

Light of the World (p. 3), Honey (p. 9), Building
Our Future (p. 29), Remembering Dan Jackson (p. 36)

december 2022

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“And I, when I am
lifted up from the
earth, will draw all
people to myself.”

—John 12:32, NIV

Light of the World

A few years ago, if you drove onto the campus of Kingsway College in December, you would see a life-size nativity scene on the front lawn of Jim and Carol Ryan’s home. Many cars would drive by at night to see the set lit up with the focus on Baby Jesus as they continued the Christmas light tour of decorated houses.

Then one year Jim and Carol changed the nativity scene from a cradle to a cross. The Ryans wanted to direct people to the real reason for the season. As many direct their attention to Baby Jesus during the month of December, many look past the reason *Jesus* came to this earth, to die on the cross. “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32, NIV).

When I think of what took place for Jesus to enter human life as a baby and then to make His way to the cross, it boggles my mind to even try to comprehend the deep truths of the gift when He clothed divinity with humanity. This is the gift we can share with others when their hearts and minds are pondering the Christmas theme.

As December commences and many in this world begin the frenzy of selecting the perfect gift, this is an awesome opportunity to open our church doors to the nativity and the cross. Opening our doors so that others can begin to comprehend the deep truths of why Jesus came to this earth a baby, died on a cross, rose again, and will soon return to take us home. This is the greatest gift our church can give to our communities in which God has planted us.

While this world continues its downward spiral into the self-destructive nature of sin, God has given us a prime-time spot for evangelism: bringing the whole everlasting gospel to a world when their hearts are open in the slightest degree to the story of Redemption that took on human form when Jesus came as a babe and finished as a Saviour on the cross. ■

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



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WHAT'S INSIDE

December 2022



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WHAT'S COMING Read Dr. Mpoki Ulisubisya's journey to becoming a medical doctor and the High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania to Canada. In the end, it's all about Him.

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *Is there a difference between freedom of religion and freedom from religion?*

A: These ideas are linked, but they are not the same. Unfortunately, a lot of people think that freedom *from* religion is the primary purpose of religious liberty. This is problematic.

It is an unfortunate historical fact that the first big religious liberty case in Canada under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms involved the federal government imposing a religious practice. In 1985, Big M Drug Mart Ltd. was charged with opening on Sundays in violation of the *Lord's Day Act*. But the Supreme Court of Canada decided that legislation infringed freedom of religion because it forced everyone in the country to abide by a majoritarian Christian practice.

The court made the right decision. The government shouldn't compel citizens to behave in a particular way just because some, or even most, Canadians hold certain religious beliefs. However, the case perpetuated the idea that Canadians should be protected against religious beliefs and practices. This is not the same as ensuring that Canadians are free to practise their religion without interference from the government.

Even people with no religious beliefs are protected by freedom of religion. They are protected from coerced religious practice. However, those with minority religious beliefs also need protection. They need to be protected from government rules that hinder their ability to freely practise their beliefs. Both are important. But in an increasingly secular society in which religion—any religion—is perceived as having little value, the need to protect against religion has become a more acceptable clarion call.

This leads to philosophical confusion. I have argued constitutional cases in which secular humanists oppose accommodating religious groups when their religiously based beliefs concerning morality conflict with widely

held secular notions. These groups see the religious group as imposing itself on its own membership, when in fact the members opt in because they share a deeply held commitment to the beliefs. If the courts agree, the religious group is no longer accommodated within society, predominantly because secular society disagrees with the members' beliefs.

This is a dangerous development in the law. While religious liberty must protect both freedom from imposed religion and the freedom to practise religion, *the government should not impose religious neutrality within churches or other religious organizations*. Doing so does not enhance religious liberty. It undermines it.

As society becomes ever more skeptical about the benefits of religion, I fear the impulse to protect *against* religious practices will allow government regulators to impose themselves on Christian and other religious groups and organizations. They will justify this as protecting minority positions within the church. In doing so, they will interfere with religious beliefs and practices, enforcing a secular perspective and undermining religious liberty.

It is a difficult balance, but the government needs to be religiously neutral. This means that state regulators must respect privately adopted religious beliefs and practices, even when they are peculiar, or offensive to, secular and humanistic ethical standards. The government should neither advance particular religious beliefs nor hinder them.

Freedom from imposed religion by the state is essential to religious liberty. But so is freedom to practise religion in the private sphere. The government must respect both. ■

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

A Season for Giving

“As they came into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their treasure boxes and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”—*Matthew 2:11, NET*

A new star appeared in the western skyline. Most people probably didn't even notice it. Astrologers, on the other hand, take notice of that sort of thing. A group of them—well-respected wise men, or magi, from the east—began searching for the meaning behind this new star right away.

As soon as heavenly influences helped them discover the meaning of the shining star from the scrolls, they loaded their camels with gifts and headed to Jerusalem in search of the new king.

Their entourage created quite a stir. But the wise men were confused when they didn't see the pomp and circumstance that typically surrounded the arrival of a new dignitary. They inquired, “Where is he that has been born King of the Jews?”

It didn't take long for the news of their arrival and their pointed inquiry to reach Herod's palace. When Herod learned of this development, he became agitated. He had never let anyone stand in his way, and now he felt threatened. Was a new king about to take his place?

Herod immediately assembled the chief priests and scribes and inquired where this new king was to be born. He was able to direct the wise men to Bethlehem. But he asked the wise men to return after their journey, so he could worship the new king as well. After their private meeting with Herod, the wise men left, and the star led them to Bethlehem.

Upon arriving in Bethlehem, the wise men went to the house where Mary and Joseph were staying. As soon as they saw Baby Jesus, they bowed down and worshipped him. They also presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Such was their custom when in the presence of royalty.

Afterward, the wise men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went home by another route. Joseph was also told in a dream to leave for Egypt at once, where the wise men's gifts sustained them.

As I reflect on what the wise men gave to Jesus, I started thinking about what *we* give to Jesus. In

2021, Deloitte estimated that a typical Canadian family budget for Christmas was \$1,841.¹ At the same time, according to Statistics Canada, the median donation in 2019 was \$310.²

What gifts are we giving to Jesus? The wise men felt compelled to give Jesus the very best. Upon reflecting, I have come up with three things as a start. I'm sure there are many more, and as Christmas approaches, I hope you'll build on my list.

1 The gift of worship. Through worship, we come to see God more clearly. God invites us, through worship, to see His face so He can change ours. We simply stand before God with a willing heart and let God do His work. And He does. The wise men sought the Child of God, just as God seeks His children. We also need to be seeking the Father. “The Father is actively seeking such people to worship him” (John 4:23, NCV).

2 The gift of time. Spending more time with families, neighbours, and God. Do you know the names of the eight neighbours around you? This year do a reverse advent calendar. For more information, go to www.maritimesda.com and click on “How to Neighbour.” Spend more time volunteering in your local church. Determine how you can use your time to bring honour and glory to God.

3 The gift of resources. This can include time, money, and donations of food or clothing. It could include supporting church organizations that are helping people around the world and our neighbours down the street. The wise men first worshipped Jesus, then gave Him their gifts they brought for Him. This Christmas season let us remember the wise men's example. As we worship our Saviour and King, He will guide us in our giving. ■



Dave Miller is president of the Maritime Conference.

1 Deloitte, *2021 Holiday Retail Outlook*, <https://bit.ly/3htLjH7>
 2 Statistics Canada, <https://bit.ly/3DSwdll>



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Creation Corner for Kids

Honey

*How sweet are thy words
unto my taste! yea, sweeter
than honey to my mouth!*

—Psalm 119:103



Did you know there are more than 20,000 species of bees in the world but only a few of them make honey? Of those few species that make honey, only two are domesticated or kept and raised by people. The rest live in the wild. A bee will make five to 15 trips each day collecting nectar, spending its whole life to make just 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey. These facts make

honey a rare treasure.

People love honey because it's sweet. But honey is also powerful medicine. Scientists have found that honey works against 80 different kinds of germs. Doctors have used honey to fight infections, heal wounds, and help skin grafts grow in burn victims. Some studies found that honey even prevents cavities in teeth.

Think about it.

Honey is precious, not only because it's sweet and tasty but also because it fights germs that make us sick and because it can heal. On top of that, bees sacrifice themselves to make honey.

God's Word is sweet to us because it shows us His love for us in Jesus' sacrifice, protects us against the enemy's attacks, and heals our hurts and sorrows.

Do it!

Have you put God's Word to the test in your life? Do your own experiment. Ask God to change you by the power of His Word. Then apply His Word to your life every day.



Self-Reflection

Leadership is essential in advancing the people and work of God, and good leaders understand what motivates them. Why do you serve? Take a moment to reflect and monitor motivations daily.

We are called to examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5; Lam. 3:40). Jesus expressed our ultimate motivation in John 4:34: “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work” (NIV). He took the time to reflect.

Self-reflection makes for stronger leaders. Understanding one’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, goals, and their impact on others is critical. When leaders clarify their core values, they grow in integrity and decisiveness.

David described his core in Psalm 40:8: “I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart” (NIV). The more leaders reflect on their strengths and their Source of strength, the more confident they become in the One who sent them and in His calling. Such confidence is seen in how they communicate, influence, and make decisions.

Note, however, we are not changed by beholding self but by beholding Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Robert Murray M’Cheyne famously said, “For every look at yourself, take 10 looks at Christ.” Ellen White in *Steps to Christ* iterates that the vital



relationship “between God and each soul [is] as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watch-care, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.”¹

Take time to ensure your motivations are aligned with your Creator. ■

Damson Oppong is the ministerial liaison for the SDACC.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1892), 100.

Forward-Focused Health

As we look back at everything we’ve been through this year, from ongoing concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic to personal changes and challenges, our health, our work, our relationships, our family, and even our spiritual life, God has been faithful.

It is often said, we cannot live life going forward by looking in the rearview mirror! God has called us to have a *forward-focused faith and forward-focused health!* Our desire to be healthier, make changes to enhance our health, and be fit for service begins by taking small steps forward.

During this season many experience the “blues.” We often entertain negative notions of ourselves and what we have failed to do. However, I want to encourage you today. Look up, child of God!

One researcher remarks, “Our beliefs control our bodies, our minds, and thus our lives.”¹

In Psalm 42:11, the Bible prescribes, “Why are you in despair, O my soul? Why have you become restless and disquieted within me? Hope in God and wait expectantly for Him, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God” (AMP).

As Ellen White once wrote, “I wish you a happy new year. The old year with its burden of record has passed into eternity. Now let every thought, every feeling be that of remembrance of God’s love.”²



As we cross the threshold from 2022 to 2023, take hold of God’s hand, live forward, and look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. The best is yet to come, for we are nearing our eternal home! ■

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

¹ Bruce H. Lipton, *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter, Miracles* (United Kingdom: Hay House, 2008).
² Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 15. Originally in *Letters and Manuscripts — Volume 5* (1887–1888), 1.

