No one can argue about the success of the Harry Potter books. After the amazing success of the first book, children and adults alike could hardly wait for the subsequent publications. Some would stand in line for hours just to be among the first to get their copy. Why? Simple really, J.K. Rowling had a story to tell and since humans love stories, the entire world was ready to listen. The problem with the Harry Potter story is that it is not the true one. We have the true story, but we have not been telling it.

We have the true story about good and evil. We have the story about a world taken captive by the Devil and how Jesus came and triumphantly rescued us from sin and death. It’s just that we are not telling it and many, many people in Ontario are dying in sin without the hope of salvation.

The Ontario Conference is committed to telling the true story to the people of Ontario. We even have a slogan for it, “Tell Ontario.” However, it is more than just a slogan. “Tell Ontario” is the response of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario to the rallying call of the leadership of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to “TELL THE WORLD” our story of salvation and the return of Jesus Christ.

Across the world, divisions, unions, conferences, churches and individual members are committed to telling everyone the truth of Jesus and His soon return.

Mission

The mission of the Ontario Conference is to tell our families, neighbours and friends about the everlasting gospel of salvation.

President Derrick Nichols encouraging the members of Elliot Lake Church to tell their community

Ontario Membership Set to Reach 27,000 by Year End

The membership of the Ontario Conference is likely to reach 27,000 by the end of 2006.

In his report to the Board of Directors on Sunday, October 22, 2006, conference secretary, Antonio Bueno, stated that at the end of the third quarter of 2006, membership stood at 26,678. When compared with the same period last year, there has been a net increase of 1,519 members.

The figures allow for all additions and losses and reflects the highest number ever added to the conference in one year. “It could be the best year in the history of our church,” he said, indicating that the figures only reflect the reports that had been received from the field. With numerous evangelistic meetings presently taking place, it is anticipated that the 27,000 figure could very well be reached.

Guidelines for Establishing New Congregations

With the increase in membership new congregations will most likely be formed. The Board of Directors recognises that it is the responsibility of the Ontario Conference to coordinate the establishment of new congregations.

Ontario Highlights
Editorial

She received the first five items without much comment. Sometimes she would nod her head or utter a pleasant word of affirmation. When I shared the next item with her, there was a puzzled look on her face. I waited for the question I had come to expect. It elicited the same response each time. “Is this really true?” She asked, “does it mean that I have equal say as someone who has been in the church for 30 years?” I quietly nodded and said, “That is exactly what I mean.”

Some years ago, I saw the need as a pastor to be actively involved in the nurturing of new converts. I developed a course of lessons for a ‘post-baptismal class,’ where newly baptised members could spend six to twelve months learning about the church, its administration, witnessing, Bible study, etc. In one lesson covering the privileges and responsibilities of church membership, it indicates that once a person becomes a member of a congregation, he or she automatically has an equal voice as all other members about how the church is governed.

Sharon was surprised to hear that her voice mattered in the church as much as anyone else’s. She thought that only church officers had any say and that business meetings were only for long-time members. Her opinion is not unique. It is shared by most new converts because they are not usually taught their privileges and accompanying responsibilities. What is often surprising, though, is to find young people who have grown up in the church having a similar opinion. They have been taught the 28 fundamentals from cradle roll through to youth class, but somehow they do not realize that as members, their voice is equal to ours. Is it because each time they have tried to speak, adults do not listen or treat what they have to say as unimportant? I have heard some young people and young adults express their frustration that even when they attend business meeting and try to get involved, no one is ready to listen to what they have to say. So, they simply vote with their feet by not attending.

Each church member is valuable and has equal say. Yes, the board has the responsibility for the general administration of the church, but it does not operate in secrecy, and its authority is given to it by the congregation. Some churches make every effort to be open and will even publish the agenda and minutes of the board on the notice board for members to see (of course, matters of confidentiality are not listed). This is the sign of a healthy church. The board is also accountable to the church at the regular business meetings. Members have every right to expect, at the end of each year, a full report from each department as to their progress in meeting their objectives and to have their questions answered. Pastors and elders are usually open to hear the concerns of members. When a matter is sufficiently serious, they will take it to the board for consideration.

Some members have discovered that when they encourage others, who share similar concerns, to attend business meetings, their voice is multiplied and their voting strength is increased. Others have discovered the church manual and wondered why they had never bothered to buy one before.

Sharon’s realization that she is a part of a church that listens to her voice and respects her vote, gave her a strong sense of value and belonging and encouraged her to fully participate in its life.

Halsey Peat
Editor
The expression ‘too much month left at the end of money’ is familiar to a lot of people. Even if they are unable to quote it accurately, the probability is that they have experienced a time when the money had finished, but there were still a number of days left in the month before the next pay day. The Ontario Conference faces similar situations each year, especially during the first ten months.

The past few years have been financially challenging for the conference. While annual tithe income steadily increased, the church was faced with sudden and escalating costs. Insurance costs increased dramatically because of increased liabilities and other factors. There was also a three year period of adjustment to implement the new renumeration plan for employees. The refurbishment of the conference office and the building of the extension further added to the sense of financial burden.

2006 is almost finished. The conference remains financially healthy. God has blessed this conference through the faithfulness of His people. Even without specific appeals from the conference, the membership has simply responded to the urging of the Holy Spirit and took hold of God’s promises in faith.

