Lessons from the US Presidential Election

Incorporating School Talk
“Change We Can Believe In”

I admit it. On November 5, 2008, the day after the historic US presidential elections, I found my eyes misting over as tears began to fill them. I had been reading the various news reports of Barack Obama’s victory and the jubilant response of millions of Americans and people around the world. People were so happy that they cried. Their joy touched me so deeply that my misty eyes threatened to embarrass me.

For nearly two years Obama had been speaking about change and struck a chord with millions of people. He even wrote a book, Change We Can Believe In, that clearly spoke of his dream for a better world than the present. People, tired of the present order with its inequalities, injustices, corruption and hopelessness, saw in his victory a hope they could grasp with both hands. Barack Obama quickly became the embodiment of all their hopes, dreams and aspirations for tomorrow.

As I observed the joy, passion and enthusiasm of Adventist friends and others to Obama’s victory, I couldn’t help but consider the fact that he is just a mere man. Yes, someone who has given them great hope, but still a man all the same. He can inspire hope, but he cannot guarantee its fulfilment. He can preach about change, but does not have the power to change himself. He is just a man, like the rest of us—in need of a Saviour.

Also, I was fascinated by the animation of my Adventist friends. They were happy to talk about Obama and the election and eagerly shared stories about him and photographs of him. They promptly passed on almost every Obama-related email they received. However, their enthusiasm seemed out of character with many Adventists. Adventists sometimes seem to display a sullen spirit, not given to much excitement except for discussion about the law of God or the Mark of the Beast. It was different with Obama. He had, somehow, managed to arouse passion in many of us, and it prompted an important question: What about Jesus, “the hope of the world”?

Are we as excited about Jesus, the true hope, as we are about a mere man, as good as he appears to be? Do we have a burning passion for God’s kingdom as we displayed towards an election? Did we spend more time daily watching CNN and its coverage of the election campaign than we spent in prayer and reading God’s Word? Do we eagerly share the good news of salvation and God’s victory over sin as we did about Obama’s victory over McCain?

These questions trouble me because I find the finger of condemnation pointed directly at me. If you pause for a moment and reflect, you may find that same finger also pointing at you. Maybe we have become so comfortable in the routine of living the Christian life that it has become just that—a routine instead of a vibrant, daily experience with God. It could be that we have become so familiar with spiritual things that we are comfortable, simply living as religious people but lacking the power of the Holy Spirit.

For the child of God, born of His Spirit, nothing is more exciting than the dream, the longing to see our Saviour face to face. To imagine that day when we shall look up and finally see our Redeemer, as He comes through the clouds, should fill our hearts with such hope and longing that we will not allow anything on this earth to hold us back.

President-elect Obama can only do so much. With Jesus there’s no limit. The hope He offers is guaranteed to be fulfilled. Jesus is the Saviour, our Lord, and soon-coming King. Without Him there isn’t anything.

Jesus makes the difference. With Him in my life, I really don’t have to worry about anything. It doesn’t matter how difficult my circumstances are; when Jesus is with me, I can rise from the deepest problems and soar to great heights. He brings about a change that enables me to overcome the most severe trial. He has also promised me that upon His return, He will change my body from mortal to immortal and exchange my world of sin for a new earth, “wherein dwelleth righteousness”.

This is change we can believe in.

Halsey Peat
The President’s Message

We give Him our heartfelt thanks and our sincere appreciation for the faithfulness of our members. We can be confident in the limitless ability of God to provide for His people. He is always faithful. We are assured that when we trust Him, our future is secure.

So many people place their confidence in the financial markets and the banking system, but as Christians we must remember that we should not place our hopes in man-made institutions. Even if the economy regains stability, it will only be for a time. Whether it is months or years, we do not know. What we do know is that the world is rapidly coming to an end, and we should be looking for the kingdom of God to be established.

It is actually God’s will that His kingdom be established. Jesus even prayed it to be so in The Lord’s Prayer. As far back as in the Old Testament, during Abraham’s time, the Scriptures speak of him looking for a city (kingdom), that is built by God—one that is based on the principles of God’s government. Thank God that we can be confident that one day He will make the earth new. Ellen White states that heaven will beat with one harmonious pulse throughout eternity (G.C. 278).

When Albert E. Brumley wrote the song, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through,” he was reminding us that God’s kingdom provides a different condition and a far better environment in which to live. It’s a song that every Christian should remember, especially in times of difficulty when we are tempted to feel that the future does not hold much hope for us.

Even as we contemplate the hope of God’s kingdom, there is one important factor we must not overlook. When Jesus preached of it, the first thing he declared was, “Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17). The meaning is simple: Repentance is the condition of the kingdom. All who escape the world and its turmoil and enter into God’s kingdom are those who have repented of their sins and turned to God for His righteousness. Repentance and God’s kingdom go together.

I hardly need to remind you that we live in sobering times. As we see the signs rapidly fulfilling, we are urged to “look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

Looking up is both a time of sobriety and rejoicing. Sobriety leads to self-evaluation and repentance. It is also a call to action—to populate God’s kingdom as we passionately preach the Gospel and witness of God’s salvation to our families and neighbours. We also rejoice as we look up because it is only as we do so can we expect to see our Savour coming through the clouds for His people, His church.

Let us not fret or worry about the future because God, who knows the future, has already secured it for His children.

Let us hold firm and steadfast, remaining faithful and true. Pray for one another. Pray for our church. Jesus is coming soon.

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Lessons from the 2008 US Presidential Election


The days following the election the media was preoccupied with the amazing achievement of Barack Obama. Pundits and analysts alike lifted every political stone in order to determine where he or she thought that this would happen. Colin Powell, in his endorsement of Barack Obama, described him as an African-American who just happens to be African-American. Each church member and leader must first be a Christian who is identified by the Adventist message and lifestyle. Ethnicity, gender and nationality are secondary. Such matters as ethnicity and nationality can be divisive and hinder the work of the church. For example, if language is not an issue and a pastor is the best fit for a congregation, ethnicity should not determine where he or she pastors.