FRESH FAITH

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, if you could get rid of one thing in your life, what would it be and why?

Walk a Mile in My Shoes

by Alannah Tjhatra



Matthew Rasch explains that his childhood was no easy feat. Born in Fredericton, N.B., Matthew bounced between three provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec—as he lived between his divorced parents. He had some health complications as a child, including Tourette syndrome that often acted up when he was younger.

“There were lots of days growing up where I wasn’t included, got picked last in gym class, and got picked on because of my Tourette syndrome,” he explains.

But despite all this, Matthew was not deterred from enjoying his youth. As a young boy, he loved going to hockey games. He and

his siblings spent a lot of time using their imaginations, enjoying the beauty of the outdoors. Matthew explains that even though his parents were separated, they still made sure that he and his siblings were loved and looked after.

“Looking at my past now, I went through a lot for a little boy and a youth. But I’m glad that I experienced what I did,” says Matthew. “[I now] know what it feels like to have pain and be discouraged, to feel rejection—but also what love felt like.”

Matthew’s past taught him to include all types of people, with no exceptions for race, disability, or culture. He was easily able to put himself in another person’s shoes. This prepared him for his career: Matthew is now a homecare worker, which he has been doing for the past seven years. He and his co-workers provide everyday care to individuals in need, such as cleaning, cooking, and feeding. They take clients out to appointments and help them participate in various activities of their interest. Matthew’s past experiences have helped him empathize more deeply, and he is perfectly suited to his job.

“My job comes with challenges,” says Matthew, “but I pray for God to get me through them. He has always delivered.”

Now Matthew lives in Newfoundland with his wife and two children. He is very involved in church life, serving as a deacon and running various church social groups. Matthew advises youth to “always stay humble and kind.” He says, “Remember, no matter the trials you’re facing ... there’s always light at the end of the tunnel. Remember that you are special to God, and that you are loved.” ■

Caryn Cruz

I think I would take away my senioritis, because it’s been affecting my academic performance.

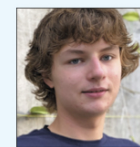


Grace No

I really want to get rid of my scoliosis, because I’m scared of getting spine surgery if my posture gets worse. They stick a metal rod down your spine, and that’s really scary.

Nora Martin

I guess I would like to get rid of any and all bodily irregularities. It would be nice to be completely healthy.

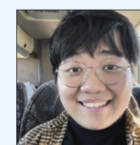


T Bruggemann

Probably anxiety, because I’ve been struggling with that a lot, and it’s been really disruptive to my life and my ability to work.

Valerie Akinyi

I would get rid of the traumatic situations that force people to be in a constant “survival state.”



Yoel Kim

My bad study habits. I think it would be nice to know how to work at a greater efficiency than now.



Q. Sometimes I find the holiday season difficult. It's so busy. Don't get me wrong—I love seeing my family and doing holiday stuff. But with all the obligations and expectations, sometimes I feel like I'm missing something. What would you suggest?

A. **Auntie Lian (AL):** The holiday season can get busy! Sometimes it can feel like you're working through a checklist of to-dos instead of enjoying the season! When there's so much we're trying to squeeze in, we don't realize that we end up squeezing things out: like time with God.

Pastor Shawn (PS): When you feel anxious that you're missing something, or something feels out of place, it's important to draw closer to God. The Bible says in Psalm 94:19, "In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul" (NKJV). Jesus loves you unconditionally; He wants you to live without anxiety and live life with abundance (John 10:10).

AL: Let me make a suggestion. This season, consider drawing closer to Jesus by doing an act of kindness for someone. This is a great time of year to do it, as most of the world is speaking about Jesus and is open to such gestures.

PS: For example, Auntie Lian and I always buy a set of Tim Hortons gift cards and sometimes write Scripture verses on them. In the course of our day, when we see people in need or a person who needs cheering up, we give it to them with a short word of encouragement.

AL: You could also try other things like purchasing warm socks, hat, and gloves and giving them to homeless people in your neighbourhood. If you don't have money to purchase new things, ask everyone in your family to go through their closet and look for clothing that is too small or gently used. Drop

this clothing off at your church's Community Service Department so they can get it to people in need.

Also, consider "adopting" an elderly person in your church and doing something nice for them, like buying them groceries or visiting them and listening to their stories of how they grew up. Many would love the company and appreciate knowing that you care.

Whatever you choose, be sure to select something that's meaningful to you too. Otherwise, you'll just be adding one more task to a very busy holiday season.

Serving Jesus brings a sense of joy, connection to Him, and blessing to yourself and those around you. That's what the Bible means when it says, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38, NIV).

PS: This holiday season can be different. Find a way to do an act of kindness in the name of Jesus for your family, friends, and/or your community. You might just find that your feeling of something missing becomes filled with God's love.

May the God of hope fill you and your family with all joy and peace. Happy holidays! ■

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

DON'T MISS IT!

"Instead of worrying about how you're not 'living your best life,' realize that this, right here, is your best, your worst, your messiest, dullest, most exciting, and most beautiful life."

I love the holidays, but they can be *really* busy. Between church programs, exam season, and relatives visiting, there's hardly a moment to breathe. Snap your fingers and that quick little break is over, you're back to normal, and you're wondering where the time went.

Life is like that a lot, I find. There's always something dragging us from one moment to the next, from one place to another, back and forth in our busy schedules. And in the blink of an eye it's been a week, a month, a year. We go and go, and I'm afraid that in the constant running, a lot of beautiful things slip through the cracks. There are so many good things in the world that go unnoticed, so many rays of sunshine that we ignore because we're only focused on the clouds up ahead.

I'm no exception. When I was in high school, I couldn't wait to graduate. I had a long list in my mind of all the things that would be better once high school was finished—like this magical idea of university where it would be nothing but sunshine and roses. Yes, I was a wee bit naive. When I finally did graduate from high school, I found that the next phase of my life was hard and nothing like I'd imagined. And I began to miss the time before. I realized how much I'd failed to appreciate, how many beautiful things I'd completely missed.

What I failed to understand was that every slice of life has good parts and bad parts. Even something as small as a day will not be all good (or all bad). Instead of worrying about how you're not "living your best life," realize that this, right here, is your best, your worst, your messiest, dullest, most exciting, and most beautiful life. Live each moment like it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience—because it is.

Friends, there is always beauty to be found if you look for it. The closer you look at the world around you and the people around you, the more you will find to admire. The Bible says,

"This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24, NKJV). I've learned to try and take that attitude forward with me in the morning, and I'm much happier because of it.

Life is a gift from God, and it should be treated as such. Every day is an opportunity to show love to someone, to help your friends and neighbours, to spend time in nature, and to spend time with God. There's so much to be seen when we try to look through His eyes.

Long ago in a little town called Bethlehem, people were very, very busy. They were busy with a census, busy making extra meals for their distant relatives who'd come to town. The streets were crowded with people who were probably cross and irritable from all the craziness, and what did they miss? They missed God coming to earth in a barn two houses down the street. The little town of Bethlehem had no idea. The angels singing, the star, the Saviour—they missed it. They missed it all because their eyes were closed.

Let's not do what they did. Let's not close ourselves off to the wonder of the lives God has given us. Instead, I'm going to be looking for His blessings and His actions because I don't want to miss a second of it. There's so much to see, so much to enjoy. Let's not let it pass us by. Let's let this holiday season remind us of our Saviour's love and remind us to open our eyes to all the beautiful, wonderful, amazing things we might've missed. ■

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 3)

In this final segment I want to share some of the challenges you need to be aware of during the installation of your equipment. First, remember the primary purpose of upgrading the audiovisual equipment in your church is about spreading the gospel to the world. That means, as you push into this new evangelistic field, the devil will push back! That includes during your installation of equipment.

Lesson 3: Keep Calm and Pray

In our church's journey, we had multiple discussions about the equipment and about how, where, and when it would be installed with our AV installer. However, in any large project there will be unforeseen circumstances.

For example, in our case, existing under-flooring channels were changed to accommodate all the new AV wiring. Location of equipment had to be changed. Due to COVID, some of our ordered equipment was not available at the time of installation, and shipping dates rolled over into the following year. Fortunately, our installer provided us loaner equipment to tide us over.

Also, as the AV installations were part of a larger church renovation, delays in construction meant delays in AV installation. The best thing to do when such problems arise is to keep praying and remain flexible. In the end we were able to overcome all challenges by the time we reopened.

With installation complete, the installer conducted tests to confirm the integrity of the new cabling, speakers, and other systems. Once done, we tested the system with a live praise team and musicians in attendance. Again, the enemy was in full force with audio problems developing from a malfunction in a new piece of equipment. Last-minute arrangements had to be made for our worship service until we could get a replacement. Again, we prayed and stayed flexible. God came through and allowed our

first stream to be a great success. The sound quality was even, the cameras were clear, and the music well-balanced.

Lesson 4: Train, Train, Train

At this point I want to say a word about training. In my experience, most AV teams have hand-me-down knowledge. Just like the game broken telephone, the last person receiving that knowledge has accumulated operator error that impacts the service. If your church is investing in equipment, be sure to also invest in training your AV team. In our church we budgeted for training to ensure our team not only knows how to use the equipment properly but also considers things such as camera transitions and that music is mixed properly both in the church and on the livestream.

We're planning to implement our first training in the next few weeks. Regular training not only builds up skills of your members but is also vital for effective media ministry.

This is the journey our church took toward getting a new AV system. In summary prepare prayerfully, plan purposefully, pursue the work with persistence and flexibility, and prepare your people with training.

If you follow these guidelines, your church will be ready for lights, camera, worship—sharing the three angels' messages in high definition both in the church and throughout the world!

I want to express my sincere thanks to Cleve from Sandy Audio Visual who was our installer. They were invaluable in sharing their knowledge, acquiring quality products, and applying their expertise to ensure our equipment was operational by the deadline. ■

Shawn Ellis (sellis@adventistontario.org) is the associate pastor of Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church in Markham, Ont.

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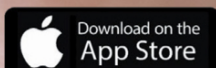


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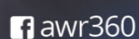
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What a Gift!

"It is only when we are feeling very weak that we can experience His strength. It is when we feel afraid that He holds out the gift of peace."

Have you ever received a gift you were disappointed in? Maybe something you were pretty sure you didn't want? And have you ever kept it and realized later that it was the perfect gift—just what you needed?

I'm pretty sure trials and difficulties, and even tragedies, can fall into this category. Think about it: if we are "in Christ," nothing can touch us except if it goes through Jesus first. He tests it out and, "knowing that we are dust" and knowing how much we trust Him, He allows only what will be for our benefit and for the benefit of those watching.

