

ONTARIO CONFERENCE

HIGHLIGHTS



Fall 2022

The Evolving Church

HOPE in Today's Context

2022 Camp Meeting
& Ordination Page 12

Walking & Working
With Jesus Page 8

CYSA Track & Field
Returns Page 32

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Reflections on Growth: Piecing Together a New Normal

On March 11, 2020, life became stranger than science fiction. In the fall of 2019, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) emerged and created a buzz, but no one expected that months later, it would be declared a global pandemic and shut down our schools, offices, places of entertainment, gyms, churches and more. We were shell-shocked and unprepared.

I remember sharing that our churches would close on March 19, 2020. We hoped the lockdown would last only a few weeks, but it soon became apparent that things would not go back to normal anytime soon. As a result, with financial assistance from Ontario Conference administration for Zoom accounts and equipment, our intrepid churches pieced together a new normal—i.e., “building the boat while sailing.”

This edition of *Ontario Highlights* reveals how our churches and conference have evolved. First—and perhaps most obvious—many churches ventured online for the first time or significantly improved the production value of their existing stream (see p. 6). Nearly all our churches across Ontario can now reach global audiences online! We have also successfully held several virtual or hybrid camp meetings and other conference-wide events (see pp. 12-15). But there are also some unexpected gains:

- Church members staying connected even in the strictest of lockdowns via online small groups and Zoom meetings (see p. 6)
- Children and youth fulfilling the gospel commission through digital evangelism (see p. 8)
- Groups of churches, like Ontario's Spanish congregations, aligning for significant evangelistic efforts (see p. 16)
- Lay members organizing and presenting inspiring evangelistic series (see p. 17)
- Churches and individual members meeting increased needs during the pandemic, both locally and abroad (see p. 22)
- And so much more!

Saying Goodbye

As we reflect on the past few years, we can see that, although we've evolved as a church, we've also grown as individuals. For me, the pandemic was a period of intense change and growth. I am not the same Christelle Agboka who stood in front of you on Sunday, August 20, 2017, as Ontario Conference's newly elected Communications director. In official photos, I was smiling, but on the inside, I was shaking. I knew God had called me to this position, but was I ready? I wasn't sure, but God was.

Building on the foundation of my earlier years, the pandemic pushed me to find new ways to share a message of hope and wholeness and equip others to do so. The online trainings from the Communications department covering topics like live streaming, graphic design and digital evangelism are among my fondest memories. So are Ontario Conference's virtual events, where I overcame my reticence to be on camera to serve as host, panel facilitator, interviewer, singing group member and more.

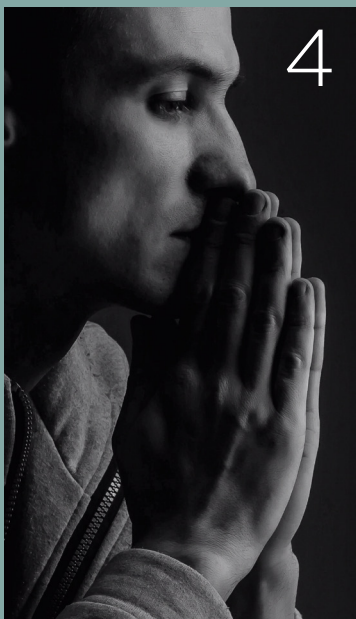
When this magazine hits your homes, my time at Ontario Conference will have come to an end. I have prayerfully accepted a call to join the North American Division's Communications team. I want to thank you for being part of my growth journey, praying for me, offering a helping hand, reading my work, sending encouraging notes and lifting me up. I would not be where I am today without each of you.

My parting words are, as I've shared many times, let's use what's in our hands—a phone, tablet, laptop or the many gifts God has given us—to connect like Jesus so we can go home soon.

Many thanks, and God bless.

Christelle Agboka
Communications director





4



10



8



6



14



16



24

- 4 Meaningful Worship
- 6 **The Evolving Church**
- 8 WWWJ: Walking and Working with Jesus
- 10 **A Rich and Satisfying Life**
- 12 2022 Camp Meeting
- 16 **Around Ontario**
- 22 Saving Lives in War Zones

Meaningful Worship

The **Worship That Connects Summit**, held December 10-11, 2021, boasts worship sessions and seminars teaching us how to worship in a way that glorifies God and how to share His love with others.

Scan the QR code to watch now.



On Tuesday, May 24, Uvalde, Texas, was disrupted by an unthinkable act of violence. An 18-year-old man walked into Robb Elementary School and mercilessly shot and killed 19 students and two teachers. This tragedy left the nation desperately seeking answers. In the face of such a tragedy, some may ask why God allowed this to happen. Doesn't God care? While the world is beginning to recover from COVID-19, tragedy is ever-present.

People are asking tough questions: If God loves me, why did my husband die of COVID-19? If God cares, why did my parents get divorced? If God is good, why was my daughter killed by a drunk driver who survived? If God is just, why are people suffering in senseless wars? Why does wrong so often seem to triumph over right?

How do we find answers to these questions? How do we find peace?

We can find peace through meaningful worship and by building our relationship with God.

Since the days of Adam and Eve, there have been two types of worshippers. Cain and Abel were brothers raised in the same home, taught how to honour and worship God by the same parents. Both were given equal opportunity, yet only Abel's offering appropriately glorified the Lord. God rejected Cain's worship as meaningless.

Let's clarify what meaningless worship is. Matthew 15:8 says, "These people draw near Me with their mouths and honor with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Berean Study Bible).

Matthew uses the Greek word *Karadeah* for heart—the mind, fountain and seat of one's thoughts, affections and purposes. A verse in the song "A Gift Without a Giver" by the Winans says, "What's the use of praying and staying the way I am?" Our worship is meaningless without our hearts.

Cain didn't worship the way God intended; he wanted to do it his way. Thus, Cain dishonoured His creator. Isaiah 29:16 (AMP) speaks against this dishonour: "Oh your perversity! You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be considered of no more account than

the clay? Shall the thing that is made say of its maker, he didn't make me; or the thing that is formed say of him who formed it, he has no understanding?"

Our lacklustre worship doesn't form the type of relationship needed to find solace during a tragedy. Instead, we need a genuine connection with Him to understand why and how God could allow such tragedies to continue.

John 4:24 says, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (ESV).

Jesus makes the truth about meaningful worship clear in Matthew 15:8. Meaningful worship requires "drawing near to Him with our mouths, honouring Him with our lips and keeping our hearts focused on Him."

Throughout our journey in life, we must do the following:

- Keep our hearts and minds focused on Him.
- Praise Him through our prayers.
- Celebrate Him in our songs.
- Honour Him in our hearts.
- Continually thank Him in our thoughts.
- Pay tribute to Him in our testimonies.
- With intentionality, always adore Him for who He is.

He is our Maker, Lord, Saviour, and Substitute on the cross. He loves us and cares for us beyond that which we deserve. Therefore, the God whom we worship is great and worthy of praise.

Psalms 95:1-7 reminds us of the following:

"1 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song.

3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

4 In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him.

5 The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

7 for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care."

According to historians, this Psalm was written shortly after the Israelites were released from Babylonian captivity. It was an invitation to remember and worship. The Israelites tended to forget the Father and all He had done for them. When shackled by the enemy in a strange land, they found it hard to sing the Lord's song. But God gave them a second opportunity for true worship, and they grasped it.

We, too, are shackled with the burdens of daily life, stressed with overwork and bombarded with bad news. However, we must engage in meaningful worship with God even in our heartache and pain.

God calls for us to continually and meaningfully worship and praise Him with all our heart and soul. We must worship Him in spirit and truth and build a permanent relationship with Him. The more we worship, the more we will understand why God allows the storm to continue and will gain the strength to endure.

And like Habakkuk, we can say,

"17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

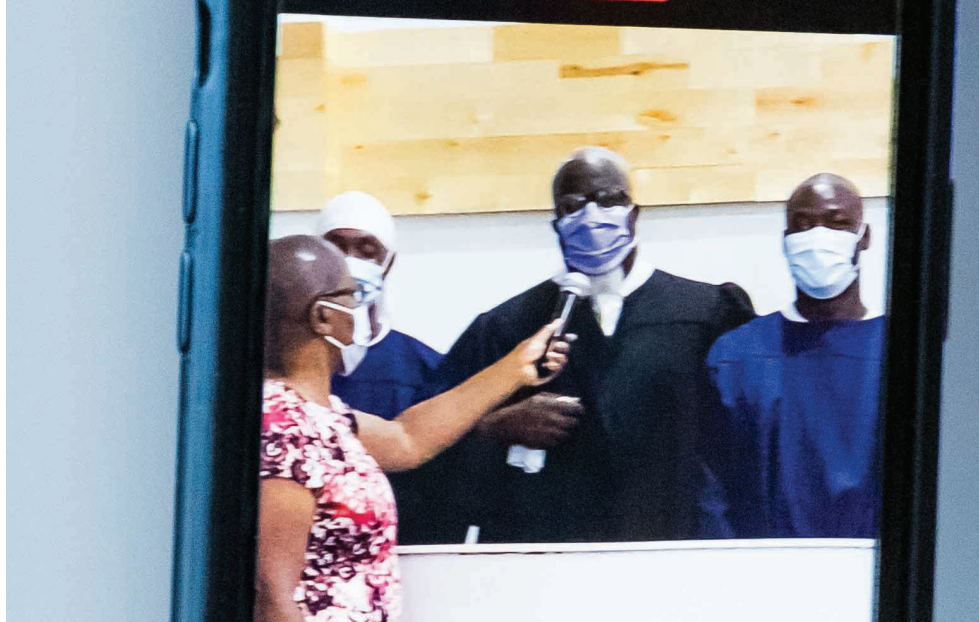
18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation." (Habakkuk 3:17, 18, ESV)

Mansfield Edwards,
President



Evolving Church

Best Practises for Digital Evangelism



Pastor Andre Anderson ministering at Shiloh Church during the pandemic

One recent Sabbath morning, the Immanuel Church parking lot is nearly full. A glance around the sanctuary reveals a congregation diverse in age and ethnicity but with more young people than is typical. After service, young adults gather like an extended family, welcoming newcomers as if they'd always been there. It feels like home.

"During the pandemic, young people—many non-Adventists—came out of nowhere," said Associate Pastor In Pyo Hong. As he led an in-person Wednesday night Bible study on the 28 fundamental beliefs, people kept coming in and built a community. "People were hungry for truth that makes sense."

Our interviews with pastors, elders and communication leaders confirmed that, since 2020, life—and church—have changed forever. Here are some key takeaways:

God's Provision

When church buildings closed, God invariably provided the tools and personnel needed to go virtual. During his first Sabbath at Shiloh Church, Pastor Andre Anderson met a musician who did live streaming and audiovisual work. While sharing his dream of an online evangelistic series, Anderson learned about the Roland switcher, a product that produces multiple camera angles with only a few cameras. It was costly, but the church board agreed to purchase it on a monthly plan for a year. "With two months left to pay off this product, the pandemic hit. God's timing."

As a small church, Romanian Heralds also had limited funds for new media equipment. However, God provided money for a camera, and other equipment was donated. "It's been a walk with God," said Emanuel Achim, the AV leader.

Practice Makes Progress

Some churches, like College Park, were already online and simply refined their offerings. Others, like Thunder Bay and Immanuel, who were starting from scratch, took a step-by-step approach to live streaming. Thunder Bay started on Zoom, graduated to recording the sermon, and then streamed an entire service. Immanuel Church began with



Gabriel Achim with newly baptised member

its two pastors and head elder meeting in Lead Pastor David Rogers's study and projecting a sermon onto an iPad.