2. The Value of Having a Vision

One of the main differences between a leader and a follower is, the leader has a vision. A vision is like a map giving direction, purpose and passion to a person’s life. “Where there is no vision, people perish” says the Lord (Prov. 29:18).

Barack Obama had a vision of change that was very different from other political leaders, and he was not afraid to share his vision. As he repeated his vision, others began to echo it. Even the opposing party began speaking of change.

Adventists are called to be visionaries. Whether as individuals, local churches or conference leaders, we must be people of vision. A child of God must have a vision, but it must be one that is diametrically opposed to that of the world and there should not be any hesitancy to share it.

God has clearly given this church a vision by which to live. We already know the outcome for this world. We are keenly aware of the great prophecies regarding end-times. This vision is what gives us hope. It motivates us and gives us courage when faced with seemingly impossible circumstances. When we live and preach our vision, it becomes contagious.

3. The Necessity of Being Transformational

Barack Obama is widely acclaimed as bringing about transformation in United States politics. God’s people must be transformational, agents of change. Jesus did not call us ‘light’ and ‘salt’ because it sounded good. Light is highly visible and the virtue of salt is its total involvement and transforming power.

We are expected to bring about change in the lives and circumstances of people. God’s people can never be satisfied with a situation where there is poverty, injustice or inequality.

Our voice must be heard. We must use our influence, talents and energy to bring about change that will benefit those who need it most.

We cannot live exclusively to ourselves, associating only with fellow Adventists, while ignoring the ills of society and the pain of our neighbours. We must be intentional in seeking the good of others. Our desire is to see people transformed by God’s grace and their circumstances improved with our help.

4. Relevance Gives Success

Obama picked up on what people want. He was meeting a perceived need. He did not give them what he felt was good for them. He felt the pulse of the people and responded to their felt needs.

If our church is going to be effective in its evangelism,
it must feel the pulse of the community and respond according to it. Success is the reward for relevance. Irrelevance is the funeral dirge of any church or organisation. Unless the church interacts with the community according to its perceived needs, the community will ignore the church and give its support to those who will address its needs.

5. The Importance of Being a Stakeholder

Since the church operates democratically, you have the right to have your concerns heard at a business meeting once it has been placed on the agenda. Even as a non-board member, you are also entitled to attend and raise an issue at a board meeting after speaking with the pastor and requesting time to do so.

Attend business meetings and encourage others to do so. You may find that in numbers you can bring about meaningful change in your church.

6. You Are Not Alone in Wanting Change

Barack Obama was not the only one desiring change. As he called for change, it resounded around the globe and harmonised with millions.

You are not the only one desiring change in the church. There are many who long to see our church become more responsive to the needs of its entire membership and embrace people of different backgrounds without having them first change to fit a stereotype. A growing number of members are calling for change in worship. People are looking for worship that is inspirational. Others seek change where younger people are brought into the main stream of church organisation and leadership.

Yours is not the solitary voice calling for change. Others are also calling to our leaders to take the initiative to bring about and carefully manage change before unmanageable changes erupt.

7. Leadership Must Be Inspiring

Barack Obama inspired people to believe in his vision. Even before his election, the media sometimes spoke of him as ‘presidential’. At all levels of church life, we need leaders who will inspire the local, provincial, national and international church to boldly fulfill the mission God has given us. Whether a church departmental leader, an elder or pastor, a truly inspirational leader is one who is full of the Holy Spirit and inspires hope in God’s people.

The world is now in crisis. It is a crisis that will not ultimately get better, even though for short periods of time it will appear to improve. The Bible is clear that God’s people will face severe trials of faith. The times demand inspirational leadership.

8. People Will Finance What They Believe In

The amount of money raised by Barack Obama’s campaign was phenomenal. What made it even more astonishing was that millions of ordinary people regularly gave relatively small amounts. They believed in his vision and were moved to volunteer time, energy and give it financial support. People will always finance what they believe in.

Do we believe in the Gospel? Do we really believe that Jesus came and died our death in order that we may inherit eternal life? Do we believe that God has raised up this church to preach the everlasting Gospel? If our answer is yes to any or all of these questions, we will finance the support of the Gospel. There will not be any hesitancy. Jesus said it best, where our hearts are, that’s where we will place our treasure (Matt. 6:21).

9. There Is Reward at the End of the Journey

The election on November 4 was the culmination of many, many months of hard work. During the final months, fatigue gnawed at Obama, but winning the presidential mantle quickly banished the struggles and weariness of the journey.

Waiting for Jesus to come, seeking souls for His kingdom and trying to make the church truly relevant to people can sometimes appear so difficult and frustrating. Yet, God has promised, “He who stands firm to the end, will be saved” (Matt. 24:13) He also promises, “My reward is with me” (Rev. 22:12) “Eye has not seen; ear has not heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, the things God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

The 2008 US presidential election is now being relegated to the history books, but the lessons gleaned from it can be of immense benefit to the thoughtful person. While there are many more lessons than the nine listed above, these nine can serve to help the church become relevant to its community and more meaningful to its members.

Halsey Peat is Communication director of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and editor for Ontario Highlights
The Adventist Designated Driver
Driving Drunk or Driving Drowsy?

The good news: Most drivers do not drive after drinking. The bad news: Most drivers have driven under the influence of fatigue, often due to inadequate sleep. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) reports that drowsy driving can be just as dangerous as drinking and driving. Researchers suspect that crashes due to drowsiness are under reported as many drivers are reluctant to report falling asleep behind the wheel. Driving drowsy reduces response time, causing serious accidents when drivers often do not make any corrective adjustments to avoid the crash.

The Results Are In
An intriguing study, published this year in the Journal of Safety Research, assessed the attitude and behaviours of 750 Ontario drivers. Results indicate a majority of drivers (58.6%) admitted that they occasionally drive while fatigued or drowsy. Reports show 14.5% either fell asleep or “nodded off” while driving and almost 2% were involved in a fatigue or drowsy driving related crash during the past year.

The Adventist designated driver: an oxymoron? When greeted with the Arrive Alive: Drive Sober campaign, a non-drinker glances at the poster or image on the screen that announces “Choose Your Ride” and sighs in relief. No tinge of concern tickles the consciousness as the options appear: a tow-truck, a police car, a taxi, an ambulance or even a hearse.