He never wastes pain that is given to Him to heal. I see this again and again. The promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom 8:28, KJV) should give us confidence, but I know from personal experience that it can take a while to see or understand the benefit of what is happening. It can take a while to be brave enough to ask God to make us willing to accept the character modification He is trying to accomplish in us through those difficulties we'd like to get rid of. It can take time to admit that we need that modification ...

Why do we struggle so much in this area? Why are we shocked and horrified when bad things happen to us? Do we not trust that God knows what to allow?

We would like to know the mind of God, but it is so far above our ability to comprehend! It would be like trying to explain geophysics to a two-year-old. What we *can* know is His heart. When we experience enough of Him to understand that His love for us, as an individual person, is beyond our ability to comprehend, yet we truly know it in our inmost being ... we begin to understand that we can trust Him with the difficult and painful parts of life.

We trust enough to give Him our feelings and ask for His in their place, and we begin to experience patience, longsuffering. We can leap for joy, knowing that there is a grand purpose behind everything we experience, good or bad. It is easy to believe God loves us when things go well. It takes an intimate knowledge of His heart to believe it when things are going very wrong.

It is when things go wrong that we are comforted by His precious presence and feel the hugs in His promises to never leave or forsake us.

It is only when we are feeling very weak that we can experience His strength. It is when we feel afraid that He holds out the gift of peace.

God loves to comfort and strengthen us. He loves to put a smile on our face and peace in our heart. When we refuse to give up our pain, sadness, or anger, we say no to those gifts. Let us say yes instead and see what He will do! ■

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

Where Are They Now

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

Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer

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

George Ivkov: I was the eldest of four children born in a small town of former Yugoslavia. Father died of TB in 1948. Life was difficult, but the Adventist Church hosted activities for children and youth. Churches were closed during the communist regime, so we met in private homes. Education was not easy either. Missing school on Sabbath meant our parents paid heavy penalties.

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

G: After finishing elementary and high school, I moved to Novi Sad [the second-largest city in Serbia, which used to be part of Yugoslavia] to apprentice in mechanics and technology. I was involved in the many activities of the church. I was baptized on March 23, 1953, and in September 1955 was drafted into the army. I finished military duties in June 1957 and, in September, enrolled in the Adventist theology program in Rakovica.

M: What led you to choose a ministerial career?

G: Being involved in the church activities as a youth even while in the army (the young people at Zagreb church included me on Sabbaths), I had a great desire to be a pastor. I prayed constantly. God answered, and I praise Him for that.

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

G: After graduating from theology in 1960, I served as



George and Ethel Ivkov



an intern youth pastor in the city of Sremska Mitrovica [in the now autonomous province of Vojvodina, Serbia]. Shortly after, the conference administration called me to Novi Sad as youth pastor. Subsequently, I was given a district of five churches with a conference mentor. I conducted public meetings in most of my churches using a projector and slides, which at the time was new technology. The Lord blessed, and many souls were baptized. Glory be to God!

In 1970, I immigrated to Canada. That same year the Toronto Yugoslavian Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor was retiring, and he recommended me as his successor, but it did not materialize that way—at least not then. Instead, the conference president, Philip Moores, assigned me as an assistant to the Yugoslavian pastor and advised me to join literature evangelism to improve my English. Again, the Lord blessed. Psalm 125:1 says, “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.”

M: *What has been the highlight of your career?*

G: There are three.

One is watching how God opens doors for organizing and building churches and schools. In 1973, I was asked to pastor the Glengarry church and care for the newly baptized group in Cornwall, Ont. There we opened a country school with eight students. After three or four years, we organized the company into a church with more than 30 members and approximately \$30,000 in the church building fund. In 1976, I was called to pastor the Sarnia church, which was in a building program. We completed the project, opened a school, and dedicated that church.

In 1998, I applied to Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich., to work on my M.Div. Before I finished, the Toronto Yugoslavian pastor retired, and the conference president called me to be the pastor, stating, “You are good to us as you are. We do not have a budget for another ethnic pastor. You are one of them; you have to take over.” Not wanting to lose English work, I was also given the Oakville church, which was renting from the United Church. Our members were praying to have their own building, and God was working. Every Sunday we canvassed the area farmers to sell us a piece of land, and the Lord worked on the heart of one who sold us more than three acres, which is now the Bronte church.

I have fond memories of every church I pastored, but Agape Temple was special. It was the only predominantly West Indian congregation in Toronto with a Caucasian pastor. They spoiled me with delicious Jamaican cooking. Although they worshipped in rented facilities, we purchased property and were able to have a “mortgage burning” ceremony within three years.

God has been at work in all my churches, and no matter where I found myself, He helped us improve the

building, open schools, or raise funds for a building.

The second highlight occurred while in the Toronto Yugoslavian Church. We reprinted 18,000 copies of *The Great Controversy* in Serbo-Croatian, and the division helped finance its mass distribution.

The third highlight came in 2002, a couple of weeks after retirement. Conference president Derrick Nichols invited me to be a field secretary to promote the conference’s Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF), encouraging members to contribute the equivalent of \$2 per member per week or \$104 per year for conference church buildings. I was pleased because I noticed the majority of Adventist congregations were meeting in rented facilities, or the buildings were in disrepair, or the mortgage interest rates were exceptionally high. So, it was a delight to be part of the CBIF promotion plan.

M: *Tell us about your family.*

G: In the former Yugoslavia, all intern pastors were on a two-year probationary period before marriage. We were not even allowed to date. These years tested our moral character.

On Oct. 21, 1962, I married a beautiful, musically talented young woman, Ethel, who was a great asset to my ministry. Ethel, a pastor’s daughter, working as a unit secretary at Branson and York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill, instinctively knew how to be a pastor’s wife, treating and loving everybody equally. She also served as a literature evangelist for several years while we were in Cornwall and Sarnia.

We have two sons—Robert and Edward—and five grandchildren. Both sons graduated from Kingsway College and Andrews University. Robert is a scientist working at Johns Hopkins University Hospital (Baltimore, Md.) researching prostate and brain cancer. His children are Alex, Evie, and Michael.

Edward graduated with a master of psychology from the University of Colorado. He and his wife have an online business. They have two children: Tristan and Erika.

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

G: Ethel and I live in Newmarket, Ont. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we spent winters in Florida, where I was involved in the Venice church. In summer I was involved in the Barrie church as an elder, taking my turn at preaching. Unfortunately, with my health now compromised by age, I am not able to do the thing I loved most—preaching. But I still love people, my church’s teachings, and even church politics (to a point).

If I had to do it again, I would change nothing. I would choose the same duties in the same churches with my same helpmeet. ■



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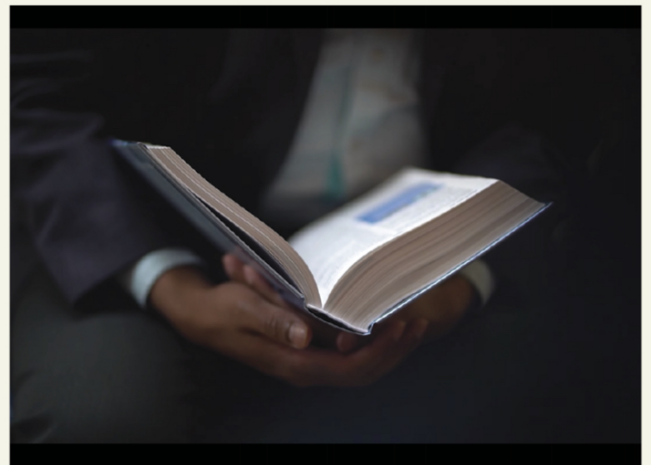
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RAINMAK



The Praying Cake Lady

Elfrieda Epp is the poster child for the old adage “Little becomes much when God is in it,” and her almost 30 years as an educator reflects that premise beautifully.

Before her career, Elfrieda had no hope of ever becoming a teacher, since her own education amounted to only six years. She was born in Paraguay and completed those six years of schooling in Uruguay. She grew up in a Mennonite family, where her alcoholic father would walk her mother and the five children—all girls—to church and then take himself to the local bar.

“Lord, please help my father to stop drinking,” Elfrieda prayed earnestly for years as a young girl.

Her little prayer became much, though, when the family moved to Canada and her beloved father gave his life to Christ. Elfrieda herself became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1978, and she says, “It’s the one thing I have never regretted.”

So how did a teaching career materialize from only six years of education?

Elfrieda was living in Edmonton and one day said to a very good friend, “I so would like to learn more in life! I would love to work in a classroom, but that will never happen.” She recalls, “He asked, ‘Why not,’ and I replied, ‘I only have six years of schooling, and I only speak English; I can’t write or read English!’”

There’s a lovely quote that “anything is possible when you have the right people to support you.” And, of course, anything is possible with God! Put those two things together, and you get a friend who quickly made some phone calls,

resulting in Elfrieda completing Grades 9–12 in just 18 months!

After graduating from university as a teacher, she taught high school for two years in Vancouver, followed by several years of teaching Grades 3–6, followed by her favourite—kindergarten—for the remainder of her career. In between those years, Elfrieda earned a master’s degree.

Elfrieda’s eyes sparkle as she reminisces about her youngest students. “If I had to live my life over again, I would teach kindergarten. The kids were amazing! They love learning, and they actually love coming to school. I taught in the public schools, and I was able to have deep conversations about my loving God and how He answers prayers.”

Religious holidays were an especially opportune time for Elfrieda to share her faith with her students. “Every Christmas and Easter, I would draw the story on the whiteboard. God always put a Christian child in my class, and they always wanted to know the Christmas and Easter story.”

Of course, it wasn’t always rosy teaching young, rambunctious children. “There were times,” Elfrieda calls to mind, “that I had 22 children in my classroom, and many were ESL. Whenever I got a little frustrated with them fighting amongst themselves, I would go to the back storage room and say a prayer. When I came out, they would ask, ‘What do you do in the back room?’ I told them that I went to pray for them and for patience for me.” She remembers fondly, “There were times when they wanted to play, but I needed them to finish a project, and I would put my face

in my hands and say, ‘Oh, oh, oh.’ Some of them would say, ‘Ms. Epp, do you need to go pray?’ Or they would say, ‘Go, go pray, Ms. Epp.’”

It is said of teachers, that you will learn much more from their caring and hard work than from their style. Elfrieda’s caring ways empowered her students to thrive and grow. There’s a reason she would frequently find little notes scrawled with “I love you” and hearts under her classroom door.

Throughout all her years of teaching, she always made sure each student’s birthday was celebrated with a cake or cupcake. During lunch hours, she would teach students how to knit scarves for the homeless. Every Christmas, every student in the school took home one of Elfrieda’s gingerbread cookies. She took students to doctors’ appointments, visited them in hospital, helped arrange several funerals and, on one occasion, sat with a mother and her two daughters for three days as their father lay in a coma before he died. She was able to sit with the two sisters at the funeral and explain that their father was merely asleep.