The financial report to the end of the third quarter of 2006 shows a 5.6% increase in tithe over last year. Faithful church members have not only sought to return their tithe to God but have also increased their thanksgiving offerings. Ontario Advance, the offerings used to develop the work in Ontario, has increased by an amazing 19%! Mission offerings, having been on the decline since 2001, has had a complete turn around since last year and continues to show an upward trend this year with an increase of 14%. In terms of total revenue and expenses, the conference is within budget with an anticipated modest gain by year end, if the giving trend continues.

How is the Tithe Used?

How the tithe is used is a question that frequently arises. The diagrams for 2005 below give a graphical representation of the following:

For every $1 of tithe received, the conference keeps 74% or 74 cents. The remaining 26% is passed on to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. They keep 9% while a further 1% goes to the ‘Small Conference Subsidy,’ and the remaining 16% is passed on to the GC/Canadian Joint Ministries Organization.

The net tithe income of 74%, plus all other income, such as Ontario Advance, offerings and donations, subsidies, investment income, and miscellaneous income constitute the total disposable income of the conference. For 2005, 49% of this amount went towards church ministries. These include salaries for pastors and Bible workers, evangelism and various ministries, such as Stewardship, Personal Ministries, Family Life, Children, Youth, etc.

Given the importance of education in Ontario, 17% went towards teachers’ salaries, operating support for nine schools, subsidies for Canadian University College, Kingsway College and student scholarships.

A further 5% was allocated to Publishing (HHES and Canada Youth Challenge) while 2% went to Special Services: Health and Campus Ministries, Community Services, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, Legal Services and Communication. Seven percent went to retirement plan contributions for employees. Support services—conventions and meetings, administration, accounting, auditing, trust services and general expenses—was allocated 14%. Finally, 6% went to working capital.

The New Office Building

The new office building, built at a cost of $5.1 million, is now complete. Again God has blessed the church by providing individuals who have given to its construction. One person, who is not even an Adventist, gave a very significant amount towards the project. Without that major donation, the work could not have been done. It was an urgent need. The growth of the conference required support that could no longer be accommodated in the inadequate facilities of the old office. There was also the pressing problem of fire hazards and the risk of being closed down by the Fire Marshall because of over-crowding. There were also major problems with heating, plumbing and air conditioning that made the work environment unsuitable. It was even necessary to rent space from Kingsway College to provide offices for some directors.

Increase in Tithes and Offerings for 2006

Continued on page 4
Increase in Tithes and Offerings for 2006

The July opening was a highlight for the conference, and it was with thanks to God that the building was opened for His glory. It is remarkable that the gracious donations received ensured that the building is debt free. No funds were borrowed, neither was any tithe money used for any aspect of its construction and furnishing. The conference is now blessed with a building that suitably represents the church family in Ontario.

Ulysses Guarin
Treasurer

Tell Ontario
Jesus Is Coming Soon

Jesus Christ. We will “Tell Ontario” by portraying His character through unconditional service, worship, nurture and discipline.

Vision

It is our vision to creatively implement the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) by developing spiritually mature Christians and planting culturally relevant churches in Ontario where the hurt, depressed, confused and unloved can find love and acceptance, help, forgiveness, hope and encouragement.

As we look at “Tell Ontario,” we see a marvellous opportunity to really consider our province, cities and our local communities with all honesty and attempt to understand their pressing needs, and then set practical objectives for outreach and evangelism.

Objectives

There are four objectives that will greatly assist us to “Tell Ontario” over the next five years:

1. Each member in the Ontario Conference commit to spend at least ten additional minutes in daily prayer and in studying God’s Word.

2. Each member be encouraged to engage in regular, active witnessing in a way that reflects his or her own personality and style.

If one third of our nearly 27,000 members were to bring just one person to Christ each year over the next five years, we would add at least 40,000 new members through this method alone.

3. Each congregation conduct at least one community outreach project every year. When this is combined with other initiatives this would mean 650 outreach events in the next five years.

4. To facilitate and encourage the strategic planting of 50 new congregations throughout Ontario.

These objectives are exciting, but they will not amount to anything unless each member and each congregation is willing to become involved in telling someone about Christ. Imagine the results we would see if our entire membership were to commit to spending just one hour each week intentionally reaching out to un-churched neighbours, friends and family. We would see and be amazed by the power of God.

A keyword is ‘intentional.’ Dramatic church growth will not happen by chance, so over the next five years we want to intentionally focus on un-entered areas in order to plant 50 new congregations across Ontario. This means changing our present view of church growth and evangelism.

To facilitate a culture of intentional outreach, the Ontario Conference, during the next five years, will convene events that will provide training for pastors and lay persons alike.

As a conference, we will use all the available resource to empower pastors and lay leaders across the province to witness to every person in Ontario.

NURTURING BELIEVERS

As we “Tell Ontario,” we recognize the need to nurture new believers. In the last two years, 2004 and 2005, 2,050 new members were added to the membership in Ontario. However, during the same period, 1,162 were lost through death, transfer, missing or dropped, resulting in a gain of 888 members. Churches are encouraged to do everything to nurture all believers, especially new ones.

The Power of Prayer

Time should be taken to encourage new members to develop a strong devotional life. In fact, we encourage all members to daily spend at least ten additional minutes in prayer and Bible study. We cannot sufficiently emphasize the need for prayer, both
personal and as part of a circle of friends. Just imagine what would happen if there were at least one prayer team in every congregation who will, not only pray for the community, but also intercede for the church, the Ontario Conference and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC)! This would mean over 130 prayer units throughout the conference in regular prayer.

