENGER: *In your opinion, what is the most important element for the proper functioning and continued influence of such a centre?*

MONIQUE: I believe it is vital to cultivate sincere, deep brotherly love and to work with one heart and soul. The involvement of members and other volunteers is also vital to its proper functioning.

MESSENGER: *With the “high speed” mode of our world today, how do you balance everything you have to do with involvement in a center of influence?*

MONIQUE: It’s all about priorities. If we put the kingdom of heaven first, if we dedicate our lives to the Lord every day, we will not let the fast pace of society hold us back in fulfilling our mission. Well-planned, prioritized personal involvement will allow us to invest

ourselves fully in such a project.

MESSENGER: *In conclusion, what message would you like to leave our readers with? What appeal do you have for them?*

MONIQUE: Here is what Ellen White wrote over 120 years ago:

We earnestly hope that the steps taken in the future in the work in San Francisco will still be steps of progress. The work that has been done there is but a beginning. San Francisco is a world in itself, and the Lord’s work there is to broaden and deepen.²

This is the hope we want to bring to the Better Life Centre today. Adapting Mrs. White’s statement, “We earnestly hope that the steps taken in the future in the work in Warwick and beyond will still be steps of progress. The work that has been done here is only the beginning. The Bois-Francs region is a world in itself, and the Lord’s work there is to broaden and deepen.”

Dear friends of all Adventist groups and churches in Canada, we invite you to open a center of influence, however small, according to your means and possibilities!

“[The] blessing of God rests upon unwearied diligence. He does not despise the day of small things. A wise use of the littles will bring a wonderful increase.”³ ■

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

- 1 Australasian Union Conference Record, March 1, 1901.
- 2 Australasian Union Conference Record, March 1, 1901.
- 3 Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, 48.



What could be better than a foot massage for visitors of the Agricultural Expo?

Photo below: Marianne Lemay and Sandra Hamel at the 28 Days Without Alcohol Challenge in partnership with the Jean Lapointe Foundation.



The CVM mascot



A Promise a Day Keeps Stress Away

“Promises from God’s Word are like leaves from the tree of life; there is power in His Word.”

When sickness comes, many are desperate to find answers. As a result, an openness to spiritual things often follows. That is why the sharing of basic health principles can be such a blessing to many who are ill and can be an opening wedge for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the book *Ministry of Healing*, we read, “Every gospel worker should feel that the giving of instruction in the principles of healthful living is a part of his appointed work. Of this work there is great need, and the world is open for it.”¹

A few months before the pandemic hit, literature evangelist Kyemar was knocking on doors in British Columbia. As he was walking, he talked with God. He asked God, “Lord, please show me some fruit of Your work. Show me how the literature we are sharing is making a difference.”

That summer, God answered his prayer on the last night and at the last door. Kyemar knocked and a woman came out. She quickly said, “I know who you are! You have health books and you’re a Christian! You’re a Seventh-day Adventist!”

Kyemar confirmed her impression but wondered how she knew. She then went on to explain that three years prior, another literature evangelist missionary had come to her house and presented health and spiritual books. She said that they had a wonderful conversation about Christianity and about the health principles found in the books. She had decided to purchase some health books.

Unfortunately, during the three years since that initial encounter, she was diagnosed with cancer. However, she remembered the conversation and the books. So she decided to go back to the books and apply many of the

health principles. God eventually healed her from her cancer, and she ascribes much of the healing to what she had learned and applied.

Although the woman was now healed from cancer, Kyemar realized as they spoke together that she still had challenges in her life. She was facing spiritual battles, and God had sent him at just the right time. Although she didn’t have any funds, Kyemar felt impressed to leave with a book with her: *Peace Above the Storm*, which not only contains the text of Ellen White’s classic *Steps to Christ* but also includes Bible promises for a variety of situations.

He encouraged the woman to put her trust in God while claiming His Word. He told her, “A promise a day keeps stress away! Promises from God’s Word are like leaves from the tree of life; there is power in His Word.”

As Kyemar left that home, he felt so encouraged. Not only was he able to be a source of encouragement to someone, but God had pulled back the curtain to give him a small glimpse of the wonderful impact that literature evangelism can have on one person.

God’s Word still changes lives. The same Word that changes our lives as church members, is the same Word that will change the lives of our friends, family, and co-workers. Let’s commit to making the sharing of God’s Word a priority in 2022. For those we meet more often, health literature may be the best option to start with in building bridges toward spiritual things. God will honour what we share—little though it may be. But let’s still share, for as one preacher once said, “God can’t bless nothing!” ■

Kyemar McCollin shared his story while serving as a CYC literature evangelist. Lifestyle Canada is Canada’s literature evangelism ministry.



Empowering My Journey

As I stop to think about the impact Adventist education has had on me, I can't help but think it has brought me to where I am today. Take a little journey with me into the past.

When I was in elementary school, I learned what it meant to be empowered to do great things. It was in the early mornings before school even started that some of us students who arrived early would head out to the field beside Curtis-Horne Christian School (then Curtis-Horne Junior Academy) to play touch football.

Curtis-Horne is a small Adventist school in Regina, Sask. Its students varied in ages and abilities, but we still enjoyed playing together. I remember an older student who was a leader and often played quarterback during these games. He always took the time to make sure that everyone got to touch the football. One of his favourite plays was to pass the football off to a younger student and then run beside them to get them into the endzone. I can't describe how amazing it was as a little girl playing among bigger students to be sheltered into the endzone and be able to score for your team. I was able to achieve something I didn't think I could do as a young girl.

