Over the last eleven months of 2007, we have seen our conference continue to move forward. We give thanks to God because we did so solely by the power of His grace. I hardly need to remind you that we are living in a time of many uncertainties, where there are always constant changes, especially in areas that affect the economy, our social well being, and our religion. In spite of the uncertainties and changes all around us, God has certainly taken care of His church in this province and has poured out untold blessings upon His people.

Particularly at this Christmas season, it is good to look back over the year and reflect on the blessings of God to see what has been accomplished through Him. Again, we have focused heavily on the main mission of the church – evangelism. We take seriously our Lord’s commission of presenting the Gospel to all in our various communities. The Administration and the Board of Directors provided more than half a million dollars for our pastors and churches across the conference to carry out some form of evangelistic outreach. From the most recent reports received, seven hundred and fifty individuals were baptized. Included in these outreach events were two major successful efforts: One conducted in Sault Ste. Marie by Bill Santos and the It Is Written Canada Team, and the other in the Durham area (Oshawa), conducted by Dan Bentzinger of It Is Written US.

Through the efforts of Pastor Vincent Lue and members from Bethel Church, a group was planted in the Parkdale area of Toronto in July 2002. Just five years later, on June 16, 2007, this group was organized into a company. Brother Claudius Bollers and his wife, Sonia, have been giving this new church excellent leadership. Around the same time, a group from Apple Creek Church started holding meetings in Ajax. Assisted by retired pastor, Manley Coleman, and the Pathfinder director of the conference, Pastor Charles Leader, rapid growth took place. On March 17, the group was organized into a church. In Lindsay, a group that has been meeting there for several years was finally organized into a company on May 26. This was made possible through the faithfulness of the membership and the local leadership of Cliff Patterson. Pastor James Anderson provides pastoral leadership for the company.

Through the Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF), four churches received $24,498.00 and every other church received $308.81. This is an on-going programme of the conference. Since 2001, twenty-five churches have been recipients of this funding. Of this number, four churches were assisted to completely pay off their mortgages.

Continued on page 5
It’s Time to Say Goodbye to ‘Special Days’

I’m puzzled. Why do we have to have ‘special days’ in church? It’s as if Sabbaths are mundane, just ‘regular Sabbaths’ unless it is Health Ministries Day or Communication Day or some other ‘special day’.

On these special days, all the stops are pulled out to make the day ‘extra special’. Often more thought and planning, than usual, go into the service. You can be sure that there will be an abundance of music, and members are encouraged to attend and bring their friends. Perhaps this is a sad indictment on regular services being routine and predictably uninspiring.

I’ve also noticed that these days tend to be rather competitive; each department attempting to out-do the others, vying to put on the best programme with the most dynamic preacher and best musicians and singers.

Then, there is the spirit of possessiveness. As far as some departments are concerned, it’s ‘my Sabbath’, and the pastor and elders are required to sit back and allow them to get on with it.

In some churches, some department heads view these days almost as a sacred right. Some go as far as to demand more than one Sabbath in a year. Given that there are at least 13 departments, if each had two days yearly, then half of the Sabbaths in a year would be spoken for without the pastor being able to implement a sermonic year to meet the needs of the congregation.

Increasingly, new days are creeping in. Music Day is a recent addition, ‘Deacons and Deaconesses Day’ has been with us for a few years now. What’s next? This is a far cry from when the pastor would designate a number of Sabbaths each year to give particular emphasis to an aspect of the mission of the church. It was never designed to be a way of divvying up the 52 Sabbaths in each year to include every aspect of the congregation’s organisation, function and mission.

Admittedly, I’ve seen some days which were of excellent standard, often entertaining, and sometimes, even inspiring (thank goodness). However, they boil down to just one day. In some churches that one day is the highlight of a department’s work for the year. It’s not uncommon for a high percentage of a department’s budget to be spent on that day. Once the day is over, the department can claim that it has done something significant, or its day has been successful.

Successful? What is meant by successful? Did the department have clear, measurable objectives that were met? What about the rest of the year? What is being done in our departments and ministries that actually meets the needs of the members and the community and so contributes to the growth and development of the church?

Perhaps the church would be best served if we ministered to the congregation and community as an ongoing concern. For example, instead of having a family life day, it could be more effective if the department organised support for families experiencing difficulties. It could also plan occasions to celebrate the success of families, provide an on-going education for parents and couples; and could even be a resource for the pastor as he preaches to the needs of families during a series or over a number of Sabbaths.

Special days tend to be far too exclusive, only addressing a narrow segment of the congregation. Also, one sermon is insufficient to accomplish the mission of a department. In many cases, the emphasis of these days is best suited to a seminar, rather than 30 minutes of a sermon during divine service.

It’s time to say goodbye to special days. Not all of them, but most. Let’s put our energies into carrying out the mission of the church and not into putting on a programme for a day. At the same time, those who plan our weekly services, please put more thought into planning. Move beyond the usual. Be inclusive and creative in your planning services. Put prayer and effort into making every Sabbath a special one.

Halsey Peat
Editor
‘I Just Can’t Seem to Get an Answer to My Prayer’

Our mother was very ill, and you passionately prayed that God would heal her. She died. Was your prayer answered? An opening came up in your company. All the pieces fit for you to get the job: You were prepared for it; you had paid your dues to the company; it was your time to receive the promotion. You prayed that God would allow you to have that job. But they passed over you and brought in someone from outside the company for the position. Was your prayer unanswered?

A young man falls in love and marries the lady of his dreams. Among their goals was to have children, but they soon realize that they cannot fulfill this desire. They eagerly pray that God removes all obstacles and provides them with a child. But their dreams are never fulfilled. Were their prayers unanswered?

