

God's Booth (p. 11), *NEW!* Growing Up Gen Z (p. 13),
Students With a Purpose (p. 20), Session Report (p. 39)

october 2022

canadian adventist
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The Canadian Adventist Messenger—the official magazine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada—is published 12 times per year. Free to SDACC members. For all others, an annual subscription is CA\$20 within Canada or US\$20 outside of Canada. Printed by Maracle Press Limited. ISSN 0702-5084. Indexed in the Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index. Member of the Associated Church Press and the Canadian Christian Communicators Association.



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Submission Deadlines

December issue **October 1**
January issue **November 1**
February issue **December 1**

>> View this issue online at www.adventist.ca/messenger

Postmaster: Please return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Messenger subscriptions, 1148 King St. E., Oshawa, ON L1H 1H8

Canada Post agreement number 40069337.



“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”

—Mark 10:43, 44, NIV

Leadership as an Opportunity to Serve

Have you ever been so bold as to go to your employer and tell them they have to say yes to the proposition you’re about to make? Especially if that question involves personal gain. In Mark 10:35–45, that is exactly what James and John asked Jesus. “We want you to do for us whatever we ask.” They were wanting to sit at the right and left of Jesus in His glory.

After a short dialogue with the two about being willing to follow the same path of Jesus, the other 10 disciples become a little perturbed about the request of James and John and rightly so. But what Jesus says next turns the tables on how they understood what they were asking.

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.” Jesus was pointing out how the secular or corporate world works around us. Then Jesus said, “Not so with you” (verses 42, 43, NIV). We are not to function like the rest of the world; we are to carry out our lives by a heavenly principle and not with an earthly sin-tainted governance.

“Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (43–45, NIV). What words to live by and to work by.

One of Jesus’ most profound acts of service outside of the cross was at the last supper. The Creator, our Redeemer, came and served and was not wanting to be served. Jesus was laying down the groundwork for how you and I are to govern our lives, our work, our churches, and our schools by a new and heavenly principle and not by the principles of this world.

I would like each one of you to ask yourself a question: Do I live by this principle? Do we do church by this principle? Does our church structure abide by this heavenly principle of serving one another and putting the needs of others before ours? Romans, in Chapters 12–15, expounds upon this principle and develops it for the purpose of what Paul needed the church in Rome to be.

I would love to see each one of us become the beacon for what Christ wants us to be so that we can be the servants bringing the everlasting gospel to the world. ■

Paul Llewellyn is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.



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Tessah Karake
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WHAT'S INSIDE

October 2022



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

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WHAT'S COMING What is a good gift? Gifts that matter. Gifts that last. Gifts that keep on giving. Read more about giving good gifts and more in next month's issue.

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *How can I stand for the freedom-of-religion rights of people whose beliefs I don't agree with?*

A: Thank you for your question. It's an increasingly common one, particularly in our society with its penchant for vilifying people whose statements or actions depart from the current ideological orthodoxies. It can be a difficult mental exercise to protect and defend that with which we disagree. There is a natural human inclination to see no value in the beliefs of other religions, or atheists, and to thereby discount their entitlement to hold or promulgate their views. After all, if their beliefs are wrong, why would we defend them?

The key is in the ambiguity of the word "them" in the last sentence. We can, and should, defend the person without necessarily defending their beliefs. Remember that freedom of religion is a gift of our heavenly Father, first manifested in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve rebelled, God allowed it as a matter of His love for them. He loved them enough to allow them, and each one of us, to make our own decision whether to maintain a covenant, trusting relationship with Him. God obviously didn't agree with their choice, but He most certainly respected and protected their ability to make it.

In defending the religious liberty of others, the Seventh-day Adventist Church seeks to model that same love. It also seeks to honour the choices that each person, who is loved infinitely by God, makes for themselves. In doing so, we treat them with the dignity that has been bestowed on each person by God, which in our fallen state is entirely unmerited.

To honour and respect the religious choices of others, we don't need to agree with their views or practices.

In fact, we may strenuously disagree with them and believe that such choices will lead to ultimate separation from God. But we honour and respect their right and ability to make those choices, just as God has done for each one of us. In doing so, we extend them the same love and grace, based on the model we see in the bible.

That is the first and most important reason that we defend those with whom we disagree. But there is another more practical reason. In Robert Bolt's play on the life of Sir Thomas More, *A Man for All Seasons*, More's future son-in-law, Roper, urges him to use his authority to arrest Richard Rich, whose perjury will eventually lead to More's execution. The problem was that Rich had broken no laws. More refuses, famously stating:

What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil? ... And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you—where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country is planted thick with laws from coast to coast, ... and if you cut them down ... do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake!¹

When we protect the religious liberty of others, we build a stronger defence for ourselves. ■

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

¹ Act I, Scene 7.

Hungry for Justice, Justice for Hunger

“And at mealtime Boaz said to her, ‘Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.’ So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.”—*Ruth 2:14, NASB*

The trials and tragedies of this life leave us hungry for change. The last few years—rife with social challenges, disease, financial uncertainty, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic—have left many of us yearning for a greater sense of security.

And now, a staggering hunger crisis threatens to destabilize our world even more. Previously existing injustices are being worsened by climate change, inflation, and supply chain disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine. The world’s most vulnerable people feel the effects most acutely. Across Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, many struggle to simply put food on their tables.

As the factors contributing to this crisis have intensified, ADRA has been busy. Our projects in multiple countries have been not only providing people with food to eat and nutrition programs to bring back the most malnourished from the brink of starvation, but also teaching communities how to grow their own food in ways that are sustainable and resilient against the ongoing forces of climate change. Starting this fall, we are launching a new campaign, “Justice at the Table.” By partnering with organizations like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB) and expanding the scope and impact of our programs, we are working to restore people to the dignity of self-sufficiency and strike at the very heart of hunger.

As we work to support countries like Yemen, Ukraine, Venezuela, Sudan, Nepal, Mozambique, Moldova, Laos, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, I also find myself thinking of ancient Israel and Moab.

An Israelite woman named Naomi found herself fleeing famine at home and seeking refuge in neighbouring Moab. After some time in peace, tragedy struck when her husband, and eventually her sons, died. Left with only her daughters-in-law, Naomi found herself again faced with the threat of hunger (Ruth 1:1–4). At one moment brought on by

famine, and the next by disenfranchisement and poverty, hunger is as ancient a problem as we have.

It has also been a measurement of righteousness.

Fleeing back to Israel, Naomi and Ruth eventually found redemption at the hands of Boaz, a faithful Israelite man who had hidden God’s law in his heart. As instructed in Leviticus 19:9, 10, Boaz left some of his fields to be harvested by the poor, the widows, and the foreigners. Ruth and Naomi found a second chance at life through a true and faithful keeper of God’s covenant.

The ominous words “In the days when the judges ruled,” in Ruth 1:1 (NIV), recall the chaos of the book of Judges. It seems those ancient days were just as tumultuous as ours. And yet, the end of the story—a genealogy leading from Boaz to King David—tells us that the history of an entire nation can be reshaped by the simple acts of faithfulness carried out by everyday people. Simple acts of righteousness—Ruth standing by her mother-in-law, Boaz protecting women and feeding the poor—pave the path of salvation history.

The same is true today. Prices at the gas pump and grocery store tempt us daily to second-guess Christ’s call to die to self and live generously. But here at ADRA, we believe that people can build a better world through the power of God’s *dikaiousuné*—righteousness or justice, one and the same in Him. Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst for this righteousness would be filled (Matt. 5:6). The call of Christ is for all of us to hunger for justice. Through His strength, may each one of us be a Boaz to the Ruths and Naomis of this world. ■

Steve Matthews is the executive director of ADRA Canada.



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Hammerhead Bat

The hammerhead fruit bat is Africa's largest bat. But even so, these bats only weigh about one pound (about 0.4 kg). Their wingspan can be three feet, or a metre, in length, which is pretty impressive. But the body of this bat is only around 10 inches (25 cm) in length.

These facts are not what make the hammerhead fruit bat remarkable, though. What's most amazing is the head of the male hammerhead fruit bat. The hammerhead bat's head is very long and might make you think of a moose, which also has a very long head. It is a very strange-looking bat, to say the least.

So why does this bat look so weird? There is only one reason. This bat was created to sing! The long face and funny-looking lips of the hammerhead bat are what makes it possible for it to sing its honky song.

Think about it.

While other bats make sounds that humans can't hear, the hammerhead has its own special song.

Christians have a special song to sing, too. God gave us the ability to speak and sing so that we can tell the world about His amazing love. When we praise and thank God, we join with the angels who are always singing praises to God.

Do it!

Next time you hear yourself starting to complain or criticize, stop and give God thanks instead. That's what you were created for! To learn more, read and pray about Psalm 150:6 and Ephesians 4:29.

Mentoring: The Way Forward

What do you do to intentionally nurture connection between family members? Families that are loving and have strong ties don't happen by accident. Throughout the Bible we see God being intentional about fostering that sense of connection between people and with Him. In the Old Testament God instructs the Israelites to make monuments of stone in order to remember a key moment. The celebration of the feasts was the same idea. In the New Testament, Jesus utilized some of the rituals of Passover to create deeper meaning for connection, to know that we are loved by God and that He went to radical lengths to demonstrate that love to us.

What are your family rituals that foster connection, safety, security, and love? I was 16 when my father died suddenly. It hit me that life is fragile. However, from that has sprung a family ritual. In our home every time someone enters or leaves, they announce their arrival/departure so that anyone else in the house can come to the door, hug them, kiss them, and say, "I love you." The purpose of such rituals is to convey the message "You matter to me."

Ask yourself, "What do I do, deliberately and regularly, that keeps us growing in a loving relationship with each other and with God?" Ask God to suggest things you can do, intentionally, daily, to let others and Him know they are important to you.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7, NIV). ■

Honey Todd is the nurture pastor at the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lacombe, Alta.

Phenomenal Phytochemicals: The Fight for Life (Part 1)

So many wars have been fought in our lifetime, let alone in all of earth's history. However, the war being waged within is invisible and happens every day. It's often called the fight for life. The body is waging war through our immune system to identify, isolate, and eliminate foreign agents, pathogens, viruses, fungi, toxins, microbes, and harmful bacteria to name a few.

If you bite into a juicy red apple or crunch a mouthful of dark, leafy greens, you consume more than just vitamins, minerals, and fibre; you also get a power-packed bite of plant substances called phytochemicals. These may help in fortifying our immune response.

Phytochemicals are literally plant (phyto) chemicals of plant origin—compounds in plants (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes) that contribute to their colour, taste, and smell.¹ This is what gives carrots their vibrant orange hue, Brussels sprouts their bitter taste, and hot peppers their scorching bite. Phytochemicals are found in all edible parts of a plant, especially the skin or peel.

Debbie Krivitsky, director of clinical nutrition at the Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Center at Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital, recommends "eating a rainbow"—many kinds of colourful fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts. "They all do different things, and they complement each other.

So, one might block a carcinogen [something that causes cancer], and another might interfere with cancer cell replication."

The Bible says, "So God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the entire earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you" (Gen. 1:29).

God's Word contains the original Edenic diet and blueprint for our health and well-being. Science is now catching up. Let's follow the Creator's handbook, the Master's menu, and heaven's lifestyle! ■

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



God's Booth

The Williams Lake Stampede in B.C. is a time-honoured tradition. Held over the Canada Day long weekend, it is a premier event, attracting locals and people from all over the world. COVID-19 shut the stampede down for two years, so when the Stampede Association announced it was a go for 2022, I felt impressed this would be a perfect way to reintroduce the Williams Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church to the community.

We teamed up with Amazing Facts Canada, and they provided a variety of high-quality resources to interest all kinds of people. There were many stressful planning delays, including application approvals, getting liability insurance, and sorting out the payment details. I was getting frustrated and told God that this was His booth and if He wanted it to happen, He would have to make a way—and He did!