At Thunder Bay, AV Associate Josh Mahon and AV Lead Miriam Szabo researched and learned how to live stream during the pandemic. Mahon said, "In a scramble, you have to figure things

out fast." He noted of the now seven-person team, and Pastor Elvis Dumitru, who also assists, "We've had to adapt so much. We learn and grow together." Judy Gamez, Mount Zion Filipino's head elder, would concur when describing her church's transition online, "We're learning something new every week."

Creating Connection in Lockdown

Even during the strictest lockdowns, churches maintained a personal connection with their congregations. At College Park, Head Elder Sam Kutondo said, "We encouraged all members to check in on a certain number of people and hear how they were doing throughout the week." They also stayed open during the pandemic, as mandates allowed. Today, in-person attendance is robust, and nearly 500 global viewers watch weekly online.

Before reopening, Thunder Bay Church held a drive-through Christmas concert in cooperation with the local health authority, and a City Hall member attended. At Shiloh, Anderson insisted on live rather than pre-recorded music so musicians didn't forget how to sing in front of people. He also prioritized reaching out to at-risk individuals. Pastor Gabriel Achim of Romanian Heralds called members daily from March to July 2020 and continues to call regularly. Then, throughout 2021, he held prayer meetings by phone three times a week. "Members were able to stay in touch and feel like part of a community during lockdown," he said.

Small Groups a Tool for Connection

Small groups (alternatively called care groups or life groups) also experienced a resurgence in 2020. That year, Mount Zion Filipino leaders were able to implement the vision for care groups they'd introduced in 2018. Today, they have seven or eight groups. Every member has one of five responsibilities: Bible study, fellowship, prayer, mission and friendship ministry. The emphasis is on members' accountability within the group.

"These groups are excited," said Pastor Sereivudh Ly. They share their testimonies every fifth week in a five-week month. One couple has already gotten baptized as a result of attending their group, which Mount Zion leaders view as a vehicle for evangelism. Within the care groups, they are establishing the "EMM network"; everyone should have someone they encourage, someone they mentor and someone

year. Mount Zion Filipino wasn't active on social media before, but they now have different managers for Facebook Messenger, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube; they also have managers for the website and e-newsletter.

Most churches now host several online services, including prayer meetings, vespers, board meetings, elders' council, women's and men's ministry, Sabbath School and 10 days of prayer. At Immanuel, members enjoy regular devotions by Pastor Rogers, prayer ministry and daily Sabbath School lesson studies online. Hong commented, "[Our members] have been growing so much because before, they engaged once a week, and now they're engaged every day."

Nurture Your Young People

Immanuel Church's young adult population exploded over the last few years via their Wednesday night



Immanuel Church members

newly baptized members are in their late 20s, 30s and 40s. Rogers noted, "This [influx of young people] is amazing. Only God could do something like that."

Hybrid Worship Here to Stay

All churches interviewed are planning to continue streaming and conducting Zoom services. After post-COVID-19 restrictions, their Zoom and YouTube numbers have stayed strong.

Sam Kutondo is grateful for the flexibility the hybrid environment allows. "COVID taught us that the church is not a building. We worship whether we're in the church or our homes. COVID put together platforms to help us connect beyond the physical."

Pastor Andre Anderson is looking forward to continuing to evolve post-pandemic, shifting from a "worship centre to a community centre," including a community services room, renovated food pantry, workout centre and technology centre. He also asserted, "Don't go backwards. Not changing is an indictment on God. We [Shiloh] were nowhere on the map. And the pandemic forced us to get cameras, fix the backdrop of our church and get lighting. And maybe that's the point. Maybe the Lord allows pandemics to force us to upgrade so we will become reflective of the awesomeness He represents."

Christelle Agboka



Thunder Bay Church AY Program 2021

mentoring them. Ly concluded that care groups help members evolve from "gathering to building relationships."

Thunder Bay leaders also split their members into six life groups during this period, where, Dumitru said, "People feel more comfortable sharing."

Expanding Your Reach Online

Overall, churches have ramped up their online presence. For example, Romanian Heralds draws in different audiences via their website, Zoom, YouTube, Spotify and Instagram. Among those who discovered their church online, one non-Adventist was baptized after worshipping with them for a

Bible studies, which started before the pandemic. "We were building a genuine, passionate community. So when they came in, they could plug into this group and start being active. Everyone was saying this [community] was exactly what they were looking for. And it's kept growing," said Hong.

Community building activities at Immanuel include distributing care packages downtown every second Sabbath, monthly potlucks at someone's home, Bible study, Friday night vespers and Sabbath School (all hybrid).

"We ended up having baptisms almost every month [other than during heavy restrictions]," Hong continued. Most

Walking and Working With Jesus: Empowering Young People to Be Digital Disciples

When David Taylor was eight years old, he liked to play preacher. According to his mother, Colleen, “During church, when the other kids were playing on their iPads, he was listening intently to the sermon. Then he’d come home and preach to his toys.” His preaching career evolved naturally, first within his home church and soon throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). So when the Ajax church decided to participate in the Ontario Conference’s Walking and Working with Jesus (WWWJ) series, David Taylor was a natural fit.

WWWJ, an Ontario Conference digital missionary initiative for children ages six and older, began in 2019 with a meeting between Ontario Conference directors Allan Chichester (Children and Sabbath School) and Edwin Martin (Adventurer, Master Guide and Pathfinder Ministries). Inspired by the popular catchphrase, “What Would Jesus Do?” (WWJD), WWWJ would build upon previous evangelistic efforts with and for children and youth.

Though Chichester and Martin could not have foreseen the COVID-19 pandemic, their desire to train young people to use social media for Christ paved the way for child-centred digital evangelism over the past two years. “WWWJ is spirit-led,” said Martin. “The Lord inspired us to continue evangelizing through the COVID-19 pandemic using digital platforms. We wanted to make use of all available technology.”

Following their initial discussion, the pair began collaborating with other Ontario Conference directors, including Christelle Agboka (Communications); Kevin Benta (Risk Management); David Forsey (Education); Reynold Hazelwood (Personal Ministry); Maria McClean (Health and Prayer); Elizabeth and

Orlando Pule (Family Life); and John Scott (Youth and Young Adults). Through these collaborations, a seed was planted and has since continued to blossom.

“The initiative was launched in 2020,” said Chichester, “with four seasons of training in 2021 for parents, children and youth ... done both in English and French.” Many topics were covered, including live streaming, social media, Canva, and of course, preaching. At its peak, the training saw over 200 registrants.



David Taylor, WWWJ speaker, Ajax Church

Today, WWWJ continues to receive support from pastors, parents and church leaders. This year, two of our local churches were given the opportunity to pilot the program. And the results were astounding, a true testament to God’s faithfulness.

News of WWWJ brought excitement for many, including

10-year-old Josiah Johnson-Hall, one of six children who took the stage during the week-long evangelistic series held at Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in April. “When Pastor Northe announced the series, I was excited to do it,” said Johnson-Hall, who is no stranger to preaching. “Everyone did well, and everyone received a reward for it.”

Yet the greatest reward is the one each of these children will receive when the Lord returns for their willingness to serve Him. For Ephesus’ Pastor, Leonard Northe, this was always the goal for his congregation’s children, including the six whom he handpicked to participate in the series. “If you preach the Word of God, you have to live the Word of God,” he said. And this is precisely what many of the young speakers have decided to do. For instance, at the series’ conclusion, Johnson-Hall dedicated himself to Christ through baptism.

Given the success of WWWJ, having received “maximum support” from parents and other congregants, the church board at Ephesus voted to conduct a smaller-scale series each month so more children could have the chance to shine for Christ.

Across the GTA, the Ajax Seventh-day Adventist Community Church set out to conduct its own WWWJ evangelistic series throughout April. Their series, comprising 14 children between the ages of six and 17, used Zoom and YouTube as their primary platforms. “Given the circumstances,” said Ajax’s pastor, Joseph Bulgin, “the attendance



was very good.” With 60 devices and more than one person watching per household, the children “became international evangelists,” with viewers tuning in from as far away as Jamaica.



Devonte Mitchell, WWWJ speaker, Ephesus Church

According to Pastor Bulgin, the church “made announcements asking for all who would like to be part of the program.” The children who volunteered received extensive mentorship from Bulgin and Elder Velma Morgan, the Ontario Conference’s executive coordinator for Adventurer Ministry. They worked alongside the parents to train the speakers and prepare them for the series. “I was so truly blessed,” said Elder Morgan of her experience engaging with the burgeoning speakers.

Among the participants was 15-year-old Taleyah Taylor. Though she’d never preached before WWWJ, she took the series as an opportunity to improve her public speaking abilities. She was nervous but “enjoyed getting the Word of God across and inspiring people.” Her words and those of every child involved were indeed inspirational. Following the Ajax series, two speakers also chose to commit their lives to Christ through baptism.

With stories like those of Josiah Johnson-Hall and Taleyah Taylor, it is not difficult to see WWWJ’s tremendous impact

— for those listening and for the young participants. “Children are the future and present leaders of the church,” said Pastor Bulgin, who conducted his first evangelistic series as a teen and thus knows firsthand the potential of children and youth to win souls. “They need to be given opportunities to work within the body of Christ.” And their work has tangible results, with 13 children baptized as a result of WWWJ to date.

Thankfully, WWWJ is here to stay. In addition to the celebration being planned for later this year to bring all the children together, training will continue throughout the GTA in 2023. But in the meantime, there is work that can be done today, work our Heavenly Father is happy to partner with them in completing.

As for David Taylor, who has faced many personal challenges, the invitation to participate in WWWJ was a welcomed reminder of God’s call to all of His people, both budding and experienced. “It doesn’t matter how old or how young [you are],” he said. “You just need to have the confidence to step out of your comfort zone.”

We thank God for each child who did just that — stepped out to help win souls for His kingdom — and every child who will do the same through WWWJ for years to come.

Shantal Small,
Children’s Ministries secretary



Pastor Leonard Northe with young WWWJ participants, Ephesus Church

Several excellent resources exist for children, youth and parents. “Truth 4 Youth,” a captivating, faith-building series that centres on Christ’s empowering grace for children in every situation, used by both Ephesus and Ajax, can be accessed on their website, www.truth4youth.org. For those wanting to learn how they, too, can walk and work with Jesus using various digital platforms, visit www.walkingandworkingwithjesus.com.

Click on the QR code to subscribe to the new WWWJ channel!



Towards a Rich and Satisfying Life

It is safe to say achieving and maintaining excellent health is everyone's goal, especially during the current pandemic. The media is overflowing with 'miracle' formulas. Certain health information seems ideal until replaced by 'new research.' The pursuit of health and wellness should not be intimidating or expensive. Instead, we should be guided by balance—a state in which various parts form a satisfying and harmonious whole and nothing is out of proportion or unduly emphasized at the expense of the rest' (Cooper, *It's Your Health*).

If followed faithfully, the following list of simple reminders should improve your quality of life. It provides a foundation for the 'rich and satisfying life' everyone desires (John 10:10, NLT).

- **Stay connected to God all day through ongoing conversations.** A balanced, healthy life starts and continues here.
- **Plan personal spiritual retreats to enjoy uninterrupted seclusion and enhance your connection with God.** Such retreats can be the perfect antidote for challenges like loneliness, burnout, depression, stress, anxiety and panic attacks. They do not replace but enhance devoted and day-long connections with God.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Celebrate life.

Do what you can to minimize and control stress, worry and anxiety. Change and crises are inevitable; how you respond to them will determine how you navigate and survive them. Adaptability and resilience will help you adjust to the subtleties of new situations.