She advocated for students to receive dental care at a reduced rate. She taught them about hygiene, and about saying their prayers. Each of her students received a bottle of water they had to drink daily, and she always kept a bowl of fruit on her desk, modelling and encouraging good health habits. She shares, “When school started in September, the parents would tell me their child didn’t drink water or eat fruit, but those parents didn’t understand the influence a teacher or another student

ERS

could have." The parents certainly appreciated the open-door policy she had for them.

Food has always been a big part of Elfrieda's life. "I grew up cooking for 10 people, and I baked bread three times a week in Uruguay in a brick oven outside. I had to gather the wood and grind the flour by hand, as we had no electricity." Now retired, and having fallen in love with cake decorating, today Elfrieda uses her years of baking experience to bake birthday cakes for people in rehabilitation in the Kelowna area. She explains about this delicious ministry, "While they are in rehab, they are not allowed visits from friends or family. I like to personalize the cakes by knowing something about what the individual likes. I think the person receiving the cake appreciates it. I know how happy the cakes made my students when I was teaching!"

Migrant workers, most of whom are Spanish-speaking, are also happy for Elfrieda's ministrations as she helps them with medical appointments and language translation.

Elfrieda is well-loved at her local fire department. As she had done with her students on Sept. 11 of every year, she continues to bake and deliver pastries for the fire department staff to show appreciation for their selfless work. It's purely humour, but they've told her that in the event of any local disaster, she will be the first one rescued!

She ponders, "I'm not sure if I can call it a ministry. I just love cooking and baking, and God has blessed me that I'm able to do this for others. I appreciate what God has given me today and that God is very real in my life. Many times,

when I deliver pastries, it gives me an opportunity to tell people of how great God is. I can tell them the miracles didn't happen just in Bible times but that they're all around us today." Well, that all sounds like a wonderful, God-given ministry to this writer!

Elfrieda reminds us all that little can become much when we seek after God.

"All I am, and all I know, and all I have, I owe to God," she asserts. "My God has and will supply all my needs. What a friend I have in Jesus." ■

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.



Elfrieda Epp



LITTLE

BECOMES

MUCH

TAPPING INTO THE POWER
OF COMMUNITY TO PUT FOOD
ON CANADIAN TABLES

It was a chilly evening, and a single mother was struggling to make ends meet. She had a waitressing job, but it was barely covering her expenses. Walking into the kitchen, she noticed the growing pile of unpaid bills on the table. They taunted her with their past due dates. She sighed. Something had to give. Proceeding to the fridge in an attempt to feed herself and her two small girls, she grew anxious, knowing that tonight's dinner could be their last. She opened the fridge, and to her dismay, only an egg and a few shrivelled carrots sat untouched on the cold shelves. It wasn't enough. *As long as the girls eat something*, she thought. Immediately, the gnawing emptiness in her stomach intensified at the reality that tonight she would go to bed hungry. Like millions of Canadians, this mother was food insecure.

The land of our nation is one of the richest in food production. Year after year, farmers grow corn, soybeans, oats, and other agricultural products, exporting them worldwide. However, the uprise in the number of families currently overcome by food insecurity magnifies our stark reality. According to Food Banks Canada, approximately 7 million Canadians (equivalent to more than one in five people) have gone hungry at least once between March 2020 and 2022,¹ highlighting that hunger can secretly affect individuals belonging to our schools, churches, and communities.

Amid this hunger crisis, members of the Lethbridge Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lethbridge, Alta., developed the ADRA Delivers Food Hamper program, a non-profit food bank providing food, clothing, and other essential items to less fortunate families and individuals within the city. Like many other Adventist churches that were closed during the pandemic, the members of the Lethbridge church wondered what they could do to remain actively involved in ministry. "This ministry was born out of some head scratching and prayer," states James Wesley, the church's pastor.

"When COVID first happened, a lot of people were left without a source of food," explains Walt Kalkan, project co-ordinator and church elder. "There were individuals who were just too ill

or too fearful to go out and shop." He elaborates, "We contacted food wholesalers, manufacturers, distributors, even grocery stores, and asked them if they had any excess food we could take to individuals who were food insecure."

To the church's surprise, many existing organizations in the city were immediately willing to contribute to their growing initiative, especially established food banks.

Today a large portion of food items that the ADRA Delivers Food Hamper program provides comes from larger food banks. "They continue to give us excess food, which we pick up on an almost daily basis and deliver to those in need," adds Kalkan.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

The ADRA Delivers Food Hamper program comprises several willing and committed church volunteers who collect, sort, and package boxes of good quality food for families in need. On Sabbath afternoons, volunteers load up cars with food hampers for delivery to their respective locations. Furthermore, many families receiving support from the program pick up their hamper from the church directly in a drive-through format where volunteers help load the goods right into recipients' cars.

Maria Jovanovic, program volunteer, shares, "Once a month, we also collaborate with food banks in the city to have a food drive. We pick up boxes and ensure there are enough products within them, adding to them if necessary to ensure families receive the supplies they need."

Kalkan adds, "We supply and provide food for those that are food insecure, and that number is growing more and more every day."

Initially, the church's hospitality department began by sharing donated bread with its church members and anyone else they knew of who was in need. Mavis Olsen, the church's hospitality co-ordinator, shares, "Over time, we began expanding as more and more food kept coming in. We began searching on Facebook Marketplace for fridges and freezers to keep food in." Today, the program has grown, helping nearly 100



"IMMEDIATELY, THE GNAWING EMPTINESS IN HER STOMACH INTENSIFIED AT THE REALITY THAT TONIGHT SHE WOULD GO TO BED HUNGRY."

families and individuals per week.

Kalkan explains, "We deliver to Indigenous reserves, refugees, immigrants, single parents, individuals with disabilities, among others. Whatever is left, we share out of our back door." He adds, "Within the last two years, we have physically delivered over 1 million meals, free of charge."

"We want to make sure people have what they need to provide for their families, especially those who are new to Canada," notes Jovanovic.

Currently, the ADRA Delivers Food Hamper program serves many families who have emigrated from Afghanistan, Syria, and Rwanda. Olsen explains, "By God's direction, we connected with new refugees from Afghanistan. Coincidentally, I had a chair for sale on Facebook Marketplace, and a young man inquired about it. I met him. He looked at the chair. He told me his story. He, his wife, parents, brother, and sister, had all arrived in the country with nothing, so I just connected with them. The whole family eventually came to the church for winter clothing, and we gave them everything they needed."

Although many church volunteers have been able to help provide for the needs of many individuals, the friendships formed through service have truly impacted recipients and volunteers alike. "You're not just dropping food off. You're making connections. You're making friendships. It's a nice sense of community," states Jovanovic.

Olsen adds, "Through our friendship with this Afghan family, we have been able to reach out to other immigrant families in Lethbridge." Due to one connection, the blessing of friendship and provision has extended to many other families in need.

Jovanovic emphasizes, "When we started doing our deliveries, we had about four newly immigrated families we were serving. Now it has exponentially expanded to 25 to 28 families a week."

1 Canadian Food Insecurity By the Numbers, "Maclean's, Aug. 15, 2022, <https://www.macleans.ca/food-insecurity/canadian-food-insecurity-by-the-numbers/>



Walt Kalkan (top left) and Pastor James Wesley (top right), along with dedicated volunteers, have grown the Lethbridge Seventh-day Adventist Church food bank to the ADRA Delivers Food Hamper

“THE SECRET TO RECEIVING FOOD BANK RESOURCES HAS SIMPLY BEEN REACHING OUT TO OTHERS AND ASKING.”



A CHURCH GARDEN

While the church’s food bank receives many food donations and support from other food banks and grocery stores, one challenge they have faced is providing families in need with fresh produce. “We often get a lot of things that might have a shelf life, things that might preserve well,” shares Pastor Wesley. “But when it comes to fresh food, particularly seasonal produce, we find moments where the food banks don’t usually have a lot of that.” As a result, the food bank developed a sustainable, low-maintenance eco-garden to plant and harvest fresh produce for the church’s food bank to provide.

Wesley notes, “This garden was born out of a phone call and relationships asking.” Fortunately, the church managed to obtain a small gardening space by connecting with city organizations and municipalities. “These gardens have been really helpful in supplementing our hampers with fresh produce,” highlights Wesley. “With minimal ... effort ... we get quite a haul.”

A WILLING HEART

Undoubtedly, the ADRA Delivers Food Hamper program has been the pandemic’s silver lining for many families in Lethbridge. Starting a food bank requires hard work, but it’s not impossible. Wesley elaborates that volunteers are critical to any new church ministry. “The hardest part of any ministry and any program is finding ... volunteers who are going to be committed and put in the

hours and the time.”

He adds, “The food bank is nothing extraordinary. We’re not doing anything super complicated. We don’t have a lot of money here at this church. We’re not a huge church with lots of people to pool from. We’ve just got a handful of committed volunteers and someone who had a passion for the project.”

Although many church members donate their time and energy to the program, others support the initiative through prayers and finances. Many volunteers are “consistently and persistently helping. Yet, we have many people within our church community giving financially to help support the program too, and that helps a lot,” he says.

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

One common concern with beginning any new initiative is limited financial resources. However, Wesley encourages, “If you’re thinking, ‘Well, where are we



There's more to the story! Watch a video from the Lethbridge food bank by scanning the QR code above.



program that includes fresh food from the church's eco-garden and clothing.

going to get all this food from and how expensive is this going to be? We have not spent tons of money. The vast majority of what we have spent has not been supplying our kitchen, store, or shelves. That stuff has come free to us." The secret to receiving food bank resources has simply been reaching out to others and asking.

"It's all about making connections with food banks, municipal interagencies, and your local Costcos, Safeways, and Sobeys, getting to know them and letting them know you exist," notes Wesley. While limited food supply can seem like an issue, he says, "Although need looks a little bit different here, supply is abundant here. Once you build those relationships ... they will begin to give you a text or a call when they need to move something. The hard part for us isn't finding the food. We're stuffed to the rafters. The hard part for us is identifying need and marketing and making sure people know we're here." He continues,

"We've found ways to make a little bit go a long way. We've also found some support to start certain things like our eco-garden ... from the SDACC and ADRA Canada. Those things have been essential because we've been stretching dollars."

Jovanovic reminds, "When you ask, God just gives."

Pastor Wesley adds, "If our medium-sized church here can do it, lots of churches can too."

A LEGACY THAT KEEPS GIVING

Although the program has blessed many families and individuals in the Lethbridge community, serving has equally rewarded volunteers. Jovanovic states, "The blessing we feel we are giving is nothing compared to the one we receive in serving."

Jovanovic has been volunteering with the ADRA Delivers program for over a year. She further emphasized that one of her most rewarding service

experiences has been volunteering with her family, especially her teenage son. "He has witnessed how God provides for these people," she says, noting how God's mighty and moving hand has become real for him.