Not Me
You are at risk if you are tired and driving. High risk persons include young people who drive at night, shift workers, and people with undiagnosed or untreated sleep disorders. Most sleep-related incidents occur between midnight and 6 a.m.

Sleepy Solutions
Sleep experts agree that following tips assist in reclaiming essential sleep time.

• Leave the caffeine.
• Pull the plug on “sleep stealers” – avoid watching TV, using a computer or reading in bed.
• Create a sleep-conducive environment. Use your bedroom for sleep.
• Establish consistent sleep and wake schedules, even on weekends.
• Finish eating 2-3 hours before bedtime.

Driving tips:
• When planning a long trip – identify safe places to stop and nap.
• If you are experiencing drowsy driving warning signs, find a safe place to stop (not the shoulder of the highway) and sleep for 15 to 20 minutes. If you have several hours of driving ahead of you and you are already feeling tired, it is best to find a bed for the night.

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Short sleep duration is linked to:
• Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
• Increase in body mass index – higher risk of obesity
• Increased risk of diabetes and heart problems
• Increased risk for psychiatric conditions, including depression and substance abuse
• Decreased ability to pay attention, react to signals or remember new information

Source: National Sleep Foundation

R.E.S.T.
Also known as Reclaiming Essential Sleep Time. This concept, introduced in the book Super Sized Kids, challenges adults and children to take back needed hours for sleep. The effects of sleep reduction can endanger your health in numerous ways.

The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) reports due to inadequate sleep. Most sleep-related incidents occur between midnight and 6 a.m.

Drowsy Vs. Drunk

Wake up
Mothers took a stand against drunk drivers. What about drowsy drivers? Take advice from the National Sleep Foundation. Drive alert... arrive alive.

Sources
• Arrive Alive http://www.arrivealive.org/index.html
• Super Sized Kids, Larimore W, Flynt S.
• National Sleep Foundation http://www.sleepfoundation.org/index.html

Debra Carby
Health Ministries Director

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FEATURE

STORM Co. Does It Again!

During the week of August 3 to 9, an energetic group of 18 Adventist teens descended on the Taykwa Tagamou Nation Reserve, near Cochrane, Ontario. Their purpose? To provide any service the people needed. Their name? STORM Co.

STORM Co. is an acronym for Service To Others Really Matter Company. Its mission is to send teams of young people to work for, learn from and encourage individual communities, sharing God’s love by building bridges to all peoples through an adventure of service to others. “Teams enter a community, ask for a place to stay and a job to do. Team members volunteer their own time and finances; they commit to strict discipline and hard work. Their goal is to live out the legacy of service modeled by Jesus Christ. STORM Co. is sponsored by the local and provincial Seventh-day Adventist Church.

This year, STORM Co. (14 members came from southern Ontario and four from Cochrane), led by Pastors Daniel Saugh and Cyril Millett, returned to the Taykwa Tagamou Nation Reserve for a second successive year. The Reserve graciously allowed the youth and their chaperones to ‘camp out’ in their gym. Throughout the week they cut firewood which they transported and stacked at the various homes. They thoroughly cleaned the health centre and made a great start on the band office side. They also assisted in clearing some of the brush from around the community.

Their time was not only spent in hard physical labour, they also made time for fun. The second evening found a number of the community children peeking around the doorposts wondering what was happening. With a little encouragement, they participated in the work and later enjoyed playing various games.

At one home, the STORM Co. team was stacking firewood using the ‘chain gang’ technique of passing the wood from hand to hand until it reached the place of stacking. Two children joined in and chatted with the team as they worked. It was a joy to see so many people working together and looking as though they actually were having fun.

Beverly Frances, the cook, commented that she enjoyed her time working with STORM Co. and now looks at these young people as her extended grandchildren.

Ontario Conference youth director, Pastor Cyril Millet, said, “It was a wonderful experience being in this beautiful northern community. If we can be of service in the future, I hope we can come with another group of STORM Co. youth to assist where we can.”

If you are interested in being part of STORM Co. for 2009, contact Pastor Millett by email: cmillett@adventistontario.org

Alison Down
Cochrane Bible Worker

Musicians Needed for 2010 GC Session

The North American Division is seeking talented musicians to perform at the 2010 GC Session in Atlanta, Georgia. To apply, visit www.gcsession.org/music. Applications must be received by January 31, 2009.

Keynote Speaker
Ron Halvorsen

MARANATHA 2008
March 13-15
Living God’s Vision

Book early; limited capacity; do not be disappointed
Register online at www.Plusline.org or call 1-800-732-7587
“Beyond Soup Kitchens” Community Services Convention 2008

On Sabbath, November 1, over 115 Community Services leaders from across Ontario sat in amazement as they heard Pastor Sung Kwon, Community Services director for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, speak of a ministry that goes beyond soup kitchens.

“Beyond Soup Kitchens” was the name given to Ontario Conference’s 2008 Community Services Convention, held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Toronto Airport. “We gave it this title,” explained Pastor Wayne Martin, Community Services director, “because we want our churches to understand that the time has come for us to go far beyond what we have traditionally done for community services work.”

With this purpose in mind, Pastor Martin invited Pastor Sung Kwon, Sandy Brittain of ADRA, and Adam Spence of the Ontario Association of Food Banks, to help cast a new vision for Ontario. It is a vision where “local church community services departments help to provide people with tools and resources for helping themselves, rather than simply giving them used clothes and handing them a meal,” says Martin. “It’s giving them a fishing rod and teaching them to fish instead of continually giving them fish.”

Emphasis was made on changing focus from inward to outward and on building rapport with the community through wholistic ministry.

Conference Health Ministries director, Debra Carby, spoke on the value of integrating Health Ministries outreach with that of Community Services. Conference Ministerial director, Dr. Errol Lawrence, spoke of the value of pastors leading their congregations to work with local communities according to their needs. Mississauga pastor, Dr. Nerval Myrie, speaking from a pastor’s perspective, concluded that churches should be open every day of the week in order to provide services to people from the community.

The convention was not all about education and motivation. The vision was cast against a background of worship and praise. This inspired many participants to want to return to their churches and share the vision they had caught.