One of the biggest problems we face as Christians is ‘unanswered prayers.’ We know of God’s instructions to pray; we believe in prayer; we practice prayer, but it seems that many of our prayers are not answered to the extent that many Christians, even devoted ones, wonder, “Does God really answer prayers?”

In seeking to deal with this age-long issue of ‘unanswered prayer,’ it would be helpful to examine our understanding and approaches to prayer.

Firstly, there are many individuals who have a very limited view of prayer— that of petition. Petition is only one form that prayer takes. Our prayer life should also include prayers of adoration, confession, intercession, and submission (Phil. 4:6-7, Eph. 6:8, I Tim. 2:1). So, when we say that our prayers are not answered, are we referring to prayers of intercession, adoration, confession or just petition? Usually our references to unanswered prayers are referring to prayers of petition.

Secondly, ‘unanswered prayers’ indicates a limited expectation from prayer. Many of us decide beforehand how God should answer a particular prayer. If the prayer is not answered in exactly the manner that we have prescribed, then we may conclude that God has not answered our prayer. Such an expectation overlooks the sovereignty of God. Let us remember that God is not obligated to answer our prayers in the manner that we humans have determined beforehand. The Bible contains many examples of prayers that are apparently unanswered:

- Moses prayed that God would allow him to enter the Promised Land, but he died on top of Mount Nebo (Deut. 32:48-52).
- The prophet Habakkuk began his book with a cry, “O Lord how long shall I cry, and you will not hear!” (Hab. 1:2).
- Paul prayed three times for the removal of the thorn in his flesh that was hindering his missionary labours, but for the rest of his life he was compelled to make the best of it (II Cor. 12:19).
- Even the Saviour, in the Garden of Gethsemane, prayed that the Father would remove His bitter cup of suffering if it was His will (Luke 22:42). But He drank that cup to the bitter dregs.
- How are we to understand these instances? Was God simply not listening? God is certainly listening! Here again we have to examine our assumptions about what God should do. We pigeonhole God by expecting Him to answer our prayers affirmatively. “Yes” is what we implicitly demand from God. We need to see that “no” is just as clear an answer as “yes.”
- We need the faith to joyfully accept either answer.

As we approach God in prayer, it would be well for us to pray with persistence and not be discouraged when our prayers are, apparently, not answered. Speaking of persistence in prayer, Jesus expressed this quality of persistence in three words (Luke 11:5-13):

1. Ask – When we ask of God, we see our need and are willing to make contact with God. We know we have a need that God can meet.
2. Seek – This indicates that there is some effort on our part along with the request to God. For example, if we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we still have a responsibility to work. If we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” we still have a responsibility to witness and preach. Someone has observed that there are three ways that a person can cooperate with God – by thinking, working, and praying. But each by itself does not eliminate the others.
3. Knock – This would imply the persistence that we bring to prayer. Does persistence in knocking mean that we must harass God before He will answer us? No! It does not. Rather it indicates our seriousness in prayer.

As we contemplate the authenticity of prayer, let us consider the words in 1 John 5:14, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

So, are our prayers unanswered? I say no! In fact, our prayers are answered beyond our imagination. James declares that “much” is what God wants to do for us in prayer (Jam. 5:16), and Paul in Eph. 3:20 exclaimed, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (or think to ask), according to the power that works in us…forever and ever amen.”

Beyond our imagination is what God did for us in Christ Jesus. Though He prayed that God would let the cup pass from Him, He had to drink it. He subsequently faced Pilate and the cross, but the result of that cup was salvation through His blood.

Eustace Williams
Director,
Personal Ministries
Bibleinfo.com
Ontario teachers learned, fellowshipped, played, and prayed together amidst the splendid (and colourful) backdrop of autumn on Lake Rosseau. Teachers from the Ontario Conference’s ten Adventist schools gathered at Camp Frenda from October 21-23 for the Office of Education’s annual Teachers’ Retreat. Seventy-one full-time and several part-time faculty, along with two guest teachers from other Canadian conferences, met together for professional development, an important part of the Ontario Conference’s programme of continued learning opportunities.

Keynote speaker was Dr. Arlene Taylor of Napa, CA. An internationally known writer and speaker, Taylor spoke about brain function and how to maximize available knowledge in this area as it applies to the classroom. A Canadian by birth, Taylor capably made brain-function knowledge both practical and easy to understand. Presentations included topics such as “Your Brain Is Your Bottom Line” and “Your Brain and Laughter.”

Elementary teachers (K-6) were in-serviced on a new North American Division-developed reading programme called Pathways. This integrated programme, which replaces the Life series (published in 1983), is already in use in several of our Conference schools. Its components include reading and writing workshop, independent reading, handwriting, spelling, phonics, comprehension/learning strategies, and more. Beth Franzen, a veteran classroom teacher from Portage, IN, was the presenter.

In addition to Franzen, Dr. Jerry Johns, author of a recommended Pathways assessment tool, also offered sessions on assessment and fluency (for K-6 teachers), and vocabulary/comprehension (7-12). Johns, a past president of the International Reading Association and a distinguished teaching professor at Northern Illinois University, is the author of over 350 books, chapters, and journal articles.

Other presenters included Dr. Ermine Leader, coordinator of groups/workshops at the Counselling and Development Centre of York University (Toronto). Leader presented Daniel Goleman’s concept of Emotional Intelligence as it applies to the classroom. Rick Norman, of Nelson Education Ltd., briefed teachers on the current conference annual achievement and cognitive testing programme. Crawford Adventist Academy teacher, Andon Boyce, helped high school teachers sharpen their technology skills during MarkBook training.

To help teachers maintain physical fitness, Vernon Langdon, associate superintendent of education, led a 45-minute wakeup routine each morning. Daily worships, conducted by Pastor Andre Anderson, CAA chaplain, provided much-needed spiritual encouragement and inspiration.

