Living Counter-Culturally
Church Election: Then and Now

I’ve always been fascinated with the account of the first election held by the apostles (Acts 1:15-26). Immediately after Jesus had ascended to heaven, the 11 apostles returned to Jerusalem and met with the other disciples. Their first act, led by Peter, was to replace Judas.

It’s the process that’s so interesting. Peter states what needs to be done and establishes the criteria—a candidate must have been with Jesus from the very beginning of His ministry. That is, he must be a witness to what Jesus did and said. This person would join the other apostles as witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). Two names met the criteria and were proposed—Joseph and Matthias. Prayer was offered and lots were drawn, resulting in the selection of Matthias.

What has fascinated me about the process is how something so important as the election of an apostle could seemingly be left to the casting of lots, an apparent reliance on chance.

It’s unlikely that any lots were cast during the local church elections held in the last quarter of 2008. It’s even less likely that lots will be cast when the 1,000 delegates meet on July 3, 2009, for the 32nd Constituency Meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario. We just don’t operate that way. We operate on the basis of a simple majority.

At the first church election in Acts 1, the casting of lots wasn’t the entire process—just its culmination. For the 120 believers at their first conference session, it was God having the last word in the process (Proverbs 16:33). Initially, the Apostles used their consecrated intelligence to determine the necessary qualification and then presented them to God in prayer, saying, ‘Lord, here are the candidates. Both meet the criteria, but you must choose whom you want.’

The casting of lots, a time-honoured practice in the Old Testament, and seeming reliance on chance, demonstrated their ‘hands off’ attitude, leaving God to make His choice. Their responsibility was to accept God’s choice.

It’s fairly easy to be cynical about the process used to select our leaders in July. It’s not unheard of, in past years, that some individuals have approached local and provincial church elections with political agendas. It’s perhaps naive to think that everyone views the process as God-directed. On the other hand, it’s not only foolish but also arrogant to think that man’s scheming and planning can shut God out of His church. He is God, after all—the same God who places kings on their thrones and removes them at His pleasure.

The first election, recorded in Acts, describes the situation where the believers were convinced that they belonged to God and that He was actively leading them in all they did.

They were acutely aware of His leadership and presence. Acts 1:14 describes them as constantly devoting themselves in prayer. Matthias’ election at the first conference session was the result of the believers’ daily immersion in prayer, and not simply the action of the corporate body at a meeting. The process and action at that meeting reflected the prayerful lifestyle of God’s people.

The criteria suggested by Peter was not to his organisation and managerial ability but resulted from his constancy in prayer. The entire election process can be viewed in this way. Here were men and women who daily sought God in prayer and consequently could recognise His leading in finding a replacement for Judas. It seems that the entire process was undertaken in an attitude of submission to God.

Our churches have already selected delegates. The Organising Committee met on April 5 and a Nominating Committee is now in place. In July, the delegates will meet at the International Centre to elect leaders for our church. It could appear, for the majority of us who are not delegates, that we do not have any part left to play but wait for the results. This is certainly not the case. The Acts 1 process was spiritual. The believers had been praying for God’s will to be done on earth and in His church. We cannot do any less.

From now, until, and even beyond the July constituency meeting, we need to be in constant prayer for our church, the selection of leaders and the direction in which God would have us go. To say that our world is faced with severe trials is obvious, and to say that our church will be faced with great perils is to underestimate the fact. More than ever before, we need to be in constant supplication to God and be willing to submit to His leadership. The election of leaders in July must be the result of the prayers that will be offered today, tomorrow and on July 3.
In much of the ancient world there is an archaeological phenomenon called a Tell. The word Tell comes from the Arabic, and it means “mound” or “mount”. Ancient cities, like modern ones, experienced natural and cultural disasters, such as fires, earthquakes and enemy attacks. People would simply rebuild on top of the ruins, and over the centuries layers would begin to pile up. Archaeologists digging into a Tell could see the layers of history revealing themselves and learn how people lived. When we look back at the Tell of our lives and the layer we call “2008”; what do we see?

For many, 2008 was a pivotal year of facing some sobering truths. We’ve learned that our personal foundation and those of our cities, countries and the entire planet are not as stable as we once thought. Two thousand and eight has taught us a frightening truth: The way in which we live today is unsustainable.

It is not hard to see how difficult it is to sustain the present way of living when we consider the world-wide financial crisis over the past few months. While economists are divided as to how to resolve the crisis, politicians resort to their default mode in all crises and continually bombard us with calls to spend money. For example, shortly after the attack on the twin towers on September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush spoke to the nation. When the entire country was in shock and needed to hear from its leader, the president could have suggested any number of appropriate things for them to do: grieve, pray, or even hope. Instead he told people to shop, to go out and spend money! The argument is that spending money is the only way to revive the economy. In the present crisis, billions have been dumped into banks and huge corporations to keep them afloat. The various economic stimulus plans in the US have surpassed a trillion dollars. This is in a country that has a national debt of over ten trillion dollars. That’s a 1 followed by 13 zeroes.

It is very clear that we are a culture of consumers. Western society is built on the foundation of consumerism. One statistic1 said that if everyone on planet Earth consumed like the average American (or Canadian) 3-5 Earths would be required to sustain us. Researcher Paul Hawken discovered that of all the goods we regularly purchase, within just six months 99% is discarded.2 This means that for all the mining, forestry, processing, fabricating, delivering and retail that goes into a product, 99% of it is simply thrown out within six months.

As far back as 1955, American economist Victor Lebow said, “Our enormously productive economy…demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption… we need things consumed, burned up, replaced and discarded at an ever-accelerating rate.”3

What has happened? As little as 30 years ago we valued things like thrift, savings, resourcefulness and stewardship. People were careful how they used their finances and were encouraged to “put something aside for a rainy day”. Today, when the world is in financial crisis, world leaders encourage people to spend more. Why? Because that is the system that has been deliberately created. However, it has severe consequences. Carter Roberts, president and CEO of World Wildlife Fund (US), noted in his latest report: “Global consumption of natural resources far exceeds the Earth’s regenerative capacity. We are borrowing from our natural capital at an entirely unsustainable rate. The evidence of the current economic crisis clearly demonstrates that Unsustainable borrowing is not without profound consequences. To raise the stakes even further, there can be no bailout if the Earth’s systems collapse.”4

It is no wonder that Paul says in Romans 8:22 that creation is groaning in pain. Perhaps the most incredible factor in all of this is that the countries that are the foremost consumers and motive force for the global crisis are supposedly Christian! This is paradoxical because Christians, more than anyone else, are supposed to be aware of their roles as stewards of God’s creation. Are we learning anything from the “layers” of the past? Are Christians, more specifically Adventists, blindly living unsustainable lives...?