Later when I headed to Canadian University College (now Burman University), I once again was empowered to be more than I thought I could be. I was given opportunities to lead on campus by people who had faith in me. These staff members and sometime fellow students encouraged me and helped me dream and achieve goals. It was their faith in me that led to "Prayer at the Sundial" and events of continuous 24 hours of prayer on the campus. Though initially I may not have known these people well, they became lifelong friends and mentors.

The small family-like environments of these Adventist schools I attended and grew up in were so influential. I was given opportunities to grow and learn, stretch my skills, and even stretch my beliefs in myself.

This growth led me to the opportunity I have today to work in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference. Looking back at my education journey, I am thankful for the time I spent in Adventist education. The teachers, fellow students, and life lessons as well as the education all shaped who I am today. Our Adventist schools are special, and I would encourage you to look at your local one as an option for your child(ren) as well.

If you are still in your education journey, I want to encourage you to find others around you to provide a positive influence. And if you are done with your formal education journey, I would encourage you to find students in your area whom you can encourage and empower. This could be just a warm, home-cooked meal or the gift of time over a hot drink. Empower those around you to be more than they think they are, as you never know where their journey may lead. ■

Sandra Wall serves as the youth and communication director for the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference.



THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

Paying It Forward

“The blessings I received can only be passed on to others who need someone in their corner at just the right time.”

Many Burman University alumni and former faculty members know J. D. Victor Fitch as men’s residence dean, math teacher, and president. Others throughout Canada know him as the educational superintendent who helped guide their children’s church school experiences. More recently, when Burman’s need for a new library could no longer be ignored, he has been volunteering countless hours of his time to chair the university’s advisory team.

So what motivates someone who retired from active service many years ago to assume such a mantle of responsibility?

Vic explains, “It was on this campus that the seeds of the abundant life I’ve lived were sown. It was here I made my commitment to the Lord and decided to be a teacher. It was also here where I met my bride of 63 years.

“I used to say I am involved in Burman now to pay back what I received then. But on second thought, ‘paying back’ is a misnomer. How is it paying back P. G. Miller, one of my favourite teachers, whose example encouraged me to pursue a math degree and science courses? Whose teaching methods I adapted for my own teaching style.

“How do I pay back the two faculty members who encouraged me to come back to school after staying out a year? I can’t! The blessings I received can only be passed on to others who need someone in their corner at just the right time.

“The same goes for the blessings I receive from my heavenly Father’s hand daily. He planned for my salvation eons ago. Now I can look forward to an eternity with Christ. All I need has already been provided for me.”

As Vic further considers his involvement in fundraising for the new library, he recalls that when he arrived on campus almost 70 years ago, he (and every other fellow student) had use of a library. And a dormitory. And classrooms. And a gym. And a baseball diamond. (How he had loved that game!) And a hockey rink. And a

cafeteria. A Christian school existed because others had acted on their belief in Christian education years before.

So now Vic volunteers—even in his “sunset years.” He attends meetings to share his expertise and thoughtful insights. He visits with friends to speak of his passion for the only Adventist university in Canada. He writes letters that reflect his belief that the church in Canada needs Burman to continue offering the best education possible to young men and women interested in Christian service.

Vic says, “I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing I can do to pay back for what I received! The only way I can express my thanks and appreciation to others and also to God is by *paying it forward*. What I do now—my time and my monetary gifts—I do for each student, current and future, who chooses Burman. I am doing it for them. *Paying it forward* so they can be blessed as I was.

“It’s an enjoyable, satisfying, beautiful, and rewarding journey.” ■

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

Will the new library be ready for dedication next semester?
Darren Bishop, director of facility maintenance and library
construction project manager, and Vic Fitch check on its progress.



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Liberty: The Very Essence of Faith

“What are your thoughts on this?” A friend said, concerned.

My eyes examined the sentence in question: “Liberty is the very essence of faith.”¹ As I weighed those words, a story wandered into my awareness.

“This quote by Luther brings to mind a certain lady who was constantly telling her husband what to do,” I began my narrative. “Not surprisingly, their marriage suffered, so they called their pastor, who inquired, ‘Is it true that you constantly tell your husband what to do?’

“Yes, Pastor, it is,” she admitted. ‘I’m so afraid he will make the wrong decision.’

“Since he’s not a child, shouldn’t your husband be given the freedom to make a wrong decision?”

“She furrowed her brow. ‘If he made a wrong decision, he would be sinning, and if he sinned, he would be lost.’

“As terrible as that would be, doesn’t God give your husband the freedom to sin?”

“No! No, Pastor! God doesn’t want my husband to be lost!”

“You’re right. God wants your husband saved.’ Their pastor clarified: ‘I asked whether God gives your husband the freedom to choose to be lost.’

“Maybe God gives him the freedom to choose, but I want to make sure he’s saved!”

“The pastor looked at her seriously. ‘If you make all the choices for your husband, will he truly be saved?’

“Silence settled in as the lights came on, and tears filled her eyes; she had been coercing her husband’s conscience. Immediately, she turned, pleaded for pardon, and he freely forgave her.”

