

Dreams Really Can Come True... (p. 20), Community  
Impact Stories (p. 36), SDACC Year-End Meetings (p. 38)

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January 2023 Vol. 92 No. 1

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“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.’”

—Matt. 13:24, 25, NKJV

## Sow the Seeds, Not the Weeds

As we start a new year, many of us make New Year’s resolutions for a fresh start, maybe breaking a habit we have struggled with in the past. Some of these habits have been likened to a weed that grows, and as it grows, it chokes the life out of the plant that we want to produce fruit or grain in us.

Weeds do get a lot of focus these days, especially during the spring and summer months when many want green grass on their lawn but experience those pesky weeds growing up instead. I know we are in the cold winter months right now, but soon the temperatures will rise, and we will again take out our seed and fertilizer spreaders and mowers to get a lush, green lawn growing.

I have noticed if you focus on the weeds, they seem to permeate even more, and we take up more time and effort trying to get rid of them. I tend to put more focus on overseeding my lawn and letting the green grass do the work for me. If I see a weed, instead of putting some kind of poison on it with collateral damage to the environment, pets, and kids, I prefer to saturate the weed with much seed. Instead of the weeds choking out the good grass, the grass begins to choke out the weeds. Sow the seeds to kill the weeds!

Sin is much like the weeds. If we focus on the sin and pray about it constantly for God to remove it and think about it all day long, that weed becomes the focus of our thoughts. By beholding, we become changed. What are you beholding in your mind when you want to rid yourself of that pesky weed from your life: the weed or the seed?

Put your focus on Jesus. Keep your mind and heart uplifted in what He has the power to remove. Let the good news of the gospel (the Seed) overtake your life and watch that weed disappear as you focus now on the Seed. ■

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



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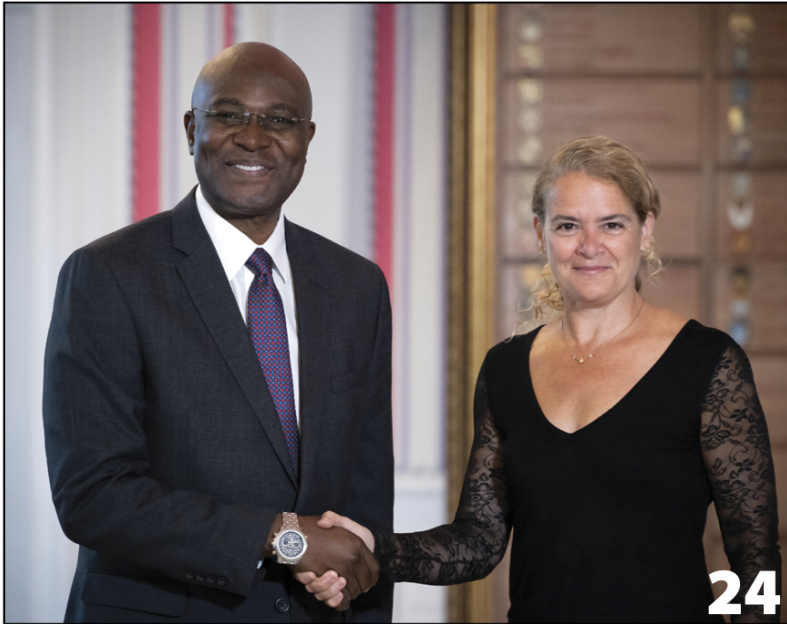
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# WHAT'S INSIDE

## January 2023



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

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**WHAT'S COMING** "I was bound in a very difficult personal, emotional, financial, and relational mess," yet, Mario Roque says, "my deepest despair was in fact my greatest blessing." Read this and more next month.

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# FREEDOM OF RELIGION



**Q:** *I heard that there will be changes to physician-assisted suicide coming in spring 2023. What is happening and how does it affect religious liberty in Canada?*

**A:** You are correct that there is a change coming to the law in early 2023. This is a very important question, as it relates to something of significant concern to many Canadians. Given decisions of the courts over the past decade, the issue of physician-assisted suicide, or “medical assistance in dying” (MAiD), will inevitably pit religious freedom against constitutional issues of liberty and security of the person. Some background is important, so I’m going to answer this question over a number of articles.

I’ll start the story in 1993, when the Supreme Court of Canada made a decision in *Rodriguez v. British Columbia*. Ms. Rodriguez was a 42-year-old mother suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig’s Disease. ALS is a cruel, painful, progressive disease that results in loss of muscle use and control. Motor neuron loss continues until the person cannot eat, speak, or breathe. It is always fatal.

Ms. Rodriguez challenged the Criminal Code provision that made it an offence to assist someone to commit suicide. She didn’t want to die immediately but wanted her doctor to be able to assist in ending her life, by her own hand and at the time of her choosing, when she no longer wished to continue suffering.

The majority of the Supreme Court of Canada (in a split of 5-4) found that the criminal prohibition against assisted suicide promoted the legitimate objectives of protecting Canada’s vulnerable and protecting the sanctity of life. The judges found that the prohibition was “not arbitrary or unfair” and that it was “reflective of fundamental values at play in our society.”

Fast forward 23 years to 2015 and the Supreme

Court of Canada case of *Carter v. Canada*. The case involved Gloria Taylor, who also had ALS. She challenged the same Criminal Code provision as Ms. Rodriguez had done. Ms. Taylor wanted the ability to access physician assistance to end her own life. She was joined in her claim by two people who had helped one of their mothers go to Switzerland to access a physician-assisted death.

This time, the court unanimously held that the prohibition on MAiD infringes the right to life, liberty, and security of the person and was therefore unconstitutional. The court found that the prohibition was not intended to preserve life, but to protect vulnerable people from being induced to commit suicide at a time of weakness. As such, they held that a blanket prohibition went too far for people who suffer from a “grievous and irremediable medical condition” and are being forced to endure “intolerable suffering.”

The court struck out the Criminal Code provision but gave Parliament until June 2016 to create a new law.

The government of Canada created a new law allowing MAiD but with conditions. To access MAiD, a person had to have a serious and incurable illness, be in an advanced state of irreversible decline in capability, and be intolerably suffering. Additionally, their natural death had to be reasonably foreseeable.

The conditions on MAiD resulted in more court challenges that further liberalized MAiD in Canada. I’ll explain that next month. ■

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



# How to Strengthen Your Willpower

“For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again.”—*Proverbs 24:16, KJV*

**T**he chocolate cake or the apple? Staying in bed or going to the gym? Watching another YouTube video or focusing on your work? Spending or saving?

Every day, all day, choices challenge your willpower: the ability to exercise self-control when you need it. The problem is that sometimes your willpower is weak, and you “fall off the wagon.”

“Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. ... What you need to understand is the true force of the will.”<sup>1</sup>

Stanford University professor, researcher, and author of *The Willpower Instinct*,<sup>2</sup> Kelly McGonigal, reveals that when we fail, we tend to give up and think, *What’s the use! I broke my promise, my diet, my resolve. ... I failed, so what’s the point! I can’t go on.*

McGonigal demonstrates how study after study proves that those who were able to forgive themselves when they “fell off the wagon” instead of beating themselves up were more likely to get back on the wagon, achieve their goals, and resist harmful habits than those who condemned themselves and filled their minds with regrets.

A teenage boy I once taught—I’ll call him Mario<sup>3</sup>—made the decision to do five pull-ups every time he passed the pull-up bar at school.

By the fourth day, he was just too sore and too tired, so he quit. He just couldn’t go on. “It simply wasn’t in me,” Mario confessed to me.

At that point, Mario chose to turn to God; after praying, he opened his Bible, and his eyes fell on these five words: “We are saved by hope” (Rom. 8:24, KJV). While he meditated on those words, Mario could see in his mind Jesus tenderly helping him through his struggle. Even though he had given up and failed, Mario knew Jesus was there for him. And that epiphany energized him to keep on going and take on his challenge one pull-up at a time, one day at a time.

When you choose to do the right thing, it’s hard. So don’t be surprised if you fall more often, feel weaker, and even fail repeatedly. Like Mario, turn toward God, and see how He is leading you into situations that test your resolve and show you more clearly your need of Him.

Professor McGonigal further identified four practices that help people like Mario succeed in strengthening their willpower:

- 1 Getting eight hours of sleep every night
- 2 Eating a plant-based diet
- 3 Getting at least 150 minutes of exercise a week
- 4 Spending 15 to 20 minutes a day in spiritual contemplation, meditation, or prayer

Mario noticed his ability to do more pull-ups decreased when he stayed up late the night before. He was also less likely to go for his morning run and less likely to wake up early enough to read his Bible and pray. That late night would push over the first domino in a chain reaction of lethargy and lack of self-control, and Mario was more likely to eat a candy bar or doughnut to refuel his flagging energy.

Whenever he found himself feeling disappointed, Mario turned to Proverbs 24:16: “For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again” (KJV).

Although he fell and failed repeatedly, Mario never gave up! He kept taking baby steps, and he listened for the tender voice of Jesus encouraging him: “Well done, my child. Keep going!”

In his final year of high school, Mario could do 50 unassisted pull-ups every time he walked past the pull-up bar. Now, that’s willpower! ■



Mike Lemon is speaker/director of It Is Written Canada.

1 Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1892), 47.

2 Kelly McGonigal, *The Willpower Instinct: How Self-Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It* (New York: Penguin Group, 2013).

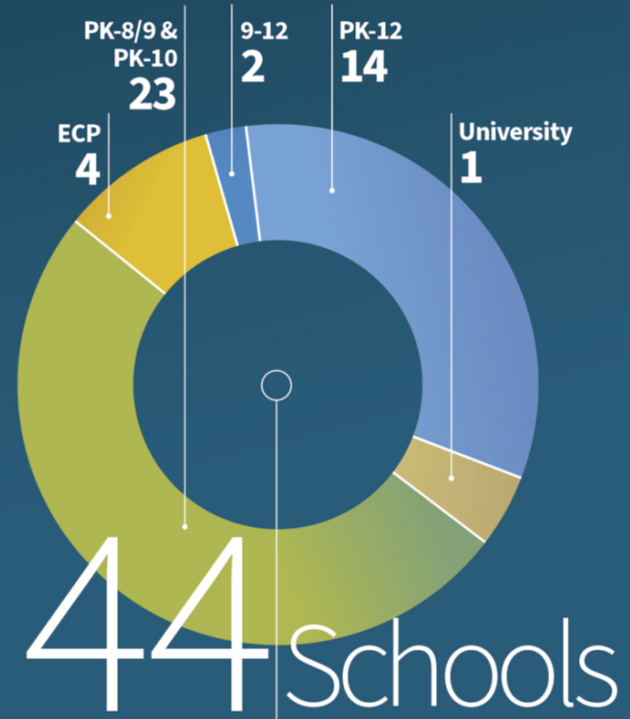
3 Not his real name.





**SDA CHURCH IN CANADA MISSION**

To inspire in each student a life of faith, wisdom, and service.



**PK-12 SCHOOLS**

by size

by conference

- 1** 1-Teacher Schools
- 6** 2-Teacher Schools
- 6** 3-Teacher Schools
- 26** 4 or more Teachers

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

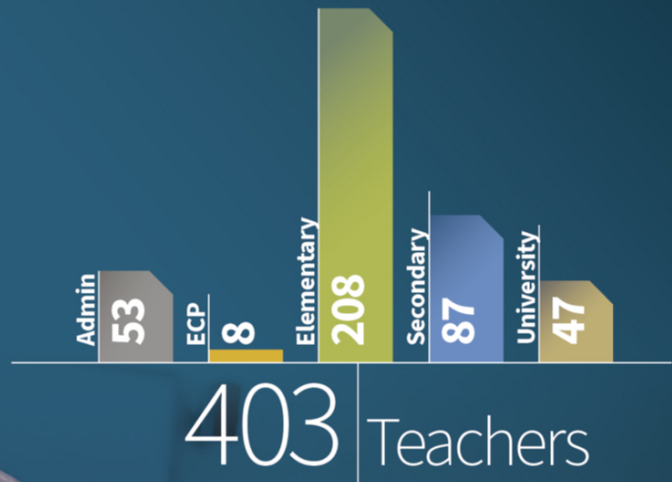
Elementary  
**2,949**

University  
**363**

ECP  
**73**

Secondary  
**1,049**

**4,434** Students



**403** Teachers





## Northern Harrier



A northern harrier flies low over the hay field, looking for voles. This medium-sized hawk is brown with a light belly and a barred tail. Its head looks too small for its body. Its appearance might not be spectacular, but the northern harrier is beautiful to watch.