“Are Christians, more specifically Adventists, blindly living unsustainable lives...?”
a society that tells us that we need more and more of the latest gadgets. We work harder to satisfy the craving that the advertisers have awakened within us. Little heed is given to the fact that the only goal of advertisers is to cause us to become discontented with what we already have. Consequently, there is less time for worship, family or even rest. We are caught up in the torrent of consumerism and there is very little difference between us and society as a whole. Yet, Jesus called us to live as He did—counter to the culture of His own day, not just to the pagan Romans, but even to the established religion of the time. He demonstrated the nature of God’s kingdom and in the Sermon on the Mount spoke of the characteristics of those who belong to His kingdom. Jesus did not allow the practices of His culture to determine His lifestyle.

In Luke 12:15, Jesus warned, “Watch and keep yourselves from covetousness. For a man’s life is not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.” Is it really necessary to change your four year-old white refrigerator because your neighbour has just bought a shiny stainless steel one? Having a flat screen television set is very popular, but do I have to buy one when the television I already own is still giving me excellent service? Does my Christianity play any part in my decision-making? How do I operate as a steward? Do I simply restrict my stewardship to returning my tithe and offerings? Jesus marched to the beat of a different drum, and so should we.

The child of God cannot march to the drum beat of consumerism. Shopping and spending and seeking after the latest fashions and technological gadgets are not the solution to our flagging spirituality or economy. God’s people should consider the economic crisis as a call to simple, responsible living and a need to understand the price the Earth pays for all the ‘stuff’ we buy. Our grandparents taught us to save, to be frugal, and to be good stewards. We need that wisdom again today.

Rev. 11:18 says, “The time has come to reward your servants, the prophets, and all your people, all who have reverence for you, great and small alike. And the time has come to destroy those who destroy the earth.” As stewards of God’s creation, Christians should be at the forefront of those who are involved in preservation, community cleanups, recycling, reducing, and seeking for renewable energy. We only have one planet on which to live, and it is not an option for followers of Christ to care for His creation.

Going against the current of our society isn’t easy, but 2008 has taught us that uncontrolled spending and irresponsible debt cannot continue indefinitely without consequences. In this new year we need to have the courage to live by different values from many of those which society places on us. Our lives must reflect the values of God and the lessons He has given us in the Bible. As we live in the “layer” we call 2009, can we learn lessons from the past layers of our tell and live healthier, more responsible and contented lives? The signs all point to a global financial crisis that is getting worse. The “birth pangs” of creation are getting more and more frequent as the time draws near to the coming of Jesus. Let us learn from our shared past and live counter-culturally to show Jesus Christ to this Tell we call planet Earth.

Frank Dell’Erba

References


Frank Dell’Erba is the pastor of Harmony Church and Toronto Italian Company

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church receive a $100 discount for general camp fees and $150 for specialized camps. All rates subject to 3% PST and 5% GST.

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Marriage: Not for Every Christian Man

Women are usually very uncomfortable with it. Men, a little embarrassed by it, yet the source of their discomfort and embarrassment—Ephesians 5:22-24—cannot be ignored:

“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.” (NIV)

To the modern Christian woman, the idea of submitting to her husband and the concept of him being ‘head of the wife’ is a difficult one. She is uniquely aware of her equality with men, and in some instances, even her superiority, so why should what some refer to as ‘an accident of birth’ place the husband as her head? Why should his maleness give him the right of lordship?

It is of those questions for which any attempt at an answer seems unsatisfactory. Some suggest that it is simply God’s way, and the correct response of His children is obedience. Others put forward one of the arguments in opposition to the ordination of female pastors—that man was created first. Still others argue that God clearly established the male as head of the female in Genesis 3:16 “...your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” An intellectual argument follows the line that in any relationship, there must be someone in charge, and in Ephesians 5, God has declared that it should be the male. This is sometimes likened to having a president (the husband) and an executive vice-president (the wife). To each argument there are, in varying degrees, counter-arguments, and the dispute remains unresolved.

It is important to take another look at headship and submission because some men think that they have the blessing of God to act as they please. They believe that their craving for control in a marriage relationship is not only their birth-right but it is sanctioned by God! Some women mistakenly believe that it is God’s will for their identities to be subsumed into their husband’s or to be controlled, dis-respected or even ill-treated by their husbands because the Bible tells them that the husband is head of the wife, and they are to consider their submission as submitting to Christ. To oppose the will of her husband is seen as not only opposing God’s order for marriage but opposing God Himself. It is difficult to believe that this is what God intended for a marriage relationship. There has to be more to this passage.

Understanding Ephesians 5:22-24


Paul writes to Gentile Christians in Ephesus to lead them into appreciating God’s eternal plan of redemption, His marvellous grace, their riches and supreme spiritual position in Christ. In chapter four, he turns his attention to their responsibilities as Christians to maintain the unity of God’s church, the body of Christ. He also outlines the moral and spiritual distinctions between Christians and pagans, saying they should not live as those who do not know God but should walk as children of light and be filled with the Spirit (4:17-5:18).

The meaning of ‘submission’

So now we come to the submission word. In the original Greek, the word ‘submission’ is not found in verse 22. A literal reading of verse 22 would be: “The wives to their own husbands as to the Lord”

The word ‘submission’ is understood from the structure of verse 21 and simply added for clarity in our English versions. However, the Greek word from which we get the word subject or submit has the general meaning of ‘being placed under’. It is not a command, instead it gives the idea of a position that a person willingly places him or herself. It is not passivity. Rather, as in Ephesians 5:22, submission means that the Christian wife chooses not to exercise power over her husband nor rebel against him but willingly takes on for herself a Subordinate role, even though as a woman she is not subordinate to a male.

“22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord…” (NIV)

The wife’s submission to her husband is a by-product of her submission to Jesus who is not just Lord of her life, but Lord over all. It is the action of a woman who is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is her willing and humble response to Jesus.
However, since she views her submission “as to the Lord”, it’s clear that she would not submit to anything that would violate her conscience. Her submission has to do with her response to Jesus. It is not her husband’s right to demand her submission. The husband has his own role to deal with.