When Luther wrote, “Liberty is the very essence of faith,” he put his finger on the pulse of Christianity. “By the word,’ said he, ‘must we overthrow and destroy what has been set up by violence. I will not make use of force. ... Liberty is the

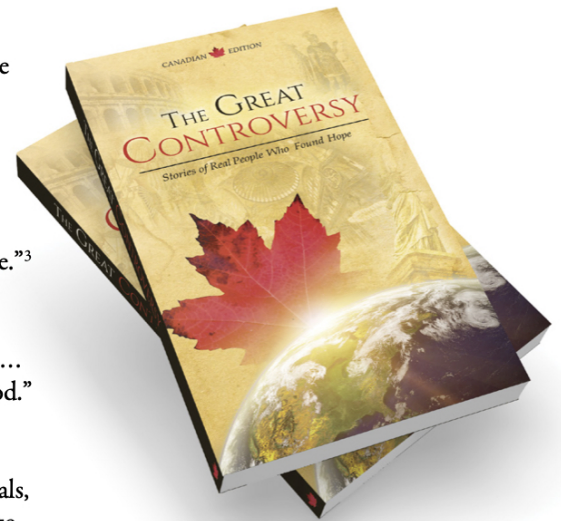
very essence of faith.”²

As much as Luther opposed false practices, he equally combatted the use of coercion to make people “do the right thing.” The pen of inspiration warns: “The conscience should not be compelled even for the observance of the genuine Sabbath, for God will accept only willing service.”³

The great reformer concluded: “We must leave the matter in God’s hands. His word must act, and not we. ... Let us preach; the rest belongs unto God.” Luther understood how force would produce a mindless multitude who hollowly comply with mandatory rituals, no different to the work of the apostate institution he battled. “But there would be no sincerity of heart, nor faith, nor charity. Where these three are wanting, all is wanting. ... God does more by His word alone than you and I and all the world by our united strength. God lays hold upon the heart; and when the heart is taken, all is won.”⁴

This phenomenal book my friend quoted, *The Great Controversy*, traces the lives of real people and their fight for freedom while the agencies of evil raged against them.

At *It Is Written Canada*, we have printed 50,000 copies of a new Canadian edition of *The Great Controversy*, and



if you wish to order your own books to share with friends, neighbours, or family members, please call *It Is Written Canada* at 905/404-6510, email information@iiw.ca, or write to: It Is Written Canada, Box 2010, Oshawa, ON, L1H 7V4.

These stories of faith trace the history of the great controversy between good and evil and unveil the final divine deliverance of God’s children. ■

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

1 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 189.
2 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 189.
3 Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 15, 1890.
4 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, 189, 190.



MANS Volleyball Team Wins Big at Province-Wide Volleyball Tournament



L to R: Tanisha Otieno (PHAS coach), Maress Emmons (MANS coach), Nayshus Demitor (Grade 8 PHAS), Taija Strongman (Grade 8 MANS), Kreedance Okeymow (Grade 8 MANS), Jeresyn Francis (Grade 8 MANS), Thomas Comeau (Grade 6 PHAS), Eugene Lidd (Grade 6 PHAS), Caelije Threefingers (Grade 8 MANS), Shannae Roan (Grade 9 MANS), Shayla Roan (Grade 9 MANS)

Mamawi Atrosketan Native School's (MANS) volleyball team ended 2021 on a high note with an historic first-place finish in the annual Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) Tournament, hosted in part for the first time at MANS.

On the Nov. 28, 2021 weekend, volleyball teams from 11 Seventh-day Adventist schools gathered from across the province on the MANS and College Heights campuses. The days were as long as they were rewarding. Games started at 9 a.m. and went until 5 p.m., with some teams playing six whole games.

The event was meaningful for MANS students for a few reasons. Hosting the tournament was an exciting way for MANS to contribute to the Seventh-day Adventist athletic community. Seeing and competing with other Seventh-day Adventist school teams provided a much-needed sense of normalcy for all the student-athletes. And perhaps most exciting of all, the MANS volleyball team went on to win the tournament in their division, becoming the FCA Division B champions of 2021.

Reflecting on the experience, MANS athletic coach Tessa Willing says, "It has been a challenging couple years in the athletic department, due to COVID. ... I know that hosting gave Mamawi students a sense of pride that we haven't had in years past. We're now one step closer to our athletic goals because of it."

For Tessa, it is a heartening trend to see athletic skills and enthusiasm on the MANS campus steadily rise over the years. The recent tournament win and overall success of the MANS athletic department did not happen

overnight; it has taken a lot of hard work on behalf of the whole school—especially Tessa, her colleagues, and the students she coaches. And Tessa coaches more than a few students.

As head athletic director, Tessa keeps tabs on three separate volleyball teams—the A, B, and C leagues. She is responsible for coaching the C league, and her colleague Maress Emmons coaches their B team, which also has students from Peace Hills Adventist School (PHAS) in Wetaskiwin, Alta. The reason for having three separate leagues, Tessa explains, is because "the C and B leagues are developmental and range from Grade 5 to Grade 8. The A league is the competitive league, consisting of students in Grades 7 to 9. We always try to have a C team at Mamawi, as this is a good introduction to the sport and team play. We hope that we can have students playing at the FCA tournament from Grades 5 to 9."

Undoubtedly, winning and hosting MANS's first volleyball championship will bolster school spirit. Already, even more students are interested in playing volleyball and other team sports. As captain of the winning team, Jeresyn Francis says of the tournament experience, "Everybody there did well. I had a good time, with good people. It was very exciting winning Mamawi's first championship, and mine as well. This [2021] is my first year at Mamawi, and I look forward to playing next year!" ■

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





Water Means More Than You Might Think

In Rwanda, Gaudance teaches her daughters how to hand-wash at their very own handwashing station, called a tippy-tap.