During a Monday evening Harvest Festival special celebration, host Cyril Millett, conference youth leader, challenged groups of teachers in a variety of mind-bending activities. Nine teachers were honoured for years of service with certificates of appreciation and gift certificates. They included Aurora Adap, Norman Brown, Judy Burgin-Hall, Jacqueline French-Bedward, Preston Handy, Wendy Hutchinson, Audrey James, Sue Leyzac and Maureen Westhaver.

Frances Schander, Superintendent of Education
Over $100,000 for Education Endowment Fund

Advocist education received a huge boost of over $100,000, in the form of a number of bequests to the Education Endowment Fund, during 2006-2007. A total of $112,943.21 was bequeathed to the fund by a number of members who valued the work of Adventist education and remembered the children and youth of the church in their wills.

Frances Schander, conference superintendent of education, was overjoyed to hear the amount left to benefit children in Adventist schools.

“I can think of no better investment than Adventist education,” she said. “It yields eternal dividends in children’s lives and leaves a lasting legacy.”

Alvin Ram, trust services director, was quick to honour those who made the bequests.

“We want to acknowledge the faithfulness and commitment of these members,” she said. “Their consideration for the work of the church, even after their death, has to be admired. Each time we receive such bequests, I feel humbled by the thoughtfulness of our members who choose to do this. I give God thanks for them.”

An increasing number of members are using the services offered by the Ontario Conference to make their wills. Some choose to include bequests and will name a specific area, such as the Education Endowment Fund, to receive the benefit.

If you would like to learn more about providing for the security of your family’s future and planned giving, please contact Denise Putt in the Trust Services Department at the Ontario Conference office, 905-571-1022, ext. 206 or dputt@adventistontario.org.

Continued from page 1

2007 - A Year of God’s Blessings

This year, for the first time, the conference has officially recognized the regional camp meetings across the province and plans to continue doing so in the future. In addition to providing funding, mini Maranatha seminars were also held at these camp meetings, thus enabling training for our members to be more effective soul winners for the Lord.

We have also placed strong emphasis on the security and safety of our children and young people over the last several years. We have formed pertinent policies, required police checks for all workers, elected officers and volunteers in our churches, and made efforts to educate the constituency. This year we hosted two very effective children safety conventions by Cory J. Jensen, co-Director of the Center of Behavioural Intervention in Oregon. The first was held in Toronto on January 20; the other in Ottawa on September 22.

For some time, Christian education has been a major thrust for the conference, and this year has seen a small increase in our enrollment and the opening of two new schools. Crawford Adventist Academy East Campus was opened at Agape Temple Church in Pickering, and London Advent Christian Academy started at North London Church.

All the departmental directors of the conference have been very busy throughout the year. To a large extent, their hard work and efforts have contributed to the successful soul-winning programme of the conference. They have made previous successful programmes even more successful and introduced new ones that help members grow and minister to others. A glance at the conference calendar that was produced for this year tells part of the story.

As I reflect, I can only conclude that it is nothing short of miracles that God has done. Only He could have opened the way and provided the means for another successful year. I thank God that He has provided so abundantly. However, we cannot and must not become complacent in our spiritual journey, neither in the work of our Lord. Faithfulness must be the watchword of every believer. In the words of the Apostle Paul, “…Let us run with patience (endurance) the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith …” (Hebrews 12:1). I am grateful to every worker, dedicated hard working soldiers of the cross of Jesus Christ, and to our equally dedicated members across this province for your commitment and faithfulness. I can only humbly and prayerfully extend to each one a Merry Christmas and a successful and prosperous New Year!

Teacher Needed in Ontario

Full-time multi-grade (grades 5-8) teacher needed immediately at Ottawa Adventist Elementary School.

Minimum of three years of teaching experience required. Ability to teach French would be an asset. Applicant must be a committed Seventh-day Adventist, be legally able to work in Canada and have, or be eligible for, denominational and/or provincial certification.

Persons interested should fax a resume to Dr. Frances Schander, superintendent of education, (905-571-5995) or e-mail fschander@adventistontario.org.

Together for a finished work

Maranatha
Institute of Evangelism

Ontario Highlights | Winter 2007 | 5
Four Hundred and Seventy-Five Women “Discover Their Purpose” at Annual Retreat

The number of eager and diverse Adventist women and their friends, 475, was just right. The location, White Oaks Resort and Spa at Niagara-on-the-lake, was the perfect spot. The selection of speakers, Esme Branner, Alexandra Caran, Ljubica Bibulovic, Dr. Mable Dunbar, Dr. Elnora Inandan, Dr. Terry Racasa, Sandra Silva, Lilly Shibata-Salley, and Lara Melashenko was just the right blend. These were the ingredients for a memorable, spirit-filled and emotionally charged women’s retreat during September 14-16, 2007.

The women were effusive with their praise:

“Being with the women of this conference who love God and demonstrate it through their lives is always a highlight of events like these. Also, the intimacy workshops and Esme’s sermon inspired and renewed me. The music was wonderful!”

“It was so great to get away from it all and realize the importance of spending time and reconnecting with Jesus.”

“I felt the accommodation, food and service were excellent – above and beyond exemplary. I would definitely return again. The workshops were excellent, and I appreciated the focus of developing your relationship with Jesus and taking time for self-care. This has been a wonderful, relaxing and rejuvenating weekend!”

Toronto Singles Reach out to Eastern Ontario Singles

Eastern Ontario singles worshipped, ate and fellowshipped with some of their sisters and brothers from the Greater Toronto Area on November 10 at Ottawa East Adventist Church. Pastor Daniel Saugh’s morning High Octane message and his afternoon’s highly interactive workshop were inspiring and fun. Ottawa East Church supplied a lovely Sabbath lunch and a fun social Saturday night programme.