The Christian husband and ‘headship’

“To love as Christ loved is a command of the greatest magnitude. Christian husbands have no choice in this. It is not a response to his wife’s submission but rather it is an initiative that he is commanded to take. That’s what loving as Christ means—to take initiative in the manner of Christ.” (NIV)

People often assume the word ‘head’ to mean ‘leader’ or ‘ruler’. However, comparing the use of the word, from which ‘head’ is translated, in other passages in Ephesians and Colossians, it has the meaning of one who brings about unity, or is the source of sustenance and growth, therefore occupying a position of pre-eminence.

While Jesus is pictured as the perfect example of this, the husband, in his imperfection, is given the responsibility to operate in a similar way. Jesus is head of the church not simply because He is the Creator and has the right of headship as a ruler but because of what He has done for it. He is Saviour. He loved the church to the extent of giving His life for the church, His body.

Headship in marriage is not a birthright of gender but a sacred responsibility that is maintained through an intimate relationship with God and demonstrated by how a husband treats his wife. In some respects, continued headship is earned. Therefore, a Christian man who is unwilling to bear the responsibility of headship should not marry.

References:
4. The word hupotasso is root in two words, hupo (primarily a preposition meaning under in regards to place (beneath), or inferior in regards to position) and tasso (to assign or arrange). Hence the meaning is to willingly subordinate one’s self or to willing obey. MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary gives it the meaning of ‘relinquishing ones own rights’. Jamieson-Faussett-Brown’s Commentary on the Whole Bible notes that while it can be translated as obedience, it is not the primary meaning and contrasts submission with the children’s role of obedience to their parents in 6:1.
5. Eph. 5:21-33 speaks of the marriage relationship that is in Christ. It does not address the marriage where the love of Christ is not evident. Peter speaks to that elsewhere (1 Peter 3:1-6). However, when a Christian husband acts towards his wife as Christ does towards His church, the Christian wife’s response is submission.

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Halsey Peat

The Walk ‘n Roll Education

The 2009 NAD Adult Sabbath School Summit Live on Your Computer

The 2009 NAD Adult Sabbath School Summit, which will convene at the World Headquarters April 24-25, 2009, will be streamed live on www.naddultministries.org. Viewers may participate by e-mail in real time at sabbathschoolsummit@nad.adventist.org. The Summit begins at 7 p.m. (Eastern) on April 24, and continues at 8:45 A.M. on April 25.
‘Discover the Power’  
Breaking Down Barriers

On Sunday, March 22, Discover the Power speaker, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, preached at a Pentecostal Church in Toronto. He had been invited by the Men’s Ministry leader upon the recommendation of his pastor who, with a colleague, had recently viewed Edward’s presentation of Revelation 12 on Discover the Power (DTP). The two pastors were so impressed with the message that they immediately contacted Edwards and invited him to present the same message to their respective congregations.

“I’m really excited about doing this,” says Edwards, “We are just working through the details that will allow me to do a short 4-day series with both congregations. I know that God is doing something great through Discover the Power.”

been attending both the weekly worship service on Sabbath and Wednesday night prayer meeting after being interviewed by Edwards on DTP about his work in the local community. Recently, he took family members and friends to worship with him. DTP has even reached an adult Sunday School group—they sent a card expressing appreciation for how the word of God is explained. Some people phone in and request pastoral visits or for the location of Adventist Churches.

Pastor Edwards and the members of Apple Creek Adventist Church are already witnessing the results of God’s work through DTP. A family of eight began attending Apple Creek Church after viewing DTP. They now regularly attend another Adventist Church closer to them and are preparing for baptism. A gentleman from a Buddhist background has

“We are really happy to receive these calls,” says Edwards, “they demonstrate the interest that the broadcast is arousing. Just recently, we had a call from a lady who decided that she wants to be an Adventist and wanted to know if there is an Adventist church in Sault Ste. Marie.” Viewers have been able to view DTP on the Hope Channel for the last four years and on Vision TV since the beginning of 2007. The 30-minute broadcast reaches over 100,000 homes in Canada with powerful Biblical preaching, inspirational music, offers of Bible courses and news of Adventist involvement in their communities.

“The news feature is very important to us,” says Edwards, “we want to present a very balanced picture of Adventists to the world, so we promote the work of ADRA, Community Services, Adventist Education, Health and our Pathfinders, amongst other areas.”

The news feature is also available for other Adventist churches to highlight their evangelistic meetings. DTP is looking to the future and to become more resourceful to its viewers. A newly updated website allows visitors to take an online Bible course, submit prayer requests, see video clips of messages and discover more about Seventh-day Adventists. A major feature will allow musicians and singers to place their CDs and music videos on the site. Edwards believes that this will be a good opportunity for many upcoming musicians in church to promote their CDs and music videos to a wider market.

In the upcoming months, viewers can also look forward to a number of innovations, including a series of sermons on Biblical prophecy related to last day events. Meanwhile, younger viewers and computer savvy seniors can also expect to find shorter segments of programming on YouTube.

In its efforts to fund the broadcasts, DTP will, for the first time, solicit funds during some segments. Presently, donations are made by members of the Apple Creek Church, their friends and from a number of viewers. The need for funds continues to grow, and on June 13, there will be an official launch of the broadcast with numerous dignitaries and community guests attending. It is expected to be a major fundraising event.

Discover the Power may be viewed on Sundays (5:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.) on the Christian Channel and on Thursday afternoons (2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.) on Vision TV.

To donate to DTP, call 905-946-8751 or send a cheque payable to Discover the Power, 700 Apple Creek Boulevard, Markham, Ontario, L3R 7X9.
If this is the first time you have been asked to serve as your church’s delegate to a Conference Session, it is unlikely that you really know what you have agreed to. Even experienced hands sometimes miss what is really required of them.

After delegates have been chosen by the church, the pastor will usually meet the delegates to carefully explain what is required of them. However, this is not always the case, so the following should help:

1. ‘Conference Session’ Is a Business Meeting

It’s important to remember that you will be attending a business meeting of the provincial church. While it is a business meeting, the essential spiritual nature of the church should not be forgotten. God’s leading must be sought before and during the meeting.

2. As a Delegate You Represent Your Church

You are a representative of your church, so you will speak on behalf of your congregation and not for yourself.

A. Delegate to the Organising Committee

Some delegates are also delegates to the Organising Committee (sometimes called the ‘large committee’ as in local church elections). They have the responsibility of selecting the 21-member Nominating Committee and a standing Bylaws Committee of nine members. This took place on April 5.

B. Delegate to the Constituency Meeting

All delegates are expected to attend the constituency meeting on July 3 and 5 at the International Centre.