- **Enjoy regular exercise, recreation, and relaxation.** Engaging in exercise and leisurely activities can increase energy and mental focus, as well as benefit your overall health by decreasing the risk of heart attack, osteoporosis, depression and anxiety; lowering cholesterol levels and blood pressure; enhancing digestion, the immune system and liver function; improving mood; and contributing to better sleep, among other benefits (www.mayoclinic.org). Any amount of activity is better than none at all. Consistency is key.
- **Practise inhaling and exhaling several times slowly throughout the day.** Deep breathing provides oxygen to vital organs, cleanses the respiratory tract, calms the nerves and reduces the risk of infection.
- **Maintain and balance family and social connections.** "The real epidemic in our culture is not only physical heart disease, but ... spiritual heart disease — that is, the profound feelings of

loneliness, isolation, alienation and depression that are so prevalent in our culture with the breakdown of the social structures that used to provide us with a sense of connection and community," notes cardiologist Dean Ornish.

- **Praise God and be optimistic.** Tell God everything you are thankful for when you wake up and before you go to sleep. 'Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise' (Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 251).
- **Find reasons to laugh.** The benefits of laughter are similar to those gained through exercise. Laughter is also good for the soul.
- **Sleep.** Rest allows the body to be cleansed, repaired and rejuvenated.
- **Eat well consistently.** A balanced diet that includes whole and natural foods provides all the essential nutrients for our bodies.
- **Stay hydrated.** Every one of our cells needs water to function properly.
- **Keep hope in your heart.** Trust God. He is faithful and infinitely capable of taking care of every situation that life delivers.
- **Safely expose yourself to the sun to stimulate your body's production of vitamin D.** Those who do not have enough exposure to the sun might need to take a vitamin D

supplement. Consult your health-care provider for more information.

- **Improve the air quality in your home by opening windows and/or doors.** This will allow air to circulate throughout the entire

house, including spaces that may have a buildup of dust, odours and potentially toxic substances.

- **Connect with support systems within your circle—family, friends and faith community.**
- **Look outside of yourself and invest in others.** Mentor, volunteer or coach. These, and similar activities, contribute immensely to mental wellbeing.
- **Listen to your favourite music, especially when you are alone.** Research has shown that listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure and pain as well as

improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness and memory (www.hopkinsmedicine.org).

- **Consult a mental health professional qualified to provide emotional support during times of great stress.** In these situations, intervention is key.

Perfect health will be a reality only in heaven and on the new Earth. Meanwhile, following the suggestions above should significantly improve your quality of life. 'I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15:13, NLT).

Maria McClean,
Health Ministries director



Distress Centres and Crisis Lines in Ontario - selected list

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), www.camh.ca

CAMH Main Switchboard: 416-535-8501 or 1-800-463-2338 (toll-free, staffed 24/7)

Call 911 or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000

For mental health services in Ontario, call 1-866-531-2600 (toll-free)

ConnexOntario, www.connexontario.ca, 1-888-531-2600 (phone or chat). Free, confidential health services, information for alcohol or drug problems and/or mental health or gambling issues

For suicide prevention and support, contact: Crisis Services Canada, www.crisisservicescanada.ca, 1-833-456-4566 (phone), 45645 (text). Services offered: 24/7 support from 4:00 p.m. EST to midnight



2022 CAMP MEETING
AUGUST 5, 6

2022 Together with God Camp Meeting

Called to Implement Christ's Method in These Last Days

This year's camp meeting theme, "Together with God," came to life as Ontario Conference's media team and others produced online content for children, teens, young adults and adults. The teamwork in the Conference's



Dr. Kevin Burrell, Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University

boardroom-turned-media centre exemplified the weekend's focus on uniting with God and others to finish His work. And from Friday, August 5, to Sabbath, August 6, thousands of international viewers (over 12,000 on Sabbath morning) were challenged to be more innovative and inclusive in fulfilling Christ's mission.

Camp meeting speakers were bold, sometimes humorous, in their delivery. For instance, adult speaker Dr. Sung Kwon (director, Master of Arts in leadership, Andrews University), speaking on the church's need to

love like Jesus, stated, "I've visited churches so cold, you could almost skate through the aisles!"

All weekend, he stressed that we, as a church, must meet current social needs or risk becoming obsolete. Kwon also emphasized our call to social justice and innovation. "Jesus is telling us, the church, to remove whatever binds people or prevents them from flourishing." He also asserted, "Our properties are not our presence in the community; our engagement is. God does not just call us to be blessed. He calls us to be a blessing."

This call to reimagine Christ's method for 2022 was echoed by several speakers, including ordination speaker Dr. Kevin Burrell (associate professor, religion and culture, Wilfrid Laurier University; see p. 14).

On Sabbath evening, viewer Avia Williams expressed, "From morning till now, God has been giving us a word—sobering words. Hear Him."

Camp meeting was intentionally inclusive, with programming for all ages and ASL, Spanish and French interpretation for the

main service. Moreover, the day included a multiethnic Sabbath School panel and participants of diverse backgrounds. Several churches added an interactive component by watching the services together or engaging in outreach.

In the evening, Dr. Mansfield Edwards (president) shared Ontario Conference's recent blessings, such as the successful lay evangelistic series, purchase of an upgraded Cessna airplane for ministry to remote Northern Indigenous communities and expansion of Seniors' Ministry activities. He also noted some sad losses in 2022—Ontario Conference pastor and former executive secretary Antonio Bueno (see p. 21) and former Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada and North American Division President Dan Jackson (see p. 20). Finally, he thanked David Forsey, the Conference's assistant superintendent



Behind the scenes at Camp Meeting 2022

of education who recently served as the acting superintendent, and welcomed the new superintendent, Pastor Emile Maxi (see p. 21).

Edwards closed with a powerful charge. He noted that 86% of new church members come in via invitation from friends and family. “Statistics show the potent effectiveness of the priesthood of all believers. Not all may be a pastor,

but everyone can be a minister.”

Technical difficulties and delays arose on the weekend, yet virtual fellowship remained strong.

For instance, viewers encouraged newcomer Gary B., who stated, “I’m so thankful I stumbled upon this Christ-centred message! Thank you, Lord, for bringing me here.”

Sis Sam Smith responded, “Praise the Lord, Gary! The Holy Spirit brought you here to hear a Word from God. Happy Sabbath, and thank you for watching. God bless you.”

Jennifer Lewis concluded, “The presence of the Lord is rich at camp meeting. Can you imagine Heaven?”

Christelle Agboka

Together with God, In Fellowship with Friends

From uplifting praise and worship and introspective Bible study to inspiring testimonies and powerful preaching, this year’s virtual Ontario Camp Meeting was one for the history books!

The Teens’ Camp Meeting featured Pastor Vanessa Hairston as keynote



Toronto Pilipino Youth

speaker, and the Young Adults’ Camp Meeting featured Ontario native Pastor Aaron Dyer. Pastor Vanessa reviewed Peter’s life and development alongside Jesus, while Pastor Aaron covered Paul’s experience with the Corinthian Church. These messages helped renew young people’s faith in God.

Youth Ministries added an in-person element with regional hubs where teens and young adults could view the service, have discussions, sing and enjoy a meal together. By many accounts, the hubs were the highlight of camp meeting. Some regions, like Western Ontario, connected via an outdoor weekend camping experience. Many regions also engaged in outreach, visiting shelters, parks and metropolitan centres.

Shamie Louis, a young adult from Ottawa Church, shared, “The music was phenomenal, and the sermons were on-point, giving much wisdom. Even better, I experienced these things in sweet fellowship with friends and young people from across the region.”

In his final message, Pastor Aaron Dyer shared how Satan is trying to break us, but Jesus is bringing revival to our survival. He encouraged us never to give up. This sums up—quite beautifully—our teens’ and young adults’ social, spiritual and fellowship experience this year. When we are Together with God, nothing can stop us from blessing others or achieving the awesome things He has in store.

Akehil Johnson,
ACF Ontario co-chair

Children’s Camp Meeting

As we reflect on camp meeting, we praise God that children across Ontario and beyond came together for a series of exciting programs.

The day began with Kindergarten Sabbath School, featuring a lesson by Pastor James Anderson (Bowmanville) and crafting led by Andrea Flores Antognini (Kitchener-Waterloo). Next was Primary Sabbath School, which incorporated relevant Bible stories. Finally, the Juniors class, presented in French by Ottawa area churches, featured a roundtable on the day’s theme—Together with God.

The mid-day Children’s Church highlighted young participants throughout the province. The heart of the program was a message from

the North American Division Children’s Ministries Director Gerry Lopez and his friend, Carlito, the puppet.

After a few hours’ break for outreach, the children’s programming resumed with a fundraising concert incorporating music by children from diverse ethnic and language backgrounds. The concert’s emphasis was on collecting a special offering to aid children affected by the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Powerful testimonies highlighted the aid churches are offering Ukrainians abroad and newly landed in Canada.

Kristen White-Bailey, who viewed the program with her children, Emma and Evan, stated, “[The program] was a delightful blend of theatre, musical



Pastor Gerry Lopez, Children’s Ministries,
North American Division

talent, languages and mission story. We loved Carlito and Pastor Gerry. Our prayers for Ukraine continue, and we were moved to give during the concert. We especially love that we can watch the whole service again on YouTube!”

Shantal Small



Ordination: God Can Use Anyone

For the 2022 Together with God Camp Meeting, an intimate group of family, friends, colleagues and church members gathered at Scarborough Church for a hybrid ordination service. Well-wishers travelled from Ottawa, the Greater Toronto Area and beyond to support Pastors Jim Nziwa (Ottawa French and Orleans French) and Shawn Ellis (Apple Creek), and a global audience of thousands tuned into the livestream on the Sabbath, August 6.

Program participants and supporters included Paul Musafili, treasurer/VP of finance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, and Ontario Conference administrators Mansfield Edwards, president; Jakov Bibulovic, executive secretary; and Virene Meikle, treasurer. Several Ontario Conference directors and fellow pastors were also present.

As always, music created a worshipful ambiance. Standout performances included new pastor Malik Smith's (Brampton) piano playing and singing, Pastor Harold Novac's (Cambridge and Toronto Hungarian) mandolin solo and the music of an exuberant trio

composed of Pastors Samuel Appiah (Toronto East), Wallin O'Connor (Scarborough) and Carl Cunningham (Mississauga). The musicians reminded us, as sung by Smith, "It takes everything to serve the Lord!"

The highlight was Dr. Kevin Burrell's (associate professor, department of religion and culture, Wilfrid Laurier University) memorable ordination sermon. He urged attendees not to be jealous of what God does through people of other denominations, like John was when he complained that someone was casting out demons in Jesus' name who didn't follow [Jesus] with them. Christ said, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50, KJV).

"We cannot reach everybody, preach to everybody, teach everybody. We need all the help we can get. So do not despise outliers!" said Burrell, who noted several outliers in the Bible, including Jonah, Jeremiah and Saul-turned-Paul. He concluded, "Jesus says, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold' (John 10:16, KJV). If God can use us, move us, save us, He can use them, move them, save them." He urged the ordinands

— and everyone — to focus on what God was calling them to do and to "let God do His business in the world."

"Why stop someone who is labouring effectively? The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Have mercy, Lord," responded Samanta Browne on the livestream chat.

"Stop the 'we' against 'them.' One God, one people, one mission!" added Pauline Christian.

Later, Pastor Nziwa recalled, "[Burrell's] message was a call to not think we've got it all and those who aren't Seventh-day Adventist aren't doing the Master's work. I needed this message."

In a brief, poignant charge, Edwards concluded, "Ordination is a time when pastors reflect on the solemnity of their call, and members are reminded how God uses ordinary people for His glory. It's a reminder that we're even at the door."

Christelle Agboka

Southern Ontario Camp Meeting 2022

Southern Ontario Camp Meeting 2022, themed “Enduring Faith,” was again virtually convened the first weekend in June. Camp meeting started with a Friday evening program and continued to a Sunday morning discussion and roundtable.

