The Tale of Two Kingdoms

Inside:
Ontario Conference Buys Land for Camp Meeting
Dethroning Self

I t hit me so hard that I was left stunned! No, it was not an object that hit me, but it might well have been because I was left shaken; my equilibrium shattered.

I’d been indulging in some introspection, doing some soul-searching about my Christian identity when I ran head-on into the wall of realization. I realized that I was not a spiritual person. I was not a man after God’s own heart.

A pall of depression settled over me as I searched for an explanation. As far as I knew and what my conscience told me, I wasn’t doing anything wrong. On the contrary, I took care to live as a good Adventist Christian in terms of doctrine, lifestyle, Bible study, witnessing, etc.– these are very important in the life of a Christian. As a pastor, I was practising what I preached. So, how did I arrive at the conclusion that I was not a spiritual person?

I reviewed my recent experiences and remembered coming across Psalm 27:4, “One thing I ask of the Lord; this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple.” It was then that I understood. I realized that the greatest delight of the psalmist, his entire purpose, was to worship God. To be in God’s presence was his sole desire. Intellectually, I knew that this is what I wanted but somehow, my passion for God’s being was hollow compared to that of the psalmist’s. My passion and desire for other things were often more evident than they were for God’s presence. I saw myself for what I was—merely a religious person, albeit a very committed one! If I had lived in Palestine two thousand years ago, perhaps I would’ve been a candidate to join the Pharisees.

In the days of Jesus, the Pharisees were the most religious people. They were the very best people in society. There were none better. They could never be faulted on even the minutest part of God’s law. Their morality and uprightness would put the best of us to shame. If they lived in our time, our local church nominating committees would be spoil for choice. We would choose them as our elders, deacons and every other position we could find to give them because they were such good men with an unequalled zeal for the purity and upholding of God’s law. Yet, Jesus called them “white-washed sepulchres (tombs)” Matthew 23:27.

Religious people are those who are seeking to serve God but do not know Him. They’ve been converted to a belief system that, in the Christian context, correctly sees God as Creator and Ruler of all and Jesus as Saviour and soon-coming King, but it is just that—a belief system. The beliefs become the all-important feature. Being right is primary. Knowledge, rules and regulations, liturgy, religious practice and lifestyle become a means of pleasing God. People are secondary. They must adjust to the rules. To the consternation of the Pharisees, Jesus contradicted their rules when He healed on the Sabbath and allowed His disciples to pick and eat corn on the Sabbath.

Religious people are not necessarily spiritual people. The Holy Spirit is not the driving force in the life of the religious person. Christ may well have been accepted into the life, but He has never been allowed to sit on the throne of a person’s life. Self is clearly and firmly rooted there. Life is not governed by the spirit of Jesus, there’s no daily growing to reflect Him. So, whenever there’s bickering, power struggles, fault-finding, gossiping, strife and hurt in church, it’s because we are operating as religious people, not spiritual ones.

The spiritual person isn’t simply the person who declares him or herself to be spiritual. There are many who don’t even acknowledge the existence of God who claim to be spiritual. The spiritual person is one in whom the Holy Spirit lives and reigns. Christ is firmly on the throne. Self has become a servant. The spiritual person, according Galatians 5:22-23, is the one whose life reflects the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The spiritual person has a deepening relationship with God. He or she knows God because the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them to him or her. The response is to willingly accept and faithfully obey God’s leading. However, this doesn’t simply happen through desire; it’s the result of prayerful submission to God and daily reading God’s Word for the purpose of knowing Him, experiencing Him and reflecting Him. It’s very difficult to prayerfully approach God’s Word in this way without the transforming power of God having a marked impact on the reader. It’s the transforming power of God that changes us from being mere religious people into those who are filled with and led by His Spirit. Spiritual people are those who are daily being changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their life.

Are you a religious or a spiritual person?

Halsey Peat
Since September, many churches across the province have been reaping a harvest of souls. Over forty-two evangelistic series and revivals have been held or are nearing completion. Pastors and lay evangelists have been preaching and teaching the truths of the Bible and over 222 new members have already joined the church through baptism.