Your work is primarily to give direction to the work of the conference for the next four years. As such you will respond to the report of the nominating committee through voting; consider the reports from departmental directors; contribute to discussion when helpful; and help cast a vision for the future.

C. Preparing

Prior to the constituency meeting, some churches choose to hold business meetings at which matters relating to the conference are discussed. In some cases, the delegates are informed by these discussions as to what issues they should raise at the constituency meeting.

Other churches set aside time for prayer. Each delegate should also set aside time for personal prayer in preparation to participate in working with God’s Spirit to lead our conference over the next four years.

For many participants, the worship services are the foundation for Maranatha. At Maranatha 2009, the joyful and inspirational worship-leading of the praise team, Desire of Nations, created such an irresistible mood for worship, praise and thanksgiving, that by the time the theme song, “Days of Elijah”, was sung, all the burdens of the week must have been forgotten and replaced with joyous anticipation of hearing God’s message.

Keynote speaker was seventy-one year-old, Pastor Ron Halvorsen, Sr. Returning to Maranatha after his powerful workshops on prayer last year he used his three sermons, Dry Bones, The Cross on Main Street and Loose the Man to challenge, teach, give hope and inspire participants to evangelize.

“So, You’re a Delegate to the 32nd Constituency Meeting, July 3-5, 2009”

The Nominating Committee is presently doing its work. It will nominate the Officers of the Conference, Departmental Directors and Members of the Board of Directors.
The high quality of the workshops often surprise first-time attendees. The presenters, from across North America and the Caribbean, are practitioners who have developed expertise in their fields. Many are highly sought-after and can easily demand and obtain significant compensation for their services, yet they offer their skills to the church in Ontario at Maranatha.

This year, in addition to the three workshops previously mentioned, participants could select to attend workshops on Prison Ministry (Robert Levy), Family Ministries (Elvis and Ruth Gyebi), Community Services (Damson Oppong & Andrew King), Health and Children’s Ministries (Dr. Carol Ambersley-Henry), Women’s Ministries (Dr. Mable Dunbar), and iPod Witnessing (Mirthell Mitchell). Each proved very beneficial.

Crystal Goonsammy who was converted through Internet Bible Studies chose to attend iPod Ministry led by Pastor Mirthell Mitchell.

“I learned about the Seventh-day Adventist Church through the internet,” she said, “and I want to be part of this ministry so that I can spread the word.”

Rosa Okamura, from the Japanese Church, went to the Women’s Ministries workshop by Dr. Mable Dunbar. “It was wonderful! I feel good about being a woman! It was my first Maranatha, and I’d like to come back again.”

Other participants were just as happy with their Maranatha experience:

“I’m a new member, and my church sent me. It has been so good. The preaching is powerful and very challenging to completely trust in the Lord and to give our whole life over to Him.” –Myata Hines, Peterborough.

“Maranatha was great. It was my first time, and I’d definitely come again.” –Julia Sobot, Toronto Yugoslavian.

“It was just an awesome, awesome experience. Maranatha is amazing!” –Carron McDermot, new member from Meadowvale.

As Maranatha 2009 came to a close, the organisers could be excited for smiling at its success outcome. Again, the BMO Institute for Learning proved the ideal location with excellent facilities and superb cuisine.

However, it was the spirit of cooperation by the participants that stood out. They represented Christ and His church so well that the staff at the BMO Institute were, like last year, greatly impressed by their friendliness, polite behaviour and cooperative attitude.

While Maranatha organisers are looking forward to the next Maranatha event to train a new group of lay evangelists, they are praying that the graduates of Maranatha 2009 will diligently work to usher in God’s kingdom so that the next Maranatha will be the actual coming of Jesus Christ.
Despite the fact that I was born into a Seventh-day Adventist family, my experience within the church community has not been typical. I did not grow up in any one church; in fact, I’ve moved from congregation to congregation, and such moves often meant that I felt very much like an outside observer. However, I’ve been fortunate that at each of the churches I’ve attended over the years, there have always been people ready to treat me as one of their own.

So why then is it that only now, at my current church, I feel as if I am truly becoming a part of the church family? I believe it’s for the same reason that many youth and young adults feel disillusioned with the church. While we often profess to love and accept them into our churches, we have little to no use for them until they measure up to our standards of what a good Christian should be. We congratulate them on coming every week; we shake their hands and say ‘Happy Sabbath!’, and we gently chide them for not showing up at 9:15 a.m. All the while, we mourn the lack of young people in the church, and when a young person says they’d like to join a ‘good Christian youth’. Of course, this means that you fall outside the traditional norm of what is expected of you in terms of behaviour, dress, and attitude, such inconsistencies can now be corrected. By the time a young person is up front on Youth Day, the church congregation can bask in the notion that the young man/woman will inspire the younger ones in the church to uphold the proper Adventist traditions. My word! No wonder so many young people say that church isn’t their thing! No wonder they don’t like going to places where, in order for their contributions to be considered of value, they must first learn how to dress, behave, and most importantly, how to think properly.

The fact is that love and acceptance are not merely words; they are actions. We need to show people that we value them in order for them to truly feel loved and accepted. But how can we do this? We cannot possibly expect the teen or twenty-something year-old to feel that they are accepted when we say, ‘of course you can participate’, but first saddle them with conditions to reach a church approved ideal. We cannot expect the teenager who is struggling with peer-pressure and faith to identify with this ideal. However, the teen can identify with believers who do not present themselves as having everything in order, people who themselves struggle with faith but still worship God to the best of their ability. When people like these welcome them and make them feel wanted by involving them they begin to see that they are accepted as they are and feel that they too have something of value to offer to the church family.

At my new congregation, I’d been there scarcely a couple of weeks when the members started to tell me how much they liked seeing me at their church. Not a full month had gone by when they were asking me what I’d like to do to help. And less than a couple of months later, they were asking me if I’d like to help with children’s Sabbath School. To someone who has always felt like an outsider, it was a shock – but a pleasant one. Suddenly, I am inspired to help, learn and participate more, and I firmly believe it’s because I haven’t just been told how loved and accepted I am; I’ve been shown that.

It’s clear to me that what I bring and contribute to the church, as I am, is valued and accepted, and that means more to me than a thousand well-meaning hugs and handshakes on Sabbath morning.

What do you think about the subject matter of acceptance? Let Highlight readers hear what you have to say about your feelings and experience of acceptance in church.