Our team had wonderful experiences sharing resources and the love of Jesus. God brought people to the booth who needed the materials and connection!

I had a teenage girl approach the booth and browse the materials. I told her the materials were free and to help herself. She looked surprised and asked, “Really? Are you sure?” I reassured her,

and she shared that she was interested in spiritual information. She said she wasn’t sure what she believed and that nobody in her household believed in God. We chatted for a while, and I selected some materials to help guide her.

Later, an Indigenous man came by and we had a heartfelt discussion about the childhood trauma of residential schools. I offered him a copy of *The Great Controversy* after he expressed an interest in history. We had such encouraging responses from many families and individuals who were grateful that we had a booth at the Stampede.

On the last day, as the event was winding down, I heard what sounded like balloons popping. Someone shouted, “Gunman, shots fired!” I got down on the ground as people started running. Moments later my husband pushed his way through the crowd to make sure I was OK and then disappeared in the direction of the shooting. After they caught the shooter, I found my husband assisting the RCMP by providing first aid to a man lying on the ground. As a nurse, I offered to help, but the officer declined. I returned to the booth, and soon the order came to evacuate.

As I drove away, I saw dark clouds looming and flashes of lightning. A

thunderstorm hit with massive winds and torrential rain. I was worried about the booth, not knowing what to expect or when we would get any information. We were told that most of the tents had been destroyed by the massive wind. My hope faltered, but I resolved to stop worrying and leave it in God’s hands. It was God’s booth after all. The materials were His, and if He allowed them to be destroyed or decided to preserve them, it was His business. I held on to the promise in Isaiah 26:3: “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you” (NLT). Peace then came over me, knowing God was in control.

We were finally able to collect our things and found a mess of ruined tents and merchandise. Literature from our booth were strewn everywhere and the magazine racks were down. Fortunately, our tent was still standing, and the boxes, which had been stored under the tables, were spared. God is so good! This experience has reminded me that God does the work and He lets me ride shotgun! ■

Kristiina Smith is the outreach leader for Williams Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church in British Columbia.



Q. How do you get back into “spiritual shape” if you have fallen away from God?

A. **Pastor Shawn:** Good question! Let’s start with an important point. After two years of COVID without regular exercise, I decided it was time for me to get back into a routine. Wanting to maximize results within my busy schedule, I started HIIT, or high-intensity interval training (it’s fun—look it up online). The point I’m making is like any fitness program, you need to have a clear goal.

Here is a biblical goal for “spiritual fitness”:

“Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith” (Heb. 12:1, 2, NLT).

Getting into spiritual shape is not simply about doing spiritual activities. It’s about following Jesus. It’s about leaving off anything in your life that’s weighing you down and keeping you from focusing on Jesus, your one and only life coach. He not only created your faith; He will also work in you to perfect it.

If you’re serious about getting into spiritual shape, you need to listen to your coach. No team has victory while ignoring their coach. You can’t have life victories ignoring Jesus. So how do you do it? Two suggestions: immersion in Scripture and listening to Jesus.

Restart your “spiritual training” by immersing yourself in the book of John. It radiates faith in Jesus. In fact, John says he wrote the book that “you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31, ESV).

As you read, imagine yourself *in* the story *watching*

Jesus, your one and only life coach. As He does miracles, teaches, and travels, ask yourself: what is Jesus trying to show me about how to do life in 2022?

While learning His plan is important, talking and listening to Jesus is vital. Too often our prayer life is a list of what we want from Jesus. In sports, the coach *already knows* what the new athlete wants before they ask: they want to be faster, stronger, and have more victories. Jesus, your one and only life coach, already knows your wants. Try restarting your spiritual training by beginning every prayer with what you’re thankful to Jesus for. It will change your walk with God.

Another thing we don’t do enough of is listen to what Jesus is telling us. Can you imagine a coach telling their player a key play in the final minutes of the game and the player ignores the coach?! Make time to sit quietly, without interruption, and listen for Jesus’ answer to your prayers.

These suggestions are a good way to restart your spiritual fitness program and bring you closer to Jesus.

Challenge for our readers: Share how you keep in “spiritual shape”! Tell us (1) what you do and (2) how it affects you spiritually! We’d love to share with all of our readers in a future article.

*Do you have a question for Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian?
Email it to messenger@adventist.ca.*

NOCAP
Straight Talk

w/Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian



GROWING UP GEN Z

DOESN'T GOD WANT ME TO BE HAPPY?

A God of love wouldn't keep me from things I enjoy. A God of love wouldn't stop me from being myself. A God of love would let me chase my dreams.

Much of this is true. Obviously, God wants you to be happy. Jesus says He came so our joy may be full (John 15:11) and so we could have abundant life (John 10:10). God loves you. He rejoices with you and weeps with you. It breaks His heart when you're hurting. He doesn't sit in heaven laughing when bad things happen or inventing ways to ruin your life. He wants the best for you, and His best will bring you joy.

But that's not usually what people are referring to when they say, "Doesn't God want me to be happy?" Often people are drawn to a laid-back, easygoing version of Christ that says YOLO and have fun. This version of God wants nothing but to have you follow your heart and fulfill your desires. The reasoning? God is love. So long as I'm not hurting anyone else, He should be OK with whatever I do.

I understand why people want to believe that this is God. It would be so much easier if there were no rules or restrictions. However, it is not despite but *because* God is love that He sometimes holds us back. Humans are like moths drawn to a flame. It'll kill us, but all we see is bright lights and flashing colours.

Real love says no sometimes. Yes, God wants you to be happy, but first and foremost, He wants you to be saved. Chasing after the desires of your heart and the pleasures of the world can cost you eternal life. Don't

be deceived into thinking that sin isn't sin anymore just because it's 2022. What Jesus actually calls us to do is deny ourselves, to take up our cross and follow (Matt. 16:24). Just because you crave something, doesn't mean it's good for you. Just because it makes you feel good, doesn't mean it's right.

So if I have to deny myself all the things I enjoy, how will I ever be happy? That sounds like I'd just be bored and miserable.

You won't be. When you truly find Jesus, He doesn't leave you empty. He becomes your happiness. He becomes the desire of your heart. He becomes your source of joy, and it is far richer and far deeper than anything you've ever experienced.

A beautiful hymn says this: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

Those things you "needed" will seem like nothing in comparison to the life that Christ offers. God doesn't just want you to be happy; He wants to be your happiness, your Saviour, your friend, and everything else you need. The world offers death; Christ offers eternity. Choose Him every day and enjoy a life that's abundant, full, and free. ■

Abigail Mathi-Amorim is an undergrad student from Toronto, Ont., who loves writing, music, and the outdoors. Her passion is to become an author so that she can glorify God through her gifts.





Tech SAVvy

BY SANDY AUDIO VISUAL

Beyond Google: Navigating Your A/V Needs for Your Church's Digital Ministry (Part 1)

While upgrading to the latest “bells and whistles” might be fun, it doesn’t mean your livestream or in-house sound and video will be noticeably better to those watching.

“We need to get online!” At the beginning of the pandemic this was, for many churches, the common refrain. It was no different for Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church in Markham, Ont.

As one of the largest churches in Ontario, an online presence was essential to our membership, which included seniors and members abroad. The question was how do we upgrade equipment to be ready for the digital space? In this short series of articles, I’ll share my experience with my church as we navigated the bumpy road of technology and the journey to digital gospel ministry.

Lesson #1: Know what you’ve got. Understand what you need.

Apple Creek was no stranger to video equipment and technology for broadcasting. They’d had it as far back as the 1980s. In fact, they used to shoot and produce the religious program *Discover the Power* featuring our current Ontario Conference president, Mansfield Edwards. At that time, the equipment was leading-edge. We had a modern analog sound board, expensive TV-quality video cameras, and a TriCaster video box that was our video production system. But that was 20 years ago.

The first thing we did when revisiting our tech was to figure out what we really needed to change and what we could keep. While upgrading to the latest “bells and whistles” might be fun, it doesn’t mean your livestream or in-house sound and video will be noticeably better to those watching. Understanding what you need will save your church a lot of money and heartache.

I was fortunate to have the expertise of our AV team during our decision-making process. You might think that’s an odd statement—thinking AV will always play a pivotal role. However, while you might have a competent AV team *using* the system, they might not understand, or only have second-hand

knowledge of, how the overall system is connected and how it works. Upgrading your system is costly and your team needs to be honest about their limitations. If they don’t know the “nuts and bolts,” that’s OK. It just means you need to call in an AV expert who can understand your needs and recommend the proper setup for your church. We’ll talk more about that in a later article. If you do have individuals on your team who know both how to use the system and how it is wired, you are blessed!

In our case, we determined that the TriCaster had to be replaced. There was a constant buzz on the video output that could not be isolated. Plus, its resolution was poor, sending out a 1980s-grade signal of 480p. (Most things you watch on TV are 1080p or even 4K now). That meant images always looked grainy in comparison to the high-definition images of today.

We also had to improve our lighting. Apple Creek has beautiful floor-to-ceiling clear glass windows. During a divine service, the light that pours in gives a beautiful spirit-filled worship experience. However, the ambient lighting was a nightmare for our cameras. Often blinds would be lowered, taking away that beautiful light to allow the cameras to compensate for outside lighting.

After a systematic review, we identified what we needed to change and what we could keep. And again, remember that not everything needs to be upgraded. In our case, our speakers were functional and of good quality. However, we added “fill” speakers to help even out the sound in the sanctuary.

This first step in our journey took several months.

In my next article, I will discuss dealing with equipment vendors and presenting to your board. ■

Shawn Ellis is the associate pastor of Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church in Markham, Ont.

THE LEAST OF

THESE

(PT. 3 OF 3)

Several years ago I was reading at a table outside a local restaurant just a few kilometres from my church. Eager to catch the last days of the sun, I quietly read through my sermon notes. From my peripheral, it felt like someone was staring at me. Looking up, I caught the sight of a couple lurking nearby.

Once our eyes met, they quickly walked past me. About an hour later, the same couple approached me at the table. "We just wanted to say hi." I stared back with a quizzical gaze. "You are that guy," the lady spoke first. I remained quiet while trying to recollect how I knew them. "We see you everywhere," the man added. "We commented earlier that we see you whenever we are out and about. Do you work around here? Are you retired? Are you self-employed?"

A grin slowly emerged from my lips as I understood what they were asking. I had made a commitment to avoid "hiding" in my office during the week. My goal was to read, write, and meet members in public, so people in the community would begin to recognize me and develop a friendship. At least, that had been my prayer. Now it felt like my plan was starting to come to fruition.

There are three essential questions to consider as you think about how you will engage the people in the community.

1 What does my community need?

Over the years, I have been surprised by the disconnect between church folks and their community.

This is often due to members driving into the community where their preferred church is located, but they don't reside nearby. I once pastored a church in a highly affluent neighbourhood. Collecting clothes and food for the needy wasn't a primary need; however, after-school tutoring was at the top of the list because both parents worked long hours outside the home.

2 How does my church look different from the community around us?

Many of our churches are what we call commuter congregations. The members drive in for a few hours on Saturdays, so they might not understand the surroundings accurately. If you were to analyze the demographics of your membership with the demographics of your town, would there be any crossover?

After meeting with the local mayor, I learned that an influx of Vietnamese immigrants had settled into our city over the last few months. The mayor asked me if our church could work with the city to build relationships with this emerging group. Without direct communication with the city leaders, we would never have known about the demographic change occurring before our eyes.

3 What are we willing to change to accommodate the needs of our community?

Everybody finds change difficult. And yet, the only way we will minister to our community is by adapting to their needs.

What are some ministries that have existed in your church for decades but no longer have a relevant purpose? Have you audited the church budget to determine how the outreach money has been spent? A conversation to determine how to adapt to the community will require grace and humility. ■

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.