Evangelistic meetings have taken various forms:

- Some were the traditional two-three week meetings with music, health spots, prizes for visitors and preaching traditional doctrinal subjects.
- Others were variations on the same style but presented the teachings of the church through health or family.
- Woodbridge chose the health route and invited Pastor Hamilton Williams from England to be its presenter.
- Toronto West was one of the six churches that opted for the family life route and senior pastor, Allan Chichester, soon realized that it was just what was needed as members and visitors expressed their satisfaction.
- Harmony Church/Italian Company took what could be described as a ‘Postmodern’ approach. With Pastor Frank Dell’Erba as presenter, they used two weekends to present the six-part, The Radical Teachings of Jesus. Nepean had also used ‘The Radical Teachings of Jesus’ in its outreach.
- Other churches used a seminar-style. Ruth Church used the teaching skills of Moses Henry to lead its six-week Revelation Seminar. London used a unique dialogue between two pastors in its seminar. Woodstock took its seminar to a banquet hall.
- Some young pastors have preached their first evangelistic series, and some older pastors have ventured to do the same.
- Other preachers were invited from Quebec, the Lake Region Conference in the United States, Brazil and the Caribbean. However, the majority of evangelists and seminar leaders are pastors and Bible instructors in the Ontario Conference.

During the course of the quarter, I have had the privilege of listening to several evangelists for the first time, and I must confess, I was blessed and very encouraged. The Ontario Conference can be proud of its dynamic preachers who continue to dedicate their lives to God in fulfilling the Great Commission. At one location, a church member, after listening to a pastor passionately preaching the gospel, said to me, “We must keep him here. Do not allow (name of organization withheld) to steal him from us. He is a gift from God.”

For the past two years, the conference has been making a determined effort to evangelize northern Ontario. Working closely with Bill Santos and his team from It Is Written Canada, we held the Countdown to Eternity series in Sudbury from October 28 until November 28, at the Holiday Inn. It was coordinated by local pastor, Jagos Ivanovic, with the members of the Sudbury Church in full support.

As part of the preparation for the Countdown to Eternity series, Bible instructors, Ida Smith and Rosa Lopes, held a weekend training seminar for the Sudbury church members from August 28-30. They dealt with topics such as How to Prepare and Give Bible Studies, and How to Meet Objections. The members also took part in door-to-door visitation, as they invited people to the series of meetings.

From December 4-12, Bill Santos and It Is Written will partner with the Metro North Ministerium to hold meetings at Northview Heights Secondary School in Willowdale.

The week-long series is expected to add to the numbers of baptisms being reported.

I would like to thank all our members who have been praying and working hard to grow the Kingdom of God during this Year of Evangelism. Remember that 2010 is the Year of Lay evangelism. Let’s team up with the Personal Ministries Department and Tell Ontario that Jesus is coming soon.

The harvest is bountiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore we are praying that the Lord of the harvest will send many more reapers.
The Tale of Two Kingdoms

The story has long been told of the battle of two kingdoms: the kingdom of Theos and the kingdom of Ra.

It begins with the establishment of the kingdom of Theos. This kingdom was perfect and beautiful. The king had made provision for everyone who lived there to experience life in all its fullness. He walked and talked with the people of the kingdom.

One day, a citizen, influenced by the king of Ra, wilfully made a choice contrary to the laws of the kingdom. All knew that the consequences of such actions would lead to death. This caused the king great pain, for he loved the citizens of His kingdom. It is told that many began to make choices contrary to the will of King Theos. The very laws designed to bring harmony, peace and joy, were seen as the cause of oppression. The citizens of the kingdom began to give their allegiance to the King of Ra who assured them freedom, happiness, liberty and independence. The kingdom of Theos seemed to become the kingdom of Ra.

This new order created chaos and confusion. The new promises lacked integrity and substance. Covetousness quickly replaced tranquility and peace; selfishness replaced cheerful giving and caring; hatred and murder replaced brotherly love. Despite the devastation, loyalty to the king of Ra increased.