—Editor
“We had a great time!” was the opinion of the overwhelming majority of students who attended the campus ministries retreat for Adventist students at secular universities, February 13-15. Over the inspirational and fun-filled weekend, common experiences were shared and new friendships were formed. Leaders, Pastors Cyril Millett and Richard Roschman, along with guest speakers, Pastor Omar Palmer with his wife, Georgiana, along with Angelo Austria, led them to greater understanding of God and their purpose as Christians on secular campuses.
Beyond the Diagnosis: A Parent’s Journey

I remember the day I received the official diagnosis, “Miss Dildy, your son is autistic.”

At first, I could not even comprehend what was happening. My head was spinning at the very possibility of what this meant for my family’s future. The word was foreign to me. Autism, what is that? When I learned about the disorder it only served to further my distress. Why would God allow this to happen to my only son? I had no answers. I just had to learn how to cope. It was the beginning of a new life for us.

My son, Taejon, was three and a half when he was diagnosed. Previous to this, although I had noticed some issues with his development I thought it was just part of every child’s normal maturation.

My main concern, at the time, was Taejon’s speech. He did not really talk much. In fact, it amazed me how well he got by on crying, using facial expressions and simple gestures to communicate.

Initially, I did not know what to do. I felt totally lost, alone and inadequate so I turned to God in prayer seeking His comfort and guidance. Even as I began to access the available services for help, my earnest, secret prayer was always for God to make my son talk. If this miracle were to take place, I would be completely satisfied.

Then one day, to my surprise, Taejon said, ‘Mama.’ Since then, he has called me ‘Mama.’ ‘Mama’ is the answer to my prayers.

It has been close to three years since that day in the psychologist’s office. I have experienced God’s provision and care for Taejon and me. He placed my family and church family around me to love and support me. He has also led us to the right people, therapies, classroom placements, and agency support just when we needed them. Taejon is now flourishing, and I am so thankful to God.

God gave me an exceptional child and allowed the situation to help me grow and to be able to help others who are faced with challenges of parenting exceptional children.

Before Taejon was diagnosed, I had limited awareness of children born with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities. I believe that my lack of awareness at the time is common to the majority of people. So, when children are diagnosed with one of a wide-range of disorders, their parents often undergo severe distress and experience feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, loneliness and even anger. I have discovered that parents of exceptional children can learn to live fulfilling, happy lives, parenting with success and providing a loving home for them. They just need some help.

Ontario Conference Family Ministries Reaching out to Parents of Exceptional Children

Donna Jackson, Family Ministries director for the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, hails parents of special needs children “as the great unsung heroes of society.” However, they are often forgotten to travel alone on their journey of unconditional love and care for their children. For this reason the Family Ministries Department desires to lend some practical support to these parents.

Donna Jackson was happy to discover that Giselle Dildy’s experience resulted in a passion to help other parents of similar experience. Dildy holds workshops to help these parents understand the elements of the public health and educational systems, government subsidies, societal conventions and the primary role of parenting, in order to effectively face the challenges of raising exceptional children. It is Jackson’s hope that Family and Women’s Ministries leaders and others will invite Giselle Dildy to their churches to give a presentation.

Jackson has also recognised that there is a lack of networking amongst parents of special needs children. In discussion with Dildy, there is a possibility of the Family Life Department teaming up with her ministry to help connect these parents who would like to be part of a supporting network. While Dildy is willing to undertake the task of collecting and matching, Jackson wants to know the following:

1. How many Ontario Adventists parents of special needs children are there?
2. Do these parents want this service?

If you are a parent of a child with special needs, please contact Donna Jackson today by email, djackson@adventistontario.org or by phone, 905-571-1022 ext. 203.

SEVEN OUT OF TEN ADULTS IN CANADA DIE WITHOUT A VALID WILL, LEAVING A TREMENDOUS BURDEN FOR THEIR LOVED ONES ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?

To find out more information on how you can protect your family, contact the Planned Giving and Trust Services Department of the Ontario Conference, 905-571-1022; 905-686-5757 ext. 206 or email: dputt@adventistontario.org
Regional Camp Meetings  
(May-June 2009)

With the coming of spring is the promise of summer and camp meetings across Ontario. The season begins in May and ends in September. With a wide range of regional and ethnic camp meetings, all anchored by the general camp meeting in Mississauga on July 4, this season promises to be one of the best ever.

Thunder Bay  
(May 1-3)

Theme: “The Character of Our Creator”  
Dr. Robert Sheppard and Pastor Ernie Pyle are founders of Knowing God Ministries, based in Texas. Dr. Sheppard has been pastor of six churches and was a professor at Southwestern Adventist University for 13 years.

Pastor Ernie Pyle served as a church pastor in Oklahoma, specializing in church growth principles. Pyle has many years of experience as a motivational speaker, both in business and religious settings. With Robert Sheppard, he conducts the Wednesday night prayer meeting at the Arlington Adventist Church, and teaches an adult Bible study group on Sabbath mornings.

Beverly Edwards-Miller is a registered dietician who believes in living a happy and healthy life. She is the regional coordinator for the Coronary Health Improvement Project (CHIP) in Ontario and has facilitated five month-long CHIP programmes in the Greater Toronto Area since 2001.

Beverly will conduct workshops on health.

Locations: Oliver Road Community Centre, 563 Oliver Rd. from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. on Friday; and at the Thunder Bay Adventist Church, 1770 Oliver Road, Saturday all day, and Sunday morning.

Eastern Ontario  
(May 15-17)  
Theme: “Living God’s Vision”

Speakers: Elder Fred Kinsey and Dr. Herbert Goulding.  
Elder Fred Kinsey serves as assistant to the president for Communication at the North American Division (NAD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He also serves as president of the Adventist Media Center, located in Southern California and as speaker/director for the Voice of Prophecy radio programme.

Herbert Goulding, MD is the speaker for the youth and young adults meetings. Dr. Goulding describes himself as “a product of Christian education from kindergarten to university and is committed to youth ministry. A native of Jamaica, he resides in New York where, in addition to his medical work, he ministers to the community through his SICAYAP (Sexuality Initiative in Christian Adolescent, Youth Young Adult and Parents) programme.

Meetings will take place on Friday evening and Sunday morning at Ottawa Adventist Church, 2200 Benjamin Avenue, Ottawa, ON K2A 1P5. Sabbath services will be held at Landsdowne Park Exhibition Hall, 1015 Bank Street, Ottawa.

Portuguese  
(May 23)

Theme: “Nao Temas” (Don’t Be Afraid)  
Speaker: William Costa, Jr.  
Elder William Costa, Jr. is an assistant to the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He is a sought-after speaker and pastor with wide experience. In addition to his captivating style and thorough presentation of God’s word, Pastor Costa is an accomplished musician and composer.