Eleven singles came from the GTA – most getting up in the wee hours of the morning to trek to Ottawa to support the first Eastern Ontario Adult Singles Adventist Ministries (ASAM) event sponsored by the Ontario Conference Family Ministries Department. Petra McGann, lay coordinator of ASAM, expressed how excited she was at the great attendance of singles from as far away as Quebec. She also thanked Pastor Harold Johnson for the loving hospitality of Ottawa East Adventist Church.

Maranatha
Ministerial and Lay Evangelism Council
March 28 – 29, 2008
BMO Institute for Learning
3550 Pharmacy Avenue, Toronto

Presenting Pastor Ian Sweeney
First Seventh-day Adventist winner of this annual competition
Support Services Launched for Pregnant Teens

Teens involved in pregnancy can now find support! The Teen Pregnancy Prevention/Intervention Ministry (TPPI) recently organized and launched the Teen Pregnancy Support Program (TPSP).

The purpose of the TPSP is to provide professional mentors who will give ongoing support to teens involved in pregnancy. The team of approximately 15 professional volunteers includes social workers, counsellors, educators, crisis intervention workers, nurses and other experts in the area of teen health and development, as well as female and male mentors who have themselves experienced teen pregnancy.

For those who want to consider the option of adoption, social worker, Judy Hutchinson-Boyce, TPSP lay coordinator, is able to provide appropriate assistance. The team maintains a strict code of confidentiality. Any parent, pastor, friend, relative or agency that has approval from the teen can refer her or him to this programme.

During the past year, the TPPI Ministry has provided prevention education and information sessions to a number of Adventist churches on issues relating to teen pregnancy and sex. Topics included: Young People Dealing with Sexual Urges, Self Esteem Issues, Focus on Abstinence, Teen and Parental Response to Abortion, Tips for Parents on TPPI, and available Teen Pregnancy resources. Plans are underway to include dramatic performances by “On Your Mark Ministries”. Judy Hutchinson-Boyce states, “If you would like team members to do a programme at your church next year, please advise us in a timely manner, and we would be happy to come to your church.”

You can contact the TPPI by calling Donna Jackson at the Ontario Conference Family Ministries Department at 905-571-1022 ext. 203; djackson@adventistontario.org or Judy Hutchinson-Boyce at teenpregsupport@adventistontario.org.

New Name for Trust Services

The Trust Services Department has been given a new name. It is now known as Planned Giving and Trust Services. The name change was voted by the Board of Directors of the Ontario Conference at its monthly meeting on Sunday, November 25, 2007, following a similar action by the North American Division in October 2007.

The name change reflects, more accurately, the nature of the work being undertaken by this department as it encourages members to wisely plan for their future.

New Workers and Pastoral Changes

Sasha Andjelkovic is a new pastor to the Ontario Conference. He comes from the seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where he completed his Master of Divinity degree. He is accompanied by his wife, Ivana, and their six-month old daughter, Tamara. Ivana holds an M.A. in Youth Ministry.

Dewaine Frazier is from Toronto but left to study at Northern Caribbean University in Jamaica. Since returning with a B.A. in Theology, he has been active in his home church, Toronto Central.

Pastor Andjelkovic is the new pastor for North Bay, South River and Haileybury Churches. He assumes his new responsibilities on December 1, taking over from Pastor Fred Irish who retired on September 1, 2007.

Dewaine Frazier is now the assistant pastor to Dr. Kenneth Campbell at Mt. Olive Church in Etobicoke. For the past two years, he has been the assistant pastor to Dr. Wesley Torres at Hamilton Mountain Church. He assumed his new role on August 1, 2007.

We also congratulate him and his wife, Donna, on the birth of their third child, Joseph Kwaku Amankwah III.

Returning from the seminary on January 1, 2008 are Frank Dell’Erba and Marian Kossovan.

Pastor Dell’Erba is the new pastor for Harmony and Toronto Italian Churches. Pastor Kossovan will replace Pastor Ulrich Unruh at Windsor Church.

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Adventist Students Find Friends, Food and Fellowship

It’s a wonderful but somewhat frightening time of life. You've graduated from high school, and suddenly, you find yourself at the bottom of another academic ladder. Fewer friends, if any, for support; parents at a distance and a sea of new faces greet you daily. You’re at a public university being treated like an adult at last!

Suddenly, it hits you: You can go to the only Adventist church located two bus transfers across town, when you want, if you want or not at all. No one to wake you on Sabbath; you’re on your own. Sweet!

University or college life can be exciting. It can also be a time of spiritual struggle when you are faced with professors that espouse evolutionary theories, the subtle promotion of a postmodern world view and a secular humanistic philosophy coming at you like a freight train. It can be very confusing.

There is support for the Christian student on the secular campus. The Ontario Conference continues to reach out to our students through the work of the Adventist Ministry to College and University Students (AMiCUS).

The word “amicus” comes from the Latin meaning “friends.” AMiCUS mainly functions as a friendship-based group ministry on public campuses. Member students befriend others on public campuses. As the friendship grows, it encourages them to stay connected to Jesus Christ or to help others discover salvation through Him.

The mission of AMiCUS is to reach, support and retain Adventists while motivating and equipping them for evangelism in the school community and using their talents in the local church.

This ministry is known officially as Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Across the United States and Canada, ACF works through groups of different types to achieve its objectives. Some groups meet in dorm rooms; others in off-campus locations, communal homes, churches and other venues. It’s a church-based ministry.

AMiCUS groups may include campus faculty and staff, along with students. Many of these groups have official campus status and operate within the guidelines of a constitution. The intention of being attractive to those not of our faith is a significant principle of the members of this ministry. Adventist students seek to engage their peers in dialogue and share Biblical truth with them.