However, some were uncertain as to how successful they would be in helping their church catch the vision. “I really loved what I learned here today,” says one participant. “The presentations were really excellent, and Pastor Kwon was amazing. He really opened my eyes as to what we can really achieve, but I wish that my pastor was here. He needed to hear all of this for himself so that I could count on his support at our board meeting.”

While her words were typical of a number of comments made by participants, the prevailing mood was one of optimism for the future of the community services in Ontario.

Pastor Martin was left feeling grateful to God for the new direction that community services has embarked on and was full of praise for the local leaders.

“I really appreciate the excitement demonstrated by our participants, as they were enlightened and saw the different avenues through which they can work to empower people,” concluded Martin. “I sense that we are ready to move on to another level in our work.”

ASAM Walk-n-Roll with Variety Village - The Children’s Charity

On Sunday, September 21, Variety Village - the Children’s Charity, in conjunction with the Adventist Singles Adult Ministry of the Ontario Conference under the leadership of Andrew Skytte, ASAM Outreach co-ordinator, hosted its second annual 5K “Walk-n-Roll” fundraiser. The annual family-friendly event was hosted by CTV’s Weather Anchor, Tom Brown, who definitely brought “sunshine” to the event. CTV was the exclusive television sponsor of Walk-n-Roll 2008.

Variety’s goal was to raise funds to support its integrated fitness programs that nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of children and youth living with disabilities. Volunteers from various churches supported Walk-n-Roll participants who walked or wheeled along the designated route through the local neighbourhood. “The energy at this event is nothing short of inspirational, and I look forward to enjoying Walk-n-Roll again this year,” said Tom Brown, CTV weather anchor and event host. “It’s great to see the local community and ASAM involved to help raise funds for essential programs that truly benefit thousands of children with disabilities.”

The Walk-n-Roll route began at Variety Village, located at 3701 Danforth Ave. in Scarborough. Walkers were joined by baby strollers, wheelchairs and power wheelchairs. Live entertainment, including guests from Bolivia and Praising Hands from Agape Temple Adventist Church, kept things “rocking and rolling”. Event participants enjoyed a BBQ lunch and a few lucky ones won fantastic draw prizes.

The Adventist Singles Adult Ministry of the Ontario Conference looks forward to being a part of the Walk-n-Roll efforts again next year!

Andrew Skytte
Ontario Conference Teachers Retreat to Learn

Ontario’s 71 Adventist teachers are actively involved in ongoing learning through professional development. The Ontario Conference Office of Education (OCOE) recently held its annual two-day Teachers’ Retreat, on October 20 – 21, at the Ajax Convention Centre.

Laura Mossey, K-6 literacy and numeracy facilitator. Keith Leavitt, associate professor of education at Canadian University College, spoke about differentiating instruction to the grade 9-12 teachers.

Throughout the school year and during the summer OCOE teachers are encouraged to attend professional seminars relevant to their needs and/or interests. Two “floating” professional days are available throughout the school year for teachers to take specific seminars pertinent to their discipline.
Ontario Teachers Recognized for Excellence

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) recognizes excellence among its teaching staff by providing an award each year to six elementary and two secondary teachers from across Canada. Some of the criteria for the award include spiritual credibility, concern for students, exceptional competence in teaching and classroom management, commitment to quality education, superior observable and measurable student outcomes, and involvement in the community. This year four Ontario teachers were recipients of this prestigious award for excellence.

Aurora Adap, Grade 8 teacher, CAA
Michelle DeSilva, JK/SK teacher, College Park
Aurora Adap, Grade 8 teacher, CAA
Audrey James, special education teacher, CAA

Wedding

Aaron Mora (health, phys. ed. and art teacher at CAA) and Sarah Vizely (Grade 3/4, CAA) were married on July 20, 2008.

Christmas Programs

Crawford Adventist Academy (High School)
- December 2, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
Grandview Adventist Academy
- December 6, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
Windsor Adventist Elementary School
- December 10, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
College Park Elementary School (Elementary)
- December 11, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
St. Thomas Seventh-day Adventist School
- December 12, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
London Advent Christian Academy
- December 13, 2008, at 5:30 p.m.
Crawford Adventist Academy
- December 16, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
Crawford Adventist Academy East
- December 17, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
Peel Adventist School
- December 18, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
Ottawa Adventist School
- December 20, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
When we experience miracles from God’s hand, we need to share the stories. Miracles happen every day in Adventist education, but most remain untold because they don’t seem dramatic enough. However, the recent Peel Adventist School fire has caused us to reflect on a succession of miracles which needs to be shared. At the October 30, 2008, Consecration Service held at the new, temporary site, some of these stories were shared with the many parents, area pastors, students, and guests from the host site. “Miracles just keep happening,” says Manuela Terencio, principal of the school, “and we are thankful to God for the many ways that He has blessed us recently.”

The miracles began happening on July 4, 2008, the day of the Peel Adventist School fire. The million dollar school, located at 57 McMurchy Avenue South, Brampton, was completely destroyed. That evening, as TADSB Supervising Principal Norman Brown stood soberly watching the remains of the smouldering building, he was approached by a man whom he had never seen before. The man offered a business card and said, “Take this. I may be able to help you.” The card indicated that he was the youth pastor of another Christian congregation.

The next week Brown began looking for possible sites for the school. He contacted the city and real estate agencies for help. Brampton, a community known for its exceptionally rapid growth, appeared to have nothing available.

So, Brown called the name on the card. Terencio, Brown, and Frances Schander, superintendent of education, were invited to tour a new facility six km. north of the McMurchy site. There they toured a brand new gymnasium/Sunday-school room facility just being completed by the Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, 55 Mayfield Road, Caledon. The congregation was willing to rent its attractive facility for the 2008-09 school year. (That is a story in itself because several years earlier this same congregation’s church had been destroyed by fire and an Adventist congregation – to which Principal Terencio belongs – offered them the use of their facility for worship on Sundays.)

Since all the books and supplies had been destroyed, everything needed to be reordered. Judy Burgin-Hall, CAA elementary principal, was instrumental in seeing that most of the needed supplies were on-site by September 2, the day school began.