March 22 marks World Water Day's 29th year. In 1993, World Water Day was first observed to raise awareness of potable water as an invaluable resource and a right for all. Water means survival. You can survive only three days without water. However, water means more than you might think. It is intrinsically involved in much of our lives, and its lack or inaccessibility, therefore, has broad implications. Addressing water issues not only ensures survival but also restores and uplifts human dignity.

After its establishment in 1985, some of ADRA Canada's earliest projects included providing safe water to communities. Throughout its lifetime, ADRA has dug wells, repaired water systems, distributed water tanks and filters, and implemented many more activities that help families to have the water they need when they need it. These examples only scratch the surface of ADRA's work in bringing fresh, safe drinking water to communities.

In regions where rainfall is seasonal and sporadic, ADRA has shown families how to make the most of the water available to grow their food. By installing rainwater tanks, ADRA has enabled families to access water throughout much of the year. ADRA has also demonstrated simple technologies for irrigation that not only extend growing seasons but also conserve water. For example, families in Rwanda now bury unglazed clay pots in their gardens. They fill the pots with water and cover them with a lid. The lid helps prevent evaporation while the water slowly leaches out of the clay pots, irrigating their gardens. As another example, families in Kenya now conserve their wastewater from cooking and reuse it in their kitchen gardens. Water means food and self-reliance.

Water's importance goes beyond drinking and growing crops. It is closely linked to education, particularly for girls. In communities where girls are expected to fetch the family's water, this sole task can take up much of the day. This bars girls from attending school and the chance of a better life available through education. ADRA has addressed this barrier in various ways, including installing water pumps in central locations. This reduces the amount of time required to fulfill this important task and enables girls to attend school. Water means education and opportunities.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic highlights the necessity of water. We need water to keep ourselves healthy and safe from viruses and harmful bacteria. With the ability to wash hands and keep homes clean, families are more protected from contracting illnesses. ADRA supports families in their efforts to protect themselves. For example, in regions where access to water is difficult, ADRA has taught families how to construct simple handwashing stations from readily available materials. A few good-sized sticks, a plastic jug, some string, and some soap come together to create a convenient way for families to consistently wash their hands and keep themselves safe. Water means protection.

All these waterworks are made possible by the generosity of our supporters. To mark this World Water Day, we at ADRA want to recognize each of you who enable us to continue empowering others to live healthier and happier lives. Thank you! ■

Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.





SLIP graduates with Ann Thompson (second from left), Karen Bell (fourth from left), and Eduardo Flores (first from right).

Something exciting is going on at New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oshawa, Ont. A community-based church, New Life began in 1992 with a mandate to take a fresh look at Jesus and His Word. In that same year, the Open Arms Food Bank, now the Neighbourhood Centre, opened its doors and commenced by serving four single mothers. What began as a small ministry has grown exponentially.

The first thing you will notice as you walk through the doors of the Neighbourhood Centre is the bustle. It is a busy place, filled with church and community members blending to minister to the families and individuals served by the food bank. But the church's ministry is not just about providing food security to a troubled neighbourhood community. "The Neighbourhood Centre is known as a place where each person is treated with dignity and respect and given an opportunity to rebuild their lives," says Ann Thompson, the centre's director.

"Before the pandemic, the centre was open five to six days a week providing food, pancake breakfasts, hygiene kits, backpacks, shelter, and socialization," says Noel Thompson, church treasurer and husband to Ann. "But with COVID-19, we were prompted to move to more long-term solutions, something we had always envisioned but were [compelled] to fast track."

The team's long-term solution was the creation of the Productivity Training Hub, or "The Hub," as it is colloquially known. Eduardo Flores, program co-ordinator for The Hub, says, "The Hub was designed to provide wrap-around training and supports to individuals who want to rebuild their lives by pursuing productivity goals. We are equipping individuals toward self-sufficiency, with a particular focus on readiness for employment and other productive pursuits."

Recently a group of participants graduated from the Self-Empowerment and Livelihood Improvement Project (SLIP), one component of The Hub's programming. SLIP is extraordinary. During the ceremony, graduates were called to the podium to receive a handshake, a beautifully framed certificate, and say a few words. Testimonial after testimonial was shared, sometimes with tears and heartrending stories of lives once out of control, now being put back on track.

Karen Bell, originator of SLIP and recruitment co-ordinator at The Hub, explains: "SLIP ensures that individuals develop a renewed sense of hope and are adequately supported in implementing their life-rebuilding plan. It offers a variety of workshops that allow participants to come away with a deeper understanding of themselves, their values, beliefs, and the goals they wish to pursue."

All this activity and transformational change is undergirded and supported by Pastor Mat Feeley, his wife and ministry partner Kristy, the leadership of New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a church membership that is all in on the vision of ministering to a broken community.

"Thanks to the support of ADRA Canada," says Pastor Mat, "we have been able to launch The Hub, recruit and retain qualified individuals like Eduardo and Karen to work not only with community members but also with agencies within the Durham Social Services and education ecosystems. These partnerships are key to the long-term success and sustainability of The Hub, and we could not do it without ADRA's help." ■

Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.

The Call of Summer Camp

The Transforming Power of Exploring Nature and Discovering God



Camp Frenda staff, summer 2021

Summer camp. There's really nothing else like it. The transforming power of a natural setting at a Christian camp is undeniable. Every summer thousands of campers are introduced to Jesus, and many give their hearts to Him publicly through baptism.

Like Adventist summer camps all over Canada, Camp Frenda in northern Ontario experienced many "firsts" after reopening its doors for the 2021 summer camping season. With strict COVID-19 protocols in place, along with a stellar staff, Frenda hosted completely full weeks throughout the summer. Due to disruptions across Ontario, many first-timers from surrounding communities also took the opportunity to experience a Christ-centred week at camp. The holistic environment of camp filled the cups of children starved for interaction. Summer camp staff also embraced mentoring, coaching, and leading their campers to Jesus. The benefit of camp was evident to hundreds of parents as well.