It was a miserable place to live in. Many were suffering under the dominion of this king. He brought destruction and pain in the wake of his rulership. The king of Ra sought to damage the character and reputation of King Theos. Eventually, many in the kingdom of Ra questioned if King Theos was a king, as he claimed to be. Some questioned his very existence. And yet still there were those who sought refuge in the hope of a better kingdom. Some remembered the stories of a time gone by, a better place with a better king.

It is told that at just the right time King Theos set out to restore His kingdom. He returned as a common citizen. He often wept as he saw the pain and suffering of his people. He lived by the principles of the kingdom of Theos which enabled him to enjoy real living. In the midst of despair, he showed compassion. Where there was hatred, he showed love. Where there was pain and suffering, he brought healing. Where there was sorrow, he brought comfort. Where there was sadness, he brought joy.

King Theos resolved to redeem his people. He made all the necessary provisions for the advancement of His kingdom. He would take their death penalty upon himself, and offer them life. The invitation went out for everyone to be part of the kingdom of Theos. The king of Ra was so infuriated with what King Theos was doing, that he planned to kill him once and for all. And so, the King Theos was nailed to a cross. His followers scattered. For a brief moment, the king of Ra believed that he had conquered King Theos.

He placed guards at the tomb were they laid him for fear that some might steal his body and claim he had risen. But that grave in which King Theos was placed could not hold him. For on the third day, he rose again to new life. He held him. For on the third day, he rose again to new life. He conquered King Ra.

As word spread, many of his followers hoped he would establish his new kingdom. How sad they were, when He informed them he was leaving on a mission to design and build mansions in a better place for a future kingdom for all.

Before he left, he asked his servants to continue the work of advancing his kingdom. He asked them to take care of it. He equipped them with the means, power and vision to accomplish everything he had asked them to do. He even promised to return. Once again, there was hope in the kingdom.

There were many gifted servants who had been trained for the benefit of the kingdom. But soon after the king left, many used their talents for the work of another kingdom. Many young citizens left because they found no place to use their gifts for the king. The king of Ra took every advantage of luring them away.

Some servants felt as though time was on their hands. They engaged in everything but the work of advancing the kingdom. They spent their energy on themselves and pleasure.

They rarely thought of their beloved king. Life was busy. From morning until night, they wasted their time in misdirected use of energy and folly. Even the weekly holiday the king granted them was filled with activities for personal gain and pleasure.

There was more than enough money for each citizen and their families. The king encouraged them to watch out for the other. They were to enjoy empowered living, but when the king left, selfishness spread throughout the land. Soon, some would take advantage of the weak. During the times of need that followed, some lost their jobs, some became homeless, and even children died of...
starvation. The poor were denied the basics of life. Many families of the kingdom could no longer afford to send their children to the kingdom schools. The children were sent to schools where they could not openly speak the name of King Theos, where the values of another kingdom were taught. No one helped; no one seemed to care.

Meeting houses where King Theos was worshipped were left in disrepair. Money that could have been used to advance the kingdom was spent on personal luxuries. King Ra worked even harder to re-establish his claim on the kingdom. He took every advantage of confusing and distracting the citizens. But the commission of King Theos remained.

If you could share a word of encouragement with the citizens of the kingdom of Theos, what would you tell them?

Would you encourage them to do whatever they could to stay focused on the mission?

Would you encourage them to love one another and care for the underprivileged?

Would you encourage them to use their resources for the advancement of the kingdom?

Would you encourage them to use their talents and gifts for the glory of the king and His kingdom?

What would you tell them?

As you celebrate the birth and life of our King Jesus this season, consider what you can give to bless His kingdom. Consider giving Him the gift of a surrendered heart, complete with a life of worship and service. Consider giving your time, talent and treasure for the advancement of His kingdom. Ensure that your gift is fully charged with the power source of the Holy Spirit. And finally, seal it with a commitment for life.