Despite a temporary loss of sound, we had our highest-ever virtual Sabbath School this year. Viewers tuned in to YouTube and Facebook for up to 17 hours of programming. We reached over 3,000 individuals world-wide on Sabbath.

Attendees heard messages from Pastors Wayne Williams, Alberta Conference vice-president, Denis Fortin, Andrews University professor, Daniel Saugh, ADRA Canada director and Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, who did the closing charge.

The theme for the exceptional Southern Ontario Adventist Regional Youth Camp

Meeting (June 3-4) was “Faith Factor... Turning Your Fears into Faith!”

During the virtual Friday night program, Pastor Samuel Sinnanainar used the example of Paul and Silas in prison to illustrate that we should praise God even in trials. Youth Camp Meeting continued on Saturday with an in-person program from 2 to 11 p.m., including AY, dinner and a social, at Really Living Church. That day, Pastors Jephthah Ndlovu and Rui Oliveira delivered inspiring sermons, and several came up for baptism during the divine service appeal.



We give God all the glory for His blessings and guidance! And many thanks to our hard-working committee members. Next year, we plan to return to our Simcoe, Ontario location in June for an in-person celebration of the restorative power of God.

Russell Preddie,
Chair, Southern Ontario Adventist
Regional Camp Meeting Committee

Upgraded Cessna for Indigenous Ministry in the North

In 2017, Ontario Conference partnered with Adventist World Aviation (AWA) to acquire an aircraft that would facilitate mission to the remote Indigenous communities in Northwestern Ontario. This year, the project experienced an upgrade. AWA replaced the previous Cessna airplane with a newer one with more seats (six versus four) and increased cargo facilities. Moreover, while the previous aircraft required pilots with specialized training to land a float plane, this one is easier to manoeuvre.

On Thursday, June 30, 2022, Mansfield Edwards, president, Jakov Bibulovic, executive secretary, and Virene Meikle, treasurer, met with Ray and Julie Young from AWA to dedicate the new airplane. Following a prayer of dedication by Edwards, they flew over Oshawa to test it out.

Edwards said, “This upgrade has taken our excitement to broaden our mission to Indigenous people to another level.”

The airplane is already in the region, and this ministry was officially launched at the Sioux Lookout Church. On Sabbath, September 24, Ontario Conference administrators Edwards

and Meikle met with Pastor Ray Davis, the new coordinator for Northwestern Ontario Indigenous ministry, who recently relocated to Sioux Lookout. Also present were AWA's Ray Young, chiefs and other leaders from respective reserves, Dr. Lloyd Douglas and two volunteer pilots. It was a full day, including a divine service featuring Edwards' message titled “Making the World a Better Place,” a fellowship lunch and a private meeting with stakeholders



discussing areas of partnership. Please keep this vital mission in your prayers!

Plans for the Cessna include transporting food, blankets and toys for Christmas and helping relatives of sick and dying individuals visit their loved ones.

Christelle Agboka,
Communications director



Como Nunca Antes (As Never Before)

“During COVID-19, several people have lost family, friends and neighbours. We wanted to do something special to share love and hope with people suffering,” said Pastor Raul Gonzalez.

Last fall, Pastor Gonzalez (Brampton Spanish and Spanish Bet-el Churches) was nominated as Ontario Conference’s Spanish coordinator. Soon, God gave him a vision of how the Spanish Adventist community could help restore lost hope to their churches and surrounding communities.

“It took three months to put together everything I had in mind,” said Gonzalez. “Then, in January, we [Spanish pastors] had our first meeting. Next, we formed a steering committee. In all, it took about four-and-a-half months to plan.”

On May 21, 2022, Gonzalez’s team launched the year-long “As Never Before” evangelistic initiative. The theme “As Never Before” was inspired by the teachings of Ellen G. White. She frequently refers to this phrase to declare our need to work together to spread the gospel as we approach the end times.

Gonzalez explained, “Considering all that is happening around the world, it’s clear that we are in the end times.”

The steering committee determined that for this initiative to be successful, physical and spiritual food were necessary.

The physical food: Church congregations will prepare food baskets for those in need, such as the homeless, immigrants and single moms. The goal is to reach 900 homes.

The spiritual food: Feeding your soul is as important as nurturing your physical body. This work required the cooperation of all 15 Spanish congregations, spanning from Ottawa to Niagara Falls, as part of the “As Never Before” committee.

They committed to planning, preparing and presenting one or two sowing evangelistic series this year. These series would prelude a major evangelistic series taking place in the fall. The sowing series ran from April to August.

“These sowing series’ aim was for our members to bring people to know our message, so we could continue or start studying the Bible with them,” said Pastor Gonzalez.

According to Pastor Gonzalez, this initiative’s primary goal is “to mobilize our church to equip and motivate them to accomplish the mission of baptizing 100 souls this year.” They are on track to reach this goal before the year ends. So far, As Never Before has brought in 87 new members—people from communities and families pastors, leaders and members worked with.

The year of sowing seeds culminated in a hybrid Conference-wide series in Toronto from September 24 to October 1, 2022, featuring “La Voz de la Esperanza” (Spanish Voice of Prophecy) speakers and married couple, Pastor Omar Grieve and Nessy Pittau. The average attendance was 250 in person and 115 electronic devices each night. In-person attendance on the final Sabbath was 700.

Other events that have taken place to further this work in 2022 include

- a Youth and Young Adults Camp Meeting (July 8–10), with NAD Youth leader Paolo Macena;
- a Stewardship Convention (July 15–17), with Pastor Rudy Salazar; and
- a Spanish Camp Meeting (August 19–20), with NAD Associate Ministerial Director Jose Cortes Jr. and others (see p. 25).

Gonzalez and his team are thankful for the support from Ontario Conference leaders, including their presence at the event launch. In attendance on May 21 were Pastor Mansfield Edwards (President), Jakov Bibulovic (Executive Secretary), Pastor Theodore Sargeant (Compassion Ministries director and ADRA liaison) and Virene Meikle (Treasurer).

When asked what has allowed “As Never Before” to be successful thus far, Pastor Gonzalez stated, “It’s prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. We can’t do anything without God. We put everything in His hands. God is leading our ministry.”

The project began with 10 days of prayer and continued with setting out a prayer plan for the upcoming months. Individuals committed to a schedule of praying throughout the day, at 5 a.m., 1 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Please pray that Pastor Gonzalez and his team will sustain the vision of helping people know that, in Jesus, there is love and hope.

Chris Perrotte

Reassurance 2022

What an amazing experience it was! Can you imagine that even as things around us do not appear to be improving, a group of evangelists could speak on “Reassurance: Certainty in Uncertain Times”? Yes, this was real. Over two weeks, the Ontario Conference Lay Evangelism Association’s lay evangelistic series offered hope and reassurance.

Under the steady hand of Association President Sister Julia Clarke and her executive and evangelism planning committees, this dedicated group of members, trained at the Ontario Conference School of Evangelism and Discipleship, worked diligently to brighten the corners of people everywhere.

Eight speakers delivered their carefully selected messages, each in their unique manner. Every message brought hope

to people living in uncertain times. Each night from July 9 to July 23, except Mondays and Thursdays, people across Canada, the Caribbean, the United States of America, Nigeria, Ghana and England connected via YouTube, Facebook, Zoom or Instagram. There, they could listen to encouraging messages, enjoy great gospel music from different praise teams and several singing evangelists, and participate in an online Bible-based quiz. After the meeting concluded, many joined the evangelist and team on Zoom for a special time of prayer and reflection.

Each night was awe-inspiring. People everywhere wanted to hear more about

A promotional poster for the 'Reassurance 2022' series. At the top, it says 'OCLEA GOSPEL SERIES' and 'HOSTED BY THE ONTARIO CONFERENCE LAY EVANGELISM ASSOCIATION SPONSORED BY THE ONTARIO CONFERENCE PERSONAL MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT'. The main title 'REASSURANCE' is in large, bold, orange letters, with the subtitle 'CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES' below it. A call to action 'Come and Join Us!' is followed by the dates 'JULY 9-23, 2022 | 7:00 PM (EST)' and a note 'No Meetings on Mondays and Thursdays'. Below this is a row of eight circular portraits of the speakers: Julia Clarke, David Ross, Kenroy Jones, Rainford Cornish, Sammy Adriatico, Leonardo Barboza, Kathleen Garcia, and Yolence Drummond. At the bottom, it says 'Opening Night: Why is There So Much Suffering in the World?' and provides information for an online event: 'ONLINE EVENT | f LIVE | YouTube | zoom | MEETING ID: 882-0411-1622 | PASSCODE: 306338 | www.OCLEA.ca'. There is also a small OCLEA logo in the bottom right corner.

a God who cares and loves during these volatile times. As a result, some decided to be baptized, and ongoing Bible studies are taking place. Let us keep praying for all our lay evangelists, digital missionaries, digital Bible instructors, and prayer evangelists as they continue to share the gospel of Jesus.

Reynold Hazelwood,
Personal & Prison Ministries director

Ontario Conference Support Staff Connect Like Jesus in Belleville

On the Sabbath, July 16, a four-person team ministered to the congregants of Belleville Seventh-day Adventist Church about “Connecting Like Christ.”



(L to R) Durven Bansie, Shantal Small, Gillian Pitt and Vernon Langdon

The team consisting of Vernon Langdon (Planned Giving and Trust Services), Durven Bansie (assistant treasurer), Shantal Small (Children’s Ministries, Sabbath School, Compassion/Community Services), and Gillian Pitt (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty/Church Planting)

led segments that emphasized how we, as believers, can create and maintain deep connections with others and how these connections can reflect God’s matchless love for us.

In one segment, the team asked, “What’s in your basket?” This referred to the story in Luke 9:10-17, wherein Jesus feeds the multitude with food from a young man’s basket. Listeners were challenged to consider what was in their baskets—their gifts, talents, and abilities—and

how they could use them to reach others for the soon-coming kingdom of God. In another segment, the team provided five practical lessons on faith-driven friendships, pulled from the book of Genesis. Jesus’s methods for connecting with others were also explored in depth.

Belleville Church members showed their enthusiasm and gratitude with warm hospitality and a potluck after the divine service, putting the theme of connection into practice. The day’s events were a testament to Christ’s love and wonderful reminder of His desire to connect with His children.

Other support staff teams went to different locations to minister:

Sarnia-Ruth Weidner (Personal/ Prison Ministries and Stewardship), Juvey Puranen (Youth/ Young Adults and Adventurer, Master Guide and Pathfinders) and Maureen French (Property Management)

Kendalwood-Edith Habaradas (Secretariat), Sharon Alexander (Treasury) and Lucille Grondin (Church Growth/Evangelism)

Shantal Small,
Sabbath School secretary



Pastor Joseph Amankwah, Heritage Ghanaian and Toronto Nigerian Churches, with praise team

African Camp Meeting Highlights

On Sabbath, July 30, African churches in Ontario came together for the annual All-African Day of Praise, Worship and Fellowship, or African Camp Meeting. A moderate in-person congregation and several online viewers participated in the special day, themed “Knowing the Times.”

Ontario Conference representatives included Mansfield Edwards, president, who spoke about strategic direction, and Virene Meikle, treasurer, who presented a cheque on behalf of the Conference.

The 2022 African Camp Meeting had the same unique features as in pre-COVID-19 years: songs of praise and scripture readings in different languages, a parade of (African) nations and an informal African fashion show.

But the highlight was the thought-provoking messages by Pastor Brian Mungandi (Minnesota Conference).

Pastor Mungandi set the tone for “Knowing the Times” in his first sermon about the 200 sons of Issachar. In 1 Chron. 12:32, the sons were singled out among the Israelite tribes protecting David from a murderous Saul for understanding the times. They recognized it was time for David to fulfill his destiny as king; thus, they were well-equipped to advise and protect him.