Recently, I visited the Cornerstone chapter of AMiCUS at McMaster University where a lively discussion on the nature of suffering took place around open Bibles. Chapter sponsor, Pastor Richard Roschman, guided the study group through a frank conversation. The students seemed to leave encouraged.

After the session, we enjoyed snacks provided by a member of Pastor Roschman's church. The cookies and treats are always well received by all the students, some of whom are not Adventists. This is the love of Christ extended to a group of young adults who relish homemade cookies or a good Sabbath meal in a home away from home.

Cornerstone does more than accept the sweet offerings of church members. Not long ago a student needed a bed. Cornerstone worked with Heritage Green Church to provide one to the delight of the fellow student who had been “sleeping on hard times”.

One chilly Friday evening, I joined a Cornerstone gathering of eleven students for Bible study. It was easy to feel like an old friend as the brownies were passed around. But it took more than brownies to increase the size of this group by about six members this year. It took prayer, dedication and work on the part of the core peer group.

The student leader of Cornerstone, Hamilton (yeah, I know; it’s a coincidence that he attends a university in a city with the same name), also leads a Bible study group for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. What a way to share the Gospel with other Christians! On Thursdays, it’s the book of Mark with InterVarsity, and on Friday, it’s Acts or a relevant topic with Cornerstone. Hamilton loves the challenge of encouraging others in their journey and search for life’s meaning.

I also met Abigail at Cornerstone. She is new to the group. What keeps her coming back? Her answer is shared by others: “I really like it.” She says, “It’s something to do, and I can’t wait to come. The Bible isn’t imposed on us. With some Christians on campus, the first thing they ask is ‘Are you baptized?’ That doesn’t happen here.”

Sandra, one of the many bright sparks in the circle, is the social conveyor of Cornerstone. She has been with the chapter for three years and loves the yearly AMiCUS Retreat at Camp Frenada. The cost is just right for a budget-tight student, and besides, the Heritage Green Church helps to defray the expense even more. I’m told that some students get support from their home church to attend this spiritual retreat designed just for students.

“Cornerstone is great,” declares Sandra. “I came through friends and went to the retreat. The retreat changed my opinion. It was amazing spiritually. I bonded with my group; it (the experience) strengthened my faith. Socially, (Cornerstone) is good to help keep us in the faith.”
The Ontario AMiCUS chapter is alive at McMaster and many campuses across our area.

As I walked away from the meeting, I wished I were in the area. Sandra invited me to attend the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Emily are attending the conference.

Sandra recounted how a friend, Nana Bonsu, invited her to attend the meeting. Sandra invited Emily because she liked it so much. And now both Sandra and Emily are attending the conference.

As I walked away from the meeting, I wished I were attending university again.

I really enjoyed the couple of hours of fellowship with the students. They have an infectious love for the Lord and desire to share the Gospel with others. Adventist Campus Ministries is alive at McMaster and many campuses across our conference.

As a courtesy and to maximize your benefit during this event, we ask that you make other plans for the care of your children.

Campuses with AMiCUS chapters in Ontario include:

McMaster University - contact Pastor Richard Roschman: rroschman@adventistontario.org.

Queen's University - Christelle Agboka: cagboka@hotmail.com

University of Ottawa - Pastor Harold Johnson: hjohnson@adventistontario.org

University of Waterloo - Pastor Jiwan Moon jmoon@adventistontario.org

University of Western Ontario - Tamika Brown tbrown48@uwo.ca

University of Windsor - Debbie Willock wiklineluna@hotmail.com

For information regarding other campus ministries groups (anywhere in North America), or if you or someone you know desires to get involved with campus ministries or needs support while at school, please contact the Ontario Conference AMiCUS director, Cyril Millett, at youthmin@adventistontario.org.

Register Early for Maranatha!

$100 per person until March 4, 2008
($120 per person: March 5 until March 18, 2008)
Includes catered lunch and supper, snacks/drinks and more!

Register online at www.PlusLine.org or call 1-800-732-7587
Due to limited space, NO Sabbath walk-ins; only registered attendees will be admitted.

As a courtesy and to maximize your benefit during this event, we ask that you make other plans for the care of your children.

Lauren’s Column

It’s Hurting My Ears!

I have a confession to make; I’m not that into popular gospel music. And so, for the longest time, I was convinced that I had to be one of the most old-fashioned and boring girls my age. You know, the type that makes you say ‘being old isn’t an age…it’s a state of mind’. I must have been making my parents happy though. I didn’t drag them out to the liveliest churches, and I certainly wasn’t running off to the latest gospel concert. Putting on a Kirk Franklin video after Sabbath dinner, generally meant that I’d soon be enjoying a Sabbath afternoon nap. Since this came from a girl who always had some music on in the background, the inevitable ‘well, aren’t you weird’ stares came with a wonderful side helping of guilt.

“You don’t listen to gospel?”

“Well, not as much as everyone else, no…”

“But what do you listen to then? You don’t listen to…secular music, do you?”

“Well…”

I am, of course, exaggerating but only slightly. And my parents’ deep love for country-style gospel (which I’d run from at the slightest faint strain of opening chords) led me to realize that I wasn’t quite as old-fashioned as I thought I was. So, I decided, to try something different. In doing so, I think I may have discovered the gap to bridge the generations in church who fall so far on opposite sides of the spectrum when it comes to music, drums, and all around ‘lively worship’.

Ear plugs.