Preaching and Teaching

We encourage everyone to pray, especially for those who preach and teach. We intend to do our best to facilitate all our pastors and lay preachers to become great preachers of the Word of God. We believe that God uses those who preach to help people in making a decision for Him.

Teachers have a role similar to pastors and have significant responsibility for the training of our children and youth. We encourage you and seek to facilitate you to partner with parents to be the foremost trainers of our youth for service in this world and in the world to come.

This means that we must ensure that all of our institutions intentionally carry out the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

SERVING HUMANITY

As we “Tell Ontario” we recognize the need to help our congregations see themselves as servants. Some are already developing a “service-oriented” mentality. How can we help others to move in this necessary direction, especially among the local pastors and church members who are not currently active within their communities?

We will endeavour to facilitate the growth of all departments in the Ontario Conference through renewal, appropriation and strategic leadership. It is our plan that each department will work to assist everyone, but especially youth and young adults, who want to become involved in the work of evangelism. We firmly believe in the energy, strength and commitment of youth and young adults, and we will work to encourage them to become fully involved in evangelism.

We also want to encourage every congregation in Ontario to find some niche where it can serve its community outside the doors of the church. We will endeavour to encourage the development of at least five new community-oriented service projects in Ontario within the next five years.

So, in order to “Tell Ontario” that Jesus is coming soon, each member must tell his or her family, not just once but over and over again. Friends must be told. Neighbours must be told. Workmates must be told. Everyone must be told that Jesus is coming soon!

Churches, families and individuals are encouraged to use every ministry possible to “Tell Ontario” as they tell the good news in their city, town or village.

Over the next few months, it is more than likely that we will hear of “Tell Ottawa” and “Tell North Bay” or “Tell Woodstock.” However, we will not simply hear a slogan. We will hear of people turning to God in numbers that we have only dreamed of because the members of each church will be telling the only story that matters, the story of Jesus and His soon return.

Let us TELL ONTARIO that Jesus is coming soon!

Errol A. Lawrence
Ministerial Director
and Church Growth Coordinator
Straight Talk about Adventist Education in Ontario

Just over 900 students enrolled in our eight Ontario schools in September 2006. These schools, along with their 68 teachers, are a small but important part of an Adventist educational system, the second largest parochial school system in the world.

Historically, education has been an integral part of who we are as Adventists. The first Adventist school was established only nine years after the church was organized in 1863. The first two Ontario Adventist schools were established in 1899. Today, in North America alone, there are over 1,000 schools, with more than 43,000 children in elementary schools (JK-8), 15,000 in academies (9-12), and nearly 19,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students in colleges and universities.

Why is Adventist education still important today? The following frequently asked questions about Adventist education may add some clarity.

Isn’t Adventist education the same as what’s offered at the school “down the road”?

Adventist education is much more than preparing students academically; as important as that is, it is about encouraging students toward a lifetime of service. It is also about placing them in an environment that will help them make decisions for eternity. Adventist parents want their children to be in heaven with them.

Adventist teachers are expected to infuse their teaching with Adventist values and beliefs. There is no substitute for a godly Seventh-day Adventist teacher in the classroom. I see it, hear it, and feel it when I walk into our Adventist classrooms. Next to parents, I believe that Adventist teachers are often the most powerful influences in a child’s life.

My child attends Sabbath School and church most Sabbaths. Besides the good Adventist home that I provide, that’s enough time in an Adventist setting, isn’t it?

Students spend an average of 6 ½ hours per day, 188 days per year, for at least 12 years, at school – hours when they are most alert and ready to learn. By contrast, many Adventist children spend 3-4 hours per week at church, 52 days per year, at church.

It stands to reason that more time spent in reinforcing Adventist beliefs and practices will grow “little” Adventists into adult Adventists. The ValueGenesis I study conducted about a decade ago bears this out. Ten years after they completed school, 67% percent of students who were educated, all or mostly in Adventist schools, were still actively involved in the Adventist church. By contrast, of children who were educated all or mostly in non-Adventist schools, just 19% of students were still associated with the church ten years after school completion. What a difference!

But why is Adventist tuition costly?

Education costs money. No doubt about it. Teachers must be paid, books purchased, buildings maintained, and heat/electricity supplied. Adventist tuition (for members) in Ontario averages about $275 per month ($120 to $321 range for grades 1-8). With registration fees, the average costs are about $3000 per year for parents.

And although parents may pay $3,000 for tuition, that’s not the entire cost. Our per pupil cost ($6,500) is very similar to the public sector ($6,510). Adventist schools, which receive no government money, are funded by tuition, local church subsidy, and the conference.

Why doesn’t the conference do more financially for education?

The Ontario Conference already does a lot. It pays 40% of elementary teacher costs (5% more than the North American Division policy requirement of 35%) and 45% of secondary teacher costs. It also contributes an amount equivalent to 5% of tithe to Canadian University College (CaUC) and an amount equivalent to 3% of tithe to Kingsway College (a high school operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada).

At the moment, on average, the Conference pays for 36% of the cost to educate your child. Tuition fees cover 41% and church subsidies about 23%.

The general recommendation is that tuition fees should cover between 50-60% of education costs. You can see that’s not yet happening in our Conference.

I’ve heard that Adventist education will be free to all Adventist in Ontario soon.