But other miracles were still happening also. The list of prospective students with contact numbers was on the hard drive in the burned-out principal’s office. Although the hard drive casing was melted, the contacts were able to be retrieved from the hard drive. Also, a money box was located in a burned-out file cabinet in the outer office, with all money intact. Everything else around it had been destroyed. The Ontario Student Records (OSRs), official school documents for each enrolled student, were found to be somewhat the worse for wear due to smoke damage, but were readable and able to be retrieved. That was the extent of the salvageable items from the fire, but every one of them important. Everything else was replaceable.

A succession of miracles. We feel blessed beyond measure. Best of all, the enrolment at Peel is up to 73, from last year’s 64. We thank God for this congregation’s willingness to rent their sparkling new facility to our school. We praise God for His goodness and humbly ask for His continued guidance as we seek a permanent home. Please continue to pray for this school – its principal, staff, students, and parents – as it continues to educate for eternity.

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history” (White, Life Sketches, p. 196).

Frances Schander
Superintendent
Crawford Students Reach Out

Matthew 25:40 says: “I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!”

This year’s spiritual theme for the TADSB is “How may I serve you?” We have been encouraging our students especially this year to find a way to serve someone in need of help. So, on September 30, 2008, we shut down the high school division completely. We transformed our cafeteria into a brown bag production line, and when we were finished we had over 300 bags of lunch with a Bible text stapled on each, 160 students and over 20 staff and support workers who were all willing to help feed Toronto’s homeless.

That Tuesday morning it was a dark and dreary rainy day. However, our students handled it as if the weather conditions were optimal.

We split the team into three different groups so that we could go to several locations in the downtown Toronto area throughout the day. We had more than enough food to go around. The day was definitely a success. At our debriefing later that week, the students all agreed that this was a great initiative, and they were eager to know how they could be of more service the next time.

My response to them was, “Don’t wait for the school to do something. Pray and ask the Lord, How may I serve you? Service can happen anywhere and anytime, but it starts with you.” Hats off to Godfrey Beresford and his Touch of Love team for their assistance.

Andre Anderson
CAA Chaplain

Windsor Students on Bible Character Dress-up Day

Left to right – Buom Martin, Justin Lee, Allan Mwizerwa, Hunter Staruck, Mary Martin, Oleyo Gobi, Anders Jeronimo, Alexandra Adeogun

Left to right – (Front row) Alvin Mwizerwa, Mana Martin, Charisma Staruck, Arlin Mwizerwa, (Back row) Whitney Omae, John James, Nyarock Pal, Trenton Rouse, Sidney Omae
Adventists Represented at Multi-faith and Diversity Day

“Don’t really know much about your church!” exclaimed a young cancer-care volunteer. “Can you tell me what you are about?” Many variations of this question were asked by hospital staff and volunteers as we managed a booth for two days, October 21-22, at the William Osler Health Centres.

When asked by Chaplain John Kim to represent the Seventh-day Adventist Church at their first Multi-faith and Diversity Day, we welcomed the opportunity. The church was represented at the Etobicoke and Brampton locations by a chaplain, Pastor Orville Browne, and a health professional, registered dietician, Debra Carby.

The purpose of this event was to provide information so health care professionals, all staff and volunteers can provide better care for patients of various religious and cultural backgrounds. Our purpose was to leave a very positive impression of Adventists.

At our booth, we provided written information and gladly answered questions about the Adventist Church. They left with a better understanding of end of life care, dietary preferences, ADRA and Adventist education. Some were very interested in our free literature, including the new Vibrant Life special issue on heart health. Others came to our booth just because they saw colleagues with the free stress ball or Geo (a trivia game provided by ADRA Canada) and wanted one. For some, this was their first encounter with Adventists.

Our own interest was piqued by some of the other exhibitors’ various agencies, cultural groups and other denominations. Many provided resources and training for new immigrants.

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One Hundred Sixty-Nine Baptised at Life of Victory

On Sabbath, September 27, eighty persons began a new life of victory after being baptised on the last day of the Life of Victory evangelistic series, held at the International Centre, Mississauga.

The happy, newly-baptised converts joined 76 others who had also been baptised in the huge portable pool set up at the front of hall 4A during the three-week series, September 6-27, bringing baptisms total, up until that time, to 136 persons. The following weeks saw 33 additional baptisms bringing the present total to 169.

The Life of Victory series was the joint effort of 14 churches to the west of the Greater Toronto Area have collaborated to impact their region.

“Life of Victory evangelistic series is the second time in five years that the churches to the west of the Greater Toronto Area have collaborated to impact their region.

“It was a joy to see our churches working so well together,” exclaimed Pastor Reynold Hazelwood, series coordinator. “The pastors were excited about the meetings, and the members enthusiastically worked hard for its success.”

Conference Evangelism and Church Growth coordinator, Dr. Errol Lawrence, was also full of praise and encouragement for the organisers and church members involved in the series.

“I’m so impressed with how hard our pastors and members worked to make these meetings so successful,” he said. “And I’m so thankful to them. I also want to encourage them to continue their work in evangelism to win their neighbours, family and friends. We have seen that traditional evangelism still works, but we should also consider supplementing it with alternative methods in order to more effectively reach the millennial generation.”

Thirty-Nine Baptized at ‘Cristo Es Mi Esperanza’ Evangelistic Meetings

Thirty-nine baptized! We knew that God would do something marvelous for us but in just one week, September 20-27, 2008, it was just wonderful to see so many baptized.

We entered the meetings with great expectancy and trust in God because we have seen His power at work earlier this year in our March evangelistic outreach. He more than fulfilled our expectations.

The Spanish Bet-el and Maranatha churches with Hope Spanish group, came together and held the eagerly-awaited series of meetings, “Cristo Es Mi Esperanza” (Christ Is My Hope), on the premises of Kingsview Village Church.

Nightly, Pastor Cardenas preached inspiring sermons that were especially relevant to the nearly 600 people attending. There was a sense that he was truly inspired and led by the Holy Spirit. People were moved as they received hope through the name and testimony of Jesus. It was clear that God was working in a mighty way.