SANDY LAKE
SANDY LAKE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
ACADEMY
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NATURE

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ACROBATICS

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Prayer and Giving Thanks: A Way of Life

"Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens.

This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live."—1 Thess. 5:18, ESV

Are you able to get together with loved ones for Thanksgiving Day this year? Do you find yourself thinking more intentionally about being thankful and sharing gratefulness at this time of year? It seems people find it increasingly difficult to "give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess. 5:18, NIV).

There's so much to be negative about in our world because we live in a sin-filled world of darkness. But focusing on the negative hurts us. Parts of the brain go dark, we feel a loss of control, and we start feeling miserable, helpless, and eventually hopeless. We go into a downward spiral and our world just gets increasingly dark. But that's not what God has created us to do. Jesus is the light of the world (John 3:19; 8:12; 9:5). When we come to Him, we become light (Matt. 5:15; Eph. 4:8). God designed us to see light, to live an abundant life, to have joy complete.

God designed us in such a way so that when we focus on giving thanks, it lights up our brains and our ability to cope in this sin-filled world. My hope is that intentionality regarding giving thanks is a way of life for the follower of Jesus, every day of the year. It seemed to be that way for the Apostle Paul. Check out how he begins 10 of his letters. Paul gives thanks for the people to whom he is writing (Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3, 11; 2 Tim. 1:3; Philemon 1:4; Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4) or exhorting them to give thanks as a general way of life (Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16–18; 1 Tim. 2:1.) In 11 of these references, giving thanks is coupled with prayer. It seems that prayer, the opening of our heart to God, goes hand in hand with a thankful heart.

Make a list of the people in your life for whom you are thankful and lift them up to God in prayer, thanking Him for their presence in your life. Think about what it is about each person that invites you to view them with gratitude. Thank God specifically for each one and the gift they are to you. Then contact them and let them know the way in which they are a gift from God to you.

As you go through the day, intentionally look for things for which to give thanks. Give thanks to God, in the moment as soon as you recognize something for which you are grateful. It doesn't have to be huge. I love clouds, and as I drive around and see the huge variety of cloud formations, I give thanks to God for His creativity. It doesn't have to be positive. Someone might speak to you in a harsh or unjust way, and you turn to God for comfort. Give thanks for that person whose treatment invited you to turn toward God and lean on Him. At the end of the day, intentionally recall things from the day for which you can give thanks and talk with the Lord about them.

Do not let negative circumstances dictate your attitude. Dare to be a Daniel. Daniel, immediately upon hearing of the decree that he could not pray to his God for 30 days, on pain of death, went home, knelt in front of his window and "prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before" (Dan. 6:10, NIV). Develop an attitude of giving thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5:18). ■

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

Where Are They Now

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

Interview by Ken Wiebe, *Messenger* Staff Writer



Loma and Bruce Boyd

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

Bruce Boyd: Lincoln, Nebraska is the place I was born as the oldest of six children. When I came along, my father, Elwood Boyd, was just finishing his theology degree at Union College where my mother, Doris (née Horton) Boyd, was also studying.

I grew up in Nebraska, where Dad pastored several churches until I was 12 or 13 years old. Then Dad was called to pastor in the Upper Columbia Conference, and that's the region where my youngest sibling was born. As Dad continued to minister, we were moved to every state in the Upper Columbia Conference: Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

Mom is an accomplished pianist, and Dad loved to sing and play the guitar. All of us children were infected early on with a love of music, and to this day we each continue to sing and play various instruments. Both of my two sisters are accomplished professional singers and music teachers. In later years, with our spouses, children, and friends, we have frequently gotten together to form a choir for special music or concerts.

M: *Tell us about your education and the degrees you earned.*

B: In 1970, I graduated from Upper Columbia Academy near Spokane, Wash. My next educational step was to attend Walla Walla College, where I decided to take a



theology major with a minor in Music.

During the summers before and after my first year of college, I worked at Camp MiVoden near Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. During my second summer there, my future wife, Loma McCreery, travelled south from Canada to work there as well. We started dating at camp and continued through the 1971/72 year at Walla Walla College.

The following school year, I took a break from my studies to serve as a student missionary teacher, choir director, and boys' dean at Adventist Vocational College, an academy near Corozal Town, Belize. While there, Loma and I stayed in touch through letters. When the principal of the school invited me to spend another year teaching there, I decided to send Loma a letter of proposal to get married and join me in teaching together. Fortunately, she said yes, and we began our life together on Aug. 29, 1973.

When we returned to Walla Walla College, Loma finished her secretarial accounting degree, and I finished my theology degree in 1976.

After pastoring for one-and-a-half years in Glasgow, Mont., Loma and I travelled to Andrews University, where I completed my M.Div. In 1980, we returned to the Montana Conference, where we lived and ministered for another 10 years. While pastoring in Missoula, Mont., I started working on a D.Min. with Andrews University.

In 1990, we moved to Loma's hometown, Hazelton, B.C., to pastor, and while there, in 1995 I completed my D.Min. degree with a focus on Christian conflict resolution. During that time I also received my Canadian citizenship, and since then I have enjoyed telling people that I'm an American by birth and a Canadian by choice.

Another important aspect in my formal education was my training in conflict coaching, mediation, and arbitration, which led to my certification as a Christian Conciliator in 2003 by the Institute of Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker Ministries.

M: *What led you to choose the ministerial and later an educational career?*

B: Frankly, the reason I chose to be a Seventh-day Adventist pastor has not always been vividly clear. While I've heard many dramatic stories of "the call," my experience has been a relatively calm and gradual movement in the pastoral ministry direction. From the time I started pastoral ministry on Jan. 1, 1977, in Glasgow, Mont., with a communion service, until now, I've found being a pastor to be exceptionally difficult yet wonderfully meaningful. I've discovered that our amazing God can work through me even when my spiritual leadership is skewed and misfiring. Ministry for God

has been a truly rewarding experience.

After 16+ years of pastoring in British Columbia, in 2006 I accepted an opportunity to continue ministry as a professor in the Religious Studies Department of Canadian University College (now Burman University). My decision to move from pastoring in the field to teaching future pastors and others in a university setting was influenced by the fact that I have an especially strong cluster of spiritual gifts in teaching. I felt that my many years as a district pastor prepared me to mentor young pastoral students.

Before my retirement in 2019, Loma and I enjoyed 12 more years of denominational service as I taught religious studies courses and eventually served as the head of the department.

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

B: It's difficult to choose one thing as a highlight. I suppose the thing I have most enjoyed might be designing and teaching the Burman University conflict resolution course. This is the only university course I'm still teaching in retirement. I have found it especially rewarding to receive positive feedback from students or parents about how that class has made an encouraging difference in the lives of their family members. My prayer is that there will continue to be a positive relationship ripple effect through the influence of hundreds of students who have taken this class.

M: *Tell us about your family.*

B: Loma and I are thankful to have three beloved adult children. Benjamin (Tracie) is an electrical engineer in Langely, B.C. Jeb or Jeremiah (Jelena) is a radiologist in Vernon, B.C. Jodi (Stefan) is the busy mother of our two preschool-aged grandchildren, Jerra and Malachi. Jodi and her family are transferring from Pacific Union College to Walla Walla University, where Stefan will continue his teaching career with the Math Department.

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

B: For now, we continue living in Lacombe, Alta. Since January 2019, we have been participating in a church plant called The Friendship Company. The recent coronavirus epidemic has made that an especially difficult task.

By way of hobbies, Loma knits a lot, and I garden when I can and whistle when I can't. The hobbies we enjoy together are walking, hiking, biking, kayaking, camping, and singing. ■

STUDENTS

With a

PURPOSE



"Not another essay!" my students groaned.

"But this one's different," I tried, with hopeful enthusiasm. "You'll be writing a story that tells about a time God taught you something."

"Oh, and add dialogue and stuff?" they asked, mildly interested.

"Yes," I said, "and we'll be putting your essay into our Deer Lake School 365-day devotional book ..." I paused dramatically before adding the punchline: "THAT WILL BE PUBLISHED ON AMAZON!"

Gasps filled the room.

"For real?"

"They will publish my essay?"

"Wow!"

They stared at me in disbelief for a few more seconds before the panic started.

"What will I write about?"

"Everyone's going to read this!"

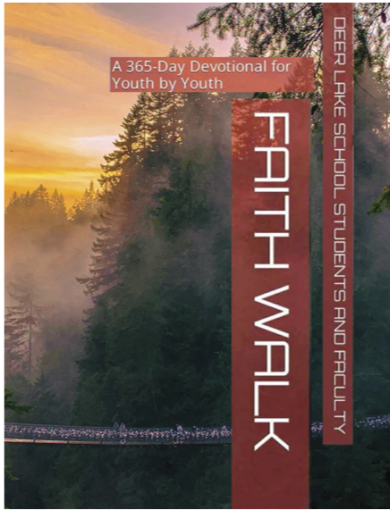
"What story?"

"Don't worry," I assured them.

"I know you all have something to say. Think of a time in your life when you were alone and scared,

or triumphant with success, or learned something important the hard way! What was God trying to say to you? This is your chance. You have a story that might help someone else."

Before I knew it, fingers were busy clicking on keyboards as students started their essays. They did have a story, and now they had an audience. My students were filled with a purpose ... for God. At Deer Lake School, we try to remind them of that every day.



January 8 entry from Faith Walk:

“My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”

—Psalm 84:2, NIV

Many say that the most important day of your life is the day that you were born. It is true. Why wouldn't it be? It was the day when you took your first, awaited breath. It was the day when you were given your name, the name that people would call you for the rest of your life. You were definitely brought into this world for a reason—you have a purpose.

When I was a child, I was very obedient. At the time, I didn't see how one could not be. Maybe it was just part of my character, or maybe I just wanted to make others feel happy. I didn't know. But one thing I knew for sure, was that for every given command, I completed it with diligence, care, and perfection.

“Make your bed!” my mother ordered.

Oh, right! I should make my bed.

“I won't disappoint you, Mama!” I scurried to my room and did as I was told. From that day forward, I always made sure that my bed was entirely made and that my room was nice and tidy.

“Memorize your multiplication tables!” my father instructed.

“I'm sorry, Papa. I won't fail you again!” I rushed to the living room and sat there with my eyes glued to my white, crinkled paper, rewording each math equation listed, one after the one.

“Eat your vegetables!” my aunt insisted.

Vegetables. I don't like vegetables. But, “I'll do it, Tita!” I instantaneously jumped out of my seat, collected a few unappetizing veggies, and laid them on my plate. With my fork, I slowly brought the green, lumpy spinach to my mouth. Gross!

As I grew older, the demands and expectations started to become more difficult to achieve; I was worried that I wouldn't be capable of meeting or exceeding them.

“Get a perfect score on your test!”

“Be involved in all extracurricular activities!”

It was all too much. To make things clear, I didn't obey their orders just because they had told me to; I also did it for myself. I strongly desired to be the best in all things. Soon enough, I started worshipping my academic grades and accomplishments. They became my idols.

While I was in Grade 10, my school transitioned to remote learning due to COVID-19. I was relieved. More time to study! I thought. It was nice for the first few weeks. However, one day, at the end of an online class, a thought abruptly came across my mind: *Is that it? All these assignments completed, yet I still feel hollow. C'mon, there has to be more to life than this.*

At that moment, I sought to have a balanced life. I found the courage to start playing the piano again. It had been so long since the last time I played; it didn't seem right to leave it in the living room, collecting nothing but dust. I ran outside in nature every morning. Running was what I enjoyed doing alone; breathing in the fresh air and looking at the wonderful view of the purple mountains from afar gave me peace of mind. I reconnected with old friends, classmates, and family. In the past, I rarely socialized with others; it was one of the biggest mistakes of my life. I began to read books, books that had been lying on my shelf for years, untouched.