“Yours, O LORD, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.” (NRS 1 Chronicles 29:11).
Keeping your intestines healthy is one of several ways to strengthen the immune system. This can be achieved, in part, by refraining from eating just before bedtime as this interferes with restful, rejuvenating sleep. During sleep, the body’s immune system and the organs of detoxification are focused on cleansing, healing, and renewal. If the stomach is full, therefore, the body must postpone repairs and the elimination of wastes in order to digest the meal – a process that could last for hours if the meal is a heavy one. Throughout the following day, the body is forced to direct its energy to the task of digesting meals without being given the opportunity to eliminate waste from the previous day. If this cycle continues long enough, the immune system is weakened, resulting in the body’s susceptibility to viral and bacterial infections because of the presence of accumulated waste in the intestines.

Waste in the intestines provides the ideal environment for parasites to thrive. Here, they reproduce rapidly and may result in parasitic infection. Signs of parasitic infection, occurring alone or in combination, include constipation (or diarrhoea – depending on the type of parasite present), gas and bloating, irritable bowel syndrome, abdominal pain, anorexia, chills, joint and muscle aches and pains, teeth-grinding, chronic fatigue, hives, rashes, eczema, ulcers, sores, muscle spasms, rectal itching, anaemia from blood loss associated with low iron absorption and the presence of blood or mucus in faecal matter, and the presence of a worm (or worms) in stool.

In order to reduce the incidence of parasites in the intestines, it is important to adhere to the following simple guidelines:

- Wash all fruits and vegetables in a plant-based soapy solution. Avoid purchasing fruits that are cut and packaged.
- Avoid eating animal products as these can be sources of parasites.
- Eat foods that are high in fibre to decrease bowel transit time. Ideally, you should have a bowel movement for every meal you consume.
- Drink plenty of water to promote good bowel elimination.
- Wash your hands according to the guidelines given in the summer 2009 edition of Highlights.
- If you are gardening (indoors or outdoors), remember that parasites are found in soil and can enter your body through cracked skin or cuts.
- Avoid swallowing water if you swim.
- If you have pets, ensure that they are de-wormed.
- Avoid the overuse of antibiotics since this can result in the increase in intestinal parasites because of the reduction of normal flora in the bowel.
- If you are infected, consult your health care practitioner for natural products that can be used to eliminate parasites.
- Exercise frequently to increase the body’s ability to remove toxic substances and parasites from the body.

While it is impossible to live in a sterile bubble, we can do all in our power to reduce the incidence of disease. And while we wait to experience life in an uncontaminated environment, let us be encouraged by Revelation 22:1 & 2 - Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Maria McClean, Health & Children’s Ministries Director
On Sunday, November 29, 2009, the Ontario Conference Board of Directors voted to approve the purchase of thirty-eight acres of land from Kingsway College for a future camp meeting ground.

“We're really excited about this,” said Pastor Daniel Linrud, conference executive secretary, “because we believe that it answers the mandate and strong cry of our constituency for a site of our own where we can have a multi-day camp meeting and a location where we can hold other events.”

The cry of the constituency goes back to at least two constituency meetings. During the thirty-first meeting in July 2005, the constituency approved an initiative, asking “the Board of Directors to conduct feasibility for the long-term plan of procuring a property.” However, at the constituency meeting in July 2009, it was reported that the initial phase of the project could cost between $40 and $50 million to purchase land and build a 300,000 sq. ft. auditorium. Even without additional costs of other required infrastructure, a loan of $50 million would be necessary. The annual interest charges would amount to approximately $4.75 million, absorbing 20% of the conference operating budget. These prohibitive figures seemed to have dashed the hopes of many.

The purchase of the property at Kingsway College will restore their hope that they will attend a multi-day camp meeting at their camp ground in Ontario within a few years.

The purchase of the property has come as a surprise because the new conference administration had not yet begun to actively seek a property. However, it has been the subject of their prayers. “It was the timing,” said Linrud. “I see God’s hand in this.”

He explained how in October, the Ontario Conference became aware that Kingsway College was preparing to sell twenty-seven acres of land for the development of about 300 residential homes. At the same time, the rezoning from an education institution to a residential zone was about to be completed with the city. Once zoning had been approved, it would have had made it impossible to purchase the property to be used as a camp meeting site. The prayers of the administration became more fervent, believing that God’s hand was on the property for the conference.