As Pastor Cardenas preached and made appeals for people to accept Jesus as their Saviour or to renew their commitment to Him, we were truly moved to see over 85% of the congregation respond, including 39 precious souls who surrendered all to Jesus.

To God be the honour and glory!

As we look back and reflect on the series of events that took place during this wonderful week, we can clearly see God’s loving hand.

We are grateful for the support we received from everyone who willingly invested time and effort.
visiting potential converts. We are especially thankful for the support of the Ontario conference. Conference president, Elder Derrick Nichols, and executive secretary, Elder Antonio Bueno, were able to join us in our meetings. These meetings were not just an event soon to be forgotten. These meetings were strategically planned and executed with God’s blessing, as part of our ongoing mission to reach every Spanish-speaking individual in the Greater Toronto Area with the good news that Christ is coming back for His children.

**He Came; He Preached; the Lord Conquered**

On September 13, 2008, when Evangelist Clive Dottin from the Caribbean Union stepped into the pulpit at the Shiloh Adventist Church and kicked off the Festival Wave Gospel Crusade, things began to change for 50 people.

Nightly, except Thursdays, until October 11, the sanctuary and outer hall at Shiloh Adventist Church were filled. People turned out in their numbers. Some were curious. Others went because of a kind invitation, while some went to hear God’s servant. However, most discovered the saving power of God and accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour.

The power-packed, salvation-inspired, real life sermons were directly from the Scriptures, and they led people to step out for Christ. Fifty souls were baptized. The community of Scarborough will never be the same as the church family at Shiloh nurture the newly-baptized and prepare them to join in the work toward the soon coming of our Saviour. Thank you, Pastor Dottin, for bringing this great change to us.

*P.V. Massey*

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**Elliot Lake’s Busy Summer and Baptism**

It has been a busy summer for the members of the North Shore and Elliot Lake district.

On June 1st the Adventurers of both churches got together in Massey to picnic, play and receive their awards. Ninety percent of the children are from the community. Many parents came out to watch, as their children received their badges. A number of parents commented on how much they appreciated what the churches are doing for their children.

On July 9th, the members of the Elliot Lake Branch Sabbath School gathered at Spruce Beach in Elliot Lake to watch the baptism of Cadence and Misty Stewart. These sisters have been a blessing to the church already. They are actively involved in worship services, Adventurers and church socials. All the members enthusiastically encourage them in their Christian walk.

Finally, on Aug 11-15, the Elliot Lake group conducted a Vacation Bible School. God worked in marvelous ways to bless. Members had planned advertising in the local paper. However, the proprietors, due to serious health concerns, were unable to publish. Through church signage and the dedication of members, especially Cadence and Misty, twelve eager children attended.

They all listened attentively and actively participated as they learned about King Jesus. All expressed a desire to join the Adventurers/Pathfinders in September.

The members of the North Shore and Elliot Lake churches rejoice as God opens doors to minister to the youth in the North. We ask for your prayers as we seek to expand God’s kingdom.

*Pastor Doug Pollington*
Cobourg Company Reaches Community with Health Expo

On Sunday, September 7, 2008, the 25-member Cobourg Adventist Company held its first health expo in the auditorium of the Golden Plough Lodge, Cobourg.

The purpose of the health expo was to increase the awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist presence in the Cobourg community and to help people learn the principles of healthful living through the eight natural laws of health: N.E.W.S.T.A.R.T.

Organisers, Cynthia Y. Ramlal and Judy Riley, both registered nurses, were very pleased with the outcome. “We heard people say that we should do this again,” they said.

Planning such an event was not easy for the small congregation. Initially, they attempted to work with an existing health unit in Port Hope but that did not materialize. Going alone, they were faced with serious challenges. However, with help from members of nearby Bowmanville and College Park Adventist Churches and support by Pastor Olavi Orpana and the assistance of Pastor Robert Puth, they were able to have a successful event. They were even assisted by a visiting Adventist physician, Dr. Samuel Lespinasse, from the United States. He quickly volunteered to help when a local doctor was unable to assist.

Ramlal was also very grateful for the help given by two colleagues from work. “I did not have to ask them,” she said, “I was casually talking to them about the programme and what it was about; they just said that they would like to help.”

Help also came from someone who had previously attended a cooking school held by the Cobourg Company. While unable to attend the health expo, she graciously provided vegetarian sandwiches for the occasion.

Many of the local merchants in Cobourg were quite happy to post flyers of the event in their stores, complementing the paid advert in the local papers.

Ontario Conference Health director, Debra Carby, was impressed with how the congregation obtained the involvement of community health professionals. “This is a good model for other churches,” she said. “When we work with community health professionals, we build relationships, and we are able to make a greater impact on the community.”

The majority of participants have requested a follow-up fitness/wellness workshop. The organisers plan to continue, with God’s leading, to present this aspect of outreach and encourage the importance of a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle in Cobourg.

Cynthia Ramlal/Judy Riley

Six Nations Church Celebrates 111 Years with a “Spiritual Gathering”

In 2008, Six Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church has 111 reasons to celebrate! It was organised in autumn of 1897 and has since reached out to the people of the Six Nations Reservation with the Gospel of Jesus. So, on the weekend of August 22-23, friends and visitors joined the congregation to celebrate 111 years of God’s blessings with a ‘spiritual gathering’.

The gathering began on Friday night at the Six Nations Community Centre, Hagersville, when local pastor, Herb Sormin, welcomed the congregation to worship and introduced Elder Monte Church, Native Ministries co-ordinator for the North Pacific & Canadian Unions. Elder Church was the featured speaker for the weekend.

The fellowship and celebration of 111 years will be long remembered. The inspirational rendition of He Touched Me by Fred and Blanch Hill, married for 60 years, brought back many memories for some, while the melodious tenor of Pastor Herb Sormin’s The Holy City, pointed to a glorious future.

The church is already planning another ‘spiritual gathering’ next year among the Six Nations—Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora—with a decidedly evangelistic flavour. Pastor Church has already committed himself to support it and is willing to be involved.

Sharon Johns celebrating God’s goodness with dance

The joy of the dance and chant was reflected throughout the worship service and especially in Elder Church’s message, as he preached about God’s grace in the life of each Christian.