In spite of all of my efforts, I still had a feeling of emptiness. What was I missing? My eyes started to wander as I sat there, alone in my bedroom. After a few moments, something caught my eyes: my Bible. I was missing God. My

heart skipped a beat. This whole time, I'd been ignoring God and had deliberately put Him below everything. Tears started to run down my face. How could I have been so blind! My body was shaking, and my knees fell to the ground. What had I done?

After reflecting, I decided to spend time with the Lord. In all that I did, I made sure that He was included. Each time I ran, I listened to worship music. Each time I played the piano, I sang songs that gave glory to Him. Each time I read the Bible, I highlighted verses that reminded me of how perfect and great His goodness is. I truly surrendered my life to Him.

For years, I'd been focusing on temporary things. Getting good grades and checking things off my to-do list was not what God had planned for me to do for the rest of my life. I realized that such things are completely meaningless to Him.

I view things differently now. Every single solitary day, I am grateful that the Lord has given me genuine joy and a reason to live. The least I could ever do is to continually serve others with love and to learn more about Him! In fact, influenced by Mark Twain, I've come to the conclusion that there are actually two days in my life that are the most important: the day I was born, and the day I knew why. ■

—Michele Luceno, Grade 11 (2021), Deer Lake School



Loretta Knopp is a teacher at Deer Lake School, a K-12 school in Burnaby, B.C., and editor of Faith Walk: A 365-Day Devotional for Youth by Youth. Rooted in the faith traditions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Deer Lake School is committed to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and we embrace a vision to be a holistic learning environment where individuals grow to their fullest potential as children of God. Find out more at deerlakeschool.ca.

RAINMAK



Total Health Ministry

What do you do when God seemingly closes the door to your dream ministry? If you're like Darlene and Ron Blaney, you claim Proverbs 19:21 and trust that God's purpose will prevail.

The Blaneys always had a passion to help people in the area of diet and lifestyle, and so when they moved from Calgary to rural Alberta, their hope was to build a lifestyle centre/seniors' complex. Financing for such an undertaking proved to be challenging; however, that disappointment brought about the plan God had for them in the small town of Eckville. Thus, Total Health, Darlene and Ron's natural food store and nutrition clinic, was born. With Darlene's PhD in nutrition and her career of teaching, facilitating cooking classes and health seminars, plus authoring five nutrition-related books, the natural food store was a perfect fit.

Using their God-given gifts and talents, the pair wanted to make a difference in their community and be able to introduce people to Jesus. Following God's leading, they were able to purchase a building in town, right next to the post office. When the health inspector expressed to Darlene and Ron that most businesses in that area did not thrive unless the owners were born and raised there, and that she hoped for their sake that things would work out for them, Darlene recalls, "We confidently told her that we knew it would, because we felt the Lord had guided us there."

Originally, the store was set up with a separate office for nutrition consulting only, but that soon changed when first one customer—and then others—

asked if Darlene would be offering cooking classes onsite. A variety of health seminars and themed cooking classes were scheduled forthwith, adding to their clientele.

It might be fruit from British Columbia, though, that increased store traffic exponentially. The first summer after Total Health opened, Darlene and Ron agreed to sell some cherries and apricots a friend had purchased in B.C. The response from clients was immediate and overwhelmingly positive. Darlene states, "Health stores have a tendency to scare some people off, so we decided it was an opportunity to get people to step inside our store, pay for their fruit, see that our store was not a scary place, and, hopefully, find food and products they might be interested in. Well, this plan was a huge success! With so many seniors and others unable to drive to the larger city, people were thrilled for the fresh fruit made available so conveniently for them. Before long, we had to make our own trips to B.C. in order to bring back enough to supply the demand." She adds, "This has become our advertising for the store without the great expense that usually goes into advertising."

Darlene and Ron marvel at how God has prospered their efforts to work for Him. With Ron's business degree, God has provided the opportunity for him to serve clients in the area of personal and business income tax. Thus, by God's grace, Total Health has expanded far beyond the initial store concept and nutrition consulting.

It gets even better, though! Because of their willingness to follow God's leading, they are able to say, "We have beat the

odds, staying in business just over seven years now. The town recognizes us and says we have 'put Eckville on the map' and are 'the rose' or highlight of Eckville! The other day we had a new customer tell us he was moving to the area because we are located there. Pretty exciting how the Lord has blessed us! To be successful in a population of 1,175 people is incredible!"

And it gets yet even better! The following shows just how marvellously God is using this wonderful couple. Ron shares this heart-stirring story: "It is our prayer each day that we will reflect Christ's character in everything we do and say. After sincerely praying this prayer one morning, a customer purchased some items, then went to walk out the door when, suddenly, she turned around and came back. She took Darlene's hand and said, 'I want you to know that I see Jesus in you.' That was the ultimate compliment one could ever receive! Thank you, Jesus!"

Not only are they in the natural food business for people's physical and mental health, but they also want Total Health to be used for their customers-turned-friends' spiritual health. Darlene says, "As we became better known and respected in the community, we felt it was time to begin our ministry. During this time, we had become friends with our customers and would share the occasional book and testimony, but we wanted to do more. We organized a town-wide garage sale day. People would make a donation to have their address put on our map showing where the garage sales were located in town. Then spots were rented out along the

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main road of the town for people to set up tables to sell their goods. We invited the ADRA emergency truck to park on the road and give tours of the truck. All funds raised were donated to ADRA. The town's thrift store now donates all extra clothing to our Adventist thrift store in Lacombe."

Here's another example of God's leading in their ministry. "When the movie *Hacksaw Ridge* came out in theatres, we had an idea to show this movie in our town. We purchased a quantity of the *Hacksaw Ridge* books through Amazing Facts and distributed them to our customers with an invitation to watch the movie. The presentation was a success! We followed that with an invitation to attend a five-night series by Pastor Bill Spangler on the theme of 'What Does God Think About War?' This gave Pastor Bill the opportunity to share the history of the war in heaven, how Jesus died to save us, and the good news of the blessed hope of the resurrection and eternal life.

"Thereafter, Pastor Bill held another five-night series, followed by an ongoing weekly Bible study. God worked miraculously for us to secure the seniors' lodge to hold the meetings. They even advertised our Bible study to their tenants. It was a success, as we worked through the *It Is Written* Bible study guides. When COVID-19 hit, the gathering stopped, but in the summer the guidelines were lifted, so we began another Bible study series, this time in our store. Again God brought success. When pandemic guidelines became stricter, putting the study on hold, we were able to continue to share and



Ron and Darlene Blaney

remain close to our Bible study friends as well as share with others. One customer/friend we shared the info with regarding an upcoming Amazing Facts seminar watched every episode and, at the end, was excited to say she was convinced that the Seventh-day Adventists have the truth and she was a believer. She began to share the recordings with her family and friends! By God's grace, we'll continue to plant seeds regardless of challenges that may come our way."

Despite some discouraging setbacks along their journey, Darlene and Ron can praise God and say with assurance, "Looking back, we see how the Lord has led us, and plans we never imagined! His way is always the best way!" ■

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.



Memories From Africa



Nilton Amorim returned home to Oshawa, Ont., late March 2022, after four weeks in Africa. He was bringing back four weeks full of memories.

Two memories, however, stood out. One was an 850-kilometre journey along the worst roads he had ever travelled on his entire life. The other was time spent with some of the most joyful, enthusiastic, and committed Christians he had ever met.

Whatever his personal joys and discomforts, one thing was sure: the experience Pastor Amorim and his life partner, Tannia, had was a fulfillment of their dream to help advance the cause of Christ.

That trip from February to March occurred some 12 years after Pastor Nilton, as many people fondly call him, retired from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC). At the SDACC, he had been executive secretary and vice-president for administration.

But the trip was not a long-delayed retirement gift. In his words, “My wife and I live frugally and visit many countries.” This time he went as a regional director of Gospel Outreach Canada (GOC). As Region 4 director, he oversees the work of GOC’s evangelists in Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Gambia.

Was Pastor Amorim born to be a Gospel Outreach regional co-ordinator? Maybe not. But I believe his upbringing, education, and work experience prepared him for the role. Growing up in Brazil, he spoke Portuguese. University studies in France, Britain, and the United States equipped him with French and English language skills. And life and ministry in those environments and in Africa provided the cultural background for the task.

His early and profound experience in economic independence also helped. As a youth in Brazil, “I sold books for eight or nine years and became financially independent,” he told me. Later, while studying in France, he maintained the life of the colporteur, travelling to, and working in, Sweden every summer.

His father became an Adventist just before his birth. So he was firmly grounded in the Adventist faith. He met Tannia at a young age when she

went to France to study the language. In language, culture, doctrine, and ministry, they practically grew up together.

I am therefore not surprised that he has found his work with Gospel Outreach Canada “quite interesting.” Even the fact that GOC’s Canadian staff are all volunteers would not bother a man who learned the language of financial independence so early in life. “After retirement, I decided I did not want a paid job,” he said. He was not wealthy, but frugal living prepared him for working without pay. Yet, he was excited to advocate upon return home for increased emoluments for the African evangelists in his group.

Another positive outcome of the visit was that the evangelists got to know him, and he got to know them. He told them how much his love for Africa had grown during his earlier encounter with the continent. “I told them that if it was not for matters related to the education of my children, I would probably not have left Africa.” Also, as a former professor, he was able to share much with the evangelists through seminars and sermons.

There were challenges. Yes, his hosts did all they could to accommodate him and his wife. Yet, the diet was difficult.

Then, of course, there were the 850 kilometres of “the worst roads I had travelled in my life.” But that problem existed only in Conakry, Guinea. On the other hand, throughout their stay, he and his wife experienced the “joy of seeing how enthusiastic” the evangelists were about ministry.

Because people in some parts of Africa often lack working smartphones, Pastor Amorim brought with him smartphone devices that were in good working condition. Part of the joy of his interaction with the evangelists was

the response of those who were able to receive the phones.

I asked Pastor Amorim to give me one word to describe his journey. He replied, “Meaningful.” Then he added, “For me and them. I got to know parts of Africa I did not know before.”

He looks forward to future trips to the region. He hopes to resolve problems experienced this time. For example, instead of taking that burdensome 850-kilometre journey in Conakry, he would stay in the city and let the evangelists, being younger, do the travelling. He has some thoughts about overcoming the food problem as well. And he hopes to gather more phones to ship or carry for those evangelists who did not receive any the last time.

Plus, he is planning some new things. He would fulfill the desire of the evangelists by conducting seminars on homiletics to enhance their preaching abilities. As a former chair of theology and a homiletics professor for five years in Rwanda, he feels equipped to help in this way.

Pastor Amorim was not alone in viewing the trip, or the work of GOC in Canada generally, as a success. Pastor Daniel Sandy, president of the Sierra Leone Seventh-day Adventist Mission lauded the visit. This, even though his wife’s illness took him away from the country and the events. “I got reports,” said Pastor Sandy, “that the visit was very successful.” Even before this recent visit, the support of GOC for the work in Sierra Leone has been remarkable, Pastor Sandy declared. He noted that there had been over 50 baptisms over the years.

He told me that the work of the GOC-supported evangelists has extended beyond the spiritual realm into disciplines like education and agriculture. He singled out the “top evangelist,” Samuel



“I got reports that [Pastor Nilton’s] visit was very successful.”

—Daniel Sandy, president, Sierra Leone Seventh-day Adventist Mission



Bangura, and highlighted that “Pastor Bangura is doing a great job.” The progress of the work in Sierra Leone is taking place despite the small number of evangelists in the field. That number increased slightly after Pastor Amorim’s visit. And Pastor Sandy hopes for further increases as time goes on.

I also spoke with Pastor Bangura himself. Unlike Pastor Sandy, he was able to participate personally and actively in Pastor Amorim’s visit. “He passed on knowledge to us on how to befriend people of other majority faiths. We enjoyed it and pray to see more of Pastor Nilton to build our faith in the great mission to which the Lord has called us.”