The property in question is the one north of Shankel Road, west of Townline, the land surrounding College Park Elementary School (CPES) up to College Woodwork centre, and the parcel of land behind the girls dormitory, north of the King Fitness Centre (See the diagram above).

The original development plans included moving CPES to another part of the campus and selling the parcel of land to be used for a plaza.

The entire face of the campus would have changed to commercial and residential.

The conference administration began holding conversations with Kingsway College Board and after three meetings, “everything just fell into place” says Linrud.

The opportunity was even more attractive when it was considered that financially successful camp grounds (where the camp sites do not lose money) in the USA
are those that are part of an existing academy where infrastructure is already in place.

On November 17, the Ontario Board of Directors approved an offer to be made to Kingsway College for the twenty-seven acres plus an additional five acres at a cost of $5 million. The additional five acres is the parcel of land north of the parking lot at the King Fitness Centre and west of Clarence Biesenthal Drive. Subsequent negotiations resulted in an additional 5.2 acres of land by CPES.

The conference offer of $5 million for approximately 38 acres was accepted by the Kingsway College Board on November 19. Final approval to purchase was made by the Ontario Conference Board on November 29.

The property is larger than the grounds presently used by Kingsway College, but camp meetings will also include the present campus which many church members are familiar with. Pastor Mansfield, Ontario Conference president, recognises this as one of its advantages.

“The campus of Kingsway College has been our traditional home,” he said, “and members are used to this location. Additionally, we will have access to existing facilities such as the cafeteria, dormitory, gymnasium and the Adventist Book Centre. There is also adequate parking.

This is really an answer to our prayers.”

Reflecting on the speed of the negotiations, Edwards added, “I must personally thank the conference Board of Directors for supporting the vision and endorsing the proposal.”

It is expected that the property will belong to the Ontario Conference early in the New Year. However, it is not yet known when camp meetings will return to Oshawa as the site will have to be prepared for such use. Further costs will have to be incurred. Camp meeting for 2010 will again be held at the International Centre on May 29.

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**Church Building Investment Fund Passes Million Dollar Mark**

The Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF) has surpassed the million dollar mark! Conference treasurer, Ulysses Guarin, recently reported that since its inception eight years ago, $1,143,615 has been raised. Recently appointed field representative, Vernon Langdon, was quick to acknowledge the generosity of church members across the province and the significant financial support of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the milestone achievement.

“This is really good news,” says Langdon, “because our churches have a combined debt of over $12,000,000, and reaching the million dollar mark shows that we can reduce and even eliminate outstanding loans.”

All funds received are distributed annually to assist churches eliminate their building loans according to a set formula. From the amount collected, 70% is allocated on a rotating basis among four or five of the churches, starting with those bearing the oldest debts. The remaining 30% is divided equally among the remaining churches, regardless of membership or tithe income, as appropriation for their capital needs.

Since the inception of CBIF, twenty-nine churches have been major beneficiaries. These churches have been able to either accelerate their loan amortizations by as much as twelve months, or, as in the case of thirteen churches, totally eliminate their building loans.

“There is no doubt that the CBIF is working,” says Langdon, “and we have to give God the glory for what has been achieved so far. I also know that the conference is grateful for the generosity of those who have given to this fund.”

He is keen to see churches freed from debt so that they can focus their energies on proclaiming the gospel.

“All it takes,” he says, “is for each member in our 152 churches, companies and groups to give a minimal contribution of $2.00 weekly or $104 each year.

“In November, we began a new cycle of financial assistance to the churches with outstanding loans, from the oldest to the most recent, and every member is encouraged to prayerfully support this worthy endeavour.”

In her book, *Counsels on Stewardship*, E. G. White states, “When you place the Lord first and realize that the Lord is dishonoured by debt, God will bless you.” Vernon Langdon may be reached at the Ontario Conference office and will be happy to meet with church boards or congregations to explain the mechanics and benefits of the CBIF. Tel.: 905-571-1022 ext. 217 or 905-686-5757 ext. 217.
Reinventing Ancient Rituals?