Then you have heard incorrectly. The Partnership in Adventist Christian Education (PiACE) Finance Committee is looking at all aspects of education. One thing is certain: To operate a first-rate educational system in Ontario will require more funds, not less. PiACE Promotion Committee, chaired by Pastor Reynold Hazelwood, will soon be sharing information regarding the proposed funding formula that is necessary to maintain a viable and vibrant school system.

But what about the Education Endowment Fund? Won’t that pay for tuition?

Not exactly. Many church members continue to contribute each month toward this fund, and we are all grateful for that generous spirit. However, the concept of the
endowment fund is that only the interest will be used to assist worthy students. Although the fund is increasing ($157,903 to date), interest rates have been consistently low since the fund began. Therefore, the fund would need to have at least $1-2 million to really make a difference.

I know a family in our church that wants its children in our school but can’t afford it. What can I do?

Check with your pastor and Adventist Education Leader (AEL) to alert them to the desire and need of this family. The pastor and/or AEL can work to collect tuition through the Worthy Student Fund on behalf of families that are in real need. I am aware of schools where at least one-half of the students are supported in this way.

Are there a lot of Adventist children NOT in Adventist schools in Ontario?

You’re right. In Ontario, the demographics have shifted considerably in the past 30 years. Most of our school-aged children now live in our cities: Ottawa, the GTA area, London, and Windsor. Approximately 23% of these school age children in our churches across Ontario are attending Adventist schools. This compares to about 38% overall in the North American Division.

The conference goal for Adventist education is two-fold: To expand with satellite schools in the areas where most of our children live and to continue to encourage the small schools connected to single churches in outlying areas. Both types of schools play important roles in our educational system.

To be continued

Frances Schander
Superintendent of Education

Ontario Membership Set to Reach 27,000 by Year End

within its territory. The initial steps will be taken at the local level:

► Pastoral staff will dialogue
► Pastors will consult with the local Ministerium to determine geographical area and possibility of partnership
► Pastoral staff to dialogue with Board of Elders
► Dialogue with Church Board
► Implementation of a needs assessment study (the conference to provide necessary tools)
► Implementation of a feasibility study
► Dialogue with the Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Councils
► Dialogue with the church in business meeting
► Recommendation by vote of the church in business meeting.

Once the initial stage has been completed, the recommendation is submitted in writing to the Ontario Conference Church Growth Committee. This committee reports its findings, along with any additional recommendation, to the Ontario Conference Administration. After careful review, the administration submits the project to the Board of Directors for consideration and action.

These procedures will allow for effective coordination of new congregations. They allow for members with evangelistic zeal to closely work with their pastors and churches in a way that will provide the best support for newly formed groups. They will also ensure that new congregations are strategically placed for maximum effectiveness in a community.  

IT IS WRITTEN

Nov. 12, 2006 From Atheist to Ambassador
19, 2006 Doubting the Divine
26, 2006 The Day Doubt is Removed
Dec. 3, 2006 God’s Word
10, 2006 When Flags Change
17, 2006 Sounds of Christmas, Pt. 1
24, 2006 Sounds of Christmas, Pt. 2

It Is Written can be viewed: CHTV on Sundays at 8:00 a.m.
CTS on Sundays at 8:30 a.m.
The Portuguese programme is on OMNI-TV (Toronto Ch. 47) on Sundays at 9:30 a.m.
Please check your local TV guide for local channels, etc. and be sure to invite a friend or neighbour to watch these outstanding programmes.
For more information about It Is Written Canada, visit our website: www.iw.ca.
C’était la toute première fois que nous assistions à un Camporee et nous avons apprécié cette expérience !

Quand le Club David a été formé en janvier 1988, nous avions seulement quelques jeunes Pionniers et de jeunes Aventuriers. Huit ans plus tard, durant le Camporee de juillet 2006, notre club comptait déjà 54 Pionniers à Guelph.

Le Club David représente deux églises adventistes francophones en Ottawa, l’Orléans français et l’Ottawa français. Le Conseil des Pionniers de la Conférence de l’Ontario (CPCO) l’a enregistré en 2001 et il n’a cessé de grandir depuis.

Nous avions besoin de dirigeants forts, aussi nous avons fait en sorte que les nôtres puissent assister à des formations de fin de semaine à Montréal, à Toronto, en Albany, NY et à Boston, dans le Massachusetts. La vision qu’ils ont insufflée a eu pour résultat cinq cérémonies d’investiture pour les Explorateurs et les Aventuriers et deux autres cérémonies d’investiture pour les Masterguides.

Notre voyage jusqu’à Guelph s’est fait en car scolaire et a duré sept heures. A peine arrivés, et avant même que nous ayons pu nous installer, nous avons été surpris par une averse tormenteuse qui nous a tous laissé trempés. Cependant, nos Pionniers ont chanté sous la pluie et ont demandé à notre Créateur de fermer les écluses des cieux. Presque aussitôt, notre prière a été exaucée. Notre aventure avait bien mal débutée, mais nous sommes restés fidèles et nous avons tenus bon jusqu’à la fin de notre séjour.


On dit de la première participation à un Camporee que c’est une expérience pour le meilleur ou pour le pire. A Guelph, nous avons goûté à notre première fois et, malgré l’averse du premier jour, nous avons décidé que, pour nous, c’était pour le meilleur!

Merci en particulier au Pasteur Leader et à son épouse, Ermine, qui nous ont dirigés, guidés et encouragés à vivre cette expérience mémorable en nous offrant leur soutien inconditionnel.

