As we enter into the Christmas holiday season, the Ontario Conference wishes each believer God’s richest blessings.

While the world is busy running to and fro in preparation for selfish indulgence, let us remember the reason for the incarnation of Jesus the Messiah. We are aware that He was not born on December 25, so we do not celebrate a day. However, we must not lose sight of the joy that our Saviour took our form and was born of a virgin.

At His birth the angels sang “Glory to God in the Highest”, Wise men brought Him gifts and shepherds adored Him. We too may also sing of His glory, offer ourselves as gifts and adore Him in worship.

Christmas also provides an opportunity for our families to come together. Let us make the best of these rare moments to strengthen our family ties and build strong relationships.
Together as families or as groups of friends, let us also reach out to those in need. While many give gifts to loved ones and look to receive gifts in return, let us remember the ‘least of these’ as Jesus called those who cannot help themselves and offer them our help, our time and our love. Let this Christmas be a time of looking out for others and giving to those who cannot give to us.

Yes, as I wish each person a happy and safe Christmas, may we all recognize that God’s richest blessings are realized as we ourselves become a blessing for others.

Mansfield Edwards, OC President

Adventist Church Membership Passes 18 Million Member Mark
Fast-growing denomination hits new milestone in 2013’s third quarter

December 19, 2013, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States|

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, one of the fastest-growing Christian denominations in the world, has recorded more than 18 million baptized members. There were 18,028,796 Seventh-day Adventists worldwide as of September 30, according to the church's Office of Archives, Statistics and Research.

An estimated 25 to 30 million men, women and children attend weekly Adventist worship services. The church does not baptize infants or very young children, thus the gap between attendees and baptized members.

In October, Adventist Church Executive Secretary G. T. Ng noted the continuing growth in church membership: “On any given day, 3,052 people join the church. Every hour 127 people are baptized. Every minute, two individuals are baptized, and we praise God for that," he told church leaders during his report at the 2013 Annual Council in Silver Spring, Maryland.

David Trim, director of Archives, Statistics, and Research, commented on the milestone: “We are excited by this growth at a time when, globally, many religious groups are no longer growing. We thank God that, in the face of challenges such as political oppression, religious persecution, and increasing materialism and secularism, this movement, which emphasizes hope and wholeness, is continuing to grow and has now passed this statistical milestone.”

Formally organized in 1863, the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates 112 colleges and universities, more than 1,900 secondary schools and nearly 6,000 primary schools, with a total enrolment of more than 1.75 million, along with 172 hospitals, treating more than 16 million people annually. The church’s commitment to serving humanity includes the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), as well as evangelistic campaigns and broadcast ministries designed to share the Three Angels’ messages with a world in need of Bible-based answers.

Source: Adventist News Network (Mark A. Kellner/Adventist Review)

Conference Plans Unique Israel Tour

December 19, 2013, Oshawa, Ontario…OCN

The Ontario Conference is planning a unique tour of Israel in spring, March 20-April 1, 2014.

While there are many tours to Israel, says organizer and Ontario Conference Worship director, Pastor David Schwinghammer, this will be a tour for worshippers. The one-of-a-kind tour, aptly called ‘In His Steps’, is for worshippers who would like to experience the joy of worshipping at the locations where Jesus is said to have walked.

Schwinghammer was inspired by the experience he had on a trip to Israel earlier this year. On that trip he and other pastors and their families worshipped at a number of the sites mentioned in the Bible. He described his time there as being among the most enriching experiences in his life and was convinced that others would definitely want to share in what he had experienced.
“Going to the Holy Land has brought the Bible to life,” he said. “To walk where Jesus walked and worship at sights where Jesus spent much of His ministry changing lives, has touched my heart in a deep and meaningful way. My faith has been affirmed, and I have been drawn closer to Jesus!”

The worship tour is designed for all worshippers, but worship leaders, planning teams, pastors, elders, singers, and musicians will greatly benefit from it,” says Schwinghammer.

For more information, interested persons should visit www.israelworshiptours.com or contact the Worship department at the Ontario Conference Office at 905-571-1022; ext. 105. It is advised that individuals act quickly as seating is limited. The cost is $2,550.00

Kenyan High Court Rules Against Sabbath Accommodation for Students

December 19, 2013, Oshawa…OCN

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya yesterday lost its fight for Sabbath accommodation for its students in public schools.

The church had filed a case against Alliance High School where students are required to attend classes on Sabbaths. However, Justice Lenaola dismissed the petition saying that such a directive could cause total chaos in schools' programmes because it would mean that it would have to accommodate students from other faiths.

“At the end, if that became a policy of order of this court, I am not sure if the public schools would have the exact formulae for doing so without causing total chaos in its programmes,” he said.

The church also accused a number of other public schools of violating the fundamental rights of Adventist students attending them.

Report adapted from The Nairobi Star.

EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 26
Registrations for Family and Women’s Ministries Training

We are now taking registrations for Family and Women’s Ministries Training at Mount Zion Filipino Church on January 26, 2014. This event is to provide education and foster spiritual growth and direction for local church leaders in Family, Singles, Women’s and Young Women’s Ministries. Emphasis for 2014 is on Parenting for Family Ministries and Evangelism for Women’s Ministries. We are planning for a Keynote speaker on Evangelism. Other speakers will be presenting on related topics and resources will highlight useful tools for building ministries. Presentations include how to start a ministry (Family, Singles, and Young Women), Family Ministries Certification Modules, Women’s Ministries Evangelism training, Grief Support Group Facilitator Training and an introduction to Prevention and Intervention Ministries. Training Fee - $25 per person (Early bird $20 per person) Includes all session materials and lunch. The program begins at 9:30 am sharp with lunch from 12:30-1:30 and closing at 3:30 pm. All churches are being asked to sponsor their leadership teams for this important training session. To register, visit AdventistOntario.org and click on conference events. Open the event listing and click "register now" to make a payment with credit card. Register by January 20. Early birds, save $5 if your register by January 13. Telephone registration is available January 6 – 20; call Kristen Bailey at 905-571-1022 ext. 204. Online registration is available through the holidays! Visit AdventistOntario.org after November 25.

February 2
Boys’ Volleyball Tournament

Kingsway College & the Ontario Conference Youth Department will be hosting a Boys’ Volleyball Tournament (ages 13-18, photo ID required) on February 2, 2014 at the A.E. King Fitness Complex in Oshawa, Ontario. This is open to all Adventist schools and churches. Get your boys aged 13-18 together and form a team (up to 12 players). If you do not have enough boys in your church you can ask your friends or more than one church can join together. The cost per team is $150. Teams must register and submit payment...
by January 13, 2014 to be eligible to play on the day of the tournament. Please contact Fabiane Campos at (905) 433-1144 x247 or camposf@kingswaycollege.on.ca.

May 23-25, 2014
Crawford Adventist Academy 61st Alumni Homecoming Weekend


We are looking for two representatives for each honoured year as well as volunteers to help in various areas for this event. Please contact the office of advancement, TADSB - Derrick Hall, VP of advancement, (416) 633-0090 / toll free (866) 960-2125 ext. 234 or dhall@tadsb.com; Judy Cardona Gamez, advancement assistant, ext. 248 or jgamez@tadsb.com. Visit our official website www.tadsb.com; follow us on Twitter @TJACAAAlumni; like us on Facebook ‘The Official TJA/CAA Alumni Group’.

OTHER ADVERTISEMENTS & JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Donor Relations Director
ADRA Canada seeks an experienced Donor Relations director responsible for the overall supervision, continuous enrichment and implementation of a donor relationship and annual fundraising strategy that links the resources of individuals in Canada to the needs of those in poverty and distress. This position oversees the communications, marketing and fundraising activities of the agency. To apply, email your resume and cover letter outlining how your skills and talent match those required for this position and why you’re particularly interested in being part of the ministry of ADRA Canada. See full job description.

College Woodwork is inviting applications for a full-time Human Resources Officer to join its administration team. This person will oversee the daily operations of the human resources department; complete all bi-weekly payroll functions, and oversee the company’s student work scholarship and cooperative education programs. Interested candidates should provide a Cover Letter & Resume to Sheldon Smith at sheldons@collegewoodwork.com.

College Woodwork is inviting applications for a full-time Production Manager to join its management team. The Production Manager should plan, direct, and coordinate production activities ensuring a smooth production process that operates within the established operating budget. The main responsibility of the Production Manager is to oversee the production process, reducing costs wherever necessary and making sure that products are produced on time and are of good quality. Interested candidates should provide a Cover Letter & Resume to Sheldon Smith at sheldons@collegewoodwork.com.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada Is Now Accepting Nominations for the 2014 Excellence in Education Awards

The Process for Nominators
- Must be a stakeholder (superintendent, principal, school board member, teacher, pastor, school staff member, parent, student, or church member).
- Must not be immediate family members of the nominee.
- Must complete the Nomination Form, Letter of Recommendation Form, and a Letter of Recommendation.
- Must find two other stakeholders (one from each of the two other categories), unrelated to the nominee, to complete the Letter of Recommendation Form and write Letters of Recommendation. For example, if the nominator is someone from the School Leadership category (Superintendent, Principal, or School Board Member), the remaining two letters of recommendation must be from each of the remaining categories, one from Colleagues (Teacher, Pastor, or School Staff Member) and one from School Community (Parent, Student, or Church Member).

Nominee:
• Must have a valid Standard, Professional or Administrator denominational teaching certificate.
• Must have a minimum of one full year teaching experience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada school system.
• Must be a teacher or administrator who is employed at least half time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada school system.
• Must not have received an Excellence Award within the last five years.
  (A list of teachers who have received awards are posted on CAT~net – http://catnet.adventist.ca.)

It is our hope that the SDACC Excellence in Education Award will inspire our teachers and school administrators to always strive for excellence in teaching and service, and that those who are presented with this prestigious award will truly appreciate it as a token of our thanks for having them as excellent teachers in our school system.

Please take the time to nominate your Adventist school teacher or principal today. Nomination forms can be found on CAT~net, http://catnet.adventist.ca under Resources – SDACC – Excellence in Education Award or you may call the SDACC Office of Education at 905-433-0011 x2072.

Please send articles in plain text (NO graphics or photos) to OCN@AdventistOntario.org
(No later than Wednesday afternoon)

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