Close to the ground, it skims along, head lowered, searching, searching. Just before it reaches the trees on the far side of the field, it rises steeply and turns. As it turns, the white patch on its tail flashes in the sunlight. Then it drops back near to the ground and glides along heading up the field again, still searching.

### Think about it.

This hawk is called a harrier because of its back-and-forth hunting style. God warns us to be careful because the devil prowls around hunting for people to destroy. But we have a strong Helper, whose eyes are always going back and forth on the earth.

Jesus sees us when we're in trouble. Nothing is hidden from His watchful eyes. Is your heart committed to Him?

### Do it!

Next time you're in trouble, don't panic. Pray. Choose to trust God whose eyes see it all. Then watch how He demonstrates His strength.



## Interacting Without Fear

“I had the opportunity of a lifetime to share with Muslims in a mosque, and I was struggling. But finally, the Holy Spirit won out, and I raised my hand. What was I doing in a mosque? Years earlier you wouldn’t have found me anywhere near these people because I felt they were dangerous and could shoot you down either by word or bullet,” says John.

What happened to John has happened to many who venture out to learn how to relate with Muslims. Knowledge replaces fear.

Seeing an ad in his local newspaper inviting the public to the grand opening of the new mosque, John decided to attend. He had been listening to and reading the materials from the Adventist–Muslim Relations websites, salahallah.com and lastdaysigns.com, and now had the tools to interact with Muslims without fear.

“Shortly after I arrived at the mosque, the guests were given the opportunity to share. This is when I raised my hand and began with the greeting *as-salamu alaikum*, as I do with all Muslims I meet. Explaining who I was, I said, ‘I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I don’t eat pork or drink alcohol. I don’t bow to idols, but worship the one true and living God.’



“As I finished sharing, the Imam rushed toward me with both hands outstretched in acceptance. He greeted me heartily and, pulling out his phone, begged for my contact info.” How quickly and effectively Seventh-day Adventists are able to make friends with Muslims. ■

*Rudy Harnisch (sdabooks@gmail.com) is the Adventist–Muslim Relations liaison for the SDACC.*

## Discipling Little People for God’s Kingdom

This year the SDACC Children’s Ministries Department has reviewed and considered the most significant needs within Canada. It has been a time to talk, evaluate, and pray about how to move forward in the years ahead. In 2023, the department plans to accomplish three main things. One is for our churches in Canada to run an Adventist Vacation Bible School (VBS) program.

Here are four good reasons why you should strongly consider running an Adventist VBS program:

- 1** It’s a program written by a team of Seventh-day Adventist children’s ministries leaders and pastors.
- 2** Lessons feature a Seventh-day Adventist point of view that will resonate with kids from your church and share God’s love with children in your community.
- 3** It is based on the Bible and focuses on the life of Jesus. Kids will be introduced to Jesus and learn about His many miracles and the plan of salvation.
- 4** It is unique! Offer your community a Vacation Bible School experience that’s different from the other churches in town.

Our Adventist programs are distinctly different; they



point people to Jesus with a solid Adventist but not overbearing influence. I would like to see all churches aim at running an Adventist VBS program this year. If you’re interested, go to [www.childmin.org](http://www.childmin.org) for access to resources. Talk to your local children’s ministries director, who will be happy to direct you as well.

Let’s continue planting seeds for eternity and discipling our little people for the kingdom. ■

*Kaitlynn Harushimana is the children’s ministries liaison for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.*



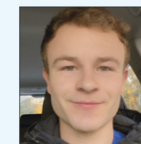
# FRESH FAITH

## 35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what is your favourite Bible story and why?

### Chaehyun Kim

The story of Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It shows the history, present, and future of how God is involved on earth. It proves that He is alive and that He intervenes in our daily lives.

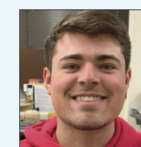
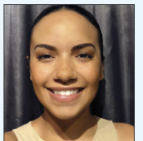


### Ethan Drew

I think my favourite story is probably when Jesus calmed the storm. It kind of gives you a reason not to panic. No matter what environment you're in, God's in control.

### Gabriela Francisco

Esther's story. God isn't ever explicitly mentioned, but we know that He's there, which can be applicable to our lives. Esther didn't do everything perfectly, but she still managed to trust God in everything.

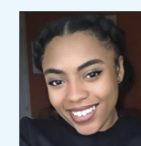


### Justin Corbett

When Jesus sent Peter out to catch the fish with the coin in its mouth for taxes. It shows how God has a thousand ways to fix your problems that you haven't even thought of.

### Owen Faehner

When Jesus let Lazarus die purposefully and raised him back to life. His response to Martha, when she asked why He didn't come earlier, showed how God can show His glory even through bad situations.



### Shania Watts

It was always the story of Esther. From a young age, I just found her story very inspiring—she's a role model who shows you it's important to stand up for what you believe in.

## Growing Confident in God

by Alannah Tjhatra



There was an unspoken sentiment at Melissa Cooke's church that women were not supposed to be pastors. As a result, Melissa never had an inclination toward pastoral ministry. She believed that this door was simply not open to her, so it wasn't a consideration.

"This, however, did not stop my father from trying to turn all his children into child preachers," says Melissa, laughing.

In her adolescent years, Melissa started searching more deeply for God,

questioning her beliefs, and further exploring the world around her. Melissa's family was always very active in the church, and she always knew that serving God would be an integral part of her life. She just didn't yet know *how* she would serve Him.

With the help of her mother and mentors at Kingsway College, Melissa began to lean toward pursuing chaplaincy. She attended Burman University (then CUC) for a BA in adventure-based youth ministry and then Southern Adventist University for a BA in pastoral care. Finally, she finished her schooling at Burman with a BA in religious studies.

Though she still held inhibitions about becoming a pastor, Melissa soon came to an understanding with God: if He opened a door for her to go into pastoral ministry, she would go. And He did.

Melissa was called to be children's pastor at Aldergrove Seventh-day Adventist Church (now Church in the Valley), and after studying at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, she became associate pastor there. She spent time conducting VBS programs, co-ordinating Adventurers, and leading Bible studies.

There were often uncertain times, and she felt unprepared for many things: "While serving in Abbotsford, I found myself no longer in the associate pastor role, as my senior pastor was on leave. I was unsure how to walk forward. In my silent prayers to God, sharing my fears and hesitations, He answered." God placed people in Melissa's life to walk alongside her and uplift her.

She explains, "I realized that I don't have to be afraid or hesitant. God ... will open doors, and when He does, He will answer and provide whatever is needed for where He asks me to walk."

So when God opened a door for her to a different position, Melissa no longer had any fear. She knew that no matter how uncertain things got, God would have an answer for her. ■



**Q.** I'm starting to build my New Year's resolution list. I already have a number of items, but I'd like to know your perspective on how to put one together.

**A.** Happy New Year to you and everyone reading this article! Making a clear plan to achieve a goal is a good thing. The Bible says in Proverbs 21:5, "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty" (ESV). Before you complete and commit to your list, consider these suggestions:

**1 Identify real-life priorities for yourself.** For example, many people's resolutions include wanting to start exercising. That's a good thing. However, is losing weight the goal? Or should it really be about getting active in order to feel better inside and out? Look at your list and see if there's a driver or motivation behind your resolution. That might be your true goal.

**2 Choose a goal that will stretch you.** A resolution to "clean out your email box" can be done in a few clicks. If you're taking time to invest in yourself, choose something you can look back on and see growth. For example, if you choose to "learn the piano," be specific. List the music school you will enrol in and the favourite hymn or song you want to play by the end of the year.

**3 Choose good, better, and best achievements.** It is super important to make sure you don't overstretch yourself in your goal. Learning to play Hymn 100 ("Amazing Grace") is a good first goal instead of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D-minor! Instead set achievable milestones. For example, it would be good

to play "Amazing Grace" from the hymnal, but it would be better to play "Hear I Am to Worship" using four chords. And the best? Well, the best would be to play "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Set yourself up for success in your planning by setting realistic achievements.

**4 Remember who will get it done.** "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1, ESV). Pray over your list before it is final. The Spirit will make the changes in your life. However, you must be in a place to let Him make those changes. Reflect on your relationship with Jesus. Do you need to change or add something to walk closer to Him or to better hear His voice? If the "Master Builder" is going to do the work to change your life, make sure you are giving Him something to work with.

Our prayer is that your resolution list will be a blessing for you and it will draw you closer to Jesus this year.

Feel free to share your list with us! ■

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*Do you have a question for Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian?  
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**NOCAP**  
Straight Talk

w/Pastor Shawn and Auntie Lian



# GROWING UP GEN Z

## DOES MEDIA MATTER?

*"There's only so much shelf space  
in your brain—make it count."*

There's probably at least a few blockbuster titles that come to mind when you think of things that aren't too good for your spiritual health. Then there are songs with questionable lyrics, gory TV scenes, scantily clad movie stars, and questionable moral messages that are dubious at best. They circle round and round in a perpetual storm that bombards us every day. Most don't give it much thought, but in my opinion, media is one of the most important concerns for a Christian living in the modern age.

Let me explain.

What we consume affects what we think about. The things we see get shelf space in our minds, and when things dwell in our minds long enough, they can slowly change us. While we can't control what thoughts pop into our heads, we can control what we feed our brains, and by feeding our brains with godly things, our hearts will change in a positive way. We will become better people and grow closer to our Creator.

It's important to remember that *everything* we consume has some effect on us. Nothing in this world is truly neutral. When watching, reading, and listening, we need to think critically about the messages being conveyed to us. God gave us a mind and a conscience to discern what is helping us and what is hurting us, and we need to use those tools to curate our watchlists. I love stories, and they are so powerful. A simple tale can let you experience new worlds, understand the complexities of situations and teach lessons that may have taken the writer a lifetime to learn. But because they are so powerful, stories can also be dangerous, and we need to be careful which ones we allow to shape our worldview.

The next danger is that of dullness. Anytime a tool (like a blade) is used, it gets a little duller, and you must apply more and more pressure to achieve the original result. The same

goes for entertainment. Unfortunately, a lot of movies, books, and shows rely on cheap thrills to keep their stories engaging. Whether this is in the form of violent scenes, chilling horror, or raunchy romances, we are hooked in with the promise of greater and greater rushes of emotion.

This is already unhealthy, but it gets worse, because when we've seen something once, it has less impact the next time. What happens is that we become slowly desensitized to thrills, and we have to go further to achieve them. Although we might be engaging with seemingly harmless media, these simple, small steps have the power to slowly but surely lead us into consuming media that is harmful to our mental and spiritual health and opens the door to countless new temptations. The Bible reminds us many times that sin starts in our hearts, and we need to be very mindful of where we are allowing our desires to take us.

Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (NIV).

So yes, media matters.

There's only so much shelf space in your brain—make it count. ■

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*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.*





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# WONDERS

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# CHURCH ON DEMAND

## FORECASTING THE FUTURE

**H**appy New Year! It may be too early to forecast how the year will turn out. If Jesus doesn't return in the next 12 months, we will be heading for a bumpy ride as we enter 2023. While we can't foretell the future, perhaps we should consider the felt needs facing our local churches. Do we have a realistic pulse on our local community? I'd like to address a trending issue that seems to be cresting nationally.

The pandemic spurred a sort of departure from regular church life. Have you observed the weekly church attendance restored to pre-pandemic numbers? Most likely, no. Where did all those people go? After two years of being unable to meet in person, many people concluded that church didn't have a meaningful impact on their regular life. Perhaps they had been attending out of habit or guilt ... or perhaps a little bit of both.

Meet Jenny, a 32-year-old single woman who lives in the city. Her parents are faithful Seventh-day Adventists who sacrificed for Jenny and her younger brother to attend denominational schools. Upon graduation, she moved to a large metropolitan city and started attending a medium-sized Adventist congregation. Every Friday night, Jenny meets her parents and brother via video conference to study the Sabbath School lesson. "Yes, it sounds so corny," she says, shaking her head with slight embarrassment as she relays this story to me. "But it makes me feel like I am home with my family."