Now before I am deluged with comments along the lines of not all gospel music is loud! Let me clarify; it often is. More relevantly, a lot of church services today are so loud that I find myself volunteering out of the goodness of my heart to sit with the mothers in the back pews, far away from the loud speakers (of course, there are some churches at the other end of the spectrum that are so quiet that worshippers could be mistaken for fossils). In fact, the noise level outside the sanctuary is generally just about perfect, which is a shame, because the whole point of me going to church is so that I can worship in God’s presence with my fellow believers. Otherwise, I’d stay at home, pop a DVD into the player and watch a sermon wrapped up on the couch. I don’t need the pastor to scream his message at me. I can learn and grow from it without being yelled at. Music and many other aspects of a church service just happen to fall under the same category.

I knew I wasn’t crazy when, from the relative safety of the back pew, a small hand tugged on my dress. “What’s wrong?” I asked, looking in concern at the pain etched onto the face of the three and half year-old girl beside me.

“My ears!” she said. “It’s hurting my ears!” Need I say more?

Love … Lauren
Adventurers: Building Character

There is something wonderful happening among our children across the province. They are reaching out to their communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Among these are small churches in Northern and South Western Ontario who, despite having few children, now have thriving Adventurer Ministry with a majority of children from the community. Dedicated adults take time to serve and minister to the children of the church and the community through this ministry.

In the large urban areas of Ottawa and Toronto, the Adventurer Ministry continues to grow. More children now have an opportunity to belong to an organised peer group where they can develop spiritually, physically, mentally and socially.

The Adventurers programme was created to assist parents in their role as their children’s first teachers and evangelizers. As people of God, we are privileged to “train our children” in the way of the Lord. Deuteronomy 6:4–9 speaks to this process. Eugene H. Petersen paraphrases it this way:

“Attention Israel…write these commandments that I’ve given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children.

Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night…”

No one can replace a parent in the life of a child. As parents we can pass on only what we have. In order to effectively pass on God’s commands to our children, they must first be a part of our life. Our children need to see our faith in God through our responses to day-to-day happenings—a dented fender, a financial challenge, a job promotion, a serious illness.

Some studies confirm the dire importance of parents in the mentoring and discipling of our children. Among Christian youth, some 80% leave the church after graduation. Among Seventh-day Adventists, some 50% of our youth leave our churches upon graduation. However, in families where parents actively mentor their children, the statistic is the opposite; the retention rate is at 80%.

God’s plan for leaving a legacy that will pass from generation to generation is for parents to be the primary mentors of their children. The prophet Joel captures a picture of God’s dream for His children in Joel 2:28:

“I will pour out my Spirit on all people…your young men will see visions.”

Our children are the centre of that dream. God speaks about our children experiencing the outpouring of His Spirit. God longs for this inter-generational movement, including our children, to have a special niche in spreading the Gospel to the world.

Our children are to be in the “heart and soul” of mission, actively sharing the great news about Jesus. Shaping hearts is all about presenting Jesus to the world.

I am so grateful to the faithful Adventurer leaders and parents who dedicate so much time shaping the hearts of our children for God.

“Are you man enough to be an Adventurer leader? If you are a male, see your local Adventurer leader today and volunteer for the sake of the children.”

C. Leader

Charles N. Leader
Ontario Conference
Adventurer Specialist

Ontario Highlights | Winter 2007 | 10
Ontario is burning with evangelistic fervour! Since September 2007, close to 58 Seventh-day Adventist Churches, both small and large, have been busy seeking souls for the kingdom of God. Church members have been telling Ontario that Jesus is coming soon. They have incorporated the use of satellite meetings, health seminars, live public preaching, and even the internet, to reach the people of Ontario with the Gospel.

In the Greater Toronto Area, people were spoilt for choice as to which meetings they should attend. Wherever they attended, they heard young preachers preach with power and conviction.

September began with the ‘The Life of Victory Evangelistic Series’ (September 1-22, 2007) at Ruth Church in the rapidly expanding city of Brampton. By its conclusion, 37 souls were baptized. The meetings, conducted by Omar Palmer, associate pastor of Apple Creek Church in Markham, can be best described as life-changing.

Preparation began months earlier when Pastor Reynold Hazelwood led the members of Ruth Church into an intense period of seed sowing. Evangelistic teams were organized and given goals and objectives. Some Sabbaths were set aside for prayer, fasting, and spiritual consecration. There were weeks when the teams went into the community distributing tracts, giving away health books and conducting Bible studies. Two weeks before the opening night, there was a sense of high expectations. Flyers advertising the meetings were distributed, and on the evening of September 1, the church went into full evangelistic mode when nearly 400 people turned up to listen to the opening night presentation, “Escape for Your Life”.

For the next three weeks, Pastor Palmer passionately shared the Gospel of Jesus, showing how everyone could live victoriously. Nightly, he challenged the audience to accept the life of victory through Jesus Christ, and men, women and children responded with glad hearts. Entire families accepted the life of victory in Jesus.

Three weeks later, for four consecutive weekends, starting September 21, 2007, the North Brampton Company, in its first evangelistic effort since its formation a year ago, has reaped a harvest of ten souls. Evangelist Mathew Feeley, assistant pastor of Toronto Kingsview Village Church, presented “God’s Answers for an Anxious World.” The meetings were held at Cheyne Middle School in Brampton.

Communication secretary, Theresa Jordan, reports: “The members of the North Brampton Company gladly took their friends and families to hear Evangelist Feeley. A powerful preacher, Feeley demonstrated his passion for God’s Word and preached sermons that gave hope to everyone and challenged them to experience the goodness of God.”

The series also included mini seminars on Family Life and Health. Stress and Diabetes were among the topics presented. There were also nightly surprises when gifts were distributed to visitors. At one of the meetings, a member brought 19 visitors while another brought ten.