L’Equipe française d’Ottawa

It was our first time attending camporee, and we loved it! When our club was formed in January 1988, we only had a few young Pathfinders and Adventurers. Eight years later, Club David was able to take over 54 Pathfinders to Guelph for the conference-wide camporee in July 2006.

Club David represents two French-speaking Adventist churches in Ottawa, Orleans French and Ottawa French. It was registered with the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council (OCPC) in 2001 and has not ceased to grow. We recognized the need for strong leaders so we arranged for them to attended training weekends in Montreal, Toronto, and Albany, NY, and Boston, Massachusetts. The leadership they have given has resulted in five investiture ceremonies for Explorers, Adventurers and two for Masterguides.
In 2001 the Rare Beavers were formed, and a year later the Little Lambs was started to meet the needs of the parents who have young children. We also organized five local camps, including one in Cumberland with the Quebec Federation. Early this year we received an invitation from the OCPC to attend camporee for the first time.

We were very excited about the invitation because we wanted to connect with the OCPC, but we were short of funds. We embarked on a major fund-raising drive, including a car wash and selling Indian corn. We also looked to our friends in the community for help. Pastor Charles Leader and his wife, Ermine Leader, and Florence Questelles of the Shiloh Church were especially helpful.

Our trip to Guelph took seven hours in a school bus. As soon as we arrived, we were soaked with a sudden downpour of torrential rain. We did not even have time to settle in. However, our Pathfinders sang in the rain and asked our Creator to shut off the fountains of heaven. In no time, our prayer was granted. Our adventure had a bad start, but we were faithful and firm until the end of our stay.

Camporee was a wonderful experience. The joyful gathering of Pathfinders from the four corners of the province taught us to appreciate the different musical talents, skills of the drilling team and drum corps team. Our participation was very beneficial. We learned so much. We were happy to have taken part in competitive plays and received valuable training. Our presence was noticed. Yes, it was our first time and we wanted to represent the two French churches in Ottawa well, so we did our best. We also wanted to be remembered for something good so we offered the other campers a special origami in the two official languages of our country.

It is said that a first time camporee can be a “for better or for worse” experience. At Guelph, we had our first taste, and, even with the downpour on the first day, we decided that it was for better!

Thanks to Pastor Leader and his wife, Ermine, who guided and encouraged us to live this memorable experience by offering us their unconditional support.

The Ottawa French Team

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**New Staff**

We welcome Kristen Bailey to the conference office. She is the new secretary for the Women’s and Family Ministries Departments. She replaces Lindsay Sormin who left earlier this year.

Kirsten has a passion for God, graphic design and computers. She has worked in Information Technology at Durham College and as Administrative Director for Investment Planning Counsel at the University of Ontario.

She has been an Adventist for seven years and, with her husband, Darren, is actively involved in her local church, New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Oshawa.

Kristen has already become a valuable member of the team at the conference office.

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**Belong!**

The First Ontario Conference Earlteen Rally at
The King Fitness Complex, Oshawa
February 17, 2007

Featuring:

Randy Fishell, editor of Guide Magazine, the Adventist Church's official magazine for Earlteen. He is also a consulting editor for Real-Time Faith, an alternative Earlteen Sabbath School lesson.

Including:

- Guide Dog - Lots of New and Old Friends
- Guide Trivia Game
- Fun and Surprises
- Good Music
- Breakout Sessions for Parents
- Gift Giveaways
- Workshops for SS Teachers

With tracks for Earlteen (6th & 7th Grade Students)
Parents and Earlteen Sabbath School Teachers

Cost: $15 for this one day event (lunch included)

For more information, please contact Cyril Millet at cmillet@adventistontario.org

Sponsors: The Ontario Conference Youth Ministries Department, Kingsway College & College Park Church
Eight Baptized at Apple Creek

On Saturday, September 2, 2006, the Apple Creek Church welcomed eight more souls into the family of God. There was a lot to give thanks for, as seven converts were baptized. One person was accepted into membership by profession of faith.

James, one of the candidates, along with two of her three children, Natasha and Quincy, delivered a powerful testimony of how God has worked in their lives and brought them into the Apple Creek family. She spoke of her fruitless search for a church until she saw “It is Written” on television and the hope that it gave her. She went on to describe an article in the paper about Dr. Mansfield Edwards and then getting in contact with him and receiving his invitation to attend the church. There was not a dry eye in the congregation as Karen shared how she was warmly received and loved. “I believe the Holy Spirit led my family to Markham for a new purpose, perspective and joy in our lives,” she said. “I am determined to remain a member of the Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church because I am convinced that the advent message reflects the true teachings of God’s Word.”

Apple Creek Celebrates Thirty Years by Burning its Mortgage

This is definitely a great day, as we are baptizing families into our family as well.”

The Apple Creek Church welcomes Karen James, Quincy James, Natasha James, Pauline Whittingham- Ashley, Osmand Ashley, Anika Needham- Reece, Jordan Reid and Emilda Daniel.

The happiest memories were reserved for the time when they worked on the present building. “There were days when we were working out in the hot sun. Many of us helped to dig holes, shovel dirt, lay bricks and support those who were in the trenches,” said Brenda Hall.

Dr. Errol Lawrence, senior pastor from 1996-1999, gave the evening address and affirmed the steps that were taken by each contributor to the growth of the church over the past 30 years. He was one of ten former pastors and associate pastors who returned to celebrate with the church.