Service is an opportunity for God's children to put their faith into action. Scripture repeatedly reminds that service is a vital thread in the tapestry of the Christian life. While the church exists to share the gospel hope, the most effective method for doing so is Christ's method alone—service. This holiday season consider how your church can reach out to those less fortunate and develop a legacy of service that lasts until Jesus returns (Matt. 25:34–40). ■

Angelica Sanchez is a freelance writer for the Canadian Adventist Messenger.



Peace Above the Storm

“There is a lot of anger and pain everywhere. But there is also peace available from Jesus.”

S*teps to Christ* is a spiritual book that literature evangelists like to carry. It has been translated into 165 languages with millions of copies distributed around the world. This little book is divided into 13 chapters and helps people develop a genuine relationship with Jesus—the basis of all true peace.

Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in anxiety, depression, and anger throughout the world. Canada has not been exempt from the impact of Satan’s fury. This is why *Steps to Christ* is becoming more and more relevant. Some time ago, our publishing house came out with a different name for the book: *Peace Above the Storm*. The content is the same but is presented in a larger format, with beautiful nature pictures, additional Bible promises, and short stories to introduce each chapter. In the last few years, this different book format has been given away by the thousands in Canada! Michael shared one such copy ...

Michael served as a student literature evangelist in Toronto this past summer. As he approached a home, he saw a man sitting in his parked car. He kindly approached the car, but the man told him to leave and then peppered Michael with curses and profanity. Michael was stunned but respectfully walked away as he heard the man’s daughter saying, “Daddy, you’re so rude!”

Michael finished the street and then rejoined the team leader. He sat in the minivan where they both waited for his street partner to finish her last home. While sitting in the van, the same “rude” man started to approach the van. He spoke with the leader and asked about a young man who had come to his home. When Michael saw that the man had come in peace, he came out of the backseat of the van to meet the man. You could see that the Holy Spirit was working on the man

as he humbly and sincerely apologized and asked to see what Michael had to share. Michael took out the book *Peace Above the Storm* and the man was very glad to receive it. It was exactly what he needed as he was going through a lot and was dealing with anger issues.

A similar experience happened to Renée some time ago. When she arrived at a man named Mike’s house, he yelled at her to leave before she even introduced herself. She left, but a few minutes later, Mike tracked her down and asked her to return to the house. She quickly prayed and felt impressed to follow him. Upon reaching the house, he opened the door and asked her, “What do you see?”

She answered, “Nothing?”

Indeed, the house was completely empty! While Mike was gone fishing, his wife had left him and had taken everything in the house. He was so sorry to have unleashed his anger on Renée.

After praying with Mike, Renée gave him *Peace Above the Storm*. She also gladly signed him up for Bible studies.

There is a lot of anger and pain everywhere. But there is also peace available from Jesus. Many don’t know where to find freedom from worry, guilt, and fear. Why not carry a small *Steps to Christ* with you the next time you go out? With a simple prayer for guidance, God will impress you where to leave it or who to give it to. Let’s share peace. Let’s start with Jesus. ■

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.



BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Adventist educators are passionate about how we can best meet the needs of a quickly changing society while maintaining our focus on core Christian values. We asked teachers across British Columbia to share how some of the current changes in education at large are impacting them and their students.

How are the intentional and interactive ways you are presenting spiritual lessons inspiring your students?

“My students and I truly enjoy using the *Encounter* curriculum. The stories and activities are engaging and relevant, and my students get excited about the variety of experiences provided in this curriculum. My students are going home and enthusiastically telling their parents about Boy David and the Armour of God.”

—Alysia Carlson, Okanagan Christian School

“We learn how God would like us to be and what special gifts He has given us. After our discussions, I ask each child what they want to pray about. Their requests were usually about what they wanted, but as time went on, their prayers changed from being about them to being about others. They even started wanting to pray out loud, individually. We can’t even have lunch until we sing our ‘pray’ song.”

—Teresa Heare, Avalon Adventist Christian Academy

Life service opportunities are a big focus in today’s classrooms and the global community. How are our schools preparing students for this?

“Almost every year Fraser Valley Adventist Academy takes students to Camp Hope to assist in cleaning and preparing the camp for the summer activities. We have also participated in international mission trips, helped a constituent church with a home renovation project each year, assisted with a free clothing store for the community, held fundraisers for ADRA, collected socks for homeless people, and created cards for care home residents.”

—Linda King, Fraser Valley Adventist Academy

Education has made some major shifts in the last 10 years. What is one change that you have made that has

profoundly affected learning for your students?

“Our kindergarten and Grade 2 students really look forward to Forest Tuesdays when we explore God’s creation up close at our local forest park. They learn important skills such as risk assessment, investigation, viewing from different perspectives, and asking tough questions. At the end of the day, memories are made and brought back to the classroom for real experiences that they can transfer to book learning. It is a life-changing experience using nature as our classroom!”

—Bobie Tremblay, Deer Lake School

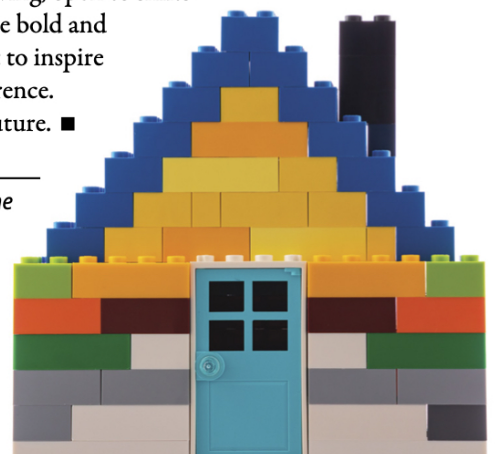
Many of our schools are experiencing enrolment increases because families of other faith backgrounds are seeing the value of Adventist education, a safe and diverse learning environment that incorporates Christian values into daily living. Has your school been impacted by this growth?

“It has been and continues to be a blessing to witness God in action at PVCA as He provides for us and as He fills our classrooms to the brim with families who are dedicated to Him and to our school community! I believe our growth is largely due to the powerful faith of our school board members. The challenge is when we must turn families away because we have no room for them.”

—Rosemary Fischer, Pleasant Valley Christian Academy

Adventist education has always been, and will continue to be, a valuable ministry within our communities and a vital part of fulfilling the mission of the church. Our educators are committed to keep growing, open to shifts in thinking, willing to be bold and different, all in an effort to inspire learners to make a difference. They are building our future. ■

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



Investing in “Our Own Backyard”:

A Better World Partners With the Saruk Centre for Leadership Development



Students helping at the Red Deer Food Bank

Providing clean water in Kenya ... creating classrooms for girls in Afghanistan ... developing clinics in the Masai Mara ... People typically associate A Better World (ABW) with overseas projects; however, ABW also invests in “our own backyard” as it partners with the Saruk Centre for Leadership Development (SCLD) to develop humanitarian leaders— young people who have the vision and motivation to serve Canada and the world.

As SCLD founder Elvin Saruk states, “The world is in dire need of new leaders—leaders of moral integrity, sound purpose, and clear vision.” For this reason, the Saruk Centre conducts a three-year program with a mission to develop “effective leaders by enhancing life skills, inspiring values through service, and expanding leadership abilities through instruction, experience, and mentorship.”

On Sept. 22–24, 2022, thirty undergraduate students from Burman University and Red Deer Polytechnic participated in the first weekend seminar of the 2022/23 academic year. They interacted with Elvin Saruk (senior VP, Sherritt International Corporation), ABW co-founder Eric Rajah (owner, Advanced Systems), board members from SCLD and ABW, and special speakers.

Sharing Information

Future leaders explored concepts of leadership, vision, and motivation with Dan Wilson (corporate lawyer, business executive, and entrepreneur), Dr. Kelvin Hill (dentist and SCLD board member), and Kent Hehr (lawyer, former MLA and MP, VP Strategic Partnerships and Growth for Fueling Brains).

Students learned about building an effective, accountable

team from Scott Sankey (investor and finance leader); practised team building under the guidance of Ron Schafer (associate professor of physical education at Burman University); and learned how to become more effective leaders by honing their social and emotional skills with registered counselling therapist Delicia Adams.

Participants mentioned how much they appreciated the “genuine care” of the board members and special presenters.

One student noted, “I was surrounded by people who genuinely want me to be successful in my work and in my personal development. I will apply what I’ve learned in my daily life.”

Growth

Students received a book from Gail Misesk (educator and board member) and took a survey to discover their personal strengths. They explored time management and mentorship.

One participant commented, “The weekend felt like a community because everyone was so involved and committed to learn.”

Interaction

There were walks on the beach, discussions, and campfire stories. Participants commented that they liked “the storytelling and life experiences that the speakers shared.”

They felt that their eyes were opened when they realized that there are many “different perspectives and techniques to being successful.”

Service

On Saturday morning the group visited the Red Deer Food Bank. Director Mitch Thompson was overwhelmed: “These 30 students accomplished as much in three hours as our regular volunteers would have done in three weeks. This was an overwhelming act of service.”

Some of the student participants felt that this activity was the highlight of the weekend.

One future leader summed up the weekend with these words: “It was incredibly influential. I learned both leadership skills and life skills—takeaways that will influence my life and the lives of those around me. I’m beyond grateful for this opportunity and experience.”

The world will be a better place because future leaders have the opportunity to learn attitudes and practise skills when they participate in the Saruk Centre’s Leadership Development program. ■

Denise Dick Herr is professor emeritus for English at Burman University.

The Fullness of Time:

An Old Vision Yields New Beginning for Church in Maskwacis



Above: Chief Vernon Saddleback and Chief Randy Ermineskin suit up for a tour by Werner Brouwer (Eagle Builders, right) along with Alberta Conference secretary Wayne Williams and Maskwacis pastor Tsholo Sebetlela. The chiefs joined Conference MAC Building and Steering Committees in a meeting with the builder selected for the centre.

Left: Ed Desjarlais' 1956 CUC yearbook photo was taken shortly after his discovery of the Adventist message and the hope he wanted to share with his people in Maskwacis.



Above: In 2009, Pastor Peter Ford brought teachers and staff from MANS to see the site of the future Mamawi Atosketan Centre, dedicating it in a prayer circle—a tradition familiar in Indigenous as well as Adventist communities.

Right: The first Adventist school in Maskwacis opened in 1984 in the lean-to of a church.



"I'd like to see something built for my people," Ed confided to his friend, "like a church or a school or a centre of some kind."

At Christmas, we love to retell the wonderful story of God coming to be with us. Its power continues to renew hope. It was this power that Ed Desjarlais, a young Cree man, discovered in the dismal Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton, where in 1955 he was being treated, along with other Indigenous people, for tuberculosis (TB). Inhaling coal dust in the Lac LaBiche, Alta., mines where he'd worked from the age of 15 had destroyed one of his lungs. As he lay waiting to die, Ed read an Adventist tract.