The North Brampton Company was supported by the Brampton Church. Two neighbouring churches in Durham, Agape Temple and Ajax, had a combined effort with their Living Truth Evangelistic Series (Sept 29 - Oct 27). Fred Nichols, pastor of Agape Temple, was the evangelist. He was assisted by Rupert Gray, Ajax pastor, Bible workers, Leonard North and Manley Coleman.
Nineteen persons were baptized. Two of these attend Toronto North Church and were baptized by their pastor, John M. Scott II.

The Living Truth Evangelistic Series was also broadcast live on the internet, making it the first known evangelistic series in the Ontario Conference to be broadcast this way (visit their websites for pictures and video: www.agapetemple22.adventistchurchconnect.org and www.ajaxsda.com).

In the west, Mississauga Church held its largest-ever baptism when Pastors Nerval Myrie and Travis Afflick immersed 26 precious souls on October 13, 2007. Three young ladies were baptized a week earlier, making a total of 29 newly baptized members. The baptism was the culmination of ‘The Blessed Hope Gospel Series’ that was held for three weeks, from September 22, 2007, at Mississauga Adventist Church.

The evangelistic series with Evangelist Charles Blythe, Youth director of the West Indies Union of Seventh-day Adventists, was the first of its kind in the last seven years. Pastor Blythe enthusiastically delivered the nightly messages with a conviction that soon became contagious and inspired a spirit of revival in the congregation.

Nightly, he emphasised the theme, ‘It’s Crunch Time,’ to challenge his hearers to decide to accept the life that Jesus offers.

The baptism on October 13 captured the mood of the series. After the last person was immersed, three others requested immediate baptism. The congregation responded with hearty ‘amens.’ As the three new candidates prepared for immersion, another person asked to be included. The final appeal for a future baptism saw more people moving forward to the front; some were overcome with tears of joy as they experienced freedom from sin through their decision to accept Jesus as their Saviour.

As Mississauga Church was having its final baptism, Philadelphia Church was having the opening night of ‘Experience the Praise’ (Oct. 13-Nov. 3). Church pastor, Fitzroy Maitland, reports:

‘After three wonderful weeks of a powerful presentation of this glorious Gospel by Evangelist Dewaine ‘Razor’ Frazer, the dust is now beginning to settle again at Philadelphia Church.

‘Two weeks before the opening night, the church went out on a flyer distribution blitz, distributing thousands of flyers in the neighbourhood; and a few days later, a half-night prayer vigil was inspiring and encouraging to all who attended. Then came October 13. The man, the day and the church all converged with the theme, ‘Experience the Praise’, and Philadelphia Church has not been the same since.

‘Dewaine Frazer’s messages were always on the cutting-edge (razor) and comparatively short, and his presentations were packed with powerful punches. It was refreshing to see many young people responding to the altar calls, and several of them gave their lives to Jesus—going all the way to baptism.

‘Among the 26 persons who were baptized, four were renewals (re-commitments), and two others joined our fellowship on profession of faith. We ascribe praise and glory to God for what He has done through the ‘Experience the Praise’ evangelistic series.’

As major efforts were held in Sault Ste. Marie, Durham region and elsewhere, people are responding to the Gospel of Jesus. More members are responding to the call to ‘Tell Ontario’ because they see that as they tell, people are listening.
New Name and Church Premises for Sault Ste. Marie Church

On Sabbath, October 13, 2007, the members of Sault Ste. Marie Church rejoiced with a service of thanksgiving. It was an occasion of thankfulness and celebration because their new church building at 407 McNabb Road was officially opened. The move to larger premises was accompanied by a change of name. The church is now known as Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The official opening of the Cornerstone Adventist Church was attended by the officers of the Ontario Conference, civic dignitaries and a number of people from the community. Pastor Derrick Nichols, president of the Ontario Conference, delivered the sermon. He was assisted in the opening ceremony by the other officers, Pastor Antonio Bueno and Bro. Ulysses Guarin; Councillor John Roswell, mayor, and Tony Martin, MP.

For the past 50 years, Sault Ste. Marie Church worshipped at 120 Cunningham Road. “The decision to move was one we had to make,” said local pastor, Carter Stanley. “We had outgrown the facility, and God blessed us with the new one. We firmly believe that this new building will not only meet our needs but will allow us to make a greater contribution to our local community.”

The new building will also house the Sault Ste. Marie Adventist School, now known as Cornerstone Adventist School. The opening ceremony concluded at noon and was followed by luncheon in the church hall.

Combined Baptism for Carlton Place and Perth Churches

The members of Perth and Carlton Place Churches joined together on September 15, 2007 to witness the baptism of five of their young people. The baptism was held at the residence of Troy and Heather Smith on the shores of Bass Lake.

Pastor Andrew Marttinen immersed the candidates, three of whom are his own children, Andrew Jr., Annya and Sarah. They will join Carlton Place Church. Siblings, Kaileen and Andrew McGlade, the two other young persons baptized, will join Perth Church.

Members of the Smith Falls and Brockville Churches were also present to share in the celebrations and to offer their support to the new members.

Perth Church Hosts MicroCHIP Health Seminar

Perth Adventist Church held a MicroCHIP Health Seminar in the Perth Public Library from September 18 to October 4, 2007. It was conducted by Lida Koronewska. Helping out were Glenn and Jean Lewis, Rob and Tania McGlade, and Pastor Andrew Marttinen. The meetings were a follow-up to the health screenings that took place at the Bridge Festival in Carleton Place on the civic holiday weekend and at the Perth Fair on Labour Day weekend. At the close of the microCHIP meetings, a number of participants signed up for the full Coronary Health Improvement Project Seminar to be held in early 2008.

Andrew Marttinen, Pastor
**Fitz Henry Returns to Philadelphia for 15th Anniversary Celebrations**

Hundreds of believers joined in celebrating the 15th anniversary of the formation of Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church from Friday, November 9, to Sunday, November 11, 2007.