“Some church members where I live are teaching that it is necessary for Christians to observe Israelite festivals. Is this a biblical requirement?”

Several Adventist scholars have looked into this subject, and the common conclusion has been that the Bible does not expect Christians to observe the Jewish festivals. Let me briefly summarize some of those conclusions.

1. Festivals and the Sacrificial System: Each of the festivals was characterized by the joy of bringing offerings and sacrifices to the Lord. In Leviticus 23 the different festivals are listed, and their purpose is summarized with the words “These are the Lord’s appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to the Lord by fire” (verse 37, NIV). The Hebrew preposition ל (for) is used here to express the idea of purpose. There is no indication in the Bible that during the festivals a spiritual sacrifice could take the place of a material one.

2. Festivals and Centralized Worship: A number of the festivals were to be celebrated at the Temple and not anywhere else in Israel. Three feasts are specifically required to be observed in the Temple, making it necessary for the people to appear before the Lord; namely, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16).

Even Passover, which was originally a family celebration, was also centralized and connected with the Temple: “You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the Lord your God gives you except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name” (verse 37, NIV). The Bible does not allow for the celebration of those festivals anywhere else. Any attempt to justify their celebration independent of the Israelite Temple is simply a human determination.

3. Festivals and the Calendar: Most of the festivals were closely tied to the Israelite agricultural calendar. This was clearly the case with respect to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was closely connected to the Passover (Lev. 23:5-11); the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost; Deut. 16:9, 10; Lev. 23:15-21); and the Feast of Tabernacles (Ex. 23:16; Deut. 16:13; Lev. 23:33-36). The same applied to the sabbatical years (Ex. 23:10, 11). The implication is that it was impossible for the Israelites to celebrate some of these festivals before they entered Canaan. This was particularly the case with the Feasts of Pentecost and Tabernacles (Ex. 23:16). No exceptions to those regulations are mentioned in the Bible, thus indicating that the celebration of those festivities was restricted to those living in the land of Israel. In fact, Hosea announced that Israel’s exile would make it impossible for them to celebrate the Lord’s feasts (Hosea 9:1-5).

4. Festivals and Ethnic Identity: The religious and ethnic identity of the Israelites was closely associated with the celebration of some of the festivals, such as the Passover, which was restricted to Israelites and to those who through circumcision became Israelites (Ex. 12:43-50). It may well be that the reason the Judaisers Paul confronted were requiring Christian Gentiles to become Jews by being circumcised (Acts 15:1); otherwise they could not celebrate Passover and other festivals and Jewish rituals.

5. Festivals and Christians: The New Testament makes clear that the sanctuary services of the Old Testament came to an end through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and through His high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. The ceremonial law was “a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves” (Heb. 10:1, NIV). We no longer abide by the ceremonial Levitical law; we have a new High Priest who does not belong to the order of Aaron; and “when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law” (Heb. 7:12). This is not the law that regulated priestly lineage; it is rather the law that could not bring perfection (verse 19).

During the apostolic period Jewish Christians may have observed the festivals, but there is no biblical evidence to support the conclusion that this was required of Gentile Christians. On the contrary, the Bible indicates that the celebration of the festivals had geographical and temporal limitations; their religious function found its fulfillment in Christ.
Ignite Ontario 2010 Year of Lay Evangelism

Almost a year ago, the Personal Ministries Department of the Ontario Conference, in conjunction with other ministry departments, embarked on an all-inclusive evangelistic plan – the 2010 Year of Lay Evangelism.

From the plan’s inception, the idea was to equip, empower, and utilize the spiritual gifts of as many church members as possible from a minimum of 100 churches so that they can be more fully involved in the primary business of the church – soul winning!