Mungandi then turned to the audience and said, “If we are going to make a difference in our days, we have to master the times and the seasons like the sons of Issachar did.” He stated we can understand the times by “aligning

ourselves with God [through] prayer and meditation.” He urged attendees, “If we understand the times, we’ll fulfill our role in God’s plan. We must have a God-vision. The time is now!”

Pastor Mungandi preached with energy and power; and his efforts were appreciated.

“God bless you, pastor, for that wonderful sermon. So inspirational!” said one lady enthusiastically.

Pastor Amankwah, an organizer and Heritage Ghanaian and Toronto Nigerian Church pastor, concluded: “Thank you for that timely message. Thank you for that revival push!”

Christelle Agboka

Sing a New Song: Habakkuk Song-Writing Contest Winner

In April, the Office of the President announced a song-writing contest based on Habakkuk 3:17,18:

“Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Savior” (NIV).

Participants took the concept of these verses to form the song’s lyrics with their original composition. They were to think in terms of a

congregational song, melodious, simple and easy to sing. By God’s grace, 30 individuals entered the contest, and one was selected by a committee. Congratulations to the winner, Raymond May, who wrote “The God of My Salvation,” sung by Joan Ramos.

We thank all participants for using their musical gifts for God’s glory:
Sandrine Adap
Abigail Amponsah
Laflyn Anderson
Majorie Angel Brown
Kevin Brouet
Joan Grace E. Manzano
Earl Flynn

Rachel Irene Fourny
Beverley Grant
Moriah Kennedy
Alison M. Down
Abigail Mathi-Amorim
Artur Maxwell Mazur
Maria McClean
Abraham McFarlane
Tristan Mignott
Heather Orr-Mullings
Aleta Pagonzaga Agpalo
Mark-Shane and Fiona Scale
Zelinda Sealy-Scavella
Milan Smolka
Steven Vassell
Vinicius Melo Vicente Silva
Norma Vina Cejudo



Click on the QR code to hear the winning song!



A Labour of Love and Faith

In Mark 16:15, Jesus instructed His believers to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Recently, three churches—North-West Brampton Seventh-day Adventist Church, led by Pastor Windel Montaque, and Milton and Guelph Churches, both led by Pastor Aundrea Thompson—boldly took on this charge. Working together, they launched a three-week, in-person and online evangelistic series called “Give God a Chance,” beginning Sabbath morning, April 9, 2022.

Coordinating the series was a monumental task. All the necessary preparations called for stamina, passion and faithfulness, but nothing deterred this group of God’s highly committed workers.

Five days a week for three weeks, Pastor Dane Fletcher, Youth director, Jamaica Union, captivated attendees with powerful, thought-provoking sermons. Topics included “What to Do When You Don’t Know What to Do,” “Unshackled Faith,” “Final Chance” and more. Digital disciples monitoring social media platforms created a welcoming online environment. Even with the challenge of COVID-19, member engagement made in-person worship inspiring and rich.

Without contributions from various ministries from each church and audiovisual/IT, music, prayer, children, communications, hospitality, pastors, elders and members, the evangelistic series would not have reached its intended audience. The biggest

thanks go to God, who helped us overcome many challenges so we could spread His Word everywhere.

As the series unfolded, new members were brought into the fold. Others reconfirmed their faith and allegiance to God. Such a labour of love and faith is not always easy to navigate. However, in Matthew 17:20, Christ promises, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” So let us all continue to work diligently in reaping the harvest.

Michelle Taylor, Communications, North-West Brampton Church



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Former NAD President Daniel R. Jackson Passes to His Rest

Statement from Ontario Conference President, Mansfield Edwards

On behalf of all our members in Ontario, I express condolences to the Jackson family on the passing of Pastor Dan Jackson, former North American Division and Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada president.

His charisma, keen sense of humour and out-of-the-box thinking positively impacted the philosophy of ministry in our field. We honour his legacy and commit to being stewards of his contributions.

We offer our prayers for his dear wife Donna, who faithfully served our conference as Family and Women's Ministries director; daughter Lara, who served as Superintendent of Education, son Danny, daughter Dena and the extended family.

To the Jacksons, may God comfort you as only He can and fill you with the assurance of the blessed hope of His soon coming.

On Sabbath morning, July 23, 2022, Daniel R. Jackson, former president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America (NAD), passed to his rest after several months of battling cancer. He was 73.

Jackson, who served the Adventist Church for 49 years, retired in July 2020 after a decade as NAD president. Jackson made many contributions to the church in North America during his tenure as division president, including the building up of the NAD Ministerial Association; the creation of a missional strategic plan; the planting of nearly 1000 churches and the baptism of nearly 300,000 people.

Jackson was a native Canadian and, with the exception of five years in the Southern Asia Division, lived and ministered in the North American Division. He graduated from Canadian Union College (now Burman University) and Andrews University, from which he held an M.A. in Religion in Systematic Theology.

He was known for his love of music, keen sense of humor, and mission-mindedness — all hallmarks of his ministry through the years.



Scan to read more

Nearing retirement, he shared, "Serving has always been a privilege. I deeply respect and revere what God is willing to do in the life of a scamp from Edmonton, Alberta, and a wonderful woman from Sidney, British Columbia."

Jackson is survived by his wife, Donna, who served as an associate director for the NAD Ministerial Association before her 2020 retirement; three children; and four grandchildren.

Kimberly Luste Maran,
North American Division

Conference Workers on the Move

We would like to take a moment to thank retirees, welcome new hires and to share other 'comings and goings' with you, our constituents.

New Hires

Welcome to Geoffrey Killy Kiprono, who will be pastoring the All Nations Church, with other assignments to be added.

Anthony Kern has been hired to pastor at Ottawa East and Kanata Churches.

Edwin Darius will work with Toronto Central and New Beginning as assistant pastor.

Kenneth Appiah-Kubi was assigned to Toronto Ghanaian and Heritage Ghanaian Churches as assistant pastor.

Malik Smith is with Brampton Church as assistant pastor.

We will see all our new arrivals at Workers' Meeting this September.

Transfers

• **Frankie Lazarus** to Toronto West Church

• **Daniel Kurek** to Ottawa (Benjamin) Church as assistant pastor

• **Raul Gonzales-Gomez** to Spanish Betel and Barrie Group

• **Travis Kwon** to Willowdale as assistant pastor

• **Rui Oliviera** to College Park as associate pastor

• **Sheldon Imperio** to St. Catharines and Niagara Falls Churches

• **Junior Garcia** to Maranatha Spanish and Brampton Spanish Churches

Celebrating Pastor Antonio Bueno



The Church was saddened to learn of the passing of Pastor Antonio Bueno on Sabbath, June 4, 2022 due to a progressive illness. He was 71.

For Bueno, a native of Spain, the call to ministry was implanted at an early age. From ages 4 to 7, he was “car-schooled” by his mother, Amperito, as they travelled across Spain supporting his father, Antonio Bueno Sr., a pastor.

His missionary spirit took him to Switzerland, where he met his beloved wife, Lilian, and to Argentina and France for theological studies. After that, Bueno carried out his entire pastoral ministry in the U.S. and Canada, as a local church pastor, theology professor and administrator. He served the Adventist Church for over 40 years, 24.5 in Canada.

Bueno was instrumental in forming the first French-speaking congregation in Ottawa. He later pastored the Hawkesbury, Cornwall and Immanuel Churches, ending his career with 17 years shepherding Bowmanville Church.

Moreover, from 2005 to 2009, he served as the Conference’s executive secretary.

During his tenure, a Human Resource office was created; the Conference established a partnership with It is Written Canada for ministry in Northern Ontario; and Conference support boosted regional and linguistic camp meetings.

On June 10, several colleagues, family members and friends gathered for his funeral service. Participants included Pastor Derrick Nichols, who served as president while he was in office, current president Pastor Mansfield Edwards, and many former colleagues.

Bueno was remembered as a supportive friend, caring pastor, attentive husband, father and grandfather, intellectual and rebel. And Pastor Bill Santos, a family friend, gave a touching eulogy just months after his own father passed.

Santos concluded, “We’re not always gonna understand why it has to be this way, but if we trust God, we’ll have peace.” Then, in a tearful half-whisper, he sang, “God is too wise to be mistaken. God is too good to be unkind. So when you don’t understand, when you don’t see His plan, trust His Heart.”

Bueno is survived by his wife, Liliane, sons Alex and Andrew, daughter-in-law Lanessa, and grandchildren Lucas and Nina.

Welcome Pastor Emile Maxi

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Pr. Emile Maxi, the new superintendent of education. He comes to the role with several years of ministry experience. Most recently, he served as senior pastor for Silver Heights Church in Winnipeg. He is taking over from David Forsey, who capably filled the role for the last three years and is now returning to the role of assistant superintendent of education.

President Mansfield Edwards stated, “We are grateful that, after an extended search, God brought us Pr. Maxi, who has a heart for education and ministry. We trust God will work through him to oversee this critical mission field, which prepares children for this life and the life to come. We also want to acknowledge David Forsey, who stepped up to serve as acting superintendent throughout the pandemic and other challenges.”



Retirement

Bernice McDonald, Bible instructor, retired at the end of June. Sis Mac (as she is affectionately called) has mentored several pastors and Bible instructors over the years. In her proper regal way, the Duchess has shaped the work in the GTA through her quiet and resilient spirit. Many souls have been saved through her. Her love, counsel and mentoring over the years will be greatly missed.

Farewell

With sadness, we share that **Pastor Fred Nichols** has accepted a call to the Greater New York Conference. We would like to express our appreciation and thanks to Pastor Fred for his two

decades plus years of serving in Ontario. Pastor Nichols transitioned to lead pastor for the North Bronx Seventh-day Adventist Church. We wish him well in this new chapter in ministry.

Pastor Lincoln Nogueira has moved back to Brazil to complete his doctoral studies; we wish him well.

Pastor Evaldo Vicente Silva has accepted a call to serve as editor for the *Messenger* Magazine and Communications director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, effective March 1, 2022. We wish him all the best in the new ministry experience.

Pastor Juan Carlos Atencio has transitioned to Burman University

in preparation for the teaching ministry. All the best to him.

Pastor RJ Becbec has transitioned from Barrie Church to Kingsway College as chaplain. We wish him well.

Pastor Emerson and his wife Alice have accepted a call to Sri Lanka. They have been in Ontario for more than two decades and have served with distinction. We wish all God’s blessings as they transition into this new role.

Damson Oppong and Kristen Whyte-Bailey, Ministerial department

Saving Lives in War Zones

On February 24, 2022, the world watched in horror and disbelief as missiles rained down on the sovereign nation of Ukraine. The violent air assault was followed by a ground invasion the world had not seen since World War Two.

ADRA Ukraine is a small, five-member country office supporting the humanitarian work in Ukraine through its Kyiv headquarters and regional offices in Mariupol, Kramatorsk and Severodonetsk. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has brought significant attacks across the country, resulting in wide-scale death, destruction and displacement. Within moments, ADRA Ukraine staff became part of the vulnerable population they have supported since its inception in 1993.

From the first bombs being dropped, ADRA Ukraine was ready to assist the most vulnerable. With reports of heavy casualties and intensive damage to critical infrastructure, priority was given to evacuating people to neighbouring countries like Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Moldova and Hungary. Thanks to Ukrainian churches and groups, those fleeing the violence were sheltered, fed and transported to safe regions.

Ukrainian churches and volunteers mobilized for action, organizing food, water, hygiene, shelter and supply convoys. "I saw so many humanitarian cars [with] humanitarian aid stopped on the side of the road [due to shelling]. Sadly, some of those humanitarian convoys didn't reach their destinations," said Artem Dikhtiaruk, ADRA Ukraine Programs Director, in a Zoom call with ADRA Canada writer Heather Grbic.