Location: 260 Hyde Park Ave., Toronto.

Southwestern Ontario  
(May 29-30)

Theme: “Living Hope”  
Speaker: Pastor Manny Cruz. Pastor Manny has been involved in Youth Ministry for over 20 years. His unique “Street Artists Ministry” has taken him all across the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Young and old have been blessed by Pastor Cruz’s testimony of how God brought him out of a life of alcohol, gangs, and graffiti in the streets of Los Angeles to a life helping teens and youth. Currently, he serves as the Associate Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

Meetings will be held under the big tent on the grounds of Sarnia Adventist Church, 1620 Modeland Road, Sarnia, ON N7T 7H8.

Upcoming Camp Meeting Dates

Southern Ontario Regional Camp Meeting: Simcoe, June 12-13

Ontario Camp Meeting: Mississauga, July 4

Zimbabwean: July 28-Aug 2
Filipino: July 31-Aug 1
North Eastern Ontario September 4-6
Hispanic: October 9-10
Personnel Changes

Saying ‘Good-bye’

Debra Carby, Heath and Children’s Ministries director for the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, recently resigned after five years in the position. She completed her work on March 31, 2009, to take up a new appointment with a newly developing diabetes programme in Ontario.

Ms. Carby, a registered dietician who also holds a Master’s degree in Public Health (nutrition), was appointed to her position by the Board of Directors in October 2003. Since her appointment, she has worked tirelessly in both areas of Health and Children’s Ministries.

In the area of health, Ms. Carby has broken down a number of barriers in the community by effectively representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a number of provincial and national forums. One of her significant health accomplishments was the CampFit programme, held at Camp Frena in 2007. Parents will remember her work with their children during the camp meeting season from April to September each year.

“It was a wonderful opportunity to work at the conference level for the past five years,” said Carby. “God has allowed me to grow spiritually, learn new things about myself and to meet such wonderful people from all our churches. However, He is now leading me into a new ministry, and I believe that I should follow His leading.”

At a farewell gathering for Ms. Carby, Conference president, Pastor Derrick Nichols, expressed his appreciation for her work over the past five years and presented her with a gift.

Before her appointment in the Ontario Conference, Ms. Carby served as the Health Ministries director of the Allegheny East Conference in the United States.

Pastor David Thompson, assistant minister at the Downsview congregation, has accepted a call to serve a congregation as an assistant pastor in the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Pastor Thompson began working in the Ontario Conference in October 2005 after successfully substituting for an evangelist at an evangelistic meeting in Downsview earlier that year. During his short stay in Ontario, he served under Dr. Kenneth Campbell and Pastor Ledford Morris, former and current senior pastor at Downsview.

We wish him every success as he assumes his new role in the Greater New York Conference, commencing April 1, 2009.

Welcome to Ontario

New to the conference office is Lois Zygowiec. She is the new administrative secretary to the president and treasurer.

Lois joined the staff at the conference headquarters at the beginning of February 2009, bringing with her a wealth of experience and skill.

Before moving to Ontario, she lived and worked in Michigan where her career took her to Andrews University and then Whirlpool Corporation. At Andrews she was responsible for its global recruitment programme and led a team of recruiters. She later joined Whirlpool Corporation as part of its Human Resource leadership team and global technology organisation. She was its team leader for a leadership development programme.

Lois is the wife of Pastor Kristopher Zygowiec, minister of Bronte Adventist Church. They have two adult sons.

55th ALUMNI HOMECOMING WEEKEND


Friday, May 22nd: Vernon Langdon, Classic Golf Tournament

Friday Night: Reunion Concert - Saturday, May 23rd: Sabbath Service and Lunch

Keynote Speaker: Dr. James Doggette

Saturday Night: Original Movie “Hush”

Sunday, May 24th: Walk-a-thon - Alumni Basketball Game

RSVP: Derrick Hall (VP of Advancement)


Email: dhall@caasda.com, development@caasda.com

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Apple Creek Youth Awarded YMCA Peace Medallion

In a recent ceremony at the Markham Civic Centre, Orville Wallace was among 15 GTA recipients of the YMCA 2008 Peace Medallion. He was nominated by founder/director of Peace Builders International, Eva Marzewski, in recognition of going beyond the call of duty to promote peaceful activity in the community.

A 2003 graduate of the University of Toronto, Orville has been working as a Youth Employment Counsellor for more than three years, his primary office location being the Jane and Finch community. This altruistic young man also makes time in his busy schedule to volunteer at Hamilton Detention Centre where he works with young inmates. In his daily work Orville routinely encounters youth who are fatherless; youth who, possibly because of the lack of a father-figure or a role model in their lives to guide them, have headed down paths of despair, and subsequent violence and crime. His mission is to give hope to these youth, understanding that for many of them he might be the only positive role model in their lives.

Orville's motivation is “to give back” to society, let troubled youth “know that everything is possible if they strive for their goals, and to give them hope.”

With a view to providing more support for youth in conflict with the law, Orville has also founded, and chairs, The Youth Justice Network of Toronto. This is a network consisting of youth workers, probation officers, police, social workers, teachers and counsellors who work with youth who are incarcerated and also support them as they are released. A visionary, Orville is committed to making a difference wherever he can. His dream is to create a business plan to be an independent consultant for a non-profit organization, working in collaboration with probation officers in an effort to be of further assistance to troubled youth.

Grace Lawrence

Bronte Church: Seeking to Double Its Number of Women

In many Seventh-day Adventist churches, women outnumber men. Bronte Church is no exception. However, one of the goals of the Women’s Ministries Department, over the next two years, is for each woman to introduce another woman to Jesus.

The church, recognizing the strong evangelistic potential of its women, has adopted the theme, “Every Woman for Every Woman” for its Women’s Ministries Department (2008-2010). It cites the example of Jesus who fed the hungry, healed the sick and generally met the physical needs of people and commanded His followers to do the same. Bronte Church is committed to doing this and so introduce other women to Jesus.

The theme was highlighted on Sabbath, March 7, 2009 when the church celebrated Women’s International Day of Prayer. Lois Zygowiec, wife of the local pastor, shared a message on the importance of women to God. “You are engraved on the palms of His hands,” she said.

Later, commenting on the evangelistic thrust of Bronte’s women, Zygowiec said, “I’m really impressed with how the women of our church have seen themselves as a means of growing God’s kingdom. Perhaps it will encourage the men to reach out to other men in a similar way to share the Gospel of Jesus with their friends and neighbours.”