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Cynthia Ramlal/Judy Riley

Thunder Bay Church

is looking for the following members: Marie Eve Duval and Stephanie Rowden. If you have any information, please contact Pastor Jim Rieder at 1-807-983-2659 or jrieder@adventistontario.org

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HUNDREDS CELEBRATE TORONTO WEST’S MORTGAGE ELIMINATION

Hundreds of Toronto West’s church family returned home last August to celebrate the elimination of the church’s mortgage. Spread over two weeks, the event attracted a huge throng of former members.

On Sabbath, August 2, Pastor Fitzroy Maitland, who guided the church in the relocation to the suburb of Rexdale in 1999, delivered a soul-stirring message, “the All-sufficiency of Grace’. Focussing on four areas – origin, purpose, focus and destiny – he said, “If you are aware of your origin; if you understand your purpose; if you focus on your destiny, you will leave a rich heritage behind”.

The final weekend, August 8-9, brought together conference president, Elder Derrick Nichols, and divine hour speaker, Pastor Steve Cassimy, both former senior pastors of the congregation.

Cassimy, now pastoring in New York, had the congregation smiling with delight as they repeated after him, “I believe in Rock and Roll – Jesus is the Rock and my name is on the roll”.

In his sermon, Dancing with the Star, Cassimy said, “Jesus is the star dancer. As we celebrate His greatness, we must move in synchronization with Him, not in different directions. The best compliment we can ever receive in life is for someone to say, ‘You look like Jesus’”.

The two-week celebration was spiced by numerous choirs and musicians and concluded with a throwback concert, featuring artists over the 45-year history of the church. Following Cassimy’s sermon, all members were treated to a sumptuous meal, served in the fellowship hall and under several Pathfinder canopies strung together. This turned out to be providential as a torrential deluge swamped the celebrants for hours – but, like Noah and his family, the throng survived under the canopy and smiled at the storm.

On Sabbath afternoon, the symbolic burning of the mortgage took place. It was attended by Elder Nichols, other church officials, civic officials, well-wishers and supporters from the Greater Toronto Area and around the world.

Also featured was the church’s strategic plan, which foresees structural changes to the building to accommodate a more community-focused ministry.

We move onward and upward in faith, believing that the will of God will not take us where the grace of God cannot keep us.

Sherene Cole-Watson

SMITHS FALLS CHURCH BAPTISM

One of the many rewarding spiritual events that took place at the 30th year celebration at the Brockville Church on September 20, 2008 was the baptism of Keith Hay.

Keith Hay, along with his wife Julie and daughter Ariel, have been attending the Smiths Falls Church since 2005. In Keith’s own words, “I really felt at home here so we decided to make this our regular place of worship”.

It was not long before Keith and Julie got involved in contributing to church activities. While Keith graciously assisted and volunteered in various church functions, Julie assisted in developing the children’s Sabbath school program. After her baptism in 2007, Julie took on the formal responsibilities in the children’s division and social convener.

As Keith pondered his close relationship with the church and his future, the decision was made to also be baptized. Pastor Friedrich Stele conducted the baptism in the beautiful St. Lawrence River. This now provided a unit of “wholeness” to the Hay household.

The following Sabbath, the Smiths Falls Church formally welcomed Keith into fellowship. He was presented with a card and a gift, symbolizing the church members’ warmth and support in his new spiritual walk in Christ.

Ernie Markosky
Nepean in Own Church by Summer 2009

Members of the Nepean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ottawa look forward to worshipping in their own new building—currently under construction starting late spring or early summer 2009. The congregation will cease being renters almost 19 years after becoming a branch Sabbath school, and nearly 15 years after formal establishment as the Nepean Church in April 1994.

The building project itself is 12 years old. It started, in November 1996, with the purchase of the land at 4010 Strandherd Drive in Barrhaven, Ottawa, where the new building is rapidly taking shape. The sanctuary of the new church is being built to accommodate about 250 worshippers at a time.

The project has had to overcome a series of challenges and delays. These have varied from the need for members to become convinced of the appropriateness of the location, to delays in receiving the range of required city council approvals to untimely snowfall last winter.

As with many church building projects, it has also had to find innovative ways to come up with the needed funds. Some members have contributed significant amounts from their own resources. Others have found innovative ways to raise funds. Still others have done a bit of both.

One member launched an informal “bed-and-breakfast,” accommodating visiting church members in her home in exchange for contributions to the building fund. Other initiatives have included making and selling homemade cooked items, ironing shirts for donations, selling donated knitted clothing, selling “Heavenly Farm” honey, and contributing money saved when home improvement projects were less than expected.

The church itself organized a number of interesting fundraising ventures. One such venture is the “buy-a-brick” program. In exchange for $20, members receive, if they desire, a replica of the bricks used on the building. Members, young and not so young, have taken part in the buy-a-brick venture.

Another project matches members in need of services—anything from haircuts to math lessons and public-speaking training—with those able to provide such services. All or part of the fees would go to the building fund.

In the spring of 2008, a well-attended combined yard sale, food sale, BBQ and auction was held. This event was very successful and entertaining as the auctioneer was able to get those attending to bid up the prices of yard sale items.

At a recent concert, with performances by two instrumental groups working together, the audience provided a more generous offering than anticipated. The two groups—one named Crescendo, the other Harmony and Praise—are increasingly in demand among Adventist and other churches in Ottawa and beyond, and attracted a much larger attendance than expected.

Frank A. Campbell

Shooting on Toronto West’s Anti-Drug March Route

The annual anti-drug march and community rally by the youth of Toronto West had been incident-free for many years, but this year, the police escort was significantly reduced. It was soon discovered that a shooting had taken place on the very route of the march and only a few officers were available for escort duty.

The march went ahead unchanged, and escorted by a few police officers and other emergency services, hundreds marched through the streets of Jamestown, in Rexdale, stopping to deliver freebies and freezes tracts. At each stop, Pastor Andrew King delivered messages of hope.

A feature of the march was a flatbed tractor trailer with a band which stopped in the Jamestown community where members of the Toronto West’s creative movement team performed to the soul stirring rendition of Fantasia Barrino’s “I Believe.”