Because of the unique design of its network, ADRA was first on the ground via ADRA Ukraine. Artem saw tanks and heard bombs dropping around his city. He said, "My family left, but I knew if I got in the car, I would not have internet and would not be able to work. So, I stayed, and it [worsened] until I realized the city was occupied and cut off from the rest of the country."

Thanks to the generosity of ADRA supporters in Ontario and nationwide, ADRA Canada provided funds for food, clean water, hygiene supplies and shelter products for the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and other vulnerable people fleeing the violence.

"So much damage has been done," said Artem. "The news cannot show everything. But the most important thing is the lives of the people, and that's what we are focusing on, saving lives."

Rebuilding Lives Around the World

Ukraine is not the only country torn apart by war. For instance, Yemen has been embroiled in a civil conflict for eight years. The war has resulted in tremendous loss of life, heavily damaged infrastructure and a lack of basic services. Over 20 million people — around two-thirds of the population — need food assistance.

Through partnerships with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, ADRA provides families with life-saving food. With funding from the Government of Canada, ADRA rebuilds damaged clinics in conflict-affected areas. ADRA stocks these clinics with

medical supplies, equipment and medicines while also covering the salaries of the medical team who staff the ADRA clinics. Through a referral system, patients who need specialized care are transported to larger hospitals, with ADRA covering transportation and care costs.

The outpouring of gratitude from the local population serviced by these clinics is tremendous. "Words can never be enough to thank ADRA and all the faithful people for their endless effort to take care of our community's health issues," said one husband whose wife and child were saved by an emergency C-section at an ADRA clinic.

ADRA also assists communities in conflict zones rarely highlighted in the media. From the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Sudan to Myanmar and more, ADRA supports families with food, education and livelihood assistance, to name just a few of the ways it helps.

Thank you for supporting the work of ADRA. Through your prayerful donation, we can be the hands and feet of Jesus when a crisis or disaster occurs. For more on how your gift is saving lives, please visit our website, www.ADRA.ca.

If you have been moved to support this critical work again, kindly do so through our Emergency Response Fund (<https://www.adra.ca/product/emergency-response/>).

Peggy Caesar, Senior Advocacy Specialist, ADRA Canada

With contributions from
Heather Grbic, writer, ADRA Canada





Richmond Hill Church Helps Ukraine One Pierogi at a Time

“What can we do?”

With the Russia-Ukraine war raging on, Ukrainian Elita Carrasco, whose parents are Richmond Hill Church members, was struck with inspiration: Why not host a fundraiser by selling the foods she grew up with—delicious, homemade Ukrainian pierogis, cabbage rolls, borscht and blintzes?

With the support of Richmond Hill Church leaders and Pastor Todor Levterov, she moved forward. Along with her parents, Nelya and Yuri Tsilo; her grandparents, Pastor Fedir and Olga Popovitch and Helen Fydyshyn-Mair and her husband Ken, the Levterov family and church leaders helped with preparations and selling. It took Nelya and Olga a week to create the dishes from scratch. “My hands are pierogis!” Olga observed.

On Sunday, March 27, Richmond Hill’s fellowship room was bustling with visitors. Most were members of GTA churches, including Richmond Hill, Immanuel, Portuguese, Toronto Spanish and Toronto Slavic International. They’d seen Elita’s promotional flyer on social media or heard of the event through word-of-mouth.

Acting as “human billboards,” Pastor Levterov and Yuri attracted many fist bumps, thumbs-up, honks and waves,

and a few cars drove in to check things out.

Overall, the day elicited goodwill and hope.

Odalis Rodriguez (Toronto Spanish), who heard about the initiative from Elita, said, “We wanted to support her as a family and a sister in Christ. I appreciate seeing that it doesn’t matter where you’re from. You care that your brothers and sisters are suffering.”

Odalis was accompanied by other Toronto Spanish members, including Pastor David Manrique, who reported on the event in Spanish on Facebook Live.

“There was a great turnout,” Elita reported. “We cooked for about 100 people, and there was no food left! We’re grateful that there’s so much support when it is most needed. It was incredibly heartwarming to see the solidarity with the Ukrainian people.”

Legacy of Service to the Ukrainian Community

The day was especially significant for Elita’s grandfather, Pastor Feodir Popovich. When he visited Ontario in 1993, a small group of Ukrainians was meeting at Willowdale Church. Because their 93-year-old pastor needed relief,



they frequently asked Pastor Popovich to preach. Church members were shocked to learn his visa was expiring, and he would have to return to Ukraine. So they visited the Ontario Conference office to request that he stay as their pastor.

Meanwhile, the pastor serving as secretary of the union of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ukraine was visiting Alberta. “My supervisor is here,” Popovich said. “You can ask him. If he approves, I can stay.” After meeting the congregation in Toronto, then discussing the proposition with the Ontario Conference’s leadership, the secretary asked him to stay, and the rest is history.

Pastor Popovich served a fruitful 16 years. Under his leadership, the congregation established its own church at 900 Sheppard Avenue West and renamed it the Toronto Slavic International Church. Its members included people from Russia, Ukraine and other former members of the USSR.

Reflecting on the fundraiser, Popovich said, “There are many . . . refugees in the country without a place to live, without necessities, without anything. Our financial support will really help. We’re very happy with [today’s] outcome.”



Speaker's Testimony on Ontario Conference Hispanic Camp Meeting

The Ontario Conference Hispanic Camp Meeting was a great way to close camp meeting season! I loved their theme "Como Nunca Antes"—"Like Never Before" and their plans to plant three churches and reach 100 people for Jesus in 2022 (see p. 16).

Over the weekend, I challenged my brothers and sisters with three relevant messages:

1. "Gracia, Como Nunca Antes"—Grace Like Never Before: If we don't love, embrace and make room for the forgotten, rejected and untouchable, they will never experience Jesus through us.

2. "Esperanza, Como Nunca Antes"—Hope Like Never Before: Less fear, more hope. Unless we truly are the people of hope, as we say we are, we won't be able to inspire people to join our family and share the great news of a better day. Fear is only a temporal motivator; our hope is eternal. The time of the end ends with the second coming of Jesus. That's an awesome thing. No fear, much hope!

3. "Visión, Como Nunca Antes"—Vision Like Never Before: To accomplish things that have never been achieved before, we must envision

them, work hard for them and have the assurance of God's blessing. Significant achievements don't come to pass without vision, work and God's blessings; they take all three.

I had virtually spoken for Ontario Conference Campmeetings in 2020 (Spanish) and 2021 (English). So it was great to be here in person to talk with, hug and experience my brothers and sisters' love and missional passion in this beautiful territory.

Very grateful for the work of the Conference Hispanic coordinator, Raul Gonzalez, and the fantastic team of pastors. It was also wonderful to see and spend some time with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada Hispanic coordinator Gardner Bermudez, Jakov Bibulovic and his daughter, Isabela. Jakov is not only my bro, but he is also the executive secretary of the Ontario Conference. Leaving Ontario inspired and hopeful.

Jose Cortes Jr., Associate Director, North American Division Ministerial Association



A Miracle Garden for Others

For the last seven years, Cornwall Seventh-day Adventist Church has planted a bountiful vegetable garden. Each summer, volunteer gardeners share produce with several community agencies. Ironically, this garden shouldn't exist. The city inspector who came and analyzed the soil years ago said it was too poor to grow anything. But the volunteers knew differently. Every year, their garden's yield has exceeded expectations.

Good planning and God's grace fuel this garden's success. Every year, in mid-to-late April or May, under the guidance of Helene Shennett, head elder and head gardener, volunteers draft plans. They rototill the soil, clear weeds and begin composting. They carefully consider each portion of the garden and then purchase and plant seeds, bulbs and plants. With love and care, daily weeding, water and God's sunshine, these seeds and plants grow in abundance.

Once the vegetables ripen, they are sorted and delivered to seven

organizations, including food banks, a women's shelter, an addiction recovery and treatment centre and lower-income nursing homes. The supersized zucchinis from the garden have also been turned



into zucchini bread and donated to local organizations that lack kitchen facilities.

The recipients of the crops, which include beans, beets, carrots, celery, cucumbers, kale, onions, peppers, squash, tomatoes, turnips and zucchini, have been more than grateful. Some

have even shared a thank-you note with pictures and videos of the raw produce or vegetables being cooked.

Last year, in addition to other vegetables, the garden produced several tomatoes. Small bags of tomatoes were prepared and distributed on street corners. These bags were supplemented with ten-pound bags of carrots, turnips, beets, potatoes and onions purchased by the Community Services department. The free vegetables from the garden and those purchased by Community Services proved beneficial to people negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Today, Cornwall Church members are confident that "the garden that shouldn't have been" is no ordinary garden. Rather, it is a miracle garden powered by hard work, love and prayers.

Helen Shennett,
Community Services director,
Cornwall Church

Nursing Home Visits Go Virtual



For four years, Rachel Fourny and her children, Danae and Benjamin, have visited Cornwall area nursing homes to share music and brighten residents' days. These monthly visits include 30 minutes of familiar secular tunes and 30 minutes of Christian songs, choruses and hymns. The program varies

each month, featuring different music styles and rhythms, including action songs designed to engage residents. One of the nursing homes primarily serves Alzheimer's patients, but you'd never guess it by their bright smiles, clapping and foot-stomping!

When COVID-19 hit, nursing homes closed to visitors. Rachel, Danae and Benjamin waited to see how the pandemic and quarantine rules would play out. In the meantime, church services, school and work moved from in-person to online. This got Rachel thinking, "If church and school could run on Zoom, why couldn't there be a virtual nursing home visit?" She contacted the nursing homes' recreational

coordinators to pitch the idea. Good news—they were interested. There was one challenge: how would they stream the program to the TVs in the residents' rooms? After a few dry runs and troubleshooting, the Fournys hosted their first virtual nursing home visit.

"COVID-19 has been a blessing in disguise," Rachel says. "Before, we would go to the nursing home, and the residents would come or be brought to the room where we were. Switching to a stream on Zoom or Google Meet for virtual visits means all the residents can view and participate. So we can interact with and reach more people."

Rachel Fourny,
Treasurer and Sabbath School
superintendent, Cornwall Church

Brockville Church Miraculously Finds a New Home During COVID

Would you consider selling or buying a house during the winter months? It would not be wise or easy. Who would want to buy or sell in subzero weather? Add to that the complications of a global pandemic. But God orchestrated just this miracle for the Brockville congregation when, in February 2020, they voted to sell their house of worship and move to a more spacious facility.

Years ago, founding member Robin Senior was impressed to pray and search for a newer, larger building for our small but growing congregation. Finally, in 2020, a building became available right next to where the congregation had worshiped for decades. Then came COVID-19, creating much uncertainty. Could we sell – and for the initial price? Would our members continue giving sacrificially toward the new building?

The relocation committee (Robin Senior, Dana Andrews, Gloria Height and Mike Chuchryk) and church board spent hours deliberating and consulting with Kevin Benta, Ontario Conference's Property

Management director. God intervened whenever we met with an obstacle. Soon, we found a buyer offering more than the asking price. Next, the local municipality approved rezoning the new facility as a place of worship. Then, the Conference's board of directors approved our proposal. Fortunately, the church's



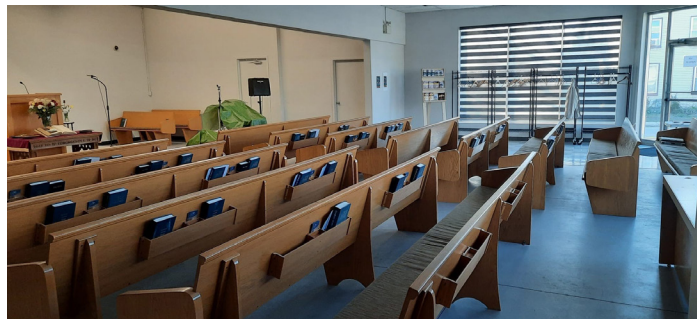
long-accumulated savings had placed us in a favourable financial position.