Pastor Bangura confirms that “the Lord has blessed me” and that where people in the Cambia district never knew of Adventists before, now baptisms are occurring and increasing. Efforts are progressing to obtain a building for worship and various community activities. “This is a real miracle,” said Pastor Bangura, who grew up as a Muslim and was led to Christianity and Adventism through a dream. He noted that pastors of other denominations are amazed that “only Adventists” are able to obtain the use of the building that many of them have long wanted to have access to.

Another evangelist, one with whom Pastor Amorim met during his visit, is the only female gospel outreach evangelist in the region. To protect her identity, we will call her Jacinth. Jacinth’s story of conversion from being a Muslim woman to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist Christian impressed and fascinated Pastor Amorim. Her first response to learning about Christianity and Adventism was one of refusal to read the literature given to her or even to provide her coordinates.

Then her son became ill and failed to respond to medicine and medical treatment. But he did respond to God’s answer to prayers from Jacinth’s Adventist friends. She then became a Christian, was baptized, and then beaten beyond measure by her husband for her beliefs.

She obtained refuge at an Adventist mission. After she attended stewardship training conducted by two visiting pastors, her husband beat her publicly and

“Where people in the Cambia district never knew of Adventists before, now baptisms are occurring and increasing.”

—Samuel Bangura, Gospel Outreach evangelist, Sierra Leone



mercilessly. Life was dark and difficult, but she stayed strong. The following year, her husband became ill and died.

She ended up marrying an Adventist Christian and became an evangelist like her new husband. She is now firmly committed to helping others, especially Muslims, “to understand who Jesus is.”

Elder Harald Zinner was at home in Canada while Pastor Amorim was visiting in Africa. But, like Daniel Sandy of the Adventist Mission in Sierra Leone (soon to be upgraded to Conference), he developed a positive but realistic view of the visit. “Pastor Amorim provided,” he said, “an excellent report of the successes but also the challenges of the missions in Region 4.”

Elder Zinner is the president of Gospel Outreach Canada. He is also the regional director of Region 7. In the latter capacity, he oversees the Gospel Outreach evangelists in Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. As president of GOC, he received, evaluated, and shared Pastor Amorim’s report. He said that GOC “has been concerned that these evangelists receive an adequate stipend to support them and their families, including housing and transportation.” Pastor Amorim’s firsthand report of the situation provides “the necessary information of how to address those financial needs.” It also assesses “the need for additional financial support so that more evangelists can be recruited as funds become available.”

Gospel Outreach Canada (GOC) is a branch, so to speak, of Gospel Outreach (GO). And Gospel Outreach arises from the efforts of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church to take the gospel to the 10/40 Window. That window comprises the countries, cities, and people occupying the space between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north of

the Equator.

The 10/40 Window is more than a geographic description. It is also an important political, economic, and theological concept. Politically and economically, the majority of the world’s poor live there. And in the spiritual context, so do most of the world’s Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. Conversely, almost three and a half billion individuals in over 6,000 people groups unreached by the gospel call the 10/40 Window their home. The top-50 least evangelized megacities in the world can, without exception, be found in the 10/40 Window.¹

The Gospel Outreach website asks a question many Adventists and other Christians often ask: “Why hasn’t Jesus come yet?”

The answer? “Because we have a work to do, one that His return depends on.” The website notes that, according to Scripture, “Jesus will come when the gospel is preached in all the world,” and it gives the statistics. Of the seven-plus billion people on Earth, “three billion still need to hear about God’s love.” And 97 percent of those unreached people live in the 10/40 Window.²

The countries visited by the Amorims are part of the 10/40 Window. So are the countries overseen by Zinner. These and other evangelists supported by GOC are hopeful that, through the prayers, encouragement and support of Adventists in Canada and elsewhere, they can share the love of God to the unreached so that end-time prophecies will be totally fulfilled and Jesus will come. “Even so, come Lord Jesus.” ■

Frank Campbell, a former ambassador of Guyana, is now a freelance writer, editor, and elder of the Agape Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Pickering, Ont.

¹ Gospel Outreach, “The 10/40 Window,” <https://goaim.org/10-40-window>

² Gospel Outreach, “Introducing people to Jesus in the 10/40 Window,” <https://goaim.org/>

CANARY ISLANDS
(SPAIN)

MOROCCO

ALGERIA

LIBY



Five G0 evangelists pose with Pastor Nilton, Tannia, the Gambia mission secretary-treasurer (second from left), and the mission president (far right).



Pastor Nilton with three of four G0 evangelists in Guinea Bissau with the G0 coordinator (far right).

MAURITANIA

MALI

NIGER

SENEGAL

THE GAMBIA

GUINEA-BISSAU

GUINEA

BU

SIERRA LEONE

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

GHANA

LIBERIA



Pastor Nilton travelled 850 kilometres of pothole-ridden roads to visit these 15 G0 evangelists and cooks in Guinea Conakry.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

CAMEROON

GABON



While Pastor Nilton visited in Sierra Leone, a young man was so interested that he was trained and hired as the country's eighth G0 evangelist.



G0 evangelists from the North-West Mission of Liberia, one of two missions sponsored by Gospel Outreach in this country.

ANGOLA





Literature + Personal Contact Changed Lives

“God must have sent you.”

Recently, someone asked me if literature ministry is still active here in Canada. I’m glad to report that God is still at work in mighty ways!

During the pandemic we saw the distribution of close to 500,000 GLOW tracts across Canada. Many of the tracts that were shared focused on mental health, breaking addictions, finding peace, and providing comfort for those in pain. We also did a massive Facebook campaign across Canada, sharing a book called *The Power of Hope*. Hundreds of individuals responded and not only learned how to deal with depression and anxiety but also discovered the path to true peace with Jesus.

Yes, the literature ministry is still active. But what gave me the greatest joy was the fact that we could once more have Canada Youth Challenge (CYC) missionaries going out into communities! Emerging from COVID-19 restrictions was a slow process and resulted in a smaller program. However, with a group of 18 missionaries, we were still able to have a wonderful impact and also assist in the ground work for a city-wide evangelistic series.

As I write this article, the missionaries are going from house to house—meeting felt needs and sharing the good news of Jesus and His soon return. This is still a very important work because through this work, “the truth is presented to thousands who otherwise would never hear it.”¹

The following two stories illustrate the power that literature and personal contact still have today.

Looking for Answers

While going door to door, Theresa met Jim² and shared *The Great Controversy* with him. He said that he had been thinking about the issues addressed in this book, that very week. He was extremely interested in what the book had to say and then read it over the next several days.

Theresa eventually invited him to church, and he accepted. After participating in the service and observing

the way things were done at the church, he said, “This is what a church is supposed to be.”

“God Must Have Sent You”

Ken was working in a neighbourhood close to the church where the Canada Youth Challenge students were staying, when he met a couple. As he talked with them, he learned that the wife had recently gone through a major surgery because of cancer. The couple was happy to see Ken. They said they had been praying for someone to come to their home because they had been searching for a church.

“God must have sent you,” they said.

The couple came to church and soon began Bible studies with the pastor. The woman was baptized.

Colporteur Ministry, a compilation of Ellen G. White’s statements, says:

The importance of this work [literature evangelism], is fully equal to that of the ministry. The living preacher and the silent messenger are both required for the accomplishment of the great work before us. ... But few have broad and extensive views of what can be done in reaching the people by personal, interested efforts in a wise distribution of our publications. Many who will not be induced to listen to the truth presented by the living preacher will take up a tract or a paper and peruse it; many things they read meet their ideas exactly, and they become interested to read all it contains.³

Please continue to pray for God to use our missionaries to share literature, make personal contact, and be used by God to change lives for eternity. ■

Jonathan Zita serves as director for Lifestyle Canada Education Service (LCES), a charity organized to better fulfill the mandates of the literature ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church across Canada.

1 Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, Oct. 7, 1902.

2 All names have been changed.

3 Ellen G. White, *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1953), 8, 9.



Online Education: A World of Possibilities

I used to wonder how an online school could fully meet the academic, social, and spiritual needs of families. Even though I knew that Prairie Adventist Christian eSchool (PACeS) has been in operation since 2007, I didn't fully understand the impact it could have ... until I became the principal. Now I know what a vital role distance learning plays in fulfilling the mission of Adventist education.

I'm a believer in what Prairie Adventist Christian eSchool does each day. I see teachers who are loving, gifted, and incredible at what they do. I witness the relationships they develop with their students and families from across the country, and I'm amazed at the care they provide. I see Jesus in our online lessons, in our Zoom meetings, in our conversations with parents, and in each interaction.

In my short time at PACeS, I've learned so much. I've learned how God can use Zoom to spread His message of salvation. I've learned that PACeS provides an avenue to students who would otherwise be left without Adventist education. I've learned that even through a webcam, real friendships can be built. I've learned that great teachers will strive

and innovate to connect with their students and engage them in learning. I've witnessed engaging discussions, science experiments (even dissections), and students learning to read, all from their own homes. I've learned that Adventist education does not need to be confined by the walls of a classroom, the halls of a school, or even the borders of a country. I've learned that PACeS embodies what is the fundamental purpose of Adventist education: to teach God's love through education.

Caitlin Adap, a Grade 12 student, shares her experience: "As an incoming high school student, I did not want to go to PACeS. None of my friends would be there, and I would have to get used to an entirely new learning style. However, the teachers at PACeS quickly changed my perspective. Many of them took time to talk to me on a personal level, putting conversation above academics. They treated me like a friend: checking in with me, praying for me, and giving me advice. They created a space where we, as students, could be ourselves, speak our minds, and feel safe doing it. The students were very welcoming and willing to help me adjust to online school.

"Even though we could only interact online, my classmates and I formed very strong bonds with each other, and they've become some of my closest friends. I truly felt God's love surround me throughout my four years

here. His character emanates from the teachers and students. While I began high school with fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, I am leaving with some lifelong friends, fantastic role models, and a stronger relationship with God. I'm also leaving with improved writing skills, so if you enjoyed reading this, all credit goes to PACeS!"

Adventist education is one of the most important ministries in our church. Not everyone, however, has access to a Seventh-day Adventist school building, and some have challenges that make it difficult for them to receive the blessing of an Adventist education. That's where distance learning comes in. Both our distance learning schools in Canada—PACeS in Alberta and West Coast Adventist School (WCAS) in B.C.—seek to make Adventist education accessible to all. Every family can receive a high quality, Christ-centred education from wherever they are.

After only one year, I've learned that PACeS makes a difference. ■

David Elias is the principal of Prairie Adventist Christian eSchool in Alberta.

Caitlin Adap

See our school websites for more information about Adventist distance learning in Canada:

PACeS

Prairie Adventist Christian eSchool (PACeS): <https://pacescanada.org/>

connect.learn.encounter Jesus

WEST
COAST
Adventist School

West Coast Adventist School (WCAS): <https://wcasdl.ca/>



Students Supporting Students



ABW co-founder Eric Rajah receives a cheque from the fundraising efforts of École Lacombe Upper Elementary School. The funds were matched by ABW to benefit a classroom in Kenya.



École Lacombe Upper Elementary School will supply more desks to the Sekanani Primary School in the Masai Mara region in Kenya.

You're never too young to give back. A Better World Canada (ABW) is witnessing first-hand the dedication our youth in Canada have toward helping others their own age. Among those who have contributed significantly are École Lacombe Upper Elementary School in Lacombe, Alta., as well as Ponoka Secondary Campus in Ponoka, Alta. These two Central Alberta schools have each raised thousands of dollars on behalf of ABW.

For 18 years the Lacombe school of Grade 6–8 students has collected donations for Kenyan children. During the most recent school term, students taking part in the Peer Support Program raised \$652, which was then matched by ABW. The combined \$1,304 will result in 25 new school desks for a school in southwestern Kenya.

More than just an infrastructure project, it's building bonds between the students so far away from one another. The Lacombe students are engaged through photo updates of the project, says ABW co-founder Eric Rajah. That engagement takes on a whole new level when the students can meet one another.