As the pandemic loomed, Jenny watched the live services of her church service. However, after weeks and months of online viewing, she discovered she had many more options. No longer was she bound by geographical limits; she could tune in to any church worldwide!

"I loved my hometown church but felt they couldn't get their act together with the technology," she says. "Also, I felt like I had outgrown the sermons. I was ready for a new experience."

Jenny quickly discovered that she didn't need to set the alarm to watch the church service of her preference. Instead, just like Netflix or Hulu, she could manage any church service at her leisure. "I can sleep in and have a *real* Sabbath. I can chat with my friends and family as I make a healthy breakfast. Then I can tune in to a church service whenever it is convenient for me."

Church on Demand is changing how we worship and express spiritual community. There is no going back. Instead, our churches must adapt to two different audiences: the folks who attend in person and the on-demand people we may never meet in person. How is your church accommodating this major transition in how *the church* is conducted? ■

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

(PT. 1)



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# I Miss My Children!

*"My parents' greatest joy is having all of us come home at the same time. They love it when that happens."*

I've just returned from a visit to family in the west and it was so wonderful to see them all again! My grandkids have grown so much in the past two years. I enjoyed watching the boys show me all their tricks on the trampoline. My granddaughter is becoming an incredible cook. My son and daughter-in-law are building a house. What a pleasure to be part of their lives for a short time!

It was so hard to leave them and come home again. Every day I'm thinking of them, wondering what they're up to, texting with the older ones, and waiting for the photos or short videos my daughter-in-law sends of the younger ones. I know it's a lot easier to keep in touch now than it was 30 years ago, but ... do I ever miss my children!

As I was flying home, the thought came to me that God must feel the same way. He can still communicate with some of His children, but what about all those who are sleeping in the grave? How He must miss them!

My parents' greatest joy is having all of us come home at the same time. They love it when that happens. Having every child around the table again brings great joy to their hearts, whether we're eating my mother's cooking or my dad's porridge; it's a real treat for me to see their enjoyment.

Again, that must be what God is looking forward to—all of us around the table at the same time, eating what He has prepared for us to enjoy! What a celebration those meals will be!

I often hear people lamenting the delay in Jesus' coming with "The world is so crazy. He will *have* to come soon!" as if He needs to be convinced to come get us. I don't believe that could possibly be the case if He has half the heart of love that I have for *my* children.

We know why He waits:

God desires His people to show by their lives the advantage of Christianity over worldliness ... He longs to make them channels through which He can pour His boundless love and mercy.

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of the Saviour shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim His own. It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten, the coming of our Lord. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel! Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps our greatest goal for this year is to let Him change us and produce that beautiful character of love and mercy in us that will show the advantage He is eager to give those who haven't truly experienced Him yet. The table is set and waiting! Let us pray to be ready soon! ■

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*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 Larry Herr.

*Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer*

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

**Larry Herr:** I was born in Decatur, Ill., to an Adventist pastor's family (Ted and June Herr) but grew up in the Chicago area, or, as my father put it, "We pitched our tent toward Sodom!"

My mother was a music teacher in the home, and my sister, LaDonna (Krenz), and I each worked on piano and an instrument: I on the trombone, my sister on the marimba. I also grew up with a deep and enthusiastic love for the Bible, virtually memorizing the 10-volume Bible Story by Arthur S. Maxwell (aka "Uncle Arthur").

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

**L:** All of my father's church districts had Adventist schools, and I attended three of them over the course of time, followed by four years at Broadview Academy, an Adventist secondary institution west of Chicago.

I earned a BA in theology at Andrews University (AU) in 1970, where I discovered the land of the Bible under the tutelage of Prof. Douglas Waterhouse. During my last year at AU, I took several courses at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary from the eminent archaeologist Siegfried Horn and Hebrew teacher Leona Running.

After I spent a year at the University of Basel, Switzerland, studying with New Testament historian Oscar Cullmann and learning German, Horn graciously



Larry Herr

offered to recommend me to Harvard University, where two of his close colleagues were teaching in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization. In spite of not having a masters' degree, I was accepted and spent six years studying the languages, archaeology, and history of the Biblical world. I wrote my dissertation on the writing style of alphabetic scripts on ancient seals from the time of the Bible, separating the scripts into national scribal traditions. The small nations of the area all wrote with the same alphabet but in slightly different styles: Ammonites, Arameans, Edomites, Israelites, Moabites, and Phoenicians. It was later published by Harvard.

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

**L:** I loved the stories in the Bible and became excited when I was able to learn things outside the Bible that helped me understand those stories better. I was planning a pastoral career, but when I took a course in Biblical Backgrounds at AU, my mind was opened about the Bible in ways I had never dreamed. This field of study allowed me to combine my two interests in the ancient world and the Bible.

In 1971, I went with Horn to Jordan for the Adventist archaeological excavations at Biblical Heshbon, just southwest of Amman, the capital city of Jordan, and discovered an aptitude for archaeology. From then on, I went to the Middle East to excavate for over 30 summers, mostly in Jordan, but also in Israel and Tunisia in North Africa. I spent a year in the last country also working on my dissertation and excavating in the precinct of child sacrifice at ancient Carthage, the great Phoenician enemy of Rome. But I have spent my life working on the history and archaeology of the Ammonites.

**M:** *Where and in what capacity have you served throughout your career?*

**L:** Following graduation from Harvard (and my marriage to Denise Dick a few days later), I spent a year (1977/78) at AU working on the publications of the excavations at Heshbon. During that year I was utterly surprised to receive a call from the Far Eastern Division of the church (as it was known then) to teach Old Testament at the theological seminary that had just started near Manila, Philippines, now known as the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS). The six-year span of time spent there (1978–1984), formally a mission appointment, introduced me to the cultures and Adventist work in Asia. I had students from all over eastern Asia, some from the Indian subcontinent, and East Africa. It was thrilling to understand their approaches to the Bible and the church.

While in the Philippines, Denise and I often asked ourselves about where we would like to be located after

our mission appointment. Canadian Union College (CUC), now Burman University (BU), was consistently our first choice. Denise had taught there already in the 1970s and was a third-generation faculty member.

I had had enough of large cities during my childhood and youth in Chicago and wanted a small institutional connection. A small town like Lacombe would be perfect.

Likewise, six years in the tropics made both of us dream about living some place that had a good set of seasons. Summer all the time just didn't appeal to us. So, when the call to CUC came, first to Denise and later to me, we eagerly accepted! We began teaching there in 1985 and have followed with great interest the transformation of the institution from CUC to BU until my retirement in 2015 after 30 years of service.

The College Heights Church on BU's campus has been my beloved church home, where I served as an elder for 32 years.

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

**L:** Two things.

First is the friendship and collegueship of my students as, after teaching them Hebrew and Greek, they saw the context of the Bible lands and customs.

Second are my colleagues at Burman and the time the institution has given me to study and publish the archaeological finds of the excavations in Jordan that I directed from 1984 to 2008. Lacombe is the perfect place to live and work. To God be the glory!

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

**L:** We have one son, Garrick, who lives in Wasilla, Alaska, working as a physical therapist. His wife, Stephanie is a nurse. They attend the Palmer church, which has become our second church family. We have three very entertaining and very different grandchildren.

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

**L:** We are retired (since 2015) and still living in the same house in Lacombe on Lake Elizabeth within walking distance of Burman. I spend half a day, six days a week, in the archaeology lab at Burman, working on the publications of our dig. It would be irresponsible to dig up all that good material and not let our colleagues around the world know about it.

We also enjoy travelling to many parts of the world. I am otherwise busy at home working on the thousands of pictures we have of all our travels and trying to keep up to date on where all our students are and what they are doing.

God has blessed and continues to do so! ■

# Dreams Really Can Come True ... When God Is in Them

## Celebrating a Successful Ukraine Fundraiser in B.C.'s Okanagan

If you never have a dream, you can never have a dream come true! This is a story about what God can do when people dare to dream.

For many years, Greg and Julie Thorp of Oliver, B.C., along with their daughter, Nicole, and Nicole's husband, Jorden, had been trying to imagine how they could utilize the sprawling property of their Riverside Garden Centre as a community outreach centre.

They looked to their own church family at the Oliver Seventh-day Adventist Church for inspiration. The church had opened its doors as a "cooling or warming centre" for overly hot or cold days. It was such a success because the church had invited the surrounding community and agencies to the facility to help run the program. How innovative!

"You can never know how elated we were to observe ... the community [working] with us, instead of our church taking the 'Lone Ranger' approach," says Greg. "Surely, God was trying to tell us something: involving the surrounding community in our plans was key." Then the lights really came on.

Since the ongoing war in Ukraine was (and continues to be) the foremost news development on the world's collective mind, they began imagining the doors God might open if they decided to get involved.

Greg explains, "Looking into this more, we learned of a courageous man [in Ukraine] who was using his own vehicle to rescue families in danger, transporting them away from regions being bombed to a place of safety miles away, at the cost of \$27 per trip. This is where our dreams mushroomed."

Soon plans were underway to host a spring musical benefit concert in Oliver's Venables Theatre. "What if God would bless this idea (His idea) now burning in our hearts, to raise enough money from a community event to fund 1,000 rides to safety? And there was our theme for the event: '1,000 Rides Out'! What a thrill for all involved when that concert brought in \$28,000 of aid for the project —\$1,000 in excess of the goal.

A repeat concert opened in Kelowna weeks later, followed by another in the Abbotsford/Chilliwack, bringing additional funds, now totalling over \$120,000. "I couldn't bypass the opportunity to get involved in this worthy endeavour," remarks Rebecca Stonecypher, lead organizer of the Abbotsford/Chilliwack event.

Greg wondered, "How can we capitalize on this God-given success and express our gratitude to the community for their response and, together with them, celebrate God's blessing, goodness, and compassion? ... What if we turned

some of our acreage into an event stage right here and invited people from surrounding towns to a celebration event?"

As soon, the planning was underway to build a stage, prepare the grounds, and involve many agencies and local businesses to present an event at the end of August 2022. After weeks of intense work creating that weather-proof stage, organizing countless details, and advertising the event, August 27 arrived with my family sitting among nearly 300 people who had accepted the invitation to attend this inaugural event. A first-of-its-kind event, it drew people from the community, Adventist church members, as well as church members from various district congregations.

Inspirational music by Elena Krupskya, a Ukrainian vocalist from Red Deer, Alta., touched the audience as the weekend theme of "compassion" unfolded with each part of the program. Of special impact were three presentations on compassion and caring by Oleg Kostyuk, assistant professor of religion at AdventHealth University in Florida. Oleg and his wife, Julia, a nurse practitioner, were "boots on the ground" in their homeland to assist Oleg's nephew, Villy—the courageous young man driving his truck to transport so many people to safety. Tears welled in many eyes as the Kostyuks and others gave riveting





**B.C. Adventist church leaders join Brad Thorp (far left), ADRA representative Douglas Pereira (middle), and event organizer Greg Thorp (far right), in presenting recognition awards to representatives of four community agencies that participated with keen interest and assistance in the “1,000 Rides Out” event: The Gleaners, Desert Counselling, Peace & Development, and Oliver Mission. Their involvement was so heartfelt, helpful, and such an integral part of all that was accomplished for Ukraine. Photo credit: Frank McMiller**

testimonies of being in the line of fire while planning and executing the evacuation project.

A panel discussion was moderated by Brad and Kandus Thorp, well-known for their founding of Hope Channel now serving the globe in numerous countries. (Well, they know about God-fulfilled dreams!) The panel discussion featured heart-rending stories of people in life-endangering situations, which kept the audience on edge of their seats.

A hallmark moment was the report by one of the event presenters, Douglas Pereira, representing Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) Canada, which had been entrusted to manage the project donations.

Through ADRA’s amazing networking with other NGOs doing humanitarian work, ADRA Canada’s efforts yielded nearly \$1,200,000—10 times that of the collective concert donations! You could feel the ripple of enthusiasm going through the audience when the amount was revealed! And what’s especially encouraging is that the Canadian government considers ADRA to be one

of the best NGOs in Canada for lowest overhead costs, with most of every donated dollar going directly to projects.