In August 2021, 17 months after deciding to relocate, we moved to our new home. On April 23, 2022, Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, Jakov Bibulovic, executive secretary, and Kevin Benta participated in the blessing of our new temple during a special worship service. Several seniors were also recognized for their years of service and sacrificial giving that afternoon.

We have begun a new ministry chapter in Brockville. Our goal is to prepare people for the impending return of Christ by serving, connecting, teaching and making new disciples in our increasingly cosmopolitan community.

All praise to God, our present help in time of need.

Pastor F. Edgar Nunes, Arlene Achieng (church clerk) and Linton Haughton (first elder)



Heritage Ghanaian On Soul-Winning Spree Despite Pandemic

In January 2022, 11 new converts were baptized following Heritage Ghanaian Church's revival sessions consisting of 21 days of fasting and prayer. These sessions were conducted under the leadership of Senior Pastor Joseph Amankwah and Youth Pastor Kenneth Appiah-Kubi. Preaching under the theme "Lunch With God," newly appointed minister Appiah-Kubi inspired many to follow Christ.

Heritage Ghanaian continued its soul-winning spree by baptizing 12 converts

after a 10-day Spring Evangelical Series, beginning April 22, 2022, spearheaded by the pastoral team and Personal Ministries department.

The guest speaker who championed the cause of the revival campaign was Pastor Michael Opuni-Asiedu from Greater Cleveland Seventh-day Adventist Church. The campaign's theme was "Extraordinary Promise for You." The series hinged on renouncing our sins and the importance of accepting Christ

as our personal Saviour. The audience was truly blessed with these powerful messages. It is no wonder these sessions culminated in the baptism of 12 people.

May God continue to help the Church be fruitful in winning souls for His kingdom.

Communications Department, Heritage Ghanaian Church



New Life Neighbourhood Centre: Offering Hope, Rebuilding Lives

Remarkable things are happening in the community through the New Life Neighbourhood Centre (NLNC). The NLNC has continued its mandate of providing essential support to the community through its food bank. This year also saw the launch of the NLNC Productivity Hub, a wrap-around support program for individuals seeking to rebuild their lives and become more productive and self-sufficient.

The food bank has impacted the lives of those less fortunate in Oshawa and surrounding areas for the past 29 years. With the help of our caring and committed volunteers and donors, we provide meal programs such as pancake and continental breakfasts, meal boxes (groceries), hygiene supplies, weekend meals for school children, care packages for the homeless and community events such as barbecues and Christmas dinners.

The NLNC's newest program—the Productivity Hub—provides self-empowerment workshops, skills training, coaching and coordinated supports that are geared toward readiness for

employment and other productive pursuits as described below:

Self-empowerment and Livelihood Improvement Project (SLIP)

On February 8, 2022, the NLNC kicked off its 2022 Productivity HUB programs with the SLIP workshop. This 12-week self-empowerment workshop concluded on April 26.

On the 26th, Pastor Mathew Feeley, New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church, offered a dedication prayer to the HUB Learners and shared his thoughts about the program. Pastor Daniel Saugh, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and his team members also attended to congratulate the SLIP participants. Mike Brannan of Durham College gave a sneak peek of the Employability and Essential skills training workshop that would follow.

Goal-Setting Workshop

After completing the SLIP workshop, this year's first batch of HUB learners was provided a goal-setting workshop to equip them with tools to implement their renewed life goals. On April 27, the NLNC Productivity HUB delivered a one-day workshop on goal-setting in partnership with Ontario Works and the Income and Employment Support Division of the Regional Municipality of Durham.

Coaching and Mentoring

The NLNC Productivity HUB provides one-on-one coaching assisting individuals

in taking steps toward self-sufficiency. Coaching and mentoring support for the year's first batch of learners began on May 6. Those currently being coached have now gained clarity on their life-rebuilding goals and are working on attaining these goals.

Skills Training

The HUB began its Employability and Essential Skills Training on May 6 in collaboration with Durham College. This 14-week program aims to prepare individuals for gainful employment and other productive pursuits via training workshops. Such workshops include Computer Essentials, Financial Literacy, Health Literacy, Mental Health and Stress Management Workshop, and Food Service Industry.

The NLNC is impacting individuals in our community through the programs being offered. We have seen the ongoing transformation of lives and are grateful to our partners and supporters who have helped make this possible. These include the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), TRU Potential, Durham College, Ontario Works, Regional Municipality of Durham and various service providers in the community.

Eduardo Flores,
Program Coordinator and Lead Coach,
New Life Neighbourhood Centre HUB

Kristy Feeley,
Communications, New Life
Seventh-day Adventist Church

A Case For Public Campus Ministry

It is estimated that more than 75 percent of our Adventist college students are attending non-Adventist institutions of higher learning.

Anyone skeptical about these statistics is not currently in touch with our denomination's educational administrators in North America and beyond. The challenges are many and complex.

Most of the North American Division church membership is made up of minority groups. These individuals, especially African American, Asian and Latino students, are viewed as a growing asset by colleges and universities in some of our nation's most populous states. Backed by substantial government support, these state colleges heavily target minority groups in an effort to "embrace our demographic future."

This poses a significant challenge for Adventist institutions of higher learning. Even though our schools receive a large sum of funding from local conferences, unions, divisions and—in some cases—the General Conference, church subsidies make up a discouraging 10 percent of operating funds, making it difficult for our tuition-dependent institutions to compete with other better funded public and private schools in our nation.

Regardless of the validity of the arguments, the reality is that an increasing number of Adventist students—especially the minority demographics that make up the majority of our North American Church population—are finding a growing list of reasons for not attending Adventist colleges and universities.

Reach the Campus, Reach the World

According to the Institute of International Education, the leading nonprofit



educational exchange organization in the United States, more than one million (or 5 percent) of students studying in our country's colleges and universities are international students. Saudi Arabia, China, India, Vietnam, Taiwan and Japan make up more than 60 percent of the international student population on public college campuses. This population is known by some missiologists as the 10-40 Window—the area with the greatest number of unreached people groups around the globe. Thirteen of the top 25 places of origin for international students are nations whose populations are predominantly or entirely non-Christian. These countries include Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, Nepal and Iran.

Although sending missionaries on overseas mission trips is critical to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is hard to justify a more efficient method of world mission outreach than reaching international students on public university campuses. In addition to engaging the future leaders of the world and the wealthy and educated, public campus ministry is more pragmatically effective. International students of non-Christian religions who are studying on American college campuses have already overcome the language barrier. We are engaging them on safer grounds. And, in many cases, we have an easier time engaging with them on a cultural level than we would if we were guests in their home countries.

Reaching the public college campus is the most effective missional way to reach the world of non-Christian global religions. It also is the most

Congratulations are in order for Akehil Johnson, ACF Ontario coordinator! During the North American Division's annual Adventist Christian Fellowship Institute, held July 26 to 31, 2022, at the University of Indiana in Bloomington (IU), he was elected to serve as president of the North American Division's ACF Student Association. Our prayers are with him and all student leaders aiming to "reach the campus, change the world."

responsible way of reaching the North American Division's largest unreached people group in its territory.

Ministry and Mission

Although there are many creative approaches for ministering to non-Christian religions on the college campus, here are five suggestions.

Community is becoming more crucially important for college students. For many students, loneliness—the feeling that social needs are not being adequately met—is a common experience on college campuses. In fact, some experts say that loneliness has hit epidemic proportions among millennials in the United States. Having sober barbecues, wholesome game nights and meaningful meetings are simple,

(continued on back cover)



Trained to Perfection

An Experience to Remember



When Dr. Ranjan Fernando, Battle Creek Academy principal, called Pastor John Echavez requesting that First Fil-Can Church's Orion Pathfinder Club perform a drill during the academy's 150th-anniversary celebration on June 2-5, there was a lot of skepticism. After all, practice time was limited, school was still going on, with some kids involved in a special school event, and that weekend was First Fil-Can's 42nd anniversary. But things smoothed out through prayer, dedication and much sacrifice. After all, Orion couldn't pass up this "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to showcase what they're known for at the Adventist Church's flagship educational institution.

With the coordination of acting club director MG Rod Bernal, drill master Matthew Arevalo and expert scheduler MG Madonna Pilapil, the Pathfinders practiced basic and fancy drills every weekend. With staff and parental support, the initially overwhelmed Pathfinders trained to perfection.

Current club captain Ian Dumaguin led the basic drills, while former captain Maycee Dammog led the fancy drills. The fancy

drill moves were incredible, particularly a move incorporating the Jeopardy theme song. The audience was wowed.

The club performed in three different settings at the academy. On Sabbath, the whole group attended Battle Creek Tabernacle, where services highlighted that it was also the 150th anniversary of Adventist education worldwide. They joined an eye-opening Adventist heritage tour in the afternoon.

Many thanks to Battle Creek Academy for their kind hospitality.

Participating in this milestone was an experience to remember. The Pathfinders felt privileged to share their talent and inspire others.

Kudos to our incredible Pathfinders. Say it loud and proud—ORION!

Harry Ilacas, First Fil-Can Seventh-day Adventist Church

Listen Up! Children's Voices Matter

Reaching the World from Ontario

"Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin." Zechariah 4:10, NLT

Angel Brown, a Jamaican diaspora and Scarborough Church member, has seen firsthand how a small project can become a large, impactful endeavour with prayer and diligence. Since 2015, she has sponsored early childhood development (ECD) initiatives in the Central Jamaica Conference (CJC). Her first activity was "CJC Connect," where Canadian churches were invited to mobilize Jamaican diaspora members to sponsor Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Connection Trips, allowing seniors, Master Guide and Pathfinder Clubs to participate in eco-tours, fix-it projects and sustainable partnerships in Jamaica.

At the start of COVID-19, Ms. Brown, partnering with the then-CJC president, Pastor Levi Johnson, donated a digital lending library for the distribution of 25 OneTablet (OneBillion.org) learning devices for ECD centres through the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) of Jamaica. Brown transported one of the devices to share with the ECC before over 2,500 devices were distributed through the OneTablet Project (for more on the project, visit PaceCanada.org).

At the end of 2021, Pastor Johnson became the vice president for strategic development at the Jamaica Union Conference. He has continued partnering with Ms. Brown and others to serve children ages six and under. For instance, he has implemented island-wide ADRA Connection Trips and ADRA Mentoring Programs; adopted Adventist ECD centres through PaceCanada.org; and, along with the National Education Trust, distributed ECD digital devices to all five Jamaican conferences, where over 125 centres now meet the ECC's certification standards.

2022, Jamaica's 60th anniversary of independence, has been declared the year of ECDs, which provides more opportunities to help. The Jamaica Union Conference has issued the JAMU60 Challenge to the diaspora in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States and to the above local conferences to mobilize corporate partners, members and friends to sponsor relevant projects. "JAMUFoodBank.com is an example of how [Jamaica Union Conference is] modelling best practices as a member of the Inter-America Division," says Brown.

The growth of Ms. Brown, Pastor Johnson and others' work bringing aid to a developing country is a silver lining in the pandemic. We pray that the collaboration between a local church member, ADRA Canada, the



An ECD sponsored by Angel Brown (r) receiving gifts

Jamaican Union Conference and other organizations will inspire more global partnerships, allowing us to connect like Jesus on a wider scale.