God revealed himself that day, and Ed became a different person. He couldn't rest, thinking about the hopelessness of so many Indigenous people. He went to CUC to learn all he could to make a difference for them.

"I'd like to see something built for my people," Ed confided to his friend and co-worker at the college furniture factory, Ed Reimche, "like a church or a school or a centre of some kind." Reimche never forgot those words. Desjarlais persistently took his vision to the Alberta Conference, and a Native Ministries department headed by John Howard was created. Ed was ecstatic but kept pressing for a centre where his people could worship and gain practical skills as well as heavenly knowledge.

Branch Sabbath schools started in Maskwacis, and Sandra Kiehlbauch Tomms, the first teacher in the Adventist school that opened in 1984 on the reserve, recalled Ed's always-supportive

encouragement in that very tough first year.

Eventually, MANS was built and opened in 2003 as a Grade 1 through 9 elementary, with the high school opening in 2018. All the while, pastors worked in the Maskwacis community, and a small congregation was established—meeting where they could find rental space. It was to this congregation that Peter Ford came. He met the owner of the only piece of land in the townsite where the conference could hold title. The purchase was completed in 2009. Of course, the land had to be dedicated! Peter brought his friends and co-workers from MANS to see the site and pray with him.

And now the rest of Ed's vision is becoming concrete. Mamawi Atosketan Centre will be a one-of-a-kind pre-cast concrete structure, designed and built by the contractor who designed and built Burman University's new library this spring and Parkview Adventist Academy last year.

As the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada moves toward reconciliation and a better understanding of our Indigenous brothers and sisters, we give thanks for a young Indigenous man's vision and the God With Us in The Rest of the Story. ■

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



Find more current MANS stories and videos at mans1.ca.
The Maskwacis Congregation page is at albertaadventist.ca.



Prescription for Love

“Tell me what’s wrong,” Marlon Cliffe said to his daughter as she sat on the step, just sobbing.

“Daddy, why doesn’t Mommy love you anymore?”

Looking back on that moment, Marlon recalls: “That question just broke my heart, and I answered, ‘I don’t know.’ We sat there for many minutes crying together. Afterwards, I went into my office and prayed on my knees for a long time. Then I started reading my Bible, and God led me to 1 Corinthians 13:8, ‘Love never fails.’ I argued, ‘God, that’s not true. Look at my marriage: it’s falling apart. Love does fail.’ And God spoke to me very clearly: ‘Your love failed. My love doesn’t fail. Read the entire chapter.’ When I read: ‘Love is patient, love is kind ... it is not self-seeking’ (verses 4, 5), the Lord asked me, ‘Marlon, were you always patient with Doreen? Were you always kind? Were you unselfish?’

“I had to admit that I had been very selfish in the relationship. I realized that I had failed. So I surrendered: ‘OK, Lord, I’m going to try it your way.’ I read 1 Corinthians 13 every day for weeks, read every relationship book, and took every course I could to help me win my wife back. God opened my eyes, and we now teach the principles for making marriage work in our workshops and retreats.”

“People say it takes two to make a marriage work. In our case it just took one person to restore our marriage—because after almost 25 years of marriage, I was done,” Doreen Cliffe admits. “I know that God was 100 percent involved because I had left the marriage, but God brought me back. I tried to leave again, but again God turned me around. We both didn’t love each other at that stage, but Marlon turned to the Lord, and through God’s strength, he was able to love me in a way that he had never loved me before.”

“For six months, I pursued my wife, with no positive response from her side, but that didn’t matter.” Marlon emphasizes, “I knew it only took one to make a marriage. I had to love and pursue her the way Christ loved and pursued the church.”

“I didn’t know how to love him back, but all I did was say, ‘I choose to love my husband,’ and within six months, I was head over heels in love with him in a way I had never been before. And that’s where it all began. Our failed marriage



Doreen and Marlon Cliffe now share their story of a failing marriage and are partnering with Mike and René Lemon to present marriage and family seminars in churches throughout Canada.

sparked a passion to help others save their own marriages.”

Marlon and Doreen Cliffe are now certified Gottman Educators for the *Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* and trained *Caring for the Heart Ministries* lay counsellors. They now openly share their own story of a failing marriage. And they educate and coach couples to work through the frustrations, silence, and distance that can develop over time.

Since the number one prayer request we receive at *It Is Written Canada* is about children abandoning their faith and the resulting family sorrow, Mike and René are partnering with the Cliffes to present marriage and family seminars in churches

throughout Canada.

If you’d like to learn more about this new marriage and family workshop, “Prescription for Love,” how a marriage and family seminar can be held in your area, or how you can request a visit to your church, please call *It Is Written Canada* at 905/404-6510, email information@iiw.ca, or write to *It Is Written Canada*, Box 2010, Oshawa, ON, L1H 7V4. ■

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



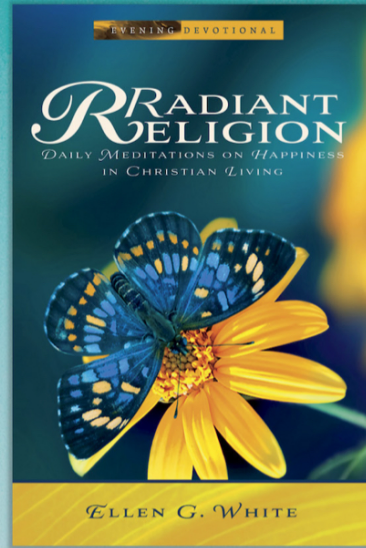
Does your faith walk need to level up?

2023 DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

ADULT DAILY



ADULT EVENING



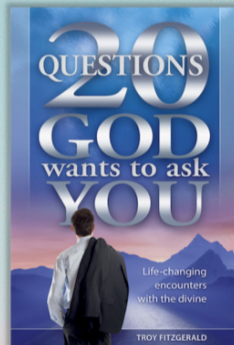
BOXED SET



WOMEN



YOUNG ADULT



"Go daily to the Lord for instruction and guidance; depend upon God for light and knowledge."

—Fundamentals of Christian Education 531

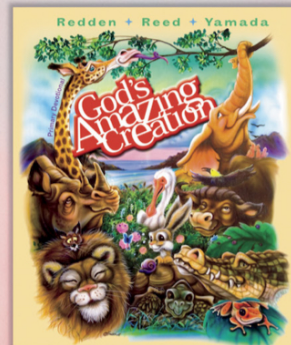
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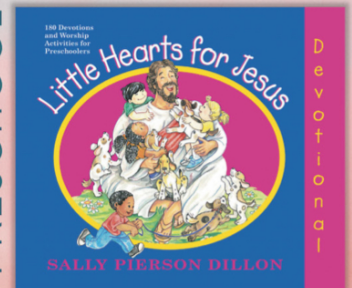
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True Worth

Through TOGETHER, the most vulnerable have better access to quality health care.

There's a saying in Cambodia that women are white cloths and men are gold bars. If a white cloth falls into the mud, it can't be made clean again. But if a gold bar falls into the mud, it can be cleaned. It is still a gold bar.

What is the value of human life? Ranna, who lives in rural Cambodia, believed that her value was determined by her level of intelligence. When she failed her Grade 12 final exams at the age of 20, she gave up on school and, in many ways, gave up on herself.

"I generally didn't dare to speak and was embarrassed. I always thought of myself as having low intelligence and was afraid to say something wrong to others," she shares. Ranna believed she was the weakest among her friends.

Throughout our lives, we absorb messages about our value. Sometimes we strive to increase our value. Sometimes our value is assigned to us. Our efforts can lead to frustration, exhaustion, and even depression. Our assigned value can lead others to treat us with judgment, harassment, and even hatred. In each case, we suffer.

At Christmas, we're reminded that neither striving nor assigning can determine our real value. Our true worth lies elsewhere and cannot be altered. In His first advent, Jesus proved that human life is precious enough to brave all the odds and dare a rescue mission. We are valuable because we are His, made in His image with dazzling diversity that deserves celebration, not scorn.

The TOGETHER project¹ touches on the value of human life by empowering women, girls, men, and boys to understand, uplift, and protect the value of others, especially those considered

inferior. Thanks to generous funding from the Government of Canada, TOGETHER is a six-year project that will empower nearly 200,000 girls, women, boys, and men in Cambodia, Kenya, the Philippines, and Uganda to exercise their health-related human rights.

ADRA recently invited Ranna to be a community partner for the TOGETHER project. She'd never held any position in her village.

At first, Ranna didn't want to volunteer. "I felt I cannot do it because I am still afraid to speak in public. But the ADRA staff tried to help and explained to me again and again. They encouraged me to try to read books and be brave. So, after that, I decided to be a community volunteer with ADRA. Now, I am in the Village Health Support Group for the health centre."

The Village Health Support Group helps to improve relationships between the staff and patients. They also assist with health service delivery, especially to the most vulnerable community members.

"I am very happy to be in the TOGETHER project. I expect that I will learn more from the project, and I will share all the knowledge with other mothers and help women in the community get involved in the project activities. That is my dream."

Timid Ranna has found her voice and is using it to show others their value. When we understand our true worth, our lives change for the better. ■

Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.



Creating a Just World

*December
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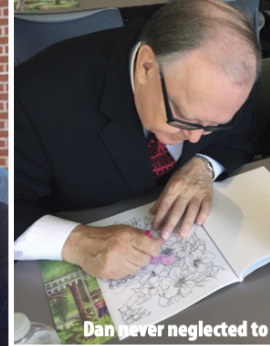




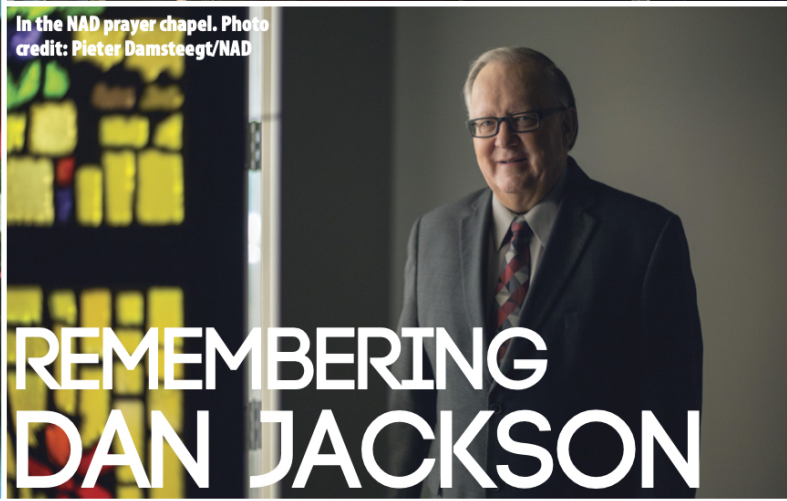
A goodbye party for the Jacksons at the Rutland church in Kelowna, B.C., in 1992



SDACC staff in 2005



Dan never neglected to



In the NAD prayer chapel. Photo credit: Pieter Damsteegt/NAD

REMEMBERING DAN JACKSON



Dan and Donna with Eric Rajah on a trip with A Better World



Dan and his predecessor as SDACC president, Orville Parchment



At a rally to save Branson Hospital circa 1997

In 2001, Orville Parchment, then president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC), accepted a call to the United States. Don Schneider, then North American Division (NAD) president, created a search committee to replace him. I had been the SDACC executive secretary for less than a year. The Search Committee asked me two questions: (1) “Do you want to let your name stand as a candidate for president?” (2) “Do you have suggestions for potential candidates?”