Vocal recording artist Gina Williams ended the day’s power-packed program with an upbeat evening solo concert.

Several dozen community volunteers assisted with promotions, traffic control, stage management, audiovisual, meal prep/service, etc. Numerous community agencies that were involved in the project were present with booths to inform attendees of their work.

In the months since the event, many are putting their heads together and asking God how this venue could be used for future community efforts and celebrations, such as fine arts appreciation events and collaborative humanitarian projects, as well as programs featuring health and wellness.

It was such a delight to witness what’s possible when people come together out of compassion and the willingness to dream. As a sage woman wrote years ago:

When God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work

and gives assurance of its success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward ... will be the success given. God can work miracles for His people only as they act their part with untiring energy.<sup>1</sup>

The Thorps’ fondest hopes now are that what God accomplished through this initiative can be exemplary of what He can and will do for any church or person bent on growing His kingdom. God is anxious to transplant His ideas, ideals—His dreams—in human soil, *you*. What kind of soil are you? Parched? Acidic? Or fertile? Will God’s seed that He might plant in you have a chance to grow? What do you or your church family dream of? Are God’s dreams your dreams? ■

*Frank R. McMiller is a retired Seventh-day Adventist pastor and lives in Rock Creek, B.C.*

# RAINMAK



## The Power of a Mother's Influence

If you ask George and Daniel Cho, "What's the best part about being brothers?" they'll likely tell you, "Being twins!" Definitely, sharing a womb and growing up together has added a dimension to their lives that most of us don't get to experience.

Born and raised in East Toronto, the two have continued living in that city, giving back to the community what their beloved mother had gained years prior when they were mere boys.

When George and Daniel were little, their mother answered a knock on the door. It was an Adventist colporteur who shared natural remedies and health principles. Experiencing some health issues herself, she faithfully tried what was shared, and her illness was cured. Although this was the family's first experience witnessing Adventist health principles in action, it wouldn't be George and Daniel's last.

The positive results with natural health principles led their mother to continue connecting with local Adventists who, in due course, also shared children's books with her, such as the well-known Arthur Maxwell books: *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories* and *The Bible Story* series. Won over by the faithful witness of her new friends, their mother deepened her Christian journey by joining the Adventist faith.

George and Daniel remember their mother readily adopting the nutritional principles she learned about. "At home she made vegetarian meals for us. And instead of white bread and white rice, she started to give us brown," Daniel shares.

George agrees, "She discouraged

snacking and drinking with meals, and made us drink lemon water before meals—many of the things we now practise and promote."

The brothers were so positively touched by the lifestyle, they grew up wanting to be medical missionaries. Daniel muses, "A big part of that desire was the emphasis our mother placed on it. When you face opposition for something, that thing seems more precious than perhaps it otherwise would. For us, that thing was the Adventist health principles. Because we faced so much opposition on our journey, these principles and our Adventist faith just seemed that much more precious and valuable. Growing up we also read about Dr. David Livingstone, Dr. Ben Carson, and books like *The Ministry of Healing* and *Medical Ministry*, by Ellen G. White. We were also very athletic, and I guess all these combined put us on a path to where we are today!"

Unfortunately, the opposition they're referring to came from family. "Our immediate and extended family, uncles, and aunts who had grown up poor in war-ravaged Korea were, understandably, very concerned about the idea of cutting out what they believed to be essential food groups. In their minds, you had to eat everything—and a lot of it!" Daniel smiles at the memory, "Our mother was very faithful and strong-willed, though. Despite fierce opposition to both the faith and health practices, she was determined to pass these on to us and our sister. She persisted until ... we, at the age of 15, decided for ourselves that we would eat plant-based." How perfect that their

decision coincided with their baptism into the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

Because of their mother's influence, the brothers have become quite a force for good in the Canadian health field. Along the way, they founded Pathways Lifestyle Medicine Clinics and Lifestyle Is Medicine, with George serving as a naturopathic doctor (ND) and clinical director, and Daniel as president and program director. The two had always planned to serve together. "As twins, we were best friends and ministry colleagues. We were youth leaders in our local church and started many initiatives together." Most notably, they, with others, started GYC (Generation.Youth.Christ) Canada.

After George became an ND, he knew he wanted to focus his practice on enabling patients to adopt lifestyles that would help prevent disease and lead to healing. "The intention of the clinics," Daniel asserts, "is to focus on lifestyle medicine for chronic diseases while also being faithful to the principles and mission of the Adventist Church; in short, it's to be an evangelistic lifestyle medicine clinic." He continues with enthusiasm, "We believe that it's one of the most effective ways to reach people for Christ. The 'pen of inspiration' calls it the right arm that opens doors. We were won to Christ through health ministry, so we know firsthand its effectiveness!"

George and Daniel's website, [pathwaystowholeness.ca](http://pathwaystowholeness.ca), provides various lifestyle medicine services and events available to patients around the globe. Of course, patients can access clinic-type consultations, but George and Daniel also regularly co-ordinate



# ERS

live in-person and virtual events, such as Dinner with the Doctor, Brunch in Paradise (an outdoor event), and their webinar Lifestyle Med Live. Perhaps George and Daniel's most ambitious outreach, however, is One Week in Paradise, an eight-day intensive wellness event held at Camp Frenda. Its focus is to help people living with chronic diseases kickstart their journey to healing and optimal health.

The vision for launching a lifestyle centre and One Week in Paradise started in their university days when they learned about sanitarium work in Ellen White's writings. Daniel shares how their dream came to fruition. "Over time, we met others with a similar dream and passion: nutritionists, massage therapists, personal trainers, doctors, nurses, and others—all licensed Adventist health professionals. We also met Mario Roque, founder of Paradise Fields—an organic farm with a mission in the Hamilton area—who had a similar vision of opening a lifestyle centre." When Mario led the One Week in Paradise program in 2021, several lifestyle organizations got on board, including *It Is Written Canada*, *Not By Bread Alone*, *Marcos Made*, and *Energy Shack Juice Bar*.

You can sense George and Daniel's excitement when they talk about One Week in Paradise: "We should never underestimate the power of our health message and lifestyle medicine. Even one week of intensive lifestyle medicine and natural interventions can have profound health impacts. We've seen people with chronic pain, and after just one week of the program, they are completely pain free. We've also had



George and Daniel Cho

individuals quit smoking, alcohol, and coffee, as well as reduce blood pressure, weight, and blood sugar. There's a lot more, and not just physical health impacts. We've seen couples having breakthroughs in their marriage and others realizing their value and self-worth. We've seen incredible spiritual impacts. For example, one lady, when asked what she'll take away, said, 'I realize that I need God in my life.' In our most recent program, we had another lady who wanted to learn more about Adventists because of the love she felt from us. This is what excites us about One Week in Paradise: not only helping people physically, but spiritually as well."

George adds, "Whatever modalities we use, we want to point people to Jesus as their Healer."

Amen! God's hand is clearly guiding George and Daniel in ministry. And what a tremendous testament to a godly

mother's influence!

Sadly, the twins' mother passed away in 2014, but the twins cling to the sweet promises of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18. George and Daniel say, "These verses motivate us to serve and do our part in sharing the three angels' messages everywhere, so Jesus can come back and we can see our mother again." ■

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

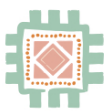
1 The website defines *lifestyle medicine* as "the application of evidence-based healthy lifestyles and health coaching techniques to empower patients to make lifelong lifestyle changes. Lifestyle medicine seeks to address the root causes for many of our most common chronic conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, excess weight, hypertension, and heart disease." See <https://bit.ly/3HfUTrZ>.





# IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT GOD

*IN THE 1940s, a police officer was assigned to monitor a series of Adventist evangelistic meetings in the East African state then known as Tanganyika. But that policeman did more than just monitor the event. He watched. He listened. And when Jesus spoke to him, that policeman opened his heart to his Saviour's love and followed Him.*



#### **From Police Officer to Pioneer**

William Tito Mwakibinga, our policeman-turned-evangelist, is regarded as an Adventist pioneer who believed in education. His work—and the plot of land he offered—contributed to the Masoko School being established. Family members attended there. They, too, became Adventists and went on to become high-placed government officials, pastors, and even professors in the medical school Tito's grandson would eventually attend.



#### **A Legacy of Christian Character**

William, popularly known as Mzee Tito (Elder Tito) lived his faith among the people. He visited them in their homes. He spoke the Word of God to them. Freedom, Justice, Fraternity (brotherhood), and Concord (harmony, unity, friendship, peace)—these words that would become embedded in Tanzania's constitution in 1977—were already part of his character.

These character traits were passed down to Tito's





**Dr. Mpoki's grandfather, William Tito Mwakibinga**



**Dr. Mpoki with his parents, Ellena Kalinga and Ulisubisya Mwasumbi**



**Dr. Mpoki as a medical school student with the midwife who delivered him**

daughter, Ellena Kalinga. Ellena and her husband, Pastor Ulisubisya G. Mwasumbi, would pass them on to their son, Dr. Mpoki Mwasumbi Ulisubisya—the main subject of our story today.



**Nurtured in a Village of Fellowship**

Mpoki was born between the years that Tanganyika and Zanzibar, respectively, gained independence from Britain by peaceful means. He was almost two years old when these countries came together, in 1964, to form the United Republic of Tanzania (“Tan” from Tanganyika and “Zan” from Zanzibar). As Mpoki grew, he watched and listened as the new United Republic developed around him.

By age 15, Mpoki knew he wanted to be a doctor. He had watched someone he loved try, unsuccessfully, to recover from an adverse reaction to an anaesthetic. He listened as the Lord strengthened his determination to find out why this had happened and to ensure that it would never happen to anyone ever again. He prayed hard for the Lord to lead and guide him in that direction.

“I went to public primary schools in Tanzania,” says Dr. Mpoki. “There were no Adventist primary schools in the country at that time. I studied at Adventist secondary schools in Tanzania and Kenya. We prayed every morning and evening. We had ‘weeks of prayer’ and campmeetings. Fellowship was nurtured. Since there was a ministerial training institute nearby, pastors and influential people who were strong in the faith spoke to us regularly. Seeing that people could be serious about religion and still succeed in life made me want to know more. I cannot overestimate the value of an Adventist education.”



**Lessons from Beyond the Classroom**

Dr. Mpoki credits Charles R. Nyantika, the teacher who adopted him as a spiritual son, for playing a large role in how his

path of faith unfolded. “Charles and his wife, Dinah, are committed Christians to this day,” he says. “Before I began my undergraduate studies toward my Doctor of Medicine degree, Charles asked me to teach at the Nyanchwa Adventist Secondary School in the South Kenya Conference. I was invited to stay in their home. During the two years I lived with them, I never heard them quarrel. They would discuss issues quietly. Charles would pay attention to what Dinah was saying. He would either agree or provide an alternative position. They showed me what living Christianity looks like; they contributed to my desire to continue to learn more.”

Mpoki was 22 years old when he went to live with Charles and Dinah. As he reflects on those early years, he says, “When it comes to God’s Word, the gap between our knowledge and ignorance is so wide that when you come across people endowed with the grace to explain and expound on the Word of God, there arises in some of us a desire to be like them. We wonder how they do it. The answer is the same in every generation: they study God’s Word and pray.” He added, “Charles and Dinah, my spiritual parents; my Christian friends who determined in their hearts to serve in gospel ministries; my family—these people have always had a very, very serious influence in my life. They’ve encouraged me on the spiritual path I’m following to this day.”



**Putting Dreams on Hold and Holding on to His Promise**

Dr. Mpoki’s medical studies took him to Dar es Salaam and Mbeya, both in Tanzania; Perth, Australia; and Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India. Halfway through his second year of medical school, as he pursued the profession he felt called to and most wanted, he made the decision to lay his career on the altar. Only God could save his dream to become a doctor, but Dr. Mpoki’s decision enabled the Lord to intervene in a most unusual way.

He explains: “Exams were held on the Sabbath.