Patricia Ferreira Lopez, camper parent and guest speaker for a week, summed up the Camp Frenda experience. "To see my own beloved girl do all these camp experiences and run free in the safety and security of the village of eyes and ears and kind hearts, well, what else could a parent want? For a wholesome, immersive, spiritual, physical, social, and mental experience for any child, Camp

Frenda is without a doubt a treasure to be discovered!"

Camps across Canada continue to be cherished treasures for generations of campers and former staff. The pandemic provided unexpected opportunities for Camp Frenda alumni staff to gather in the online environment. In January and April 2021, and January 2022, virtual Friday evening vespers were held via Zoom. These vesper gatherings gave alumni staff time to reconnect in meaningful ways and foster renewed support for camp.

Frenda alumni staff continue to hear the call of camp. Many are prayer warriors and others support through charitable donations. Since 2007, Frenda alumni have raised approximately \$700,000 for Camp Frenda! This is extraordinary! From a single alumni donation to build the new barn, to a generous family donation for the Camp Frenda endowment fund, to alumni fundraising and reunion events, Frenda alumni continue to stand in the gap to ensure camp ministry to the children and youth of Ontario for years to come. Combined with a supportive conference administration and the church family across Ontario, Camp Frenda is in good hands.

Camps across Canada can gain valuable support through alumni staff involvement. After all, camp is where many professionals first started to hone their professional skills. Pouring back

into the next generations gives thousands more the opportunity to grow and mature in the unique environment of summer camp.

An example of alumni-led projects is the renovation and renewal of the Fireside Room at Camp Frenda to honour the late camp director Bryan Lee. This room is central to camp events and holds the memories of music, worship, drama, games, communion, and more. Shortly after the 40th anniversary Frenda alumni reunion celebration, Bryan lost his battle with leukemia. It was his dream to equip the Fireside Room with quality music and media equipment to maximize event and worship experiences. Through loyal alumni support, over \$40,000 was raised during the pandemic with plans to complete the project by this summer! Surely, God's work will continue as Frenda alumni actualize Bryan's dream.

Pray for our Canadian summer camps and change a child's life this summer through your support! Visit your own Adventist summer camp website or contact the director for more information on how you can make an impact! ■

Sharon Aka is an alumni co-ordinator for Camp Frenda, along with Steve Atkins, Akwasi Bonsu, Sarah Mora, James Rooney, and Sanj Sukumaran.



Camp Frenda alumni can learn more at campfrenda.com and join the Facebook group. To be added to the Camp Frenda alumni mailing list, contact one of the alumni co-ordinators: Sharon Aka (akasharon8@gmail.com), Steve Atkins (satkins@andrews.edu), Akwasi Bonsu (akwasibonsu3@gmail.com), Sarah Mora (marigold5@hotmail.com), or Sanj Sukumaran (sanj@earcompany.ca).





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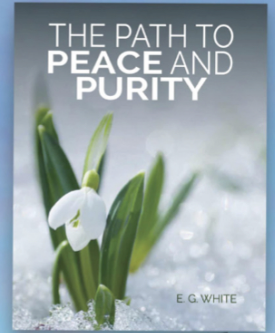
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Amazing Testimonies

from Amazing Facts Ministries

Rita's three children were growing up quickly, and she knew that if she was ever going to have them learn about the God and religion she had grown up with, it had better be soon. She asked her father to study with her children, but when that didn't work out, she wondered how she could go about doing it herself.

God had it all planned out. Just when Rita was earnestly trying to figure out how to even begin bringing her kids to a knowledge of God, a Seventh-day Adventist was inspired to call our office and donate to have Bible study enrolment cards sent out to various postal codes of her choice. Rita was one of the post office box holders that received a Bible study enrolment card!

When Rita called our office, she was very excited to learn that there were free Bible studies she could use. We sent her the Amazing Facts study guides along with a set of *Amazing Adventures Study Guides* for each of her children. Rita is so happy that God heard her cry and has provided an opportunity for her to have her children learn of Him.

As the group got together to assemble the door hanger bags, they never guessed the impact it would have on at least one person who received it. The door hanger bags are often filled with a *Steps to Christ* magazine, a Bible study enrolment card, and a *Great Controversy* book. This literature is all made available by donors who see its value and want to help make it available to as many as possible.

A woman whom we will call Carol found a bag at her door and decided to read *The Great Controversy*. When she completed the book, she filled out the Bible study sign-up card requesting Bible studies, and wrote a

note on the card saying, "Thank you for *The Great Controversy*. Changed my life." What volumes just those few words speak! What joy those handing out literature will have when they meet this lady, and those she has influenced, in heaven someday!

Another student, Brian, said, "I have enjoyed these studies so much. My friend and I have been studying the Amazing Facts Bible study guides together, and we plan to attend your church. There is a church an hour north of us and [another] two hours south. We are planning to be baptized! This is definitely the truth!"

And another student wrote, saying, "Dear Pastor Doug Batchelor, I have just enjoyed *Amazing Facts* on the Miracle Channel and wanted to express my thanks with this card. We are living at a very special time ... surrounded by the presence of God."

Please pray for those viewing Amazing Facts Ministries on the following TV stations:

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2. Miracle Channel
3. Vision TV
4. 24/7 broadcasting on satellite TV covering the Middle East with a 430,000,000 footprint.
5. 12/7 broadcasting on satellite TV covering a 1.5 billion footprint: Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh.