The plan has two phases:
- Phase one involved two major training programs in 2009. These brought together potential lay preachers from across the conference and equipped them to host a series of evangelistic meetings, September 18 - October 9, 2010.
  - The first training session was held at Downsview Church, September 17-19. Approximately, 300 lay preachers were trained in such areas as: How to give Bible studies; how to prepare and deliver evangelistic sermons; how to prepare the church for the series of meetings; the art and power of visitation, etc.
  - The second training session was held at Canada Christian College on November 14, and brought together about five hundred ministry leaders from across the conference. These leaders were provided with training and resource materials on possible seminars that they could host in their respective local churches for their communities, starting January 2010.
  - These seminars included Financial Planning; WIN!
- Phase two of the plan will come into effect in January 2010 and will put the onus on local pastors and their congregations. From the training and resource materials received in the November training, the expectation is for the churches to host similar seminars for their local communities. Besides sharing valuable and relevant information with the community, these seminars are intended to cultivate an atmosphere of relationship building in preparation for the evangelistic series in September 2010.

Festival of the Laity: The period of preparation and training will culminate with the Festival of the Laity Convention, August 26-28, 2010, in Toronto. While this will be opened to anyone wishing to attend, it is expected that all lay preachers who will be involved in the evangelistic series in September are to be there. It will provide the final inspiration, training, and motivation for our lay evangelists from across the Ontario Conference. The Festival of the Laity will replace the annual Maranatha for 2010.

Between Now and Then: Along the way into 2010, the Personal Ministries Department is committed to meeting with lay preachers throughout the various regions of the conference to provide continued coaching and support for the lay preachers. The appeal is for pastors to do all they can to support and equip their lay preachers for this unprecedented lay evangelistic efforts in the Ontario Conference.

Each church member has a unique and immediate role to play. You are asked to be involved in our greatest ever evangelistic effort. Presently, all that is asked of each person is to cultivate friendships with people and begin praying for their salvation.

Eustace Williams,
Personal Ministries Director
Five hundred church members filled with passion to see men, women and children enter God's kingdom attended a one-day evangelism training event on Sabbath, November 14, 2009, at Canada Christian College. They were challenged to move into a new realm of thinking and operating.

During his sermon, The Elijah Message for Today, Dr. John Youngberg told the congregation, “It's time we got out of the safe zone and get into the faith zone”. He was speaking about the challenges and opportunities posed by next year’s Year of Lay Evangelism.

Youngberg, 79, retired Andrews University professor and co-founder of Family Life International, spoke of his confidence that it is God’s will for His people to be fully involved in witnessing. “God needs men and women who are courageous,” he declared, “people who are not afraid of anything but who are ready and willing to set Ontario on fire for Him.”

Youngberg was attending with his wife, Dr. Millie Youngberg, as presenters at the training event.

The evangelism training, sponsored by the Children’s, Family, Health, Men’s, Personal, Stewardship and Women’s Ministries of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was the second training event for church members who will be leading in conference-wide evangelistic events next year.

**Worship**

For those who previously attended a Maranatha evangelism training event, the format was very familiar with the major components of worship and training. However, there was a greater sense of purpose because the training is directly related to a specific sequence of evangelism in 2010.

This was reflected in the worship segments led by Pastor David Schwingammer and a team of worship leaders from College Park Adventist Church. They led worshippers into an experience that left them confident in God’s ability to provide for His people and to make them victorious in their efforts to win souls for His kingdom.

Soloists, Susan Juodele and Norwill Simmonds’ rendition of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” and “He’s Able”, respectively, richly underlined the assurance of God’s power and His purpose.

**Silent Testimony**

One of the most inspiring segments of the morning worship was the entrance of eleven persons, walking one at a time onto the platform, each carrying a large white card. On the card was written a situation or a sinful habit that had weighed the person down. Nothing was said. The congregation was held in rapt attention. After a few moments, the card was turned over to reveal how God had released the person from his or her oppression. It was a silent testimony that loudly spoke of God’s power.

**Inspirational Preaching**

Those who attended and anticipated hearing inspirational and informative preaching were not
disappointed. In addition to Dr. John Youngberg’s powerful challenge for people to act in Elijah’s faith and spirit, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, president of the Ontario Conference, called for boldness in reaching out to the people of Ontario with the gospel.

“We serve a God who is not intimidated by circumstances,” he said. “We cannot allow our circumstances to prevent us from sharing our witness. Go and tell what great things God has done for you!”