A group of ambassadors and high commissioners who presented their letters of credence before the governor general, The Right Honourable Julie Payette

For the first one-and-a-half years of medical school, arrangements were made with the teachers for me to do my exams on other days, but then the teachers became uncomfortable with these arrangements. I was told to do my exams on Saturday or choose to do something else with my life. I told them my position on this subject was clear and unwavering: I would not write the exams on Saturday. I was given a letter, and I left the university. I wasn't discontinued (expelled); my status was simply switched to withdrawn. This meant I now had two academic years to requalify to continue my studies."

So, the year 1990 went by, and 1991 was well underway when, through the actions of the president of the United Republic of Tanzania, God made a way for a faithful young man to continue his studies. "It was May 1," Dr. Mpoki recalls, "just a few months before all hope of resuming my medical studies would be lost forever. Deep in my heart, I trusted that God would make a way for me, but I never expected that He would use the president to do it. Up until April 30, Tanzania had a six-day work week—Monday to Friday and half a day on Saturday. On May 1, the president decreed that Tanzania would conform to a five-day work week. By God's grace and mercy, I was finally able to continue my studies. I experienced God's kept promises for myself. I continue to experience them to this day."



**Led by God to Lead**

Dr. Mpoki has been high commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania to Canada

since 2019.<sup>1</sup> When asked what he missed most about his homeland, he quickly and emphatically replied, "The people! I miss them."

Tanzania misses her people too! Part of Dr. Mpoki's work as high commissioner is to encourage the people of the Tanzanian Diaspora Community to become part of the first-ever database created with them in mind. The Tanzanian government is reaching out to Tanzanians everywhere.<sup>2</sup>

In Tanzania, Dr. Mpoki served as an elder in the Magomeni Seventh-day Adventist Church, fulfilling many roles. He brought his willingness to serve to the Ottawa Seventh-day Adventist Church, where he has been welcomed and feels he's found a Canadian church home. As a Sabbath school facilitator, he champions the role Sabbath school has in our Christian experience. "Every day of the week is Sabbath school," he says, "and I love it because it keeps us glued to the Word! As for fellowship: the best way to fellowship is to remove the component of timing. We're supposed to be addressing needs, so until those needs are met at that particular point, we should not be saying we'll continue this next week."

**A Doctor's Dream Fulfilled**



You may be wondering if Dr. Mpoki realized his dream of ensuring that anaesthesiology is a safe procedure for everyone. Just like his grandfather, he became a pioneer. In February 2014, Dr. Mpoki became a Founding Fellow of the College of Anaesthesiologists of East Central and Southern Africa





Dr. Mpoki with The Right Honourable Julie Payette

There's more to the story! Watch Dr. Mpoki's video interview by scanning the QR code.



*"With all that he's done, and as he continues to do more, he clearly states to anyone who will listen: 'It's not about me. It's always about God!'"*

(CANECSA). An affiliate college of the East, Central, and Southern Africa College of Health Sciences, CANECSA works to advance education, standards, and research in safe anaesthesia and critical care for the people of East, Central, and Southern Africa.

In September 2022, Dr. Mpoki was a keynote speaker as president of CANECSA at the All Africa Anaesthesia Congress (AAAC) event held in Kigali, Rwanda. The theme was "Innovation and Rejuvenation in the Post-Pandemic Era."



### Devoted to Him

Since 2009, Dr. Mpoki has been publishing devotions and reflections on his blog.<sup>3</sup> Here are two excerpts:

#### From Oct. 27, 2022:

Moses would later be described as "more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:2). But as he stood before God and received his initial assignment for battle, his "humility" was nothing more than a self-absorbed lack of faith. Moses looked at his own abilities and didn't see how success was possible. He failed to see the Creator of the Universe who promised to walk by his side. ... The assignment may seem impossible, but His call is our greatest assurance of victory: "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:31).

#### From Oct. 25, 2022:

God is at work all around us, and He's calling us to join Him today. The bushes are burning, but in the hurriedness of our daily lives, we most often fail to notice—fail to stop and draw near. Is it any wonder we have a hard time hearing His call? What will we see when God allows us to look back at the life we might have lived if we would only have taken time to listen?

Dr. Mpoki continues to encourage us to watch, to listen, and to follow God. With all that he's done, and as he continues to do more, he clearly states to anyone who will listen: "It's not about me. It's always about God!"

**Editor's Note:** As this issue of the *Messenger* was going to print, Dr. Mpoki received notice that he is being recalled to Tanzania. While his presence in Canada will be missed by those who have had the opportunity to know him, his testimony will live on in our hearts and minds. There's a saying in Kiswahili, *baraka tele*. It means "abundant blessings." This is our wish for you, Dr. Mpoki: we wish you a lifetime of *baraka tele*! ■

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*Annie Warner Donnelly is the founder and owner of Taking the Next Step Corp. ([www.takingthenextstep.ca](http://www.takingthenextstep.ca)).*

1 You can learn more about the United Republic of Tanzania at <https://www.ca.tzembassy.go.tz/tanzania/category/country-profile>

2 You can learn more about Tanzania and the Diaspora Community Database it's creating at <https://www.ca.tzembassy.go.tz>

3 You can read Dr. Mpoki's blog at <https://drmpoki.blogspot.com/2022/>



# A Pizza for Peace

*“While I took the pizza, he took the ‘Peace.’ God takes the glory!”*

**R**ecently baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ladnar, who is from British Columbia, worked with the Canada Youth Challenge program this past summer. He then decided to continue serving as a literature evangelist. These are his stories:

## Joining God Where He’s Already at Work

I was going door-to-door in a neighbourhood, but because of some discouraging comments, some of our team members wanted to leave. However, my partner and I decided to continue working our street. I met a lady who had been walking with the Lord for many years. While talking with her, I prayed for guidance on what to share with her. I then showed her a book called *Peace Above the Storm (Steps to Christ)*. This led to a great conversation during which I was able to share with her all the books I had on hand. I was astonished to hear that she was being led by the Lord to accept the Seventh-day Adventist health message. She had been reading many of Ellen White’s writings even though she was not an Adventist!

I told her the purchase price for the books, but she blessed me with a contribution over and above the price. Afterwards, she confessed that it had been a difficult day, but in spite of it, she was praising the Lord that I had been sent to her door. Before leaving, I prayed with her and gave her a *Signs of Hope* book. Imagine if I had left the neighbourhood at the suggestion of the other team members! I would never have met this precious soul. It was all the Lord’s doing.

## Divine Appointment on the Sidewalk

I saw a young man walking on the sidewalk toward me. I introduced myself as a missionary for the Lord, and

he stopped to hear me out. I felt impressed to give him *The Great Controversy*. When he received it and realized what it was all about, he started to ask me all these questions. So, realizing this was a divine appointment, we went into a café where, with God’s help, I tried to answer his questions.

He believed in God and had been baptized, but he wasn’t sure if his baptism was true or not. I told him what I knew about baptism from the Scriptures and also shared with him about the end times. He was eager to hear what I had to say, and I kept praying to the Lord while I was speaking so I would say the right words.

It came time for us to part, and I ended up praying for him and his family. As it was close to the time to eat, I bought him some pizza. God really did put that young man in my path, and we exchanged numbers to stay in touch.

## Selling Food But Hungering for Peace

I was visiting small businesses when I met Mark,<sup>1</sup> a restaurant owner. Mark took the time to listen to what I was doing and showed interest in the books I was sharing. He decided to get *A Pause for Peace*—a book about the Sabbath. I then asked him, “What led you to choose that book?”

Mark responded, “Because it spoke about rest and peace.” Mark was very thankful and gave me two slices of vegetarian pizza. While I took the pizza, he took the “Peace.” God takes the glory! ■

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*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.*



# Adventist Education: Living and Learning to Serve

**ASK YOURSELF** the question, “Where would I be without the help of those around me?” How desperate we would feel if such helping hands—hands that lighten our burdens—ceased to exist. By extension, where would our Adventist schools be if help from seen and unseen hands were to disappear? Indeed, a key element that defines our schools is continued dependence on the selfless and sacrificial help of their communities.

At the end of the 2021/22 school year, the Sandy Lake Academy school board voted to approve the renovation of its science lab and the construction of a new high school classroom. To accommodate a rapidly increasing enrolment, these renovations, plus the hiring of an additional full-time teacher, were needed. Increased enrolment can certainly be classified as a “good problem” within our school system, but it presents its own challenges in the areas of personnel, scheduling, space, and visioning. Our challenge was to have the two building projects completed in time to welcome students back to school on Sept. 6, 2022. It was in these circumstances that the spirit of service and sacrifice that is intrinsic to our school system and its success shone so brightly.

Apart from defining the scope of work and acquiring the necessary building materials and tools, work officially began on Aug. 17. Between that time and the start of school, we fully made the following renovations to the science lab: new flooring, paint, ceiling, lighting, and whiteboards; a brand-new classroom, including steel framing, sound insulation, drywall, paint, ceiling, and whiteboards; and a fresh coat of paint for the high school wing. All of this was only possible by the grace

of God and the spirit of service and sacrifice that He laid upon His people through words like, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2, NKJV) and “he who is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matt. 23:11, NKJV).

During these 16 days of work, over 40 volunteers, including students, parents, staff, and community members, devoted their time, energy, and talents to the projects. Whether it was professional tradespeople or parents with their students in tow, God provided all the help we needed often when it was needed most. With such help, we were able to complete the two projects for a combined cost of under \$15,000.

Our schools provide a unique and transformative opportunity for our children to witness first-hand the power and efficiency that comes when people of varying talents, backgrounds, and means unite with hearts bent on service to support a cause that is important to them—in this case Adventist education—and labour for its success. This educational framework is encapsulated in the Sandy Lake Academy motto, “Service Above Self.” These experiences impress upon their receptive hearts the lessons of cooperation, selflessness, sacrifice, thoroughness, attention to detail, and dependence on God. I encourage all our members to commit to service opportunities at their local Adventist school and in the broader community, and to mentor our school-aged children into a life of service that will provide them with meaning and purpose both in this life and the life to come. ■

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*Steve Kibbee is in his fifth year as principal of Sandy Lake Academy in Bedford, N.S.*





# Families Participate in Use of Gifts to Keep Memories and Values in Focus



**Evelyn and George, then engaged and not yet Adventist, took this selfie with Evelyn's Brownie box camera at her nursing graduation. Shortly thereafter, they tuned in to the Voice of Prophecy and were baptized and married in 1951. Their unrestricted will gift reminds their daughter Leslie of their faith, their kindness, and how God exceeds expectations.**

*“My dad would be thrilled beyond words at how this has gone,” says daughter Leslie.*

**T**hree gifts that recently touched Maskwacis highlight the incredible difference that end-of-life gifts can make. These parting gifts positively impact church outreach, but for the families involved, they also reinforced values, rekindled positive memories of loved ones, and provided an opportunity for families and the church to work together.

## **1. George and Evelyn Widdicombe | Mamawi Atosketan Centre**

George and Evelyn had made several gifts to the Adventist Church during their lifetimes. Some were for specific church projects, but some were gifts of faith—faith that God would direct their use. The “unrestricted” gift was their choice for the gift in their wills. They never dreamed that part of that gift would become the first and founding gift of the Community Bridge Campaign to build the Mamawi Atosketan Centre (MAC).

“My dad would be thrilled beyond words at how this has gone,” said George and Evelyn’s daughter Leslie Price, one of the co-executors of their estate, shortly after the campmeeting launch of the MAC campaign.

The journey was indeed one of faith for Leslie as well as her parents. Leslie knew their hearts were always touched by the struggles of Indigenous peoples around them, but when her parents made their wills, there was no hint that a church/centre in Maskwacis was even a possibility. As an executor, Leslie recognized her duty to faithfully carry out the wishes exactly as expressed in her parents’ “mirror wills” when her mother passed away. There was no room to rationalize (e.g., *Well, there’s another church entity that my parents would be fine with or It’s all God’s work*).

So when the Alberta Conference asked Leslie if she’d be comfortable with part of her parents’ gift going to MAC, Leslie was surprised but pleased. As she and I talked, Leslie remembered that her father had helped Ed Desjarlais distribute tracts in Maskwacis.

“This centre shows the people [of Maskwacis] that our heart is with them,” said Leslie, confident that God had indeed directed in the use of her parents’ gift and gone beyond what they’d imagined.