The march is evident of Toronto West’s commitment to making the life of its youth and that of the youth in the community more meaningful. The congregation gives an ongoing support for youth-driven and youth-focused initiatives and even dedicates the entire month of August to the celebration of its youth. It is a time when all the worship services of the church are prepared and led by youth. The entire focus is on the day-to-day struggles and issues of
youth. August 2008 was no exception.

The month was a tremendous blessing. Worship services were inspiring and featured high quality music, powerful and challenging preaching, drama, video interviews and media clips, all based on the central theme, “The Good Life.”

Musical guests included: In His Name, Intercession, and Yes to Life, resident youth choir. Featured speakers included: Pastors Lyle Notice, Dewaine Frasier, Andre Anderson, Kenton Perrin and Bro. Kurtley Knight.

The month also included a variety of social activities such as: NFL Madden Tournament (X-Box), roller-skating, and a rap session on the topic of self-identity. Hosted by the A.Y. Department, under the leadership of Tricia Merraro and assistant pastor, Patrick Jacques, it was effectively conveyed that life only becomes truly “good” when a person turns from the world to Jesus, accepting Him as Saviour and Lord.

A number of youths responded to appeals for Bible study. Some shared unforgettable testimonies of Jesus’ salvation and His intervention in their lives, while others made public commitments through decisions for baptism. Sherene Cole-Watson

Welcome to Ontario!

We warmly welcome two new pastoral families to Ontario while saying adieu to another.

Pastor Kristopher Zygowiec is the new pastor for Bronte Adventist Church. We welcome him and his wife, Lois, to Ontario.

He comes to Ontario with experience in pastoral ministry, education and hospital chaplaincy. A native of Poland, he has served in Southern England, Manitoba-Saskatchewan and the United States.

He and his wife, Lois, have two adult sons.

Pastor Zygowiec was installed at Bronte Church during the worship service on Sabbath, October 4, 2008.

He replaces Pastor Andrew Kapusi, who after five years at Bronte, accepted a call and, in August, left to serve in Australia.

Pastor Kapusi previously served as pastor of the Bracebridge/Parry Sound district and Toronto Yugoslavian Church. We wish him and his wife, Juliana, God’s richest blessings as they make their new home in Australia.

We also welcome Pastor Vasilii Osadchuck, his wife, Karis, and their two children, Erik (12) and Melissa (10) to Ontario.

Pastor Osadchuck will be the new senior pastor for Immanuel Church, commencing January 1, 2009.

He comes to the Ontario Conference from Texas Conference where he has been serving as a pastor since 1998.

He is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian and English and will be a valuable asset to the work in Ontario.

Saying Goodbye to Pastor Max Mercer

We sadly say goodbye to Pastor Max Mercer, who died on Friday, August 22, 2008, from injuries sustained in a car accident.

Pastor Mercer was born on June 6, 1921 in Newfoundland to Joseph and Providence Mercer.

Twenty five years later, on a cold December day, in 1946, he married his sweetheart, Goldie Critchley.

After graduating from Atlantic Union College with a degree in Theology, he entered denominational service in June 1, 1952 in the Maritime Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He received both a ministerial and a colporteur license and worked as both pastor and colporteur for two years before dedicating himself to full-time pastoral work.

He was ordained on June 16, 1958 and remained with the Maritime conference until 1962 before moving to the Ontario-Quebec Conference where he served until 1969. He then moved to the Man-Sask Conference for four years before returning to his home province, Newfoundland. He served there for ten years—two as conference evangelist.

He returned to his first conference in the Maritimes for his final nine years of ministry before retirement in 1986.

A memorial service for Pastor Mercer was held at Heritage Green Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath, August 30.

He is survived by his wife, Goldie, to whom he had been married for 62 years.

Canadian Adventist Messenger Subscribers

Updating mailing information or subscribing members for the Messenger is now available online. Members or clerks do not need to contact the conference to update their information or subscribe for the Messenger (you may contact the conference only if you don’t have internet access). Go to www.sdacc.org (click on Canadian Adventist Messenger link; click online submissions) update your information and submit it. If you have any inquiries or questions, please contact Sarah Gouda, Communication secretary at the Ontario Conference, sgouda@advntistontario.org ext. 201.
Teen want to pray. There’s no question about it! The attendance of 110 teens at Canada Christian College for the Teen Prayer Conference on November 1 clearly demonstrated that teens have a keen interest in praying.

“It was cool,” said one teen. Another said, “I hope they’ll have it again next year.”

The all-day conference was primarily attended by teens from the Greater Toronto Area and as far as London and Windsor, both organizers, Pastors Cyril Millett II and Eustace Williams, have been encouraged to hold similar events in other locations across the entire province. They recognize that teens everywhere want to pray.

The prayer conference, specifically planned for teens, was the first of its type held by the Ontario Conference Prayer Ministry and Youth Departments.

Prayer Ministries director, Pastor Eustace Williams, a father of a teen himself, explained that the conference wanted to combat the negative influences that the media uses to bombard teens.

“We saw the need to attempt to raise the spiritual awareness of our teens,” said Williams, “because even though many are raised in the church, no one has taken the time to teach them how to pray. This is what this conference was about.”

Williams went on to say, “we don’t teach our teens to pray but still expect them to successfully deal with issues that daily confront their Christian values.”

The all-day conference consisted of worship, group activities, discussion and nine seminars.

Pastor Mike Stephenson, youth and young adult director for the Ohio Conference, was the main speaker. He was accompanied by a team of youth from Ohio and Andrews University to assist him. They set up booths where teens could express themselves in different ways that would help develop their prayer life and relationship with God. The most popular booth allowed teens to ‘nail’ a sin, such as guilt or anger, to a wooden cross by using a nail and hammer.

The nine workshops were very popular and included topics dealing with prayer and school issues, unanswered prayers, developing a personal prayer life and praying in public.

“The workshop I attended,” said one unnamed teen, “gave me more confidence in praying in public. I really liked it.”

Parents who remained with their teens attended a workshop designed to help them learn how to pray for their teens.

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