To close off, here is another message we received. It is a prayer request: "Greetings, my name is Leul and I live in Ethiopia. I saw the program on TV on the channel Leaves of Life, and I wanted to ask for prayer. Please, pray for me and my mother to see Christ (that He would be revealed to us in the Scriptures) and that we can truly understand the Bible, receive the Holy Spirit, and truly serve Christ. Thank you." ■

Michelle Harnisch works at Amazing Facts Ministries and seeks to inspire a more abundant harvest.



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SDACC

Stan Jensen Retires; SDACC Appoints New Communication Director and *Messenger* Editor



Stan Jensen



Evaldo Vicente

Many Adventists throughout Canada and around the world will join me in expressing deep appreciation to Stan Jensen for his excellent service as SDACC communication director and editor of the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*. He has a sense for important stories that confirm faith. Stan is also a man of vision for what individual Christians can do to make positive change.

Stan has been a friend to everyone. Easy to talk with, he encourages people everywhere to tell their stories. Stan believes in people. He can think of ways that folks might serve humanity. That gift has influenced many people.

Stan enjoyed projects. His influence that led to the film *Hacksaw Ridge* was a project that he pursued energetically and that he enjoyed when it came to pass. He enjoyed *Le Messager Adventiste du Canada*; *Adventist Messenger: Understanding My South Asian Neighbor*; the *Adventist–Muslim Relations Messenger*, and all the other projects that he took on with enthusiasm.

As he steps into retirement, Stan will be missed. We wish him well as he pursues his interests, enjoys his family, and simply enjoys life. He deserves it.

The SDACC Executive Committee has selected Evaldo Vicente to serve as the next communication director and *Messenger* editor for Canada.

Evaldo is familiar to Canadian Adventists through his work with *It Is Written Canada*. Prior to his service there, Evaldo was associated with *Il Est Écrit* and worked with the Quebec Conference at Greaves Academy and in Quebec City. His background in media and in a variety of platforms will bring continued growth and strength to the way we communicate our faith to the community and within our church.

Evaldo has concluded his pastoral assignment in Ontario and has joined our national staff effective March 1, 2022.

Pastor Vicente is a man who is easy to meet, is a good communicator, speaks several languages, and is a friend whom many will remember from the IIW Partnership meetings a few years ago. I am confident that God will bless the church through his ministry. ■

— Mark Johnson, president,
Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada



Ontario

Toronto Central Meets Community Need; Sustains Impact



Pathfinders helping to sort clothing donations.

When you think of missions, what comes to mind? Do you think of the faraway needs of faraway peoples in faraway lands? Do you picture missionaries getting on planes and travelling halfway across the globe to provide food, water, housing, and even medical care to people in undeveloped or underdeveloped regions? Most, if not all of us, probably think of missions in this stereotypical way.

But did you know there are many mission projects where you live? The impact of the pandemic has been far-reaching. Many communities have been struggling to survive the economic impact of the pandemic since 2020. People have lost their jobs, homes, and even loved ones. COVID-19 has also strained communities, and churches have had to find new ways to reach the people they serve. The Toronto Central Seventh-day Adventist Church has been dedicated to serving its local communities during the pandemic. By meeting the needs of its communities and collaborating with leaders and businesses, it has made a sustaining impact on its local area. Toronto Central has been the hands and feet of Jesus. It has used Christ's method of meeting people based on their needs and has connected with its neighbours.

Since 2018, Toronto Central has been busy serving the

Roselawn community. It has developed several ministry programs, such as a homeless outreach program, youth ministry program, senior ministry program and health ministry program. Every year for the past five years, Toronto Central has served more than 200 members of the local communities. All its programs have been successful, but one ministry, in particular, has been making strides.

Toronto Central's community services team, led by Judith Brown, has been working hard to stay active during these difficult times. The team's fundamental belief is based on the need to connect with people at the grassroots level. For instance, when a community member died, the team reached out to that person's family and neighbours, offering condolences as well as words of hope. While most things were shut down, they let people know that Toronto Central was there for them. This was not just a cliché: Toronto Central community services not only said they would take care of their community but also did it. After a three-month pause, they resumed their partnerships with a bakery and Toronto Community Housing to distribute bread and pastries in July. They also collected and distributed groceries, toiletries, furniture, and many other items.

Much of the work done by Toronto Central could not have

happened without partnering with local businesses and community residents. In 2020, the church’s total in-kind donations (for food, clothing, furniture and other items) were valued at \$42,496.52. Donors included Tim Hortons, COBS Bread, Sanmar Canada, and several other businesses. Community services team members engaged business partners/sponsors with a simple message: “We’re part of the same community; let’s work together to make some lives better.” Through hard work and dedication in reaching out to community sponsors and going door-to-door to connect with local businesses, they went from five sponsors to 19 in one year!

Toronto Central community services has become well known in its local communities. With the support of other church ministries and direct business sponsorships, the team has helped people from many different walks of life. They have served and continue to serve low-income families; seniors; immigrants; many homeless people; the abused; and people dealing with food, income, and housing insecurities.

You may assume that Toronto Central’s community services team comprises a large team of volunteers. However, according to Judith, the core team, including herself, comprises only eight. This small team has worked countless hours and sacrificed personal time and means to serve their community. Their valiant effort and co-operation prove that teamwork does make the dream work. They have also enlisted the help of other volunteers to ensure successful outcomes when hosting community outreach events.