Lisa Milovanov

Rising Above
Ontario Women’s Conference
June 6, 2009 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Kingsway College Fitness Complex
1200 Leland Road, Oshawa

Presenting

Keynote Chaplain Diliys Brooks

Carla Brown
Keturah Leonforde
Giselle Dildy
Dr. Elnora Inandan
Dr. Vilma Tan-Jarvis
Beverley Brüggeman

Earlybird Deadline: May 5, 2009
For more info and to register, visit www.PlusLine.org/events.php or call 1-800-732-7587
Sponsored by Ontario Conference Women’s Ministries
Shahnaz’s Story

God doesn’t just amaze us, He works in ways that we don’t even imagine. The smiles of joy and hugs that were given to Shahnaz, Shabie and Sam at their baptism on December 6, 2008 reflected God’s wonderful ability to save people.

The baptism of Shahnaz and her two daughters, Shabie and Sam, was the culmination of a remarkable journey of faith through a maze of trials and tribulations.

Last August, shortly before Pastor Bill Santos of It Is Written–Canada began the Countdown to Eternity series (November 21-29) in Hamilton, our company leader, Nelia Llorca, met Shahnaz. Their casual meeting quickly grew into a friendship and Shahnaz accepted Nelia’s invitation to attend Countdown to Eternity.

On the first night, Iranian-born Shahnaz, listened with keen interest as Pastor Santos clearly presented God’s Word. The following night she returned with her two teenage daughters, Shabie and Sam. The girls were so thrilled by what they heard from the Scriptures that they did not want to miss any of the subsequent meetings. However, they would soon be faced with severe trials.

On their way to attend the third night of the meetings, they were involved in a car accident that completely wrote off their vehicle. Although badly shaken, no one was hurt. Shahnaz found herself in tears when she realised how close they had been to death. Attempting to comfort her mother, Sam commented, “Maybe the devil doesn’t want us to attend this meeting.”

They continued to attend the meetings but the car accident was just a series of setbacks faced by this mother and daughters. In just a few short months they lost their business vehicle and then their restaurant business to a fire, and then a week after the close of the meetings, their house was repossessed. However, she was determined not to allow anything to prevent her from accepting Jesus as her Saviour.

When Pastor Santos made his first appeal for baptism, Shahnaz, Shabie and Sam were among the first to respond.

The following week, they were baptised by Pastor Gerry Pasikatan. They are now faithful members of the Hamilton Filipino Company.

Smiths Falls Church Baptism

On December 13, 2008, Peter Brugmans was baptized by Pastor Friedrich Stele.

For years, while his wife Gudrun performed an active role in church activities, Peter watched and contemplated his relationship with God. In the fall of 2008, Peter decided to be baptized, but it had to be in the very church in which he was to be a member. Since the church did not have a baptismal pool, one was obtained just for the occasion and appropriately decorated.

As the chilly winds blew the snow on the outside of the church building, hearts on the inside were warmed as Peter took his stand for the Lord. Peter was formally welcomed into the world fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Smiths Falls congregation presented him with a card and gift. All rejoiced with Peter as he started his new spiritual walk with Christ.

Ernie Markosky

Hope Church Turns to Christian Education

It has often been said, “actions speaks louder than words.” On Sabbath, March 21, 2009, Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church clearly demonstrated that its commitment to Adventist education is far more than just words when its pastor, Wayne Williams, presented Principal Norman Browne with a cheque.

For some years, Hope Church was plagued with an outstanding financial debt to the Toronto Adventist District School Board (TADSB). The means to clear it always seemed to evade the members. However, as they re-assessed the value of Christian education they concluded that it must be a priority for them. So, at the expense of structural fixtures, maintenance, departmental budgets and even some ministerial projects, the members strove to honour their debt as quickly as possible.

“As a spiritual community, Hope is a dedicated advocate for Christian pedagogy and learning,” said Pastor Wayne Williams. “For all Adventists, and especially for us at Hope, the support of Christian education is not a choice but a responsibility.”
Harmony/Italian Welcomes Pastor Luca Marulli

To the delight of a full church, Pastor Luca Marulli was back in the pulpit at Harmony/Italian congregation on Sabbath, February 21, 2009. Eighteen months ago, it would have been difficult to believe that he would even be standing, much less preaching.

A few months after arriving with his family at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Andrews University in the United States, Pastor Luca, as he is affectionately known, was diagnosed with a rare but virulent and aggressive form of cancer. It attacked him with such ferocity that many feared for his life.

From across the world, and especially in Toronto at his former church, Harmony/Italian, prayers were offered for him and his family. Miraculously, his body began responding to treatment.

Pastor Luca’s presence, along with his wife, Irene, and daughter, Maya, at Harmony/Italian was a time of praise and thanksgiving to God. The faith of many was greatly encouraged because they have witnessed answers to prayer.

Sabbath School Director Awards Certificates to Leadership Graduates

For two successive Sabbaths, January 10 and 17, 2009, Pastor Wayne Martin, Sabbath School director of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, presented certificates for Sabbath School leadership at two Adventist churches.

He was at Toronto Perth Avenue on January 10 to celebrate with 28 teachers for successfully completing the first level of the 12-week LEAD teacher certification programme. He joined local pastor, Theodore Sargeant, in congratulating the graduates.

The 28 graduates are expected to register for the second level course in April.

ASAM in Variety Village’s Fund-raising Christmas Party

On December 14, 2008, Ontario Conference’s Adventist Singles Adult Ministry (ASAM) joined Variety Village in support of their 11th Annual World’s Greatest Christmas Party, held at the village, 3701 Danforth Avenue.

As a non-profit organization, The Children’s Charity of Ontario, “Variety Village”, fundraising events are a crucial factor towards maintaining their ongoing programs and services, as well as allowing them to set goals for the future. Fundraising events also serve to raise the spirit and heighten awareness and hope for the “Variety children”.

ASAM has previously supported Variety Village in a number of ways and has not hesitated to lend a helping hand when needed.

For the Christmas party, Andrew Skytte-Alivio, ASAM Outreach Programme coordinator, prepared the programme, “The Messiah is One with Us,” for the sponsors, benefactors and members of the Village. He worked with the help of Filipino-Canadian, Willowdale, All Nations and Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist churches.

The following Sabbath, January 17, 2009, Pastor Martin was at Toronto West Adventist Church to witness the graduation of eight persons from the Sabbath School Advanced Leadership Course, parts I and II.

Pastor Martin joined the pastoral staff and Sabbath School superintendents in congratulating the graduates. They were reminded that they are to win, hold and train men, women, boys and girls for Jesus Christ.