The Ponoka high school students decided to support Red Deer youth who need access to flexible learning amid challenging circumstances. So they took on a difficult task of their own, holding a 30-hour famine in May that raised \$5,200 for students at Red Deer's Alternative School Centre. Half of the money has been allocated to support the school's recent Grade 12 graduate Keena Desjarlais, who is now enrolled at MC College—an esthetics, hair styling, and fashion design school that has six campuses across four provinces. The scholarship funds her nine-month program, including materials.

Rajah said it would have been financially difficult for

Desjarlais to attend MC College in Red Deer since she's a single parent with a three-year-old son. "But now she already has a job lined up for when she graduates, so this program will allow her to make a living and provide for her child," says Rajah.

Shawna Campos, a social worker at the Red Deer Alternative School Centre, remarked that without the help of students, Keeana wouldn't have been able to pursue further education.

"I saw the excitement on Keeana's face," added Rajah, who attended the high school graduation ceremony. "She is able to continue with her studies and get a job within nine months because of what the Ponoka students have done."

The remaining money raised will support the feeding program. The Alternative School Centre will reopen its kitchen to serve hot meals after it was closed during the pandemic.

When students help other students, the benefits are far-reaching. "It's cultivating that spirit of giving, and this is good for our country and the lives of the children," says Rajah.

Recipients recognize the donations are coming from adolescents like themselves, not just an organization. "Hopefully, when they're able to, they'll be willing to help others as well," Rajah said.

Schools are invited to fundraise for an educational project of their choice—whether it's small, like school textbooks, or large, like new classrooms.

At one point during its 32-year history, ABW had 22 schools fundraising. Today there are four active ones.

Many individual children have collected money over the years, and nearly 220 high school students have travelled to projects. ■

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

Mamawi Atosketan Centre Campaign and Baptisms Celebrated at Alberta Campmeeting



Belinda Soosay (foreground) bows in prayer after she, her granddaughter Ratrisha, and Leslie Potts Jr., all of Maskwacis, were baptized. Photo credit: Trevor Boller



Chief Ermineskin and his wife, Fran (far left) accepted a quilt created by Kelly Dregger and her husband, Jim Baker (far right) in a modified blanket ceremony. Kelly has taught at MANS since it opened in 2003.

Alberta Campmeeting was, in part, a Maskwacis celebration. It was 40 years ago that the Alberta Conference began building trust with the residents of Maskwacis—a highly influential Indigenous reserve in Canada. And now Adventists are being welcomed as trusted friends to build on a site near the Samson Cree Nation Band Administration Building.

The campaign to build on the influential reserve was launched during Sabbath school with the help of guest speaker Chief Randy Ermineskin. The following Sabbath, three members of the Maskwacis community were baptized.

This opportunity to build in the heart of Samson Cree Nation territory is remarkable because support comes from all levels of the Maskwacis community, and Indigenous leaders are engaged in the process.

The Maskwacis congregation is severely limited without an on-reserve building. Automobiles are relatively scarce, so the 30 kilometres to Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) for church services significantly impacts accessibility to Sabbath services, and there is no building from which to base community services. An easy-access, multi-use worship facility on-reserve will help turn decades of positive relationships into a thriving Indigenous congregation and make it possible for Indigenous members to serve within their community.

The General Conference's Center of Influence model is the most effective way to minister to the Maskwacis community. In this way, the Adventist Church and Burman University effectively serve as a training ground for workers and lay members who wish to connect with Indigenous communities.

Maskwacis is vital to Indigenous Ministries in Canada and in the United States for several reasons:

1 The Maskwacis community is of great prominence in the Indigenous world. The Pope's strategic choice of

Maskwacis as the site of his long-awaited apology to all Indigenous Peoples on July 25 underscores the leadership and initiative of Maskwacis on national and international levels. In 1998, Chief Randy Ermineskin was one of the Maskwacis representatives who addressed the UN Council, initiating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). A few years later, Maskwacis resident Wilton Littlechild was selected as one of three commissioners who headed Canada's national Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Cree of Maskwacis were the first Indigenous group to win legal control of their finances in Canada.

2 Maskwacis has been the foremost training ground for Adventist pastors with a heart for Indigenous Peoples.

The free movement of Indigenous peoples across borders will speed the reputation of Adventists and of methods developed across borders and in multiple communities.

3 Building our centre of influence on-reserve to solidify long-term relationships creates a unique opportunity for church workers and interested lay people to participate in hands-on reconciliation activities and Indigenous church development. By providing a base home for Indigenous innovation in this leading community, strategies originated in an Indigenous community by Indigenous Adventists will yield approaches potentially useful to Indigenous Peoples elsewhere.

Donors from Alberta and across Canada met a matching challenge to raise \$420,000 by the end of campmeeting—a blessing for all in this uniquely influential community. ■

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



Find more current MANS stories and videos at mans1.ca.
Watch Chief Ermineskin's speech at www.albertaadventist.ca/thebridge.



October 2022

31

One Thing I Desire

“If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?”
 My mind pondered the question.
 As Mike and I ran into our local Costco, the thought kept bouncing around my brain: If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?

Examining the aisles, I thought, Perhaps I will find the answer in Costco? Nope. Nothing here!

We gathered our groceries and, at the checkout, were greeted by a bubbly young woman, Lily. Lily’s water bottle was filled with a fuchsia fluid, and Mike wondered to himself, Why is there an unmarked bottle of diesel at this checkout station?

Lily grabbed the bottle and vigorously shook the pink potion, eyeing the eerie liquid for undissolved solids. Then she shook it again. Content at last, she unscrewed the lid and proceeded to gulp down the “diesel.” Lily screwed up her pretty face as she swallowed hard.

“Lily,” I said right as I glanced at her name tag, “what are you drinking?”

Bewildered, she replied, “Kool-Aid.”
 “Kool-Aid?”

“Yeah, I was so delighted when I discovered a package of Kool-Aid at home this morning. I imagined the fruity flavour would be better than just plain water. But now I can’t understand why I ever enjoyed Kool-Aid as a kid. ... It’s ... it’s yuck!”

“We have a cooler in our truck filled with ice-cold water and San Pellegrino. I’ll grab you one of each!”

“No, don’t do that. It’s OK.” Lily politely declined the offer.

Mike and I motored to our vehicle anyway. I eagerly grabbed the drinks from our cooler, knowing I’d found the answer I was looking for!

As I reached her checkout station, Lily’s eyes widened. “Oh, my! No way! Really, no way! Oh, my!”

I choked up as I handed her the drinks, and with tears in her eyes, she embraced me.

If I could ask God for one thing, I know what it would be.

This.

Blessing people like Lily. The smile on her face and the tears in her eyes are what life is all about.

So many Lilys are yearning to taste something sweet. Their expectations are so high, and, convinced they are doing the right thing, they swallow the Kool-Aid.

Mike and I recognize that God has given us such a beautiful opportunity to reach these people, to offer them something pure and refreshing: the Saviour’s liquid of life. As Jesus Himself promised the woman at the well, “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14, NIV).

Traditionally, a significant part of *It Is Written Canada’s* ministry has been to meet with its partners in-person once a year in various locations throughout Canada for Partnership Weekends; however, for the last two years, this has not been possible.

By the time the country opened up this year, venues were either unavailable or priced way out of our budget. Therefore, we decided to stage an *It Is Written Canada* rally, starting with one at the Really Living Centre in Hamilton, Ont., on Oct. 22, 2022. The theme is “One



Thing I Desire,” addressing the question: “If you could ask God for one thing, what would it be?”

We hope you can make it to this in-person event, but if not, you can also attend online by clicking the livestream links at:

- Our website: iiw.ca
- Facebook: facebook.com/ItIsWrittenCanada/
- YouTube: youtube.com/iiwcanada

Thank you for supporting us in connecting Canadians to the abundant life found in Jesus. ■

René Lemon is the co-host of It Is Written Canada.



ONE THING

I DESIRE

IT IS WRITTEN CANADA



IF YOU
COULD ASK
GOD FOR ONE THING,
WHAT WOULD
IT BE?



OCTOBER
22, 2022
RALLY

REALLY LIVING CENTRE



2060 Upper James St,
Mount Hope, ON



Phone : 905-404-6510

IN-PERSON MEETING

**11:00 AM &
3:00 PM**

LIVESTREAM LINK



YouTube.com/IIWCanada
Go to IIW.ca for more info

facebook.com/ItIsWrittenCanada



In Kenya, families are learning to grow their own food and sell the excess.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a lush country of rainforests, hills, and mountains. It's home to gorillas, the white rhinoceros, elephants, and giraffes.

Its natural beauty is matched by its wealth of natural resources, ranking it among the richest in those terms. It's therefore ironic that this beauty and bounty co-exist with one of the largest hunger crises in the world. In fact, the country has the greatest number of people in the world—27 million—facing high levels of food insecurity.¹ That is when people are without reliable access to enough affordable and nutritious food. To afford a little food, they must use crisis-coping strategies such as borrowing money or depleting assets. To stretch the food, families will ration portion sizes, or adults will skip meals to leave more for their children.

This crisis didn't happen overnight. Decades of conflict and political instability have crippled development, forcing millions to flee their homes and farmlands. The effects of conflict are compounded by an economic slump resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and rising inflation.

This hunger crisis is part of a global one of unprecedented proportions that's been brewing for nearly a decade. Thankfully, it's beginning to capture the attention it deserves to jolt us into action.

What are we supposed to do about the 27 million hungry people in the DRC, or an estimated 345 million hungry people² in the world? The simple answer is "Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble" (Isa. 58:10, NLT).

How can we save lives now and build a food-secure future, working toward hunger as a bad memory rather than an intolerable reality? We won't achieve a zero-hunger world

before Jesus returns. Nevertheless, isn't it part of our calling to work toward that goal until He comes and accomplishes it fully?

With your support, ADRA's working towards that goal. In the DRC, a new project funded by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) is preparing to bring 1,000 severely malnourished children therapeutic nutritional treatment. After completing this lifesaving treatment, they'll receive a supplementary treatment to further support and strengthen their health. The project will also encourage mothers to breastfeed their children under two years old. Community-based programs will promote good dietary practices. This will save lives and fend off the irreversible consequences of malnourishment.

Families will also receive cash to empower them to buy sufficient food, pay off debts, or invest in livelihoods to sustain themselves. This project, along with two previous ones like it, will reach 22,000 people and their families.

In countries such as Kenya, Mozambique, and Nepal, ADRA projects funded by CFGB are teaching families to grow their own food and investing in livelihood development. Similar projects will begin soon in Sudan, Indonesia, and a country in South America.

It will take all of us pulling together to meet this crisis. Even then, it will take God's blessings on our resources and efforts. But He has promised us blessings. We can therefore be undaunted in "feeding the hungry and helping those in trouble." ■

Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.



1 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (ICP), "Democratic Republic of Congo: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation September 2021 – August 2022," Oct. 11, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3AIE35z>
 2 World Food Programme (WFP), "A Global Food Crisis: 2022—A Year of Unprecedented Hunger," <https://bit.ly/3R9h0lc>



Feeding the Hungry



ADRA is working with our partners at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to provide food to food insecure people in 13 countries around the world. By addressing the root causes of hunger through sustainable approaches, we are improving the lives of thousands.

Help support our hunger projects by visiting:

ADRA.ca/hunger



Adventist Development & Relief Agency

20 Robert Street West 1.888.274.ADRA (2372)
Newcastle, ON L1B 1C6 ADRA.ca
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British Columbia

Brad Thorp Elected as President of the British Columbia Conference

On Sept. 6, 2022, the Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference) convened to elect their president, a position that was not filled during the Conference's 59th Constituency Session that took place on July 31.