The Toronto Central team has done some remarkable things throughout this pandemic season while realizing its dream of serving the community. It sought out the most vulnerable community members and didn’t wait for them to arrive at the doorstep of its church. With the support of the Prayer Ministry team and many others who share a passion for community service, team members prayed constantly, and with God’s help, they acted on those prayers. The team members didn’t wait for opportunities to come to them; instead, they went out and seized them.

Judith Brown reminds us that “the sky is the limit. There is nothing that we cannot do if we commit our plans to the Lord, allow Him to lead, and set our minds to it. But we cannot do it out of thin air. We need support. Most of all, serving the community requires financial support. I have learned these past three years that God truly opens windows and doors. He touches the hearts of people you would never think of or imagine. So don’t be afraid to ask. Ask Him to show you whom to ask, whom to approach. Ask for what you need, and He will bring it to pass.”

Judith also shared her experiences of serving the community. One Saturday evening more than two years ago, Judith and a teammate were out delivering bread. After knocking on a door, it opened, and they stood face-to-face with someone wearing

pyjamas, who had the curtains fully drawn and who looked sad and depressed. The Holy Spirit conveyed to their minds the seriousness of the situation, and they offered to pray in the doorway. Judith believes God led them to that door in time to block a potential suicide and offer hope and encouragement to someone who may have thought life was meaningless moments earlier.

Judith also recalled several occasions delivering bread when she and her team came in contact with people who were intoxicated either with alcohol or drugs. Sometimes they were caught in an exchange of cursing and had to silently pray for God’s divine protection. They have experienced firsthand many desperate cries for help in their local communities and become acquainted with people longing for a different, better, or normal life who were unable to attain these lives alone.

Judith and her team have heard stories about brain seizures, physical abuse, drug overdoses, and near heart failures while mixing and mingling with people. However, they recognize that community services provide a unique opportunity to lead people to Christ, so they pray, hope, and trust that lives will be saved for eternity because of their work.

God is waiting for you to make a memorable impact on your community, and there is no reason for you not to serve your neighbour. Even if you do not have the money, human resources, or community service experience, God can make anything possible. He’s just waiting for you to be willing. ■

—Elijah Ramjattan, with contributions from Judith Brown, reprinted from Ontario Conference Highlights Winter 2021



Weekly bread and pastries distribution courtesy of COBS Bread.

>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Jan. 31, 2022, there were 372 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,851,815. There were 87 loans with a value of \$27,919,761.

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

Adventist Muslim Relations Summit

What:

Learn to successfully share the
gospel with Muslims

When:

March 25-27, 2022

Where:

Calgary Central SDA Church,
Calgary, AB

More Info:

sdabooks@gmail.com

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Speakers:

Petras Bahadur, DMin
(General Conference AMR UK)

Mark Johnson
(President of SDACC)

Stephen Dickie
(NAD)

Rudy Harnisch
(SDACC)



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.
- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.

Announcements

Notice is hereby given that the 35th Regular Session of the Manitoba–Saskatchewan Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be held virtually by Zoom on Sunday, April 10, 2022, commencing at 8:30 a.m., CST (Sask.); 9:30 a.m., CDT (Man.); 10:30 a.m., EDT (Ont.).

The session is called for the following purposes: receiving reports, election of officers and departmental directors, election of Board of Directors, amendment of bylaws, and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the session at that time.

As provided in the current Bylaws, delegates to the session are chosen as follows: one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate for each thirty-five (35) members or major fraction thereof.

Delegates who are members of the Nominating Committee are asked to meet virtually for all of their meetings as scheduled by the Chair. The final one will be held on Friday, April 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., EDT (Ont.); 8:00 a.m., CST (Sask.); 9:00 a.m., CDT (Man.).

*Manitoba–Saskatchewan
Conference of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church*

*Per: Michael Collins, President
Christine Bergen, Secretary–Treasurer*

Obituaries

Joyce Haynes-Palaio was born Sept. 10, 1930, in Toronto, Ont., and died Aug. 16, 2021, in Bonita, Calif. Surviving: spouse, Theodore Palaio; sons, William (Julie) Haynes of Corinth, Tex., Robert (Diane) Haynes of Chula Vista, Calif., and Bryan (Meredith) Haynes of Anacortes, Wash.; daughter, Shirley (Mark) Spencer of Fish Camp, Calif.; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Olive (née Williams) Hunt was born Oct. 16, 1931, in Curling, N.L., and died Oct. 29, 2021, in Corner Brook, N.L. Olive was fun, friendly, and loved Ingathering. She served as a deaconess, assistant treasurer, and Clothing Centre assistant. She deeply loved her family and her Lord. She was predeceased by her parents, Frederick and Gladys Williams, Sr.; spouses, Patrick Colford, Sr., and Peter Hunt, Sr.; son, Thomas Colford; brother, Albert Williams; sisters, Ethel Blackler-Pike, Julia Park, Marjorie Barriault, and Elizabeth Keough. Surviving: sons, Lawrence (Mildred) Colford of Benois Cove, N.L., Patrick (Sharon) Colford of London, Ont.; daughters, Gladys (Michael) Keough of Corner Brook, Marjorie (Roderick) Stone of Gillams, N.L., and Karen (Peter) Hunt of Irishtown, N.L.; stepsons, James (Rosann) Hunt of Irishtown, and Eugene (Joan) Hunt of Aguiathuna, N.L.; stepdaughters, Dianne (Charles) Murphy of Irishtown, and Louise Hunt of Kitchener, Ont.; brothers, Frederick (Winnie) Williams of Corner Brook, David (Phyllis) Williams of Corner Brook, and Raymond (Linda) Williams of Pasadena, N.L.; sister, Verna (Lloyd) Buckle of Corner Brook; 30 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