Each of the 12-week courses at Toronto West was facilitated by Raymond Balfour.

Martin later expressed his joy at seeing so many teachers being trained, using the various Sabbath School teacher and leadership development tools available.

“The Sabbath School teacher is crucial to the growth, development and well-being of our members,” said Martin, “so we want to make sure that every Sabbath School teacher receives some form of training. I’m so happy to award the certificates to those who have taken the time for this.”

Martin also expressed his hope that members who are not Sabbath School teachers would also take some form of training and so prepare themselves to contribute to their churches in a very significant way.

Many thanks to Traysee Gelliseau (Toronto Perth Avenue) and Doreen Humphrey-Nelson (Toronto West) for the original articles. — Editor
Feeding the Homeless Through the Eyes of a 13-Year Old

From age seven, I have been going downtown Toronto with my mother and the Kingsview Village Community Service Department to feed the homeless people one Sabbath each month, and I still enjoy going.

On Friday evening, church members prepare the lunch bags consisting of cheese, peanut butter or jelly sandwich, a banana, juice box, and a variety of desserts. Hot chocolate is also served. The homeless people also receive clothing, and anything that the department has to give.

On Sabbath morning, we leave the church about 7:15 a.m. and reach our destination within half an hour. I am responsible for stocking the cup on the hot chocolate pot and also for refilling the boxes with the lunch bags. We usually spend about forty-five minutes on the streets.

One Sabbath morning, when I was eight years old, something remarkable happened. While we were serving the people, a man came up to us and told us that his eight-year old son had something to tell us. His son commended the group for our hard work and said how impressed he was with what we were doing. As a result, he decided to donate his weekly allowance of five dollars to the group so that we can continue to provide food to feed the hungry. Our entire group was very pleased and gladly thanked him for his encouragement and donation.

On another morning, a police car drove up and parked behind our van. Shortly after we heard an announcement came over the police radio “two double double and one double triple, please.” All the adults started laughing so I asked my mother what the police meant. She explained that it is what people would order when they go to a coffee shop, and that they were only joking. The three police officers left their car and talked to us for a while and then they left.

Some time later, we witnessed a miracle when the hot chocolate pot was almost empty. We prayed that the chocolate would not run out, and it did not! There was enough hot chocolate to serve everyone.

Two people we fed are now active members of a Seventh-day Adventist Church. This helped me to understand how important it is to feed the homeless and to bring people closer to God. To hear them say ‘thank you’ and ‘God bless you’ is very rewarding.

Rushaune V (Age 13)

Pathfinder Club Membership Leads to Guelph Baptism

On Sabbath, January 17, 2009, the Guelph Church members rejoiced to see two of their children, Gyamfi Adjei-Afriyie and Joshua DaCosta, enter God’s kingdom through baptism.

Joshua, son of Pastor Anthony DaCosta, is 14 years of age. Gyamfi is 16 years of age and comes from a strong Adventist family.

Both boys grew up in the church as members of the Guelph Omega Pathfinders Club. Having embraced the knowledge and the principles of the Pathfinders Club, they have now accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour.

The entire church pledged their support and prayers for both young men.

On February 7, 2009, Agape’s Children’s Ministry held “ADRA Kids in the Kitchen,” their own special fundraising initiative for Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). The children held a successful event by serving and selling pepper-pot and split peas soup.

The event taught Agape’s children about the important work done by ADRA around the world. One Sabbath, Daniel Broome, one of ADRA’s Corporate Service directors, attended a worship service at Agape where he met the children, promoted ADRA and also told the children’s story.

Angie Harris-Saunders, head of Agape’s Children’s Ministry Department, notes that one of the aims for the Agape Children Ministry is to teach the children how blessed they are. Through activities, such as fundraising, children learned that they should do their part to help others who are often without the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, and clean water.

ADRA in the Kitchen is just one of many activities the Children’s Department organizes to encourage a spirit of charity among the church’s youngest members.

Rhonda Bowen
The Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF) is again proving to be a blessing to the church in Ontario. Since January of this year, four more churches, each received $25,000 towards paying off their mortgages, while 137 other churches, each received $310.

The conference officers, Pastor Derrick Nichols, Pastor Antonio Bueno and Bro. Ulysses Guarin, have recently visited Barrie, Ruth, Elliot Lake and St. Catharines Seventh-day Adventist Churches and presented each with a cheque for $25,000.

Since its inception in 2001, the CBIF has raised nearly $1,000,000 from a combination of members, contributing $2 weekly, and the conference budgeting an annual amount of $50,000.

Last year, the amount raised was $141,517.65. The total amount was then returned to the churches, with 70% divided among the four churches with the oldest debt.

"It's always a pleasure to present a cheque to a church," said Pastor Nichols, "because I share with the members the desire to see their mortgages paid off and finally be able to dedicate the church buildings to the glory of God."

Pastor Nichols also said that he is looking forward to more members becoming involved in giving to the CBIF so that the size of the cheques to the churches can be far more substantial.

His view is echoed by Pastor George Ivkov, who although retired, tirelessly travels to all the churches across the province to promote giving to the CBIF.

"The CBIF is a wonderful idea," says Ivkov, "It’s everyone putting a small amount into one pot so that everyone can benefit. If we are faithful in doing this, then in no time every church can own its own building. It’s so simple – $2 from each member each week."

It is hoped that as more members contribute, the fund could receive $200,000 this year.

Elder Nichols presenting a cheque to Ruth pastor, Reynold Hazelwood as Pastor Bueno looks on.
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**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, COLLEGE WOODWORK**

College Woodwork, a furniture manufacturer located on the campus of Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ontario, is seeking a COO to head its operations. Established in 1921 to provide financial assistance to Kingsway College and employment opportunities for its students, College Woodwork currently has a staff of 85 full-time employees and employs 43 students on a part-time basis. It has an operating budget of $10 million with sales from $9 million to $11 million over the past few years.

Reporting to the president of Kingsway College, the Chief Operating Officer is accountable for setting the strategic direction for, and directing the day-to-day operations of College Woodwork as a viable furniture manufacturing industry committed to the success and care of its dealers, its employees, and Kingsway College as its partner in business.

The successful candidate will bring with him/her effective entrepreneurial type business skills developed through education and experience, preferably in, but not limited to, manufacturing/marketing, and a firm commitment to supporting Christian education.

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To explore this opportunity further, please direct resumes to Greg Bussey, president of Kingsway College Busseyg@kingswaycollege.on.ca

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