Rhoda, Bob, and Bernadene (L to R) credit their parents, Dave and Wanetta Trenchuk, for teaching them the value of getting an Adventist education, sharing the gospel, and working with their hands. Applying their gift toward vocational learning opportunities for students at MANS was in alignment with Dave and Wanetta's faith, values, and who they were.



Bernadene, co-owner and engraver at All Sports Cresting, found real satisfaction in personally engraving her parents' names on equipment purchased by the estate gift.

## 2. Dave and Wanetta Trenchuk | MANS's New Mechanics Centre

The Career and Technology Studies (CTS)/Industrial Arts offerings at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) expanded last November to include its first auto mechanics class, thanks to an unrestricted will gift from Dave and Wanetta Trenchuk and their children's input on its use. Their daughter Bernadene Zayachkowski and her siblings, Bob Trenchuk and Rhoda Kanna, thought long and hard about a use that would match the Trenchuks' lives and values. There was a bay at MANS for mechanics, but no tools. Bernadene and her husband, Isaac, approached the conference with a plan.

"My parents were people of the soil," said Bernadene, who grew up doing farm chores. "They worked with their hands. Dad was mechanically inclined, a jack of all trades and a firm believer in [the Apostle] Paul's tentmaker ministry. Every person is blessed with the ability to learn a trade or have a way to provide their way through life so they would not need to depend on other people's charity—so one would have some skills to lend a helping hand, and a segue to share the gospel."

The tenderness in Bernadene's voice is unmistakable.

As the engraver at All Sports Cresting, which she and Isaac own, Bernadene found real satisfaction in personally engraving her parents' names on equipment purchased by the estate gift and is confident God will use and multiply what her parents gave back to Him.

## 3. Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) | MANS and MAC

While it remains to be seen how the gift of a retired Alberta couple will be used, they are already excited about what God will do with their gift. They're currently getting monthly payments from the CGA they recently established with the Alberta Conference, and they had the option of choosing one or more ministries to benefit when their payments cease at end of life. They were united in their choice of the Maskwacis Outreach as one of the beneficiaries. The Outreach includes MANS and the Mamawi Atosketan Centre, which they highly value. They are secure with their guaranteed income for life, and confident that God will ultimately direct their Maskwacis gift to its highest and best use. ■

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



# THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI  
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

## A Heart for Little Ones

*"We work hard to keep the children  
connected to their heritage."*

Twelve years ago, Jim and Janice Clark's neighbour asked if his 12-year-old granddaughter could live with them for a few weeks while the family sorted out an acceptable housing arrangement. The Clarks already had five children. But they agreed; their middle child, Mallory, was also 12. Six months later, the girl was still with them. So they contacted their local foster care office for advice.

After completing the required coursework, the Clarks became certified foster parents. Since then, Jim and Janice have fostered close to 40 children. Some, like that 12-year-old, stayed for years; others, for shorter periods. At times, the Clark house has been home to 12 children at once. Janice says, "We have a party with us wherever we go."

Jim, a builder/carpenter, and Janice, a teacher at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS), soon decided that one of them needed to stay home. Their growing family required a full-time caregiver, housekeeper, counsellor, cook, chauffeur, etc. Jim was the one to quit his job.

One day, one of Janice's junior high students told her, "My sister is having a baby. She wants you to have it." But as the months passed, nothing further was said. So the Clarks assumed there were no serious plans for them to take the baby. Then, months later, the mom-to-be sent word through her little sister that the delivery had been scheduled. Would the Clarks please be at the hospital.

Janice says, "Despite being skeptical, I made arrangements for a substitute teacher." She adds mischievously, "I told Jim I was taking the day off to shop for antiques in Edmonton."

They arrived early at the hospital on the designated day. When they introduced themselves, they were told, "Oh, you are the adoptive parents. We have a room all set up for you. As soon as the baby is born, we will bring him so you can care for him and bond."

"At that moment," Janice says, "we

realized we were adopting a baby." They named him Huxley.

The Clarks write, "One of our hardest times is when the little ones go back to their biological families. When Huxley came home with us, our children were jubilant because he would not ever leave our family."

Currently, the Clarks are fostering five children between the ages of three and seven, all of them First Nations Nehiyaw awasisak (Cree children). Janice, who learned the Cree language and is teaching it, as well as cultural studies, at Mamawi, says, "We work hard to keep the children connected to their heritage. Coming home recently from a Powwow, our three-year-old wanted to become a powwow dancer. A few minutes later, he wanted to be a firefighter.

Huxley's response, "And you'll go around and stamp out the fire when you dance? Right!" had everyone giggling. The special joys of fostering, the Clarks reflect, are just all the little moments in the day when a laugh and smile is shared. ■

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

**Left:** Awâsis drew a beard and moustache on herself and her brother so that they could be "just like Daddy Jim."  
**Right:** Janice (née Ganson) Clark, a Burman University graduate, goes to work with three of their children: Marissa, their oldest daughter, teaches Grade 9, Huxley is in Grade 1, and "Lollypop" is in kindergarten.





# Victory in Jesus

**“W**e learned a lot from our grandma, who kept the Sabbath at her home and taught my sister and me about the love of Christ,” Melissa Chamberlain says. “So as children, we both loved Jesus deeply in our hearts, but we didn’t know how to make it real, because we did not keep the Sabbath in our own home, and television took the place of the Bible and family worship.”

Christina McSwain, Melissa’s sister, continues their story: “Life at home was very difficult and my parents officially divorced when I was around eight years old. My sister and I lived with our mom after our parents’ divorce, and we eventually stopped regularly attending church. I remained in the Seventh-day Adventist school system until around the middle of high school, when I left and attended a public high school instead. I had trouble focusing at school, and I dropped out shortly after that. I spent most of my time watching television, listening to music, or attending heavy metal concerts. My love for Jesus faded into the background as these musicians became my idols.”

When she was at the bar drinking, Melissa would have random convictions: “*What am I doing? I know this is not the way I should be living. I love Jesus, and I know He loves me.*” But I would push those convictions away. I kept suppressing those feelings. ... Both of us were more strongly convicted when we had our first pregnancies; we didn’t want our children to listen to the music we were listening to or be influenced by alcohol the way we were, but we still didn’t change.”

“Then our mom told us that she had cancer,” Christina adds. “I had recently read an article that red meat increases the risk of cancer, and at that time when my mom told me she had cancer, I was eating a bacon burger. I immediately threw it in the garbage and did not touch meat again after that day.”

“Our mom quit eating meat as well,” Melissa explains. “The doctors gave her a very grim diagnosis and told her she would need a colostomy. But we prayed for her, and the Lord healed her; she is convicted it was God who healed



**Christina and Melissa found victory in Jesus! Hear how God worked one miracle after another, this month on *It Is Written Canada*.**

her. That gave her faith in the power of prayer, and now she reads the Bible. When she went to get tested, she was declared cancer-free. Her results were a big surprise to her doctor.”

When Christina and Melissa decided to move forward in faith, leaving harmful habits behind, their challenges only began to grow. “At that point, we both knew we wanted to make a change, but we had no idea how.” Christina confesses, “I weighed nearly 300 pounds, and my mind was clouded from drinking, smoking, and mostly from my addiction to food. So many things were keeping us in bondage, separated from God.”

To hear how God worked one miracle after another, giving Christina

and Melissa power to overcome these obstacles, watch *It Is Written Canada* this month on CTV, 3ABN, Hope Channel, Yes-TV, Miracle Channel, or any of the dozens of other networks where *It Is Written Canada* is aired across Canada and around the world. Or simply go to [iiw.ca](http://iiw.ca) or *It Is Written Canada's* YouTube channel and click on the program titled “Victory in Jesus.” ■

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

 **It Is Written**  
Canada



From  
Surviving  
to Thriving

Suku's goats offer the means to provide better nutrition for her children and income for her family.

**S**uku Mijar was born into the *dalit* caste in Nepal. In the eyes of society, that makes her an untouchable, an outcast. A report from the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner shares that at least 250 million people worldwide suffer from “appalling and dehumanizing discrimination based on caste and similar systems of inherited status.”<sup>1</sup> For Suku and other dalits, that means significant and even violent violations of human rights, civil and political rights, social and cultural participation, and access to economic opportunities.

In Suku's very remote dalit village, poverty's oppression puts young and old alike at risk of exploitation and deeper suffering. Suku and her husband were unable to earn or grow enough to feed their family on a daily basis. Anything other than daily survival was out of reach.

Psalm 82 opens with “God presides over heaven's court” (Ps. 82:1, NLT). It is while presiding as heavenly judge that God issues the following command: “Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people” (Ps. 82:2, 3, NLT).

Through a partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and with your support, our church through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is able to follow this command. Considering all the hardships and difficulties faced by the community members in Suku's village, ADRA's FOSTER-II project reached out to form a group to ensure economic opportunities by improving animal husbandry and establishing access to savings and loans. Suku joined the Goat Rearing Farmers Group, where she received training on best care and

practices for healthy, productive goats. She received two goats from the project to get started with her own herd.

She also joined a savings and loans group in which she began saving 50 Nepalese rupees a month. Being a member of the savings and loans group made life a bit easier for Suku, as she could access loans from the group when she needed them.

“I did not have money to buy goats, but after being a member of the group, I am able to access a loan and increase the herd size,” shares Suku. With the loan, she purchased five more goats. “I am also aware of improved goat rearing practices now with the technical assistance from the project.”

The two goats given to her by the project each gave birth to a kid. According to the rules of the project, Suku has passed those kids on to other community members to assist with their own herds.

Suku now has high hopes for her future—an outlook not many dalits can currently claim. “I am now confident that I can get a good return from goat rearing. I am happy about the future of my family, especially for my children. I am so thankful to the project for bringing all these changes to my life.”

ADRA's work of ensuring economic opportunity not only lifts families out of poverty but also rescues them from its life-threatening dangers. Thank you for making it possible for our church, through ADRA, to ensure justice for the poor and uphold the rights of the oppressed and destitute in places as far-flung and remote as a dalit community in rural Nepal. ■

*Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.*



<sup>1</sup> United Nations, “Caste Systems Violate Human Rights and Dignity of Millions Worldwide—New UN Expert Report,” March 21, 2016, <https://bit.ly/3FgeRBq>

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# New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB Community Impact Stories

The New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB aims to bring down the barriers that hinder economically marginalized individuals from moving forward. The program provides wrap-around supports for individuals from the target population in our community in downtown Oshawa, Ont., who want to become productive and self-sufficient.

## Community Impact

The New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB provides self-empowerment workshops, skills training, coaching, and co-ordinated supports geared toward readiness for employment and other productive pursuits to participants, who are referred to as HUB Learners.

To date, the HUB helped place 32

individuals on their path toward economic self-sufficiency. Of this number, 10 are currently employed or self-employed, four are actively pursuing employment opportunities, three have taken on volunteer work in preparation for employment, nine are working on launching their own businesses, three have taken productive personal development pursuits, and two have gone back to school in preparation for employment.

One year after we piloted the program, we have witnessed some remarkable transformations in the lives of individuals in the community we serve.

## HUB Learners' Stories

Following are stories of some of the HUB Learners whose lives were impacted by the work of the New Life Neighbourhood

Centre Productivity HUB.

## Community Partnership

This is the New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB through the lens of some of our participants.

If you are interested in participating in this amazing life-rebuilding work at the New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB, please reach out to Ann Thompson, HUB program director, at [annthompson0613.com](mailto:annthompson0613.com); or Eduardo Flores, HUB program manager, at [eduardoflores.ph@gmail.com](mailto:eduardoflores.ph@gmail.com). ■

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*Community impact stories compiled by Ann Thompson, director of New Life Neighbourhood Center (NLNC), and Eduardo Flores, program manager of the NLNC Productivity HUB.*





**Colin Moore-Gough**

"I'm 55 years old. I have limitations, but I am pushing forward. I have ups and I have downs. My dad and mom are seniors. New

Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB is where I receive ongoing coaching to address the future goals that I have to work on. My family wants what's best for me in everything I do.

I feel the Productivity HUB is helping me with new ways of thinking, being

positive, and moving forward. I heard about the church through a function they were having to help the community. The program is helping people, with or without disability, find happiness and positivity for self-improvement."