After prayer and thoughtful deliberation, the executive committee voted to extend an invitation to Pastor Brad Thorp to serve as the new president. Elder Thorp accepted the call and began his new responsibilities on Sept. 8, 2022. Expressing enthusiasm with Thorp's election, Alrick Watson, recently re-elected as executive secretary/vice-president for administration, said, "We welcome Pastor Thorp as our new president and look forward to working with him to inspire our constituency toward Christ-centred spirituality, intentional ministry-oriented training, and robust mission emphasis."

Brad Thorp comes to the leadership of the British Columbia Conference with a wealth of experience in several areas of church work, including more than 21 years steering satellite evangelism and the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Hope Channel. Under his direction, the Hope Channel network grew to 46 channels and languages broadcasting worldwide. A native of the Okanagan Valley, Thorp, along with his wife Kandus, has served God and the church passionately. The Thorps have three adult married sons and five grandchildren.



Brad and Kandus Thorp

"Thank you for the confidence and trust this invitation carries," said Thorp in response to his election. "I am confident God has led in this decision and by His grace I will give this assignment my full strength and enthusiasm. My desire is to ensure the church of British Columbia and the Yukon fulfills its mission as part of God's work in Canada," he added.

Mark Johnson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada at the time, stated, "I am thankful for Brad's commitment to Christ and his willingness to use his abilities in British Columbia. I pray for him and Kandus as they inspire and lead the membership of

the British Columbia Conference."

We want to thank Elder Wesley Torres for his strong leadership over the past 11 years, first as executive secretary, and since 2016, as president. Pastor Torres led the British Columbia Conference with love and he promoted growth, especially in trying times like the past two years.

We encourage everyone across Canada to lift up in prayer Brad and Kandus Thorp, as well as every individual in church leadership. May God be pleased with His church as He looks down from heaven and sees a people committed to constant, earnest prayer. ■



Attendees gathered hand-in-hand around the auditorium.



Sanifor Plummer (left) was the commentator for the “famous women in the Bible” skit.

North Okanagan’s 25th Women’s Retreat

Eighty women converged on the Ashton Creek (Riverside) community hall near Enderby, B.C., on May 27, 2022. The North Okanagan Women’s groups were celebrating their 25th anniversary. It was a rejuvenating weekend after a two-year pandemic hiatus.

Liz Card of Sicamous started the retreat in 1997, while Lenore Duncan of the Rutland church has been involved since 1998. Lenore was the emcee and warmly welcomed everyone. She made sure that each person felt comfortable and included. She expressed distaste for cliques and encouraged us to step out of our comfort zones and sit with people we didn’t know instead of sticking with our buddies. Turns out we were all simply friends who hadn’t met yet.

Behind the scenes, Bernice Maxson, one founder of the retreat, persevered with a badly injured foot while making our scrumptious meals. A team of volunteers helped her out. She claimed her foot’s quick healing as a miracle, because she had told Jesus that if He wanted the weekend to happen, He’d have to heal her. Bernice arrived in a wheelchair but was soon on her feet. She has worked hard in the commercial kitchen for every retreat, including this silver anniversary.

The participants enjoyed excellent

speakers, good company, and superb vegetarian meals. Alisa Booth created a beautiful ambience with her interior decorating skills for the stage and elegant centrepieces. And the pristine campground topped off the incredible experience.

Keynote speaker Elaine Blackmon, of Merritt, spoke on the Lord’s Prayer. She gave a riveting personal testimony intertwined within the prayer itself.

During the afternoon program, they did a skit about five famous women from the Bible. God had used some unlikely candidates to spread the gospel. Several women modelled ancient Middle Eastern apparel, as the commentator, Sanifor Plummer, told their story. The actresses portrayed women such as Rahab and Mary Magdalene. Despite these characters’ checkered lifestyles, the Lord used them mightily. Those marginalized women helped change the course of history.

It served as a reminder that regardless of our past, we are all children of the King of the universe. We are of royal lineage, princesses, as adopted daughters of Christ.

Talented singers and musicians played old gospel songs throughout the weekend, and the crowd joined in praising God.

The action-packed weekend was also serene, as we had plenty of opportunities to walk in nature or have a siesta.

Thankfully, the weather was pleasant. It was slightly cooler, except for Sunday, when the sun shone.

Camping Friday night was crisp for those staying in tents or RVs without heat. However, as the sun set on Sabbath, the temperature was cozier.

Two of the women’s husbands, Wilf Davies and Norman Duncan, stayed in the background to help any camper who needed it. Thus was my case as they both set up my screen house. Then, a few hours later, Wilf pushed it upright after it had blown over, and he secured it to a wooden fence.

Later on I was startled awake in the middle of the night to see a man marching briskly throughout the camp with a red glowing lamp in his hand. He had a younger man’s stride, and there were no such persons in our midst. The blackened sky made it impossible to make out his features. I wondered if he was the angel that Emilia Davies had prayed for. God dispatched him to patrol the premises. I got a chill, watching the unknown man as he disappeared into the darkness.

We all had a safe, fun, and eventful weekend as the Lord smiled upon us. ■

— Doreen Zyderveld-Hagel,
communication department,
Rutland church

Alberta

New Communications/IT Director for the Alberta Conference

On Sept. 1, Troy McQueen started working as the new Communications/IT Director at the Alberta Conference. “I’m excited to be stepping back into the communications/IT role and look forward to working with a wonderful group of churches and schools throughout the Alberta Conference,” said Troy.

Troy McQueen has worked in the Alberta Conference since 2012, most recently as camp director of Foothills Camp and Retreat Centre for the past four years. Prior to this role, Troy completed a master’s degree in professional communications from Royal Roads University and served as communications/IT director for 6.5 years.

From 2002 to 2012, Troy pastored in the British Columbia Conference at the Kelowna and Aldergrove churches and served as the communication specialist leading out in the rebroadcast of Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR, now called



Rachel, Joshua, Emily, and Troy McQueen

Lighthouse FM radio) throughout the conference. He has been married to his

wife, Rachel, for 22 years, and they have two children, Joshua and Emily. ■

Ontario

Nursing Home Visits Go Virtual

Many things have changed because of COVID-19. Visiting nursing homes in person to offer an hour of music is one of them. But the Fourny family—Rachel, Danae, and Benjamin—didn’t let that stop them.

For nearly four years, the Fourny family, members of the Cornwall Seventh-day Adventist Church, have visited local nursing homes to share music and brighten the days of the residents. These monthly visits include 30 minutes of familiar secular tunes followed by 30 minutes of Christian songs, choruses, and hymns. The program changes slightly



Rachel Fourny, on piano, with her children, Danae and Benjamin, doing virtual nursing home visits.

from month to month and has a variety of music styles and rhythms, including actions to engage the residents and get them moving. In one nursing home, the residents are mainly from the Alzheimer's section. However, you would never guess it by the smiles on their faces and the clapping and foot stomping.

When COVID-19 pandemic broke out in March 2020, all that changed. Nursing homes as well as other buildings or places of business were closed to visitors. Rachel and her children, Danae and Benjamin, waited to see how the pandemic and quarantine rules would play out. In the meantime, church services, school,

and work moved from in-person to Zoom. This got Rachel thinking. If church and school could run on Zoom, why couldn't a nursing visit, too?

Rachel contacted the recreational co-ordinators at the nursing homes to pitch the idea and see if they were interested. Good news—they were. But there was one problem: how to stream the program to the TVs in the residents' rooms? After a couple of dry runs, much troubleshooting and experimenting on their side, the Fournys hosted their first virtual nursing home visit.

The pandemic has been a blessing in disguise, Rachel says. Before, we would

go to the nursing home and the residents would come or be brought, if they weren't mobile, to the room where we were.

When pandemic health restrictions were introduced, in-person visits and programs were no longer possible. Switching to a livestream on Zoom or Google Meet meant that when the virtual visits took place, all of the residents in the nursing home could view and participate. As a result, the Fournys are able to interact with and reach even more people. ■

—Rachel Fourny,
Cornwall Seventh-day
Adventist Church

SDACC

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada Elects Leadership for Next Quinquennium



Paul Llewellyn, president



Cyril Millett III, executive secretary



Paul Musafili, treasurer

One hundred and fifty-nine delegates from across the country, representing the diverse membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC), gathered virtually on Sunday, Sept. 11, for the SDACC's 19th Quinquennial Session. This constituency meeting is called for the purpose of receiving reports for the past term, the election of officers,

the election of the Board of Directors, consideration of proposed changes in the Bylaws that may be recommended, and the transaction of such other business as may come before the meeting at that time. It was postponed from 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions at that time.

The meeting convened at 9 a.m. EDT. Delegates were greeted in English

by Mark Johnson, with translation into French by Evaldo Vicente. After the singing of the national anthem, prayers were offered in English by Rose Jacinto, SDACC undertreasurer, and in French by Paul Musafili, SDACC treasurer. The president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD), G. Alexander Bryant, shared a devotional



A behind-the-scenes look at the production involved in hosting a virtual session while posting real-time updates on social media. Photo credit: Samantha Marcos

thought, after which quorum for the Session was declared and business for the day began.

The process for electing officers and the Board of Directors requires that an Organizing Committee be appointed, comprising 21 delegates selected from among those present. Bryant chaired the meeting of this committee, which in turn appointed the Nominating Committee, comprising 29 delegates also selected from among those present. It was the work of the nominating committee, whose meetings throughout the day were also chaired by Bryant, to present nominations for president, executive secretary, treasurer, and Board of Directors. While the nominating committee deliberated in private, delegates in the main meeting received reports by the president, executive secretary, and treasurer.

Early in the afternoon, Bryant returned to the main session with the first report of the nominating committee, which recommended the election of Paul Llewellyn as president of the SDACC

for the next five-year term. The motion passed with a 76 percent vote. Llewellyn, who had been the SDACC executive secretary since January 2020, has a strong background of both teaching in Adventist education and working with the youth and young adults of our church. He has served as educator, pastor, camp director, conference secretary, and conference president.

To fill the position of executive secretary, the nominating committee recommended, and session delegates voted in Cyril Millett III, currently pastor and education director at the Bermuda Conference, with an 84 percent vote. Millett, former Bermuda and Ontario Conference youth director, also brings large experience in working with youth.

Upon recommendation of the nominating committee, delegates at the session voted the re-election of treasurer Paul Musafili, with a 95 percent vote. Musafili, who has served in that capacity since 2019, is appreciated as a faithful steward of the church's resources and a visionary treasurer with a passion for

outreach.

Both Llewellyn and Bryant expressed gratitude and appreciation to Mark Johnson, outgoing SDACC president, for his leadership and service for the church. Johnson, who has dedicated over 50 years of his life to ministry, is the SDACC's longest-tenured president and has led with passion and unwavering commitment. We solicit your prayers as Elder Johnson and his wife, Becky, move on to a new phase of their ministry.

The meeting proceeded with the election of a new board of directors and votes on bylaw items. It was adjourned with prayer at 6 p.m., after lively discussion had taken place about creating a strategy for social media outreach in the church.

As the SDACC leadership begins a new term, we appeal for your continued prayers. We believe Jesus is the true head of the church and He keeps it under the shadow of His wings. We need to pray our leaders up, and work together as equally important members of the body of Christ, that we may see the growth of God's kingdom and His soon return. ■

Appreciation Ceremony for Stan Jensen at SDACC Headquarters



Photos this page: Evaldo Vicente

SDACC administrators and the communication department gathered to present an award of appreciation to Stan Jensen for his exemplary service to the church. *L to R: Aimee Perez, Mark Johnson, Adrianna Lewis, Stan Jensen, Rose Jacinto, Paul Musafili, Paul Llewellyn*



Former SDACC president Mark Johnson presents the plaque to Stan Jensen.

On Aug. 31, Stan Jensen, former editor of the *Canadian Adventist Messenger* and communication director, returned to the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC), where he was paid tribute for his invaluable contribution to the work of the SDACC. Elder Mark Johnson handed Stan a plaque in a small, informal ceremony, attended by the SDACC officers and members of the team that worked alongside Stan until his retirement in January of this year.