Eugene Rau was born March 10, 1932, in Portland, Ore., and died Oct. 9, 2021, in Savannah, Tenn. Eugene served as a science teacher and boys' dean at Far Eastern Academy in Singapore from 1959 to 1965, and academic dean at Southeast Asia Union College in Singapore from 1967 to 1971. He served as principal at Crawford Adventist Academy in Willowdale, Ont., from 1979 to 1987, and at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy in Aldergrove, B.C., from 1987 to 1995. He was predeceased by his parents, John and Palma Rau; and brother, Harold. Surviving: spouse, Betty (née Preyer); sons, Jonathan (Londa Edwards) of Vancouver, Wash., and Gerald (Heidi) of Walla Walla, Wash.; daughter, Brenda (Steve) Dickman of Savannah, Tenn.; six grandchildren; and four

great-grandchildren.

Harold Reimche was born Aug. 18, 1920, in Fox Valley, Sask., and died Aug. 29, 2021, in Kelowna, B.C. Harold served as a pastor throughout his life and well into his retirement in both Canada and the U.S. His passion for helping others discover his friend Jesus, motivated his life. He was known throughout his life as a quiet, supportive, and loving peacemaker and caregiver. He was predeceased by his parents, Philip and Magdalena Reimche; spouses, Mary Penner, and Sylvia Tkachuk; brothers, Albert, Ben, Ron, and Oscar; sister, Esther Diminyatz; stepsister, Martha Towes. Surviving: sons, Al (Beth) of Calgary, Alta., Donavon (Carol) of Augusta, Ga.; daughters, Jackie (Richard) Urbanek of Holmfeld, Man., and DellaRose (John Pijl) Reimche of Chilliwack, B.C.; stepson, Perry (Sunthare) Tkachuk, Indonesia; brother, Herb; sister, Claire Ritchey of Salmon Arm, B.C.; half-sisters, Brenda Bui of Kentucky, and Gail Morris of Oregon; 10 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Dennis Uffindell was born Feb. 15, 1931, in Watford, Hertfordshire, England, and died Dec. 9, 2021, in West End, N.C. Dennis began his ministry in England, including service with the V.O.P. at Stanborough Park. He moved to Newfoundland in 1976 and served there as a pastor until 1981. He then moved to Ontario, where he continued in pastoral work from 1981 to 1988. He was called to the Ontario Conference in 1988 to serve as the executive secretary until 1991. He was predeceased by his parents, Roland Herbert and Amy Uffindell; and brother, Arthur. Surviving: spouse, Julia; daughters, Jennifer (Stephen) Bonney of Fletcher, N.C., Sarah Uffindell of West End, and Mary (Stephen) Millmine of Ontario; brothers, Roy (Penelope) of Bridgewater, N.S., and Stephen of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire; sisters, Ruth (Ivan) Abbott of West Bank, B.C., Jean Land of Broadstone, Dorset, U.K., Shirley Kemp-Tucker of Exmouth, Devon, U.K., and Beryl (Peter) Bayliss of Newport, U.K.; nine grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Douglas Wagner was born June 10, 1949, in Lacombe, Alta., and died June 11, 2021, in Lacombe. Douglas was a teacher at Fountainview Academy and Williams Lake Academy in B.C. He was a missionary teacher for 12 years in Thailand as well as Asia Pacific International University Thailand. He was predeceased by his parents, Hugo and Ileen Wagner. Surviving: spouse, Anelize; stepsons, Johann Heinrich (Nelmarie) Scheffer of Klerksdorp, South Africa, Ivandro

(Dorien) Scheffer of Potshofstroom, South Africa, and Hendrik Scheffer of Lacombe; brother, Kevin George of Lacombe; sisters Debbie (Frank) Lutz of Kelowna, B.C., and Daphne Wagner of Kelowna.

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Upcoming Episodes on *It Is*

Written Canada: March 5: Is Self-Love an Oxymoron? Don Straub examines how we should understand self-love. March 12: Warm and Healthy Homes in Peru. This week, ADRA Canada shares the results of their heart-warming mission work in Peru. March 19 + 26: Freedom's Journey, Parts 1 + 2. Jacob Hiebert and his family were determined to follow God during World War II under the rule of communism, when being a Christian was illegal, and their heart-stopping journey bears the signs of the unmistakable guidance of God in a faith-building story of divine care. (3/22)

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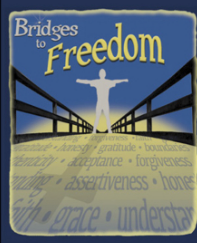


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Local Church Budget March 05
 World Budget - AWR* March 12
 Local Church Budget March 19
 Conference Advance March 26

APRIL

Local Church Budget April 02
 Hope Channel International* April 09
 Local Church Budget April 16
 Local Conference Advance April 23
 Local Church Budget April 30

*Special materials provided.



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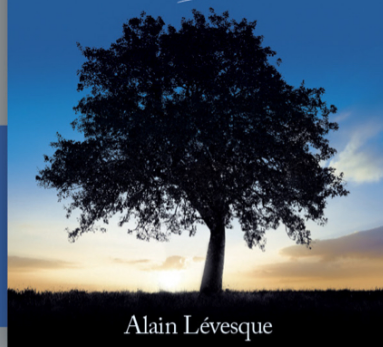
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