**Yvonne Parks**

"I'm a 73- year-old Christian lady who loves to write, crochet, knit, and arrange flower bouquets. I am physically disabled,

but I don't see myself as disabled. I'm alone—no immediate family, only distant cousins. Finances are a major problem to [meet] daily needs, let alone

any dreams. I started my own TV dinners and limit my takeout to once per month. I use the bus as much as possible and limit cab use. It has helped. I was not active in improving anything. There were days I just struggled to get through each day.

New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB encouraged my writing goals. They got me in contact with a publishing company. Helped me use the food bank (I was raised "If you do not

have, you do without"). They gave me guidelines, time frame goals to reach, and resources for help. The course was very informative and with meeting once a week, it was not overwhelming. Since starting the course, I have become more confident in my abilities. And among my notable success is that I am currently working on publishing a second book of poems."



**Donald Coleman**

"I'm a 68-year-old Jamaican-born male who has been living in Canada for over 50 years. I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist

family; ... my dad served as a pastor for most of his life. I am the eldest of five children and the only one currently residing in Canada. My 91-year-old mother has recently moved into a retirement home and is trying to deal with that adjustment. My dad passed away seven years ago from the effects of Alzheimer's. His passing has been a great loss to our family, but he left a legacy for me. I attended Christian schools for most of my life, and the friendships and connections continue. Church has been a major part of my life, as my friendships are connected to my church life. My relationship with God, who is supreme, is the major focus of my life today.

Church ... provided the foundation, but the struggles and challenges of life have led to my relationship with God. I have been married on two occasions to two beautiful and wonderful ladies who have been my support and strength. I

had two sons with my first wife, and she passed away when they were seven and five years old. That was devastating. ...

After completing my college degree, I worked as a social worker for over 20 years, then transitioned to teaching before retiring in September 2020. I am married and a proud parent of five children; three are my stepchildren. Our children have given us 10 grandchildren, who are a joy to our lives.

My number one goal for my family is for us to maintain a close relationship with God. My wife and I are confident that we can't make it happen for our children and we are trying to be examples that they see daily. Our other dream is to have a close family connection; we strive to spend at least one day a week together. COVID has certainly impacted that. My wife and I were raised with the importance of family connections, and we are striving to follow the same mould.

Looking back at our lives, both my wife and I have experienced significant losses; a divorce of a spouse and the death of a spouse. This has had an impact on me. I feel that for several years after the loss of my first wife. ... I was just going through the motions. To be

honest, I can say that it wasn't until after retirement, and my involvement in the New Life Neighbourhood Centre Productivity HUB, that my eyes became open to who I am, and excitement about my future occurred.

It's hard to say how the losses have impacted our children, but we know they were definitely affected. God has been a source of guidance as we raised our children. I do struggle with the impact my unmotivated self had on my boys, but thank God He brought us through.

My wife and I were members of an Adventist church for almost 20 years, but during COVID and virtual church, we eventually got connected to New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oshawa through friends. This led to volunteering at the food bank as well as getting involved with the programs at the HUB. The programs at the HUB have been eye-opening and a boost to my confidence, as well as providing a meaning to my life.

We are on the verge of transferring our membership to the New Life church because of the programs that are outreach based. We are very happy and impressed that we are doing more than just attending Sabbath services."

# Leadership of the Seventh-day Adv Across Canada Gathers for Year-End

There was a feeling in the air, radiating from the devotionals presented, from conversations after meals, from hallway small talks, and from prayer groups discussions. One could clearly notice the attendees' understanding of the need for the church to be intentional in several areas of ministry—the realization that our media content must be timely and relevant, the awareness that something must be done to effectively support small congregations. There was a feeling in the air, and it came out as the result of committed people—church employees and otherwise—praying and asking God for unity and guidance for doing the work of the church in Canada over the next five years.

In the first in-person meeting of this kind since 2019, leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church across Canada met at the national headquarters of the denomination in Oshawa, Ont., Nov. 16–21, to share reports of the work done in 2022, to pray together and plan for the year ahead.

These “year-end meetings,” as they are customarily called, comprise a number of gatherings of various executive and governing bodies of the church, like the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) board of directors' meeting, the officers' council, annual general meetings and board meetings of various entities of the SDACC such as Kingsway College, ADRA Canada, and *It Is Written Canada*. Education superintendents,

principals, and teachers of Seventh-day Adventist schools across the country also convened for the education council and board of education meeting.

At the beginning of the SDACC board of directors' meeting, Paul Llewellyn, SDACC president, led board members in a brainstorming exercise, asking them to answer questions related to church growth, outreach through media, and mentorship. Llewellyn went on to present the SDACC's vision for the next five years, whose areas of emphasis will be on multiplication, media, and mentorship.

During the discussions, significant concern was raised about the shortage of Adventist teachers and pastors in Canada. We are not graduating enough of them. As a matter of fact, not too many students are majoring in either theology or education. In order to encourage young people to follow those career paths, a vote was taken to offer substantial scholarships to assist Grade 12 students planning to major in those areas.

In the interest of enhancing better practices when it comes to ordination to ministry in Canada, the officers' council—made up of conference presidents, executive secretaries, and treasurers—voted to recommend to the SDACC board of directors that the SDACC administrative committee create an ad hoc committee to develop a unified ordination pathway to be followed by conferences across Canada.

Marilyn Pazitka, SDACC retirement plan director

Brad Thorp, BC Conference president

Paul Musafili, SDACC treasurer



# entist Church Meetings

Earlier this year, the SDACC constituency gathered in session, voted to delegate to the SDACC board of directors the responsibility of evaluating and appointing departmental directors for the SDACC. This was carried out at the year-end meetings. As a result of the board's deliberations, the following people were reappointed: Rose Jacinto, undertreasurer; Evaldo Vicente, communication director; Betty Bayer, education director; Jeremy O'Dell, health benefits director; Campbell Page, Indigenous ministries director; and Marilyn Pazitka, retirement plan director. Also, Keith Chant's position changed from information technology services manager to information technology services director. Keith made a presentation to the officers' council about the importance of increasing the security of our network systems across church organizations in Canada.

While the meetings were being held at the SDACC, followers of the *Messenger* magazine on social media were encouraged to send ideas, questions, and suggestions to the leaders in attendance. A social media follower suggested in their comments that the church needs to invest more into the Adventist education system. Another comment suggested that an app be developed to provide information from churches across Canada, so people from different provinces could access up-to-date information on what is happening in other provinces.

Considerable discussion was entertained on how to

expand the work of media in Canada. The SDACC is working to make *Hope Channel Canada* a reality and an effective outreach tool. For that, we need to start producing TV broadcast-quality content, made by Adventist Canadians with the Canadian public and interests in view. It was mentioned that this can only be accomplished with support and involvement by the conferences and Adventist entities from across Canada. The SDACC and *It Is Written Canada* (IIWCA) are partnering to renovate IIWCA's studio and equip it to serve a variety of ministries and churches.

By the time the meetings were concluding and attendees preparing to return home, new friendships had been developed, bonds forged, and a sense of renewed commitment experienced.

There is a need for growth—spiritual growth—both as individual Seventh-day Adventist Christians and as a church collectively. There is a need to grow the reach of our testimony. The needs may be far greater than any human resources, but it is the Lord who says, "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest" (John 4:35, ESV). ■

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*Evaldo Vicente is the communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.*

**Paul Llewellyn, SDACC president**

**Charles Aguilar, Manitoba–Saskatchewan Conference president**

**Wayne Williams, Alberta Conference executive secretary**



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## British Columbia

# Night Light Community Celebration



Abby explaining the benefits of chia seeds while making chia pudding



Inspire Ministries' health team

One day our church members met and shared the same vision and passion to reach out to our neighbourhood. We surrendered this goal fervently to God in prayer, took baby steps in the process, and humbly witnessed how the Lord blessed our little faith and turned it into His big story! This is how it transpired.

A very small team of five members got organized quite recently into what we call a "community council." This council longed to bring our church to the public, so they waited for the occasion when most people traditionally go out from door to door for trick or treating. On the eve of Oct. 31, 2022, instead of handing out the usual sweets and goodies, we gave GLOW (Giving Light to Our World) tracts, religious literature, prayer verses, vegan citrus chicken spareribs, chia pudding, and a small cup to taste the waterless natural juice from beets and carrots.

We collected contact information from those interested to win a plant-

based cookbook and another book about depression recovery. To make the event more attractive to the children, some bunnies were available for petting.

Within that four-hour lane event, a total of 23 community contacts were registered in our outreach file, wanting to learn more about vegan cooking and waterless natural juicing. Among those contacts, three requested prayers and home visitation.

It was a well-lit boulevard of happy passersby, making it the start of our Night Light street outreach experience.

The inspiration to remain connected to the community blossomed to another Night Light celebration. On Nov. 19, 2022, some 60 people gathered to learn about heaven's original diet found in Genesis 1:29 and experience food tasting from the vegan presentation and waterless natural juicing.

Fourteen community visitors were expected to come that day, but eight

called sick within an hour of the start time and we were beginning to feel disheartened, yet we remained hopeful. Then the Lord heard our lament and miraculously brought 17 precious guests within that three-hour event.

It was truly joyous to grow our circle of friends, have fellowship, and meet new associates. And the best part was when all of us from various faith affiliations joined in the prayer of intercession by Pastor Matthew Reyes as he lifted up petitions to our One living God for healing, hope, restoration, and reconciliation.

We claim 1 Peter 5:6, 7, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God [set aside self-righteous pride], so that He may exalt you [to a place of honor in His service] at the appropriate time" (AMP). May this be the source of our delight in serving our dear Saviour. ■

—Rachel Pedernal, clerk,  
Inspire Ministries





## Quebec

# Unravelling God's Love Through Science: A Different Approach



**Erick Juanich, speaker, explained biblical concepts using scientific experiments. Left to right: Combustion of pure hydrogen gas to demonstrate spiritual purity; wireless radiation energization of mercury gas to teach about obeying God; entropy for a lesson about Sabbath.**

Both the Mount Carmel and Montreal Filipino Seventh-day Adventist churches, pastored by Luis Bon Jr., recently concluded their joint youth evangelism series themed “Unravel: Love Through Science,” held at the Côte-des-Neiges Resource Centre from Sept. 30 to Oct. 28, 2022.

Led by Mount Carmel’s Erick Glenn Juanich, church elder, this was the first-ever joint youth evangelistic series between both sister churches. All in all, six precious youth decided to commit their lives to Jesus. The baptismal candidates were Ysabelle Cacatian, 15, Rachelle Cacatian, 13, Mark Twak, 11, Ethan Pigon, 11, Janelle Cabebe, 13, and Zoe Allison Cabebe, 10. All attend the Mount Carmel Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Juanich is a registered nurse who worked as a science teacher at Greaves Adventist Academy for two years. This was his first time spearheading a youth evangelistic series.

As preparation leading up to the event, a handful of youth attended a one-on-one Bible study session twice a week with an assigned teacher from early September to late October.

With the target audience in mind, Juanich explained biblical truths through the lens of science, followed by various hands-on experiments pertaining to the lesson of the night. Topics included “God” (The Origin of the Pieces), “Faith/Obedience” (Ubiquitous and Unseen Waves and Fields), “Second Coming” (The Oxidative Conclusion), and many more.

Although the event wasn’t held in an actual science laboratory, the youth enjoyed interacting during the scientific experiments. It was an engaging experience not only for the children but also for the adults in attendance.

For those young people who weren’t “tired enough” of being in a classroom setting all day, some lessons were followed by an electronic pop quiz to test their

knowledge and to see who actively listened and took notes during the presentations. Quiz winners were rewarded with prizes.

Despite busy school and work schedules, youth, adults, and guests were committed to attend the event; the COVID-19 pandemic did not make people reluctant to go.

In the end, a labour of love unfolded with lives transformed. The newly baptized members showed enthusiasm and a willingness to immediately serve in the church and were elected to hold assistant positions for the upcoming year.