My answer was swift and precise: (1)

“No. I am absolutely happy in my present position.” (2) “I have only one name to present to the search committee: Daniel Jackson.”

So, on Nov. 26, 2001, the SDACC Board took the vote 84-1 to elect Daniel Jackson as its new president.

Dan came to the SDACC with extensive experience as a consummate pastor, a theology teacher, and an effective administrator.

DAN AS A PRESIDENT

In 1 Chronicles 27 we find King David’s

administrative team. Over 40 names are mentioned, each with a precise portfolio. Only Hushai had no portfolio. He was simply described as “David’s friend” (verse 32). When Dan was SDACC president, at the headquarters he had about 30 people working under his leadership, but many conference administrators across Canada also saw him as their leader. We were all Dan’s friends.

Kings of the past had absolute power. In contrast, our church structure calls for three executive officers working together and reporting to the board. As

the president, Dan was the number one officer. And yet he never acted like “the boss” but as a *primus inter pares* (“first among equals”) which contributed to the

friendly atmosphere we enjoyed together. He valued the input of his colleagues, and we valued his wise leadership. Ken Wiebe, then a conference president, says: “To me, Dan was the epitome of a good leader.”

Dan knew how to decentralize power by delegating responsibilities. There was no micromanaging in his leadership style, yet accountability was required.

A SPIRITUAL LEADER

Dan was a spiritual leader. His deep connection with his Saviour was palpable in his sermons, daily interactions with people, and passion for evangelism.

Over and above his administrative duties, Dan found time to do what he was passionate about: public evangelism. He ran four major (27-night) evangelistic efforts concomitantly with his administrative presidential duties. He presented these series in Winnipeg, Calgary, Regina, and North York (Toronto).

At the board level, whenever there was friction, he would stop the discussion. To defuse the tension, he either had a prayer session or, with his gifted voice, started singing a hymn.

A HUMBLE AND CONFIDENT LEADER

Dan was a humble leader, and yet he exuded confidence. John Ramsey, former SDACC treasurer, explains it best with an oxymoron: “I thought he walked with a humble swagger. You wouldn’t think those two words would go together, but I think they did with Dan.”

A COMPASSIONATE AND FAIR LEADER

Compassion and fairness go hand in hand. Dan was a compassionate and fair person. Any injustice toward the less

fortunate or any kind of discrimination would flare his righteous indignation.

I was told that Dan, as a boy, developed a special interest for people with physical disabilities. In his teenage years, Dan established lifetime friendships with two youngsters who used wheelchairs for mobility, and that he admired them.

His compassion was manifested though his years of mission service. In Sri Lanka, at the height of the Tamil conflict, he risked his life to save a family by hiding them in his van under a carpet. He took them to his house and protected them. He also protected two young men whom the rioters were trying to kill, one of whom lived in his house for half a year.

His compassion was also manifested through his multiple trips to Africa with A Better World, as well as his emergency trip to Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami to help those affected by that catastrophe.

Why did Dan embrace the fight for the women who wanted to be in ministry? Because he saw firsthand that they had been marginalized or rejected just because of their gender.

I witnessed firsthand a case of Dan’s compassion and sense of fairness for those who suffered injustice. It had to do with an NAD policy that encouraged conferences to hire self-sponsored students who graduated with a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree.

To be hired for pastoral ministry, college graduates are required to have an MDiv degree. The majority of those enrolled in that master’s program are sponsored by a conference, which spends thousands of dollars to finance their studies. However, some college graduates who don’t first get hired by a conference choose to self-finance their seminary degree, often with borrowed money, thus graduating with considerable debt.

To encourage conferences to hire these self-sponsored graduates, the NAD had a policy that mandated the Division and the Union to finance about half of the salary of these self-sponsored graduates for the first year of work upon graduation. The intent of the policy was laudable, but it had a major flaw: the money paid by the higher organizations went to the conference, not the self-sponsored graduate, who often carried a huge debt

and received no compensation to help defray that debt.

When I was working in Quebec, I had my first encounter with that policy, which encapsulated an unintended injustice toward the student. When Dan came to the SDACC, I spoke to him about the policy. Dan’s high sense of justice and compassion led him to acknowledge this flaw immediately. But this was an NAD, not an SDACC, policy. Then came the 2010 GC session, and Dan was elected president of the NAD. He had not forgotten about it.

One day Dan called me and said he wanted me to attend an NAD meeting. I flew to D.C. The committee was dealing with that policy. I passionately told my story and how the policy carried unintentionally unjust effects on the worker. I added, “The only way to justify this policy is to apply Jesus’ words literally: ‘Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them’” (Mark 4:25, NIV).

As a result of that meeting, today we have NAD policy L 30 31, stating that self-sponsored graduates, when hired by a conference, will receive a lump sum equivalent to 50 percent of their first-year salary to defray their former expenses.

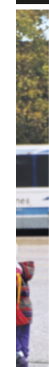
CLOSING REMARKS

While suffering from the illness that claimed his life, Dan used to say, “God has been good to me every day of my 73 years. Way more than I deserve. I will praise Him if He should heal me. I will praise Him just the same if I’m not healed. God has nothing more to prove to me than what He’s already done.”

His laughter, his hearty sense of humour, his spiritual dimension, his sensitivity and empathy toward those who experience injustice, his humility, and, above, all his compassion will be missed by all those who knew him.

Rest in peace, my friend, until the day when Jesus, at the sound of the trumpet with a choir of angels, will call you to join them with your beautiful voice, heaven-bound toward your final home. ■

Nilton Amorim served as executive secretary for the SDACC until his retirement in 2010.



Please note: Items in the "News" section may originate from various sources. The *Canadian Adventist Messenger* will give credit, via a byline, to authors of material submitted directly to us for first printing. Stories without a byline may have been written by Messenger staff, reprinted from other publications, or supplied to us by a general press release.

SDACC

Society of Adventist Communicators Convention: Communication, Stories, and Collaboration



Group photo of attendees at the 2022 Society of Adventist Communicators convention, held at North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Md.

On Oct. 13–15, the *Canadian Adventist Messenger* team had the opportunity to attend the Society of Adventist Communicators convention at the North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Md. Believers from across North America, including conference and union communication directors, professionals, post-secondary students, and local church communication directors, gathered for the first in-person event of this kind since 2019. In addition to the nearly 210 in-person attendees, a virtual content pass for Friday, Oct. 14, brought in more participants online. Adventist communicators enjoyed the company of dozens of other like-minded people, passionate about communicating the gospel by utilizing all available media.

Donovan Wallace, one of the communication directors at Nepean Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the Ottawa region, said, "I wasn't aware of how big the community of communicators was, that there was a network of them, and how they interacted. That was new to me, and I realize now it is a benefit we can tap into."

Wallace was accompanied by Kirby Joseph, also a communication leader at Nepean. Joseph, who had attended the convention virtually during the pandemic, expressed how vital it was to meet and network with other attendees in person. "The concept of sharing one's story permeated the meetings, presentations, and even sermons, during the convention," said Joseph. "From the interactions I have had here, I now go back to the local



Top left: Evaldo Vicente (first row, right) and Joey Aguilar (second row, left), communication director for the B.C. Conference, attending a workshop on podcasting
Above: Adrianna Lewis meeting and mingling with another attendee
Bottom left: Aimee Perez (right) with fellow Canadians, Christelle Agboka (left) and Philip Baptiste, at the opening reception
 (All photos in this spread are courtesy of Art Brondo/NAD)

church feeling more equipped,” he added.

Presentations and seminars were offered on a wide range of topics, such as “How to Handle Media During Crisis,” “Art Theory: Fonts, Design, Trends, and More,” “Mindful Self Compassion,” and “Podcasting: Why and How,” among several others.

Christelle Agboka, communication director for the Ontario Conference at the time,¹ emphasized how much she has enjoyed attending multiple editions of the convention. “I found that this was a place where I could meet people with the same passion for sharing the gospel through different media. I found a huge Adventist family of communicators from being here.”

Worship services during the convention were uplifting and motivating. Attendees received training and were encouraged to share the love of Jesus with other people using tools they already have.

Mark Bouzy, executive secretary and communication director for the Quebec Conference, highlighted the privilege of being in an environment where ideas,

knowledge, and experiences can be genuinely shared for mutual growth.

From the opening moments to the closing ceremony, attendees at the convention were encouraged to share their stories. Stories are powerful, and everybody has one. We cannot argue with a person’s story. People may question our theology, but our story is our testimony that cannot be denied.

The *Messenger* team looks forward to next year’s convention, which will be held on Oct. 19–21, 2023, in Springfield, Mass. Every church member involved with communication is welcome to attend. ■

— Evaldo Vicente, communication director, SDACC

¹ Christelle Agboka has since transitioned into a new role with the communication department of the North American Division.



Mike and René Lemon with guests, Zipporah and Elijah Motende



Norwill Simmonds performing a music concert

One Thing I Desire—*It Is Written Canada* Rally

What one word expresses God’s *one desire* and the message of the entire Bible?

If you could ask God for one thing today, what would it be? Riches, honour, a better job, status, friends, improved sight, intellect, hearing, better health, the ability to be more mobile (to walk or run again), the removal of chronic pain, restoration of family, children to return to their faith?

Certainly, the Almighty Creator of the universe can answer all these requests, and one day soon He “will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain” (Rev. 21:4).

There is one request—*one desire*—we see expressed in the pages of Scripture that will give you all that you could ever ask or imagine. That one desire is what Mike and René zeroed in on at *It Is Written Canada*’s hybrid rally at the Really Living Centre in Hamilton, Ont., on the Sabbath of Oct. 22, 2022.

From their hearts, Mike and René shared personal stories and messages from the Word of God, gave everyone a sneak peek into scenes from *It Is Written Canada*’s upcoming season, and highlighted the ministry’s achievements and future goals.

At the end of the day, Norwill Simmonds, a singing evangelist, inspired all with a gospel music concert.