It was the first occasion that some were hearing the new president, and they were clearly pleased with what they heard.

Training

Training was the main purpose for the occasion. Nine workshops were held throughout the day to provide a wide cross-section of evangelism preparedness. WIN! Wellness, created by Drs. John and Millie Youngberg, is an evangelistic resource that gives equal emphasis to health, family and spiritual transformation. Attendees were trained on how to use this tool in public presentations or in small groups. Darren and Nyasha Ruddock’s Leading Financial Seminars prepared presenters to use financial tools as a bridging step in the local community. The other workshops were led by conference departmental directors.

Intercessory prayer is an imperative for all successful evangelistic efforts. Those who attended Pastor Eustace Williams’ workshop learned how to apply scriptural insights and principles that will help them become effective intercessors. There were two tracks for Discipling New Believers. Pastor Daniel Catangay, Pastor Joseph and Patricia Bulgin led trainees through the crucial stage of helping to establish new believers as disciples. Both Pastors Damson Oppong and David Schwinghamer focused on spirituality. Oppong’s Encounter with Jesus explored various Bible studies designed to introduce Jesus to prospective converts. Schwinghamer’s Discover Life in the Kingdom explored the six stages of growing in faith. In Don’t Forget the Children, Maria McClean addressed the importance of presenting the gospel to children in an age-appropriate format. Glenn DeSilva’s Building a Men’s Ministry: More than a Pancake Breakfast! looked at practical ideas on how men can connect through meaningful and effective ways to lead other men to Jesus.

By the event’s conclusion, the 500 participants, filled with a rich worship experience, skills sharpened and with the charge of President Edwards still ringing in their ears, were ready to be used by the Holy Spirit to make 2010 the most successful year ever for evangelism in Ontario.

The Ontario Conference is seeking to partner with Ontario’s Ministry of Health Promotion to promote healthful living across the province. On Monday, October 26, 2009, Health Ministries director, Maria McClean, and conference president, Pastor Mansfield Edwards, met with the Honourable Margarett Best, Minister of Health Promotion, and members of her staff to discuss possible collaboration ventures.

“While looking at the minister’s website,” said McClean, “we noticed that she shares some of our views on health promotion, so we decided to approach her. She and her staff were very receptive to our ideas, and we are pleased that the minister took time to meet with us.”

Clearly satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, McClean said that it has opened the way for future dialogue on a number of events and programs to be launched in 2010 and beyond.
Brampton Continues Bible Bowl Dominance

Brampton Church has once again demonstrated that its Bible Bowl teams are the dominant force in Ontario Bible Bowl.

In a thrilling series of games during September (Bible Bowl month), Brampton’s Junior Youth and Adult teams were placed first in their division. The Senior Youth team was placed second in its division. It was not a walk in the park for Brampton, though.

For the first time in eight years of play, the team for Brampton, captained by “Mr. Bible Bowl” Freddie Guthrie in the Adult Division, lost a game to another adult team. The Willowdale Church team ended Brampton’s winning streak, but division victory was not to be theirs as Brampton eventually went on to take first place.

While members have changed over the years, Freddie has been the backbone of the team. He took his first game defeat with a smile, commenting on the high quality of play this season. In a few minutes his team was back at the front to successfully defend his church’s reputation as champions in sharing Bible knowledge.

It is clear that Brampton’s dominance will not be left unchallenged. Mount Zion and Willowdale demonstrated that their teams are ready to wear the Bible Bowl crowns.

The high quality of Bible knowledge retention was a notable occurrence this year. It made for exciting matches. The final games were often close in score and were played with tension right down to the last second.

This year’s series began after Sabbath vespers on September 12. Equipment failure delayed the start and made completing the tight schedule of games in one day impossible, but it did not dampen the enthusiasm of the players. Plans were quickly put in place to finish the slate of matches on September 26.

This year saw an expansion of divisions to include the 6 to 9 year olds in the newly formed pre-junior age group. The children in this section beamed with delight as Alex Rowe, chair of the Bible Bowl Coordinating Committee, moderated the very first game played in this division