We thank God for the success and for touching the hearts of our young people. We look forward to future outreach and evangelistic opportunities whenever or wherever that may be! ■

— Michael Cacatian,  
Mt. Carmel Filipino  
Seventh-day Adventist  
Church



# SDACC



Mark and Becky Johnson (front row) with the SDACC office family on a colourful fall day



Mark Johnson, with a characteristic twinkle in his eye, enjoying speeches and a slideshow presentation

## Always at Home

On Nov. 10, 2022, office staff at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) headquarters gathered to express their appreciation for Elder Mark Johnson’s dedicated service, leadership, and friendship. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> SDACC quinquennial session, held in September 2022, Johnson transitioned into another phase of his ministry, after serving as president of the SDACC for the past 12 years.

Mark and his wife, Rebecque (Becky), have been a source of inspiration to Seventh-day Adventists across the country. Johnson is the longest-tenured SDACC president to date. His many

years of diligent service in the SDACC presidency fit well with his overall commitment to serving God and His children on earth. He has served the church for more than 50 years.

After graduating with a theology degree from Union College, in Lincoln, Neb., he began his pastoral ministry in the United States, served overseas, and eventually transitioned to Canada, serving as pastor, communication director, conference executive secretary, and conference president. Prior to accepting the call to the SDACC, he last served as president of the Alberta Conference.

In 2010, a few weeks after the late

Dan Jackson had been voted president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Elder Johnson was called to serve as president of the SDACC, in replacement to Jackson.

Johnson is an avid reader, having more than 3,000 titles in his personal library. He uses the wisdom God has given him to reflect upon matters related to church growth, and how we can communicate the gospel to people we see and meet every day in simple and authentic ways. Being raised in a country farm setting, Johnson loves plants and animals. But above all, he loves Jesus and the people Jesus died for.





Receiving a memory book of his time at the SDACC—an office tradition—from Charisma Hodgins



Becky receiving a beautiful bouquet from Cathy Anderson

Every time he has been asked what the dream job for a pastor would be, Johnson has provided the same answer over and over: a pastor’s dream job is to minister to a local congregation; to care for people and attend to their needs; to be there when they need a word of comfort and encouragement; to point them to Jesus as the source of all hope, as the One who bridges the gap between us and heaven.

Becky Johnson has ministered alongside her husband all these years. Between 2012 and 2020, she contributed a monthly column to the *Messenger* titled

“On the Road With Becky,” where she would ask church members at local congregations and campmeetings practical Christianity questions. Though never officially employed at the SDACC, Becky has made many friends both in the office and across churches in Canada, with her calming presence and friendly attitude.

Elder Johnson has often said that the SDACC office is the best employer among all church offices in North America. If this is true, the SDACC staff recognizes the invaluable contribution Johnson has

made to that end—as he treated every co-worker with respect and dignity and strived to be a reflection of Christ’s character to others in the workplace.

We solicit your prayers for the Johnsons as they move into a new phase of ministry. We pray for continued good health and wisdom, and we look forward to hearing the stories they will share with us as they continue to serve the Lord and the church. ■

—Evaldo Vicente, communication director, SDACC

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## ■ Legal Notices

### Legal Notice of the Alberta Conference

of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is hereby given that the 52<sup>nd</sup> 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*

## ■ Births

### Reia Adellyz Rastrollo Babida

was born April 28, 2022, to Jefflyn Rastrollo-Babida and Adams Babida of Dauphin, Man.

## ■ Obituaries

**Elizabeth (née Sabo) Birkett** was born Dec. 3, 1938, in Rosedale, Alta., and died May 10, 2022, in High River, Alta. Liz was wholly devoted to her family, friends, and church family. She was predeceased by her son, Todd Birkett; parents, Jozsef and Julianna Sabo; brothers, Alec, Vince, and Joseph Sabo; and sister, Julia Sabo. Surviving: spouse, Jack Birkett; sons, Jack Jr. (Sharon) Birkett, David (Karen) Birkett, and Darren (Judy) Birkett; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

## ■ Advertisements

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## 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual ASDAL Conference

**Call for Papers:** The 2023 Conference Committee invites presentation proposals for the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual conference of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians, to be held June 27–29, 2023, on the campus of Adventist University of Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. The theme of the conference is Library Research and Internationalization. We encourage proposals that explore the role of libraries and librarians in a global research environment. Possible topic areas include: • Ongoing research projects • Collaborations with researchers in different disciplines • International co-operation between librarians • Building international collections and resource sharing • International research methods. The Committee is accepting proposals for the following types of presentations: • Research Papers—sharing completed or ongoing research projects • Position Papers—advocating for a particular viewpoint on a topic • Poster Presentations—visual presentations highlighting new approaches to library issues. Proposals should consist of the presenters' names and institutional

affiliations, brief presenter biographies, a presentation title, the format of the presentation, and an abstract of 200–250 words describing the presentation topic. Please submit proposals to Michelle Carbonilla, ASDAL president-elect, at [MOCarbonilla@aup.edu.ph](mailto:MOCarbonilla@aup.edu.ph) by Jan. 30, 2023. (1/23)

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# 2023 OFFERING SCHEDULE

## JANUARY

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

## FEBRUARY

Local Church Budget ..... February 04  
It Is Written Canada\* ..... February 11  
Local Church Budget ..... February 18  
Conference Advance ..... February 25

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**>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT.** As of Nov. 30, 2022, there were 359 depositors with a total deposit of \$33,923,525. There were 90 loans with a value of \$33,590,172.

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



## The Old and the New

A new year has come. Though Jesus said, “Of that day and hour no one knows” (Matt. 24:36, NKJV), I like to think we’re closer to seeing our dearest hope materialize, the second coming of Jesus. The end of a year and the beginning of another bring out a wide gamut of human emotions, and many people tend to look at January 1<sup>st</sup> as the opportunity to make a fresh start in several areas of life. From a temporal or cosmological perspective, there is nothing markedly different between December 31 and January 1. In a sense, the new year is not a new kind of phenomenon. It will be a collection of 365 periods of 24 hours, a parade of seasons, moon phases, and alternating tides. All of that we’ve already seen in our lifetime.

On the other hand, as humans we don’t know what 2023 will bring. Because of that, there is nothing inherently wrong with seeing the first day of the year as a clean slate, as the gateway to new opportunities, new resolutions, greater accomplishments, and reset or renewed commitments.

As we enter 2023, it may be helpful to keep in mind that we’re bringing with us all of the knowledge and experiences we have gained so far. Some might shun the idea of going back to the past, or to the old, but this is not necessarily a bad thing, especially considering the spiritual growth we live out as we walk with Christ. It was Jesus who said, “A disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure new things and old” (Matt. 13:52, NASB).

Bringing out a mix of new treasures and old ones is how Jesus envisioned the life of a true disciple. To begin with, as Christians we believe in the Holy Scriptures as comprising both the Old and the New Testaments. Also, as we deepen our relationship with Jesus, we’ll appreciate connecting the dots between truths we’ve learned in the past and the daily illumination given by the Holy Spirit to help us discover new aspects of the truth.

How will your past experiences help shape your way of life in the new year? How will the knowledge you acquired so far influence your testimony as a follower of Christ? Remember, the possibilities with Jesus are limitless, as measureless is the truth in Him and through Him.

There is a clean slate before us. It is made of material that you and I can recognize, yet it is brand new. May God help us make the best use of it, because He is able to build us up.

I look forward to being back here next month, God willing. Peace and grace to you. ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Evaldo Vicente". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'E'.

Evaldo Vicente, editor  
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**WE ARE OFTEN NOT PREPARED** for, or expecting, disaster. Over 92 years ago Canadian Junior College in College Heights, Alta., was overtaken by a disastrous fire in the middle of the night. It was a hard blow amid the Great Depression. But the staff and students, with the help of community and church members, not only rebuilt together but also thrived as they moved on to a new chapter.

### The C. J. C. Fire

UNDOUBTEDLY the large majority of our church members in the Western Canadian Union have heard of our great loss at Canadian Junior College. Some have heard radio reports, others have had telephone calls and wires, and still others have read various accounts in newspapers; and so in order to have a correct account, as far as we know, the following information will be given:

The fire occurred at about 2:00 A. M. May 28, starting in the administration building in the neighborhood of the third landing of the winding stairway, which is the main and ordinarily the only exit for the twenty-one boys who roomed on fifth floor. The cause is yet unknown, but an ulterior motive is very strongly suspected.

The blaze spread very rapidly, and with the aid of a strong wind razed the administration building to the ground in just one hour. The boys rooming on fifth escaped miraculously with their lives, all personal belongings being a total loss. Most of the boys escaped by the steel fire escape on the south side of the building, but five who were trapped escaped by a rope which was installed by one of the boys as an added precaution for just such an emergency. Holgar and Folke Haggkvist, twin brothers from Pendryl, descended the fire escape as flaming torches and are in the hospital in a rather serious condition. Let the brethren and sisters in this Union remember these boys before the throne of the Great Healer.

The laundry and woodwork shop was the second building to burn, followed closely by the boys' dormitory, all three being a total loss.

The buildings were fairly well covered by insurance; but the files and records, as well as the library, will never be replaceable.

The boys of West Hall were able to save practically all of their personal belongings, and all feel very grateful that circumstances are not worse than they are.

The fire department from Lacombe responded very quickly to the alarm and did their best to save the boys' dormitory, but the high wind was such a great disadvantage that all efforts were in vain, and although the flames were held in check for some time it was apparent to the hundreds of spectators that it would be only a matter of time until West Hall would be no more.

We are very grateful to the residents of the community who responded so liberally and wholeheartedly in offering rooms to house the boys, and at the present time all are comfortably taken care of. We are also thankful for the sympathy and assistance offered by surrounding towns, especially Lacombe.

The old administration building has gone; are we discouraged? No. C. J. C. still lives, and no word of complaint has been uttered by either student or teacher. We are carrying on our regular school work, and hope that in this great loss there is some lesson for us; some experience that will show us our own weakness and draw us closer to our great Captain, for we know that "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

C. W. SHANKEL.

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THE excellent library which has been of such valuable service to school and community is considered an inestimable loss. Already a few books have been given by friends as a nucleus for a new and equally good library. Any donations of books suitable for this purpose will be greatly appreciated. We would be glad to communicate with any who are interested in this good work.

C. J. C. LIBRARIAN.

## Relief for Fire Sufferers

By S. A. RUSKJER

IN CONNECTION with the disastrous fire which reduced to ashes three of the buildings of Canadian Junior College with their contents, on the early morning of May 28, about twenty of the college boys lost practically all of their belongings. Much more serious than this loss is the fact that four or five of the boys were burned, some of them very seriously. One of these boys is still in the hospital at this writing. We believe that it is in answer to earnest prayer that he is still living and enjoys the prospect of full recovery. The hospital bills incurred in taking care of the boys that were burned will run into large money.

After giving careful consideration to all the details of this matter, the Union Conference committee has voted to issue a call to all of our churches to take up a special collection on Sabbath, July 12, for the relief of the boys who were burned, and who lost everything in the fire. This offering should total close to \$2,000 in order to take care of these heavy hospital bills and provide just a little relief for each of the boys who were deprived of their personal belongings. This is not an endeavor to reimburse all individuals for personal belongings that were destroyed by the fire, but simply to take care of the very urgent and needy cases. Heavy losses were sustained by many in the community, especially by teachers and others. Some lost several hundred dollars worth of books belonging to them personally.



Others lost several hundred dollars worth of music, musical instruments, etc. These losses are being cheerfully born by those who are still in possession of plenty of clothing to wear, and who are unharmed, thus being able to go to work and reestablish themselves so far as the fire is concerned.

In another article we will give you facts concerning the collections from insurance companies, appropriations, and rebuilding plans. Let us remember that God still lives and has a bright future for Canadian Junior College and the young people of Western Canada, if we will but faithfully follow His leadership. At this time we simply want to urge that a liberal offering be given on July 12, and the same be handled by all church treasurers as "Lacombe Fire Sufferers' Relief Fund." Let those who have been spared the suffering of loss and agony in connection with the fire, demonstrate that they appreciate heaven's blessings by sharing the financial loss of those who have suffered.

July 8, 1930—*Western Canadian Tidings*, (Vol. 20, No. 26, p.1)



1930—*Western Canadian Tidings*

June 3, 1930—*Western Canadian Tidings*, (Vol. 20, No. 22, p. 12)



# In Times of Economic Uncertainty

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