If you were unable to make it in person or watch the livestream, you can still watch the messages and listen to the inspirational music. Make sure to share the links with your friends. Simply go to: itiswrittencanada.ca/one-thing-rally or youtube.com/user/IIWCanada/videos and click on the programs titled “One Thing I Desire—Parts 1 & 2.” ■

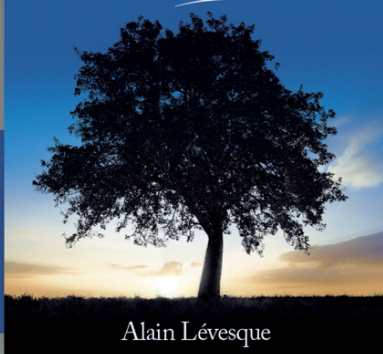
—Mike Lemon,
speaker/director,
It Is Written Canada



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IT IS WRITTEN CANADA

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Mike and René's passion for the health message, combined with Christ-centered spiritual and relational messages and counselling, has enabled *It Is Written Canada* to form a strategic working relationship with a devoted group of healthcare professionals, conducting wellness immersion programs called One Week in Paradise, to bring wholistic healing to sick and suffering souls.



Contact us at *It Is Written Canada* to know how you can attend this program.

PRESCRIPTION FOR LOVE

By nurturing healthy family relationships, *It Is Written Canada* helps families remain united and children to hold onto their faith. Mike and René will be working together with Marlon and Doreen Cliffe, who have a wealth of experience and training, to present marriage and family seminars throughout Canada called: Prescription for Love.



Contact us to learn how *It Is Written Canada* can present this program in your church.

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2022 OFFERING SCHEDULE

DECEMBER

Local Church Budget.....December 03
Adventist Min. of Compassion Canada*.....December 10
Local Church Budget.....December 17
Conference Advance.....December 24
Canadian French Ministries*.....December 31

JANUARY (2023)

Local Church Budget.....January 07
Religious Liberty*.....January 14
Local Church Budget.....January 21
Conference Advance.....January 28

*Special materials provided.



Did You Move?

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

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<p>British Columbia Conference Tanya Avelar-Martinez tavelarmartinez@bcadventist.ca 604-853-5451, ext. 300</p>	<p>Quebec Conference Sara Therlonge stherlonge@sdaqc.org 450-651-5222, ext. 238</p>
<p>Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference Joe Ann Taer jtaer@mansaskadventist.ca 306-244-9700, ext. 212</p>	
<p>Maritime Conference Jullie Bannister info@maritimesda.com 506-857-8722, ext. 201</p>	
<p>SDA Church in Newfoundland and Labrador Xenia Capote xcapote@nladventist.ca 709-682-0284</p>	



>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Oct. 31, 2022, there were 359 depositors with a total deposit of \$34,181,793. There were 89 loans with a value of \$33,758,176.

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

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PROCESS:

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

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PROCESS:

- All advertising should be submitted with local church or conference approval.
- Payment must accompany your ad or it will not be published. Acceptable methods of payment are cheque (in the mail) or credit card (online via PayPal).
- Submission deadlines are 8 weeks before the date of publication (e.g. May 1 for the July issue).
- The *Messenger* assumes no responsibility for typographical errors, nor liability for the advertisements.
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To advertise in the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, please contact our Ad Manager at 905/433-0011, x2092 or email messenger@adventist.ca.

■ Legal Notices

Legal Notice of the Alberta Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is hereby given that the 52nd Session of the Alberta Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be held at the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lacombe, Alta., on May 7, 2023. The Regular business meeting will be called at 9:00 a.m. Sunday, May 7, 2023. The Organizing Committee Meeting will be held in advance, as per Bylaws, on Jan. 22, 2023.

The purpose of the meeting is to consider reports and financial statements, to elect officers and members of the Executive Committee of the Conference for the ensuing term, to consider any proposed changes in the Bylaws, and for the transaction of any other business that may properly come before the session. The Bylaws provide for representatives from each duly organized church in the Alberta Conference as follows: one Regular delegate per church without regard of membership size/numbers and one additional delegate for every fifty (50) members or major fraction thereof.

*Gary Hodder, President
Wayne Williams, Secretary/Vice
President for Administration*

■ Obituaries

Ivan Abbott was born April 29, 1926, in Woodford, England, and died May 20, 2022, in Kelowna, B.C. One of Ivan's contributions to his church was as a lay preacher. He was predeceased by his parents, Bill and Gertrude Abbott; and sisters, Edna Hall, Agnes Ohman, and Olive Holiday. Surviving: spouse, Ruth; sons, Adrian (Linda) of Kelowna, Chris (Louise) of Kelowna, and Martin (Sheryl) of Gig Harbor, Wash.; daughters, Julie (Bruce) Dacre of Peachland, B.C., and Lynne (Lyndon) Saylor of Nanaimo, B.C.; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Isabella Jean (née Klokeid) Garner was born May 19, 1931, in Calgary, Alta., and died Aug. 14, 2022, in Calgary. Jean served as a nurse for more than four decades and retired to take on work as a homecare aide. She cared for the physical health of her community and prayed for their spiritual health as well. She was

predeceased by her spouse, Ralph Garner; parents, John and Isabella Klokeid; and brother, Grant Klokeid. Surviving: sons, Douglas (Dawn) Garner of Yakima, Wash., and Scott (Leanne) Garner of Calgary; daughters, Shelley Garner of Edmonton, Alta., Arlene Garner of Boise, Idaho, and Julie Miller of Calgary; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Kathy (née Ludwig) Walton was born Jan. 5, 1940, in Steinfelfen, Germany, and died Feb. 9, 2022, in Kelowna, B.C. Kathy faithfully supported her husband throughout 35 years of teaching in the denomination's educational system. She was predeceased by her parents, Gustar and Anna Ludwig; and sister, Brigitte Shippit. Surviving: spouse, George Walton; son, Jeffrey (Dana) Walton of Lac la Hache, B.C.; daughter, Shelley (Hugh) Scaife of Victoria, B.C.; daughter-in-law, Shannon Rose; a nephew and niece; and three grandchildren.

■ Tributes

Diana (née Kinakin) Hoodikoff



passed away on Aug. 7, 2022, at age 95, at Lake Country Lodge in Lake Country, B.C., with her family by her side. Diana was born in Arran, Sask., on March 21, 1927. She later moved to Benito, Man., with her family. Diana had eight siblings.

At the age of 17, Diana left Manitoba for British Columbia to work in the Okanagan. There she met her husband-to-be, John Hoodikoff. They were married in 1947. After working in the Okanagan for a while, Diana and John moved to Midway, B.C., where John worked at the local sawmill until his passing at the young age of 53 due to illness. They had four children: Karen Barroca (Salmon Arm, B.C.), Don Hoodikoff (New Westminster, B.C.), Sharen Pereversoff (Castlegar, B.C.), and Janet Prichard (deceased).

Diana returned to the Okanagan and started a new life in Winfield (now

Lake Country). Diana was a dedicated member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in both Winfield and Rutland, where she lived for 17 years. Diana's Christian faith was an essential part of her life. She loved her Lord and would tell others about His love.

One of the highlights of Diana's Christian life was when she decided to be baptized! She was baptized alongside her daughter Karen by Pastor Leonard Andrews of the Osoyoos church on Nov. 9, 1996.

Diana enjoyed her life. She was loving, caring, and always had a smile for everyone. She was dearly loved by her children.

■ Advertisements

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Upcoming episodes on *It Is Written Canada*—Dec. 3: **Facing the Devil**:

Traumatic accidents happen, and we wonder why. Arden Brock found himself wondering too after facing more than one life-threatening encounter. When the big one caught him by surprise, he saw the face of the evil one tempting him to take the easy way out and end it all. **Dec. 10: How to Know God's Will for Your Life**:

Prof. Stephen Reasor examines some deeper insights into how you can know God's will for your life. **Dec. 17: Justice at the Table**: ADRA Canada shares their work in creating food security. **Dec. 24: The Birthday of a King**:

A Christmas Music Special featuring Fountainview Academy. **Dec. 31:**

Changed for Life: Sarah McConaghy's life was tragically altered one fateful day in mid-winter when the roads were hit with the first major snowfall. Everything she once did without much effort became a near impossibility. See how God saved her and changed Sarah for life. (12/22)

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 enabling him to heal." Luke 5:17

nadhealth.org/events



Provision

In the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an organization, the months of October and November are traditionally filled with what we call *year-end meetings*. These are meetings where reports are presented and various church business is discussed. For those of us working at the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, the most interesting of these gatherings was, without a doubt, the Society of Adventist Communicators convention in October; you can read more about it in the news section of this issue.

October and November, with the richness of the fall colours and dropping temperatures, are also a harbinger of winter and the holiday season. A time where we are encouraged to reflect upon the incredible mercy and generosity of the Godhead in sending Jesus to live among us—an event described in the four Gospels and mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 4:4. Jesus had to be born as the Son of Man in order to ultimately die in our stead. That’s how the Godhead planned it.

I’m reminded of a particular month some years ago when my family finances were especially tight. Checking your bank account balance at that time wasn’t as convenient as it is today with web and mobile banking apps at our fingertips. You had to literally go to your bank branch for that. Even though I wasn’t expecting any sort of payment at the time, I decided to go check my balance anyway. To my surprise, a deposit had been made a few days prior for an amount slightly above what we needed. Someone I still haven’t met to this day was prompted to provide for me before I needed it.

The idea of having our needs provided for ahead of time is something we can all relate to, regardless of our particular social or economic situation. As children of Adam and Eve, the greatest need we’ve had from birth is that of a Saviour. The provision for that need was put in place well before we were even conceived.

I pray that we will take the opportunity this time of the year to be generous, giving, and supportive—be it by providing material help to the less fortunate or by offering a shoulder to cry on. I also pray that we will capitalize on the occasion to share about the provision God made available to us “before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:19, 20, ESV). In many careers, working a few extra hours will get you a few more dollars. But in the case of our salvation, no amount of work or deeds would ever be enough—or even required—to buy us a ticket into eternal life. It is *only* by the grace of God, whose benefits are available to everyone who believes in Jesus.

I wish you a joyous holiday season and a blessed new year. I will be back next month, God willing. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Evaldo Vicente".

Evaldo Vicente, editor
vicente.evaldo@adventist.ca



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RELOCATION PROJECT

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It started in 1955 with a still, small voice
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"God, if you're real, you'll have to show me,"
prayed a young Cree man. And God did.

That was the beginning of the Adventist
vision for Maskwacis. Years later, Mamawi
Atosketan Native School was built.

In 2009, Pastor Peter Ford brought MANS teachers to
the site just purchased to build a community outreach
and worship centre. "Let's form a prayer circle," he
said. So they joined hands and consecrated the land.

It's 2022, and the time has come. The Church in
Canada as well as Alberta is committed to building
the Mamawi Atosketan Centre on that ground.

"This is a good project," smiled Chief Saddleback.
"I want it to happen as soon as possible."

God's timing is always perfect.



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