Dr. Donald King, president of the Atlantic Union Conference, was the keynote speaker on Friday, August 11. It was an evening seasoned with memories of days gone by. The capacity congregation was thrilled by a segment that featured a musical memory lane when a procession of singers, who were just babies and little children in 1977, rendered heart-stirring songs as mature and outstanding musicians.

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The celebration continued on Sabbath morning and into the afternoon. In the morning service, Pastor Alan De Silva who had led the church for nearly 16 years was enthusiastic in his congratulations. “Apple Creek, you have a lot to rejoice about. This church family is only 30 years young, and you have paid off a mortgage that should have taken you 25 years but is fully completed in 15 years,” he said. He was the pastor when the initial plans were laid to purchase the piece of land in Markham where the church is built.

Elder Derrick Nichols, president of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was present for the mortgage elimination service in the evening. The congregation eagerly
applauded as Elder Nichols and senior pastor, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, went through the ceremony. What had been termed a ‘mortgage burning,’ turned out to be a ‘mortgage shredding.’ Former pastors, Jeffrey Brown, Clyde Cassimy, Alan De Silva, Errol Peat, John Scott II, Floyd Spence and Rupert Young, stood by in affirmation.

Elder Nichols congratulated the members on their achievement and expressed the appreciation of the conference for the support they give to spreading the gospel in Ontario. To hearty amens and applause, he cited their “outstanding example as a member of the sisterhood of churches.”

The celebration concluded with a grand banquet on Sunday evening.

*Collette Forrester*  
Communications Secretary

**Bronte’s First Vegetarian Food Fair**

On Sunday, September 10, 2006, Bronte Seventh-day Adventist Church held its first vegetarian food fair. With 300 guests in attendance, Bronte’s first food fair was a success. The food fair featured special home-made vegetarian dishes, blood pressure clinic, chiropractic services, massage therapy booth, Christian Record Braille Services, and foot specialist. Guests were able to ask questions and learn more about procedures they could apply to enhance their health. The children enjoyed face painting, the bouncing castle and making new friends. The Adventist Book Centres (ABC) book mobile was present so guests could buy vegetarian food to re-create some of the tasty foods displayed. Many people bought cookbooks and health books to learn more about what vegetarianism can do in their lives. Food, fellowship and sharing the love of Jesus were the best ingredients in making this outreach a success.

*Lisa Milovanov*

**Midnight Cry at Mt. Olive**

From August 12-September 2, 2006, the Mt. Olive Seventh-day Adventist Church participated in an evangelistic series entitled “The Midnight Cry.” This was conducted by Elder Owen Reynolds from Jamaica.

Elder Reynolds delivered a variety of uplifting and relevant messages to a waiting congregation that was anxious to hear his Bible messages. Throughout the series the participants were reminded of the coming judgment and how to prepare for it. He also spoke of the assurance of everlasting life with God for those who won the Christian race.

As a result of the series, 11 new members were added to the church. Amidst the rejoicing, there was sadness when one new convert died prior to the end of the series. However, there was a sense of assurance that he will be welcomed into God’s kingdom when Jesus returns.

As the church continues to strive to fulfil God’s mandate in the community, they are convinced that God will reward their efforts. It is their desire to continue to provide programs that will meet both the physical and spiritual needs of their neighbours so that Christ will be lifted up and others will be drawn to Him.

*Veronica Lyttle*  
Communications Secretary

**Local Paper Promotes North Shore Adventurers Club**

The Adventurers Club at the North Shore Adventist Church received an unexpected boost with 18 children as it began its new year on September 12, 2006. The editor of a local newspaper in Massey has been vigorously promoting its programme through her column.

*Pastor Doug Pollington*
Eighteen Baptized at Ruth Evangelistic Meetings

“Exhilarating,” “exciting,” “inspiring,” “thrilling,” and “Holy Ghost filled!” were some of the words used to describe the Word of Life Evangelistic Explosion held at the Ruth Seventh-day Adventist Church from September 2 to 23, 2006. Evangelist David Thompson, associate pastor of the Downsview Church, led the Ruth Church to a spiritually rewarding experience.

After many weeks and months of preparation, the Ruth Church was convinced it was ready for an explosion. The preparation included tract distribution, prayer walks, a health fair, Bible studies and an all-day prayer, praise and revival service. Seven thousand flyers and a newspaper advertisement spread the news that the Word of Life Evangelistic Explosion was about to take Brampton by storm. And yes it did!

In the three weeks of nightly dynamic preaching by Evangelist Thompson, there was never a dull moment. The preaching appealed to every age. Young and old could be seen, as if transfixed, attentively listening to the evangelist, as he expounded the word of God. From the opening night, the meetings were full of energy and dynamic preaching.

There was hardly a night when there was not a full house. The weekend meetings were so well attended that it was difficult to accommodate everyone. The evangelistic team was greatly encouraged by a constant flow of visitors, some of whom were heard saying, “Praise the Lord for such an exciting preacher!” Each visitor left the meetings with a gift from the church.

While there was a feeling of sadness when the meetings came to a close, the church also rejoiced as 18 precious souls made their commitment for Jesus and were baptized. There has also been a sense of revival among the members of the church, and they are actively thanking God for the results that were achieved, and how the power of the spirit of God was nightly manifested. Presently, there are many more who are preparing for baptism. The pastor and members are looking forward to that time, and they are praying that the fire of evangelism will never go out. Ruth Church cannot be the same again.