Stan began his work at the SDACC in February 2012, after having served 10 years as communication director for the British Columbia Conference. Born in Alberta, Stan became a citizen of the world, thanks to his travel across the globe and appreciation of diversity, cultures, and languages. Stan is recognized as easy to get along with and someone who can connect and network with anyone. He has been able to make lifelong friendships thanks to his kind and lighthearted personality.

Stan’s contribution to the work of the *Messenger* family of magazines and office of communication in the SDACC cannot be underestimated. Thanks to his diligence, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) approved the Adventist Church’s *Hope Channel*—and the corresponding Spanish channel *Esperanza TV*—for broadcast on cable TV anywhere in Canada. Stan was also very instrumental in expanding the coverage of Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR, now called Lighthouse FM) into British Columbia.

Retirement has not stopped Stan’s creativity, and he continues to reflect on innovative ways in which Seventh-day Adventists can make a difference in this world and hasten the coming of the day of the Lord. ■

>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Aug. 31, 2022, there were 363 depositors with a total deposit of \$34,243,867. There were 92 loans with a value of \$34,184,969.

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

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■ Announcements

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

■ Missing Members

The Toronto East Seventh-day Adventist Church is looking for the following missing members: Dwight Nelson, Osmond Nembhard, Cyntil Nesblett, Winston Neville, Mark A. Newall, Guy Neyedly, Patrick Nunes, Ionie Officer, Scerena Officer, Marilyn Parker, Jackie Patrick, Beharry Paul, Sophia D. Peart, Teresa Pelletier, Shanta Persid, Gerald Phillip, Susanna Phillip, Yvonne Phillip, Laurane Phillips, Patricia Pickering, Colbert Piggott, Harold Pinnoch, Alan Plummer, Cyril Plummer, Judith Plummer, Mark Jamaal Plummer, Ouida Plummer, Lloyd Jr. Powell, D. Pratt, Daphnie Preddie, Arlene Tamara Pusey, Linda Ramdin, Pamela Rampersaud, U. Rampersaud, Amy Reid, John Reid, Keith Reid, Thelma Reid, Elaine Rhude, Amanda Richards, Laverne Richards, Linneth Richards, Pauline Richards, Nadia Rizkalla, Leslie Roberts, Felicia Robinson, Horace Robinson, Iris Robinson, Lesley Robinson, Sharon Robinson, Burnadette Rodney, Nancy Maynes Romero, Clare Roper, Lilieth Rose, Beverly Rowe, Grace Russell, Ducrest Samuels, Isolyn Samuels, Nathan W. Sathia, Fern Seaman, Cynthia Shaw, Jennifer Shearman, Vivian M. Shortreed, Errol Simpson, Michael Simpson, Shawn Simpson, Simon Simpson, Selwyn Small, Delmarine Smart, Christopher Smith, Doreen Smith, Elise Smith, Michael Smith,

Pauline Smith, Tracy Careen Smith, Allan Spoon, Dorothy St-Pierre, Mary Stephen, Destiny Stephen-Herbert, Clinton Stewart, John Summers, Barbara Sutherland, Millicent Sutherland, Raymond Sutherland, Randolph Swanson, and Charm Swasey. If you know the whereabouts of any of these individuals, please contact the church clerk. Email: cclerktorontocastsda@gmail.com.

■ Announcements

Richmond Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church (Ont.) is celebrating its 60th anniversary on Nov. 12, 2022. Keynote speaker is Pastor Mansfield Edwards (President, Ontario Conference). The event starts at 9:30 a.m. Former members and pastors are invited and welcome. The church is located at 210 Elgin Mills Road West, Richmond Hill, Ont., L4C 4M2.

■ Obituaries

Shirley (née Eckman) Buhler was born Aug. 15, 1926, in Medicine Hat, Alta., and died May 25, 2022, in Osoyoos, B.C. Shirley was one of the charter members of the Calliaqua, now the Mount Moriah, Seventh-day Adventist Church on the island of St. Vincent, West Indies. Upon returning to British Columbia, Shirley was an active member in the Osoyoos church. She was predeceased by her spouse, Vance Buhler; parents, Emanuel and Anna (née Boschee) Eckman; and brother, Edgar Eckman. Surviving: sons, Rick (Ethel) Buhler of South Hazelton, B.C., Brent (Leslie) Buhler of Hoodspout, Wash., Mark (Arlene) Buhler of Altamonte Springs, Fla., and Kevin Buhler of Richmond, B.C.; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Linda (née Lakusta) Falkingham was born Nov. 2, 1950, in Edmonton, Alta., and died June 29, 2022, in Lacombe, Alta. Linda was a dedicated Christian in all she did at home and at work. She lovingly served the Lord and her church as a Sabbath school teacher, Sabbath school superintendent, Vacation Bible School leader, greeter, deaconess, and church board member. She was predeceased by her father, Onesim Lakusta; and brother, Glenn Lakusta. Surviving: spouse, Ken Falkingham; son, Kevin (Kelly) Falkingham; daughter, Leah Falkingham; mother, Mary Hominiuk; brothers, Gary and Dennis Lakusta of Edmonton; sisters, Belinda Weese of Edmonton, Janelle Allison of London, Ont., Brenda (John) O'Connor of Campbell River, B.C., and Jewel Lakusta of Edmonton.

Milton Sun-Kuen Hwang was born March 12, 1931, in Shantou, Guangdong, China, and died May 12, 2022, in Richmond, B.C. Since his teens, Milton worked for the Adventist Church in China, Macau, and Hong Kong as teacher, school principal, evangelist, preacher, and prolific author. In 1967, he was sent from Hong Kong to Jamaica to teach mathematics at West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University), thus becoming the first Adventist missionary to be sent from a mission field to the North American Division. He was instrumental in the founding of the Vancouver Chinese Seventh-day Adventist Church. He authored many articles and wrote devotional books for the Chinese Adventist community. He was a well sought-after speaker for evangelistic series and week of prayer meetings. He was predeceased by his parents, Hon Bing Wong and Shu-Hing Hwang Yao; brother, Morris Sun-Yow Hwang; and sisters, Wai Chun Hwang and Helen Wai Ngho Luk. Surviving: spouse, Lillian Lan-Fong (née Fu) Hwang; son, Enoch (Windy) of Riverside, Calif.; daughter, Christine Hwang of Toronto, Ont.; sister, Winnie Wai Han Lau of Los Angeles, Calif.; and two grandchildren.

Otto Leiber Lehmann was born July 24, 1944, in Rosthern, Sask., and died March 11, 2022, in Rosthern. Otto served the church for many years as elder, deacon, Sabbath school superintendent and teacher, and church school board chairman. He participated on two mission trips to the Dominican Republic to help build churches. He was predeceased by his parents, Herbert and Erna. Surviving: spouse, Sharon (née Longard); sons, Johannes Andreas, Karl Otto (Shauna) and Adam Aleksandr (Stephanie); brothers, Gustav (Lea), Erwin (Linda), and Paul (Donnalee); sisters, Hilde (Albert) Tataryn and Elsie Lehmann; and two grandchildren.

Herman Ottsofski was born Sept. 10, 1939, in Romania, and died May 28, 2022, in Johnstown, Colo. Herman built several churches and church schools for our denomination. He also helped build a hospital in Belize. He was predeceased by his parents, Franz and Strefani (née Tanzel); and son, Tony. Surviving: spouse, Marilyn (née Wallace); son, Randy; and brothers, Gerhart and Ulli.

■ Tributes

Norman Sayles was born April 2, 1931, in Toronto, Ont., and passed to his rest on Feb. 7, 2022, in Courtenay, B.C. He was a sincere person who

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put his heart into witnessing for God by teaching, preaching, gardening, and working 30+ years in a business venture with his son. Several years after the death of his wife, Norma Kay, due to a car accident, Norman married Katherine Woods. Norman is sadly missed by his wife, Katherine; his son, Grant; two stepdaughters, Darlene van Appelen and Sharon Moore; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Even at the age of 90, with increasing dementia, he showed his devotion to God in song and in his actions.

■ Advertisements

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Local Church Budget October 01
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Almost the Whole City

Last month I left you with the question of whether what happened in Pisidian Antioch could happen again—at least here in Canada. Here is the Bible text I shared as the basis for my question: “The next Sabbath, *almost the whole city* gathered to hear the word of the Lord” (Acts 13:44, ESV, emphasis mine). Sure, hyperbole can be found in the biblical text at times—John 21:25 is probably an example of that. But in the case of Paul and his companions in Antioch, it seems very plausible that almost the whole city would have gone to the synagogue to hear Paul and Barnabas. Imagine almost your entire city joining in the study of the Word with your congregation next Sabbath! Could it happen in our day, right here in our country?

Let me say that I’m not too concerned with the *possibility* of that happening in our churches. It *can* happen, and I don’t think we need to focus on that aspect. After all, “Nothing will be impossible with God,” said the angel Gabriel to Mary, the mother of Jesus, while speaking of her becoming a mother, though she was a virgin.

My real concern is with what we will do in our congregations *when* that happens. I hope and pray that we will not react like the religious leaders of Paul’s time. Acts 13:45 says that out of jealousy they began to contradict Paul’s teaching. Before we condemn their attitude, let’s consider how we would react if we came to church on Sabbath to find the place crowded by nearly an entire city of people where the majority might look, dress, and have lifestyles that are different from ours. But they’ve chosen to come because they’re searching for Jesus. How will we react? I invite you to think about that.

This month our “Heart to Heart” column welcomes a new contributor, Pastor Paul Llewellyn. On Sept. 11, the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, represented by their delegates, voted to elect Paul Llewellyn as president, Cyril Millett III as executive secretary, and to re-elect Paul Musafili as treasurer. We wish them God’s blessings for a successful term. We also want to say a big thank-you to Elder Mark Johnson, the longest-tenured president of our church in Canada. Our prayers go out with him and Becky as they continue to minister to others in multiple ways.

Later this month, the *Messenger* team, along with communication directors of unions, conferences, and local churches across North America, will be gathering at the North American Division headquarters for the Society of Adventist Communicators (SAC) convention. It will be the first in-person SAC convention in three years. We will have the opportunity to attend various seminars and to meet, learn from, and mingle with other Adventist communicators with the goal of developing skills and becoming better equipped to communicate present truth for this time. Please pray for us and look out for news on our experience at the convention in a future issue of the *Messenger*.

Until then, the God of peace be with you all. ■

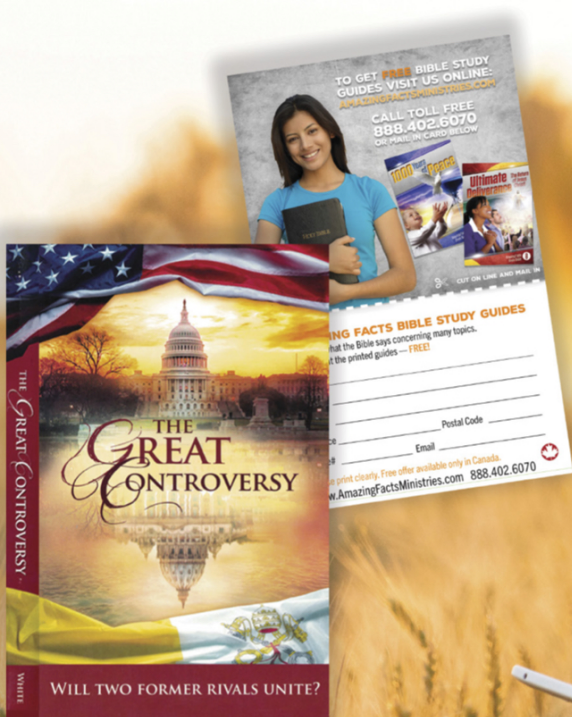
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*See highlights of the Campaign launch inside on the Maskwacis Outreach page.
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