Levi Lloyd Johnson,
Jamaica Union Conference

Angel Brown,
Scarborough Church

Wondering how your church can help? You may participate as an individual or a group:

1. Donate to ADRA Canada, ADRA UK or ADRA International to support the ADRA Jamaica Connect Program in Jamaica, which grants funds for food security, mentoring and male internships in ECDs. For more information or to host a presentation at your club or church, email Angel Brown at br8ange@gmail.com with the subject line "Presentation about ADRA Jamaica."

2. Plan an ADRA Connection Trip for annual service projects by contacting ADRA Canada, ADRA UK or ADRA International. Organize a group to travel and serve in Jamaica or donate directly to ADRA for virtual

participation. ADRA issues a tax receipt to individuals and groups in your country of residence.

3. Adopt ECDs in Jamaica through PACE Canada for Digital Device Sponsorship (a minimum of 10 per centre is recommended at \$125 each) in partnership with your seniors, Pathfinder and Master Guide Clubs. Indicate that you are donating to the JAMU-ECD list. PACE Canada issues a CRA tax receipt.

4. Do you have a substantial legacy partnership in mind? Send an email with "ADRA Jamaica Connect" in the subject line to Levi Johnson (LJohnson@Jmunion.org) or text/Whatsapp/call 876-235-1621 for details.

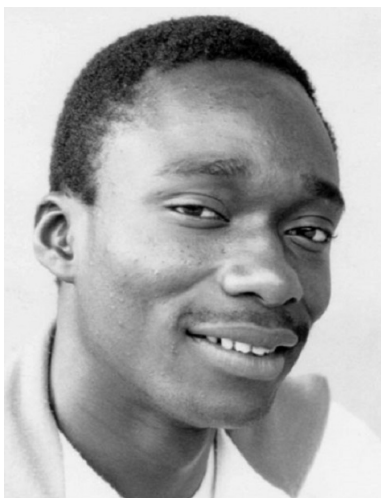
CYSA Track and Field Returns

My role as president of CYSA began when health measures were in place to keep our country safe. After two years of lockdowns and COVID-19 protocols, we were overjoyed to finally see restrictions lifting, allowing us to return to in-person sporting events.

This year's track and field event was the first time some of our board members and I planned and delivered on such a large undertaking. As we surveyed the churches, they confirmed their eagerness to participate. With that kind of enthusiasm, we had no choice but to move forward with making CYSA Track and Field 2022 a reality. Thankfully, we met the challenge with the support of our fantastic team of directors and coaches.

Sadly, we lost one of our organization's founders, Canadian Olympic sprinter Bryan Saunders, this year. Bryan was instrumental in helping CYSA create a professional athletic environment where marginalized Christian athletes could thrive. It was our privilege to dedicate this year's track and field event to his memory and legacy, acknowledging his immense contribution to our organization.

On July 24, 2022, there was excitement in the air. The athletes arrived early and were eager to participate. The coaches could finally see the results of the hard work they put into training. The families and spectators were excited to watch and cheer them on. What a remarkable moment!



Bryan Saunders
Olympic Sprinter
CYSA Founder
July 9, 1952 - April 27, 2022

Photo: CP Photo/The Canadian Olympic Association/Library and Archives Canada (1980)

The participating churches were Apple Creek, Toronto Central, Kanisa Fellowship, Perth/Hope combined and Scarborough Seventh-day Adventist Churches.

Perth, the defending champions, came out intent on reclaiming their title, and that they did with a strategic partnership with Hope athletes! The remainder of the teams came in as follows: Central, Apple Creek, Kanisa Fellowship and Scarborough.

We want to thank all participating churches, coaches and athletes. They were patient with us as we regained our footing after two years. We also thank our sponsors, volunteers, the Saunders family, vendors, spectators, Precision Laboratories, Syd's Graphics Inc. and CYSA board members.

Save the date for next year's track event. July 16, 2023, God-willing, Perth/Hope will take on a host of Seventh-day Adventist Churches from far and wide as they defend their title.

John Stanislaus, President, CYSA



After two years of online Vacation Bible School (VBS), the Ottawa Adventist and Ottawa East Adventist Churches did something historic: they each cancelled their VBS programs for the summer. Instead, they merged and ran a five-week, full-day Christian Summer Camp hosted at the Ottawa Adventist School, Camp Wanarunaround (Wanarun-around). All the campers, between the



114 Ottawa Children Discover Jesus at Summer Camp

ages of four and 14 from local churches and communities, enjoyed a fun summer of sports, crafts, field trips and projects. Each week, campers explored different themes and ideas, made friends and had adventures while learning about Jesus.

Week 1 - Sports: Campers learned about teamwork and what it means to show good sportsmanship through wins and losses. Children played soccer, basketball and badminton and ended with a rousing game of soccer-baseball.

Week 2 - Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM): Campers put on their lab coats and safety goggles to conduct science experiments, learn about the elements and look at specimens under a microscope. The week ended with a trip to Ottawa's Museum of Science and Technology.

Week 3 - Nature: Campers grabbed their binoculars and sunhats and went out to explore various habitats, enjoy

the fresh air, uncover some creepy crawlies and learn about different animals with the help of our friends from Little Ray's Reptiles. They also enjoyed a field trip to Saunders Farm.

Week 4 - Music: Campers had the opportunity to play the flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, recorder and boom whackers. In addition to learning music theory and new songs, campers played together in a loud drum circle. They truly "made a joyful noise."

Week 5 - Amazing Race: The final week was exciting and bittersweet. Campers packed their bags, prepared their passports and began an exciting trip around the world, with stops in South Africa, Greece, Argentina and Japan. Each day they learned about those countries' culture, art and food.

Just like that, Camp Wanarunaround was over. However, the results of the evangelistic endeavour haven't stopped. A total of 114 children attended camp and experienced Jesus. Now 22 of those children have decided to continue learning about Jesus and are enrolled at Ottawa Adventist School for the 2022-2023 school year.

Camp Wanarunaround made history in the City of Ottawa as the most affordable summer camp for 2022, with a weekly rate of \$60 per child.

Camp Wanarunaround was planned and led entirely by Adventist young people. By way of the Canada Summer Jobs Grant, the churches were able to hire seven young people, all between the ages

of 15 and 24, full-time for six weeks. They were responsible for much of the camp programming, administration and camper supervision. In addition, nearly 30 volunteers supported the staff. Without those young people's passion, energy and dedication, the camp would not have happened. Furthermore, all the volunteers and staff had the extraordinary opportunity to speak about their experiences at Camp Wanarunaround with Federal Minister Mona Fortier, Member of Parliament for Ottawa-Vanier and president of the Treasury Board of Canada.

Summer camps allow children to make friends and participate in physical activities and develop self-confidence, resiliency and emotional awareness. Through the support and prayers of our local churches, the financial support of the Canada Summer Jobs Grant and the power of the Holy Spirit, Camp Wanarunaround was able to offer high-quality planning at an affordable cost to parents; the camp thus reduced the financial barriers that keep many children from reaping the benefits of summer camps. Children are precious to God and close to His heart. Camp Wanarunaround's mission is to continue sharing the love of God with as many children in our local churches and communities as possible, so they might learn about and develop a personal relationship with Jesus.

Grace Ayoo, Camp Wanarunaround director and first-year medical school student at Queen's University

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It's here!

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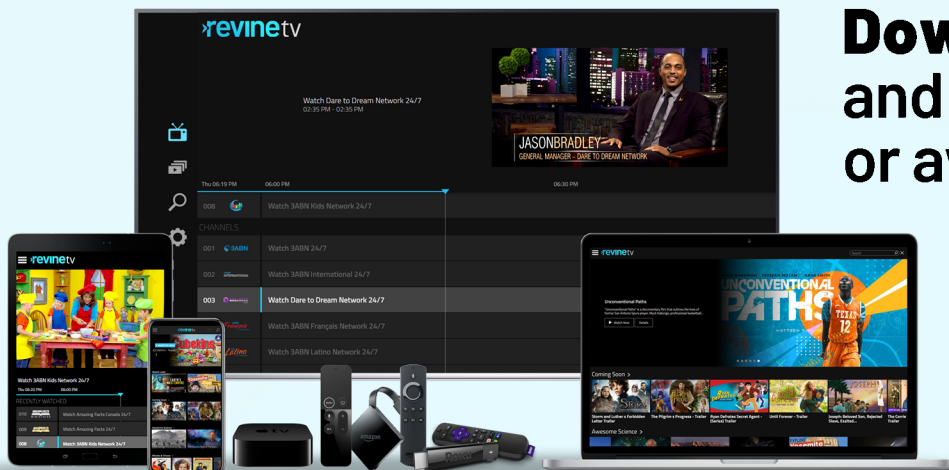
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Are You the Apple of His Eye?

Have you ever thought about making something special? You designed every detail. You checked out the specifications and functionality. You thought of the joy it would bring you and everyone around you. Finally, you got everything you needed to make that dream a reality. You worked hard and ensured all the specifications were as you envisioned.

You finished your work, looked at it and said it was “very good!” Your new creation was perfect. You were proud of what you had achieved, from the concept to the final product. But what if a disaster altered the product so much that looking at it brought you pain? What if you knew the product couldn’t function as intended but also that you could restore it to its original condition? Would you? God faced that exact situation.

You see, God planned, designed and imagined man’s functionality, the joy and happiness we would bring not just to each other but also to the universe and God Himself.

Genesis 1 tells us God took the time to create a perfect world called earth. There, humans could spend time with their Creator face-to-face, take walks and admire His handiwork. In six days, He created everything necessary for humans to live, multiply and fulfill their purpose as God imagined.

Everything else God made, He spoke and it appeared. But man was special. So God got down, got His hands dirty and sculpted man in His image. Genesis 2:7 tells us, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

Then He stepped back, looked at His creation at the end of the sixth day and said it was “very good!”

God even created companionship for man because he knew “it [was] not good that man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18).

God’s plan had come together. God could have then walked away and left mankind alone, but His plan included love, friendship and togetherness. God would never walk away.

You see, God calls us the apple of His eye! David knew how much God loved him and pleaded with God — “Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings!” (Psalms 17:8).

Solomon experienced God’s love and understood what it took to remain the “apple of God’s eye” as in Proverbs 7:2 — “Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye.”

God is saying to you today as He said to Israel, “Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored. And I have loved you!” (Isaiah 43:4).

Because you are the “apple of God’s eye,” God sent His precious Son, Jesus Christ, to restore you to the image and purpose He created you for.

God looks forward to the day when He will restore everything to its formerly perfect condition. And as Paul reminds us, “Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37–38).

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effective ways to build community among students of non-Christian religions.

Second, many international students who come have an appreciation for American culture. However, these students often discover major differences between our educational system and what they're accustomed to at home: professors have office hours, the grading system is different, group projects are sometimes required, and more. Inviting international students to celebrate holidays (American or those of their native country) or learn about aspects of our culture is a good way to reach them.

Academic tutoring is a third significant way to reach the needs of international students. For most, English is not their first language and they must study longer to fully grasp material.

Offering academic support is a solid way to serve and practice Christ's method of reaching people.

Fourth, international students welcome spiritual conversations more than many anticipate. The reason why some do not succeed in engaging students in spiritual conversations is usually because they lack a tactful approach or are unwise in their timing. In most cases, it is fairly easy to engage in spiritual discussion when it becomes a natural part of everyday living. When spirituality is not something we put on and take off but is instead who we are, spiritual conversations lose their awkwardness and become meaningful for the Adventist and the non-Christian student alike.

The ultimate purpose of the Seventh-day Adventist should be to reveal

Christ in all aspects of life. In the early Christian church, "one interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His Kingdom." (*The Review and Herald*, April 30, 1908.)

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Conference and the Lake Union*

Source:

<https://www.lakeunionherald.org/archive/articles/a-case-for-public-campus-ministry>



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