Those in the picture are some of the eighteen individuals who were baptized at Ruth

Our Pathfinder and Adventurers leaders, Rachel McBride and Karen Leung, and their assistants have decided to embark on a little adventure of their own this year by conducting our meetings on the first and third Sabbath afternoon of each month. This, of course, takes a little adjustment, but the staff is excited with the prospect of using a non-school day to possibly reach more community children.

Many thanks to our leaders and helpers; the Lord will truly bless their efforts.

Pastor Carter Stanley

Fifty-Seven Baptized at Toronto Central

From June 10-July 8, 2006, the Toronto Central Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted “The Way to Life” evangelistic series with the dynamic Evangelist Omar Palmer.

In the three weeks of nightly dynamic preaching by Evangelist Thompson, there was never a dull moment. The preaching appealed to every age. Young and old could be seen, as if transfixed, attentively listening to the evangelist, as he expounded the word of God. From the opening night, the meetings were full of energy and dynamic preaching.

But this was an evangelistic series with a difference. There was a different theme each night. Tuesday evenings was “Lovers Night.” It proved to be popular night, as the evangelist explored the many facets of interpersonal relationships but always brought it back to the ultimate love of Jesus. “Prayer Power” night took place every Wednesday evening. During these evenings, the service always included an anointing service and the “Prayer Scroll.” It was truly uplifting and inspirational to all those who were present. Friday night was “Question and Answer” night. Evangelist Palmer did not shy away from answering even the most probing questions.

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Throughout the weeks of the series, hearts were blessed, and many dedicated their lives to the Lord in the watery grave of baptism.

In total, 57 souls were won for the kingdom of God. To God be the glory, for the great things He hath done!

Petra McGann
Communications Secretary

Toronto Perth Avenue Welcomes New Pastor

There is almost nothing that compares to the feeling that one is welcomed, appreciated and validated. This is especially so when new to a particular area or space. On August 12, 2006, the Perth Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church officially opened its arms to welcome its new pastor and his family in a welcome ceremony.

Pastor Theodore Sargeant recently bid adieu to his beloved Ottawa Seventh-day Adventist Church after serving there for nine years. However, his arrival at Toronto Perth Avenue was very timely because the Youth Month was about to kick-off, and shortly thereafter the church celebrated its 35th anniversary on the weekend of May 19-21, 2006.

Pastor Sargeant has wasted no time in getting things rolling at his new home church with a number of innovative ideas and initiatives. “My home is open to you 24 hours” are some of the memorable words spoken by him at the night of his welcome.

There is nothing that compares to the feeling that one is welcomed, appreciated and validated indeed!

World Church Secretary at Toronto West’s ‘African Day’

Elder Matthew Bediako, executive secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, joined the members and friends of the Toronto West Adventist Church on September 15, 2006. He was guest of honour and preacher for their third annual African Heritage Weekend.

The idea of an African weekend resulted from discussions, three years ago, when the then pastor of the church, David Rogers, and a committee of African members attending the church thought that such a weekend would be a good evangelistic event for Africans living in Toronto.

The all-African baptism held on Sabbath afternoon, and the candidates being prepared for the next baptism, was a testimony that the weekend fulfilled its purpose.

The Toronto West members were joined by the two Ghanaian Adventist congregations in Toronto. On Friday evening, the devotional was led by Pastor Damson Oppong of the Ghanaian Church.

The Ghanaian choir sang both Friday evening and Sabbath morning. However, many of the Ghanaian members also supported the event by cooking African dishes and providing additional help. Yet, it was not a Ghanaian weekend, according to Pastor Oppong.

“The Toronto West is good at putting on this kind of event,” he said, “and they tried to encompass the whole continent and its diverse people, cultures and languages. Everything African was presented to the best. It was truly an African weekend.”

Senior pastor, Allan Chichester, was pleased with the weekend. “It created the strong sense of identity,” he said. “The speaker, Elder Matthew Bediako, spoke about the fact that long ago in Africa, even before Christianity, the Sabbath was known in Ghana and was celebrated among the Ashanti, and that they kept Saturday as the day of the great Creator God. So it creates a sense of connection with the African community to the fact that God is the Creator of all mankind.

He went on to speak about future evangelistic opportunities. “There are a number of people from the African continent who have come here,” he said, “and because of the economic situation, they’ve dropped out of the church. We’re making deliberate plans to reclaim them to the church. There are also many who have come but have no connections with Christianity, and through African Adventist members, we’re hoping to connect them to future events and to bring them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.”

Special Meeting for GTA Churches

A special meeting has been called by the Ontario Conference for all pastors, elders, Sabbath School leaders, children’s Sabbath School teachers, youth leaders, Pathfinders and all officers who work with children. The meeting will take place on Sabbath, January 20, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Canada Christian College, 50 Gervais Drive, Toronto. If you fall into one of these categories, you are kindly invited to attend.
Mayor Attends Elliot Lake Church Open House

Elliot Lake’s mayor, George Farkouh, and Ontario Conference president, Derrick Nichols, were the guests of honour at the open house held by Elliot Lake Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath, October 7, 2006.

Over a hundred people were present to celebrate the acquisition of the beautiful new church building, a former theatre that has been transformed into a church. Some were Adventists from the surrounding areas, but there were also friends from the local Elliot Lake community.

It was a very happy moment for the members of the Elliot Lake Church, as they re-called how their church had almost been decimated when the mines were closed and 9,000 people lost their jobs. They spoke of how they slowly began to rebuild their membership until the present day when they were able to rejoice in God’s blessings.