It was as if the clock had been turned back 15 years as local pastor, Dr. Fitzroy Maitland, introduced Jamaican evangelist, Fitz Henry, to the waiting congregation. Fifteen years ago, Dr. Maitland was the coordinator of the evangelistic meetings that were held at Minkler Auditorium, Scarborough, from which Philadelphia Church was born. Fitz Henry was the evangelist and Al Stewart, from New York, was the singing evangelist. They took us through a weekend of reflection, purpose, praise and hope; they elevated the standard of advancing in prayer, and encouraged us to hold fast to the awesome promises of our Lord.

The celebrations began on Friday evening with a dynamic thanksgiving service at Philadelphia’s regular worship premises. Before the service commenced, there was a sense of eager anticipation as members waited to hear the dynamic Evangelist Fitz Henry.

**Elliot Lake Baptism**

On Sabbath, September 8, 2007, members of Elliot Lake Branch Sabbath School witnessed the baptism of Christina Loshaw by Pastor Doug Pollington. The baptism was held in the waters of Elliot Lake. Afterwards, the church family gathered for a meal to celebrate at the church. The Elliot Lake group rejoices in the addition of Christina to their congregation.

**Catharine Pollington**

**Sarnia Baptism**

The members of Sarnia Adventist Church rejoiced with Wilson, his wife Lucia Guerette, and Lucie Baillancourt who became members of their church family on August 25, 2007. Lucia and Lucie were baptized. Wilson joined by profession of faith.

A fellowship meal was gladly shared by all who stayed to celebrate this most joyous occasion. Praise be to God.

**Henny Penhale**

**Religious Liberty Offering**

**Standing Our Ground for Religious Freedom**

**Henny Penhale**
Louisa Hunte Celebrates 100 Years

It was all smiles as Shiloh Adventist Church’s Louisa Hunte graciously received certificates of congratulations from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and Governor General, Michaeille Jean, on reaching her centenary birthday. The certificates were presented by Dan McTeague, MP, Scarborough-Pickering, who warmly expressed congratulations.

Louisa Gertrude Hunte (nee Gittens), born in the parish of St. Philip, in Barbados, on September 21, 1907, is not at all frail. She is lively and optimistic and credits her longevity to always staying close to the Lord, healthy living and lots of laughter. “I feel good, blessed by God to have lived this long,” she says.

Louisa has lived through two world wars, the Great Depression, major hurricanes, earthquakes, mobile phones and emails. When she was born, gasoline was 18 cents per gallon (less than 5 cents per litre).

Fifty-four years ago, Louisa was baptized and became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She clearly remembers every moment of that day and can even recount a time when her mother bitterly opposed her choice and attempted to disturb the prayer meetings that were held at her home. She did not allow anyone to dissuade her, and her strong faith in the Lord has brought her through many troubling times. She daily offers thanks to God for His marvelous blessings to her.

Louisa has served the Adventist Church in various capacities including church clerk and choir member. She was member of the former Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Scarborough and remains a committed member of Shiloh Adventist Church.

She is the mother of four children (two of whom are deceased), a proud grandmother of 32, and an even prouder great great grandmother. She is also a ‘mother’ to many in her local congregation and to all the children she has fed, clothed and kept happy in Barbados.

Louisa often says that she is “truly blessed” because God promised that “the days of our years are threescore years and ten” but she has been given five-score. She comes from a line of long livers: Her mother lived to the age of 93; and she has a sister in Barbados who is 97.

This quick-witted centenarian who still has an amazing intellect, good health and sharp mind is a blessing to all who know her.

Kitchener Waterloo’s Summer of Mission and Baptisms

What an exciting summer we had! The youth of the Kitchener-Waterloo Church participated in a week-long mission trip to the Six Nations Indian Reserve, held a Vacation Bible School, and to top it all off, two of the youth, namely Lilyana Koleva and Chintami Hendralind, decided to get baptized. At the time, they did not realise the witnessing value of their baptism.

During the summer, a group of young people from Canada Youth Challenge (CYC) arrived in Kitchener-Waterloo to sell Adventist literature door-to-door. On a trip to Ottawa, they met Isaac Barbirisa, 17, who decided to join them in their work. He returned to Kitchener with them and started working. When he realized that there was going to be a baptism at the Kitchener-Waterloo Church, he approached Pastor Jiwan Moon and requested baptism. Pastor Moon approached the church board for approval and received a unanimous vote. Isaac was baptized on August 4, 2007. Even though his parents were not present, the CYC group gladly supported him.

Andrea Kaddour, Communications
VOP Tackles the Childhood Obesity Epidemic

The Voice of Prophecy Series on “Keeping Our Kids Healthy” to Air Week of January 7-11

Today’s children are setting a new record, but it’s not one we should be proud of. Young people today might actually live shorter life spans than their parents!

Childhood obesity is reaching epidemic proportions and making headlines across North America. Experts are calling it the gravest public health threat of our time, impacting the lives of millions of children. Fueling the crisis are sugary snacks, fast food, and the sedentary lifestyle accompanying a generation brought up on computer games and videos.

Voice of Prophecy tackles the tough issues of “Keeping Our Kids Healthy” in the 21st century by exploring the Bible’s timeless answers for eating right and staying active. Throughout the week, beginning January 7, Pastor Lonnie Melashenko shares insights straight from the Scriptures to help parents and other family members keep the waist lines of their loved ones under control. Pastor Lonnie also speaks of biblical solutions for helping children maneuver through this fast-paced world and dealing with the stress of being young, which often leads to poor eating habits.

To find a local radio station airing the Voice of Prophecy daily broadcasts, visit www.vop.com or phone 1-800-SDA-PLUS.

Providing input to this Voice of Prophecy series was Joseph G. Herman, a medical journalist who has researched and written on many health-related topics, and who recently became a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.