The mayor, a Christian, said of the survival of Elliot Lake after the mine closure, that he believed “it was God’s way of demonstrating His power.” He presented a plaque on behalf of the city to local pastor, Doug Pollington.

Elder Nichols preached the sermon for the midday service and challenged the congregation to make the Elliot Lake Church like a city of refuge for the community. “The church must be on the front line, mixing and mingling with people,” he said, “it must be visible, accessible and open. For people who are desperate, the gates to refuge must not be hard to find.”

Kingsview Village Hosts ADRA-Sponsored Thanksgiving Lunch

On Sunday, October 8, 2006 members of Kingsview Village Seventh-day Adventist Church showed visitors at the Dixon Hall shelter in downtown Toronto what it really means to “love thy neighbour as thyself.” The church’s Community Services Department served up a delicious Thanksgiving feast to the shelter’s visitors and entertained them with lively music.

After weeks of preparation, the Community Services group, led by Noreen Johnson, along with the senior pastor, Joel Nembhard, his wife, and other dedicated volunteers arrived at the shelter with more than enough to feed those at the ADRA-sponsored event.

“This was a great opportunity to show others that Adventists care about the community,” says one Community Services member. “We are serious about following Christ’s example of helping the less fortunate.”

One of the main highlights of the afternoon was an impressive performance by the church’s resident country-gospel artist, Rohan Grant, who had visitors enthusiastically singing along, making the atmosphere more like that of a private concert than a shelter.

The event was topped off with a much appreciated care package and an informative brochure about the Seventh-day Adventist Church, ADRA, and specific churches in the city.

In the end, the day turned out to be a blessed success and church members felt that it was a positive example of showing the love of Jesus Christ by helping those in need.

The Kingsview Village Community Services Department is already looking forward to continuing the good work by holding events at other shelters.

Nikki Rampersad
Communications Secretary

Youth and Children’s Ministries Leadership Conference

The Ontario Conference Youth and Children’s Ministries Departments have joined forces to provide training to Adventurer leaders, Pathfinder leaders, A.Y. leaders, A.Y. secretaries and Children’s Ministries leaders. This conference will be held on January 19–20, 2007 at Canada Christian College, located at 50 Gervais Drive in Toronto.

Registration for this event will only be available online starting November 6, 2006 through www.plusline.org.
“It’s a Great Plan!”

When the Ontario Conference first came up with the idea of the Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF), there were the usual sceptics. “It will never work,” they said, “members only think about their own church buildings.” Since its launch in 2001, however, the sceptics are fewer because of the success of the initiative. Yet, there is so much more that could be done. We have yet to reach our full potential.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is among the leading churches in various aspects of ministry, such as missions, evangelism, education, health and use of modern technology. However, it is among the poorest where church buildings are concerned. Our buildings do not always adequately represent the God we serve.

Presently, the Ontario Conference has more than 130 congregations. Eighty of these worship in church owned buildings. Of this number about 30 have mortgages. The interest on these alone amounts to over $450,000 annually.

The 50 congregations without buildings worship in rented buildings at an annual cost of $500,000. Interest payments and rent cost close to $1,000,000 of God’s money to pay someone else’s mortgage.

Faced with this situation, the administration of the Ontario Conference, together with the constituency in 2001, decided on the Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF) initiative. The initiative suggests that each baptized member give two dollars ($2.00) weekly or eight to ten dollars ($8.00-$10.00) monthly, or $104.00 annually, to a common pool. From this, money could be used to help churches pay off mortgages and to buy new church buildings.

It’s a great plan! With over 26,000 baptized members in the Ontario Conference contributing to the CBIF, a sum of over $2.5 million dollars could be raised annually. Even if the more realistic figure of just 13,000 working members contribute to it, well over $1 million dollars would be raised annually.

Since its inception, the fund has received more than $600,000. Seventy percent of this has been given to 21 congregations to pay off or reduce their mortgages. The other 30% was given to congregations to start building programmes or improve their facilities.

Annually, the fund receives about $141,000, including $50,000 from the Ontario Conference.

There is far more to do. There are many large cities and towns where members are forced to rent. The fund needs the support of every member. Some are already contributing more than the $2.00 weekly, but others have yet to start. The tithe envelopes have a line marked Church Building Investment Fund, where you may indicate your donation. Let us make the CBIF an even greater success as we help it to reach its full potential because we are really building God’s kingdom! And remember, we can never out give the Lord!

Pastor George Ivkov, Field Representative - CBIF.

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Calling: Writers and Photographers!

Do you enjoy writing or taking photographs? The Communication Department of the Ontario Conference is looking for writers and photographers to cover church-related events. Your work could be published in the Highlights, the Messenger or the Review. Interested? Contact Halsey Peat at 905-571-1022 ext. 202 or hpeat@adventistontario.org.

Should Your Church Receive the ‘Church of the Month’ Award?

Apple Creek Church was August’s ‘Church of the Month’ when it celebrated its mortgage burning and 30th anniversary. Mt. Zion Filipino received the award for September when the members spent an entire week celebrating their 15th anniversary. Both churches have been featured on the conference website, www.adventistontario.org.

If there has been a significant event in your congregation in a given month, nominate your church for the award. Simply call or email the Communication Department at the conference office.
Phone 905-571-1022 ext. 201-2 or hpeat@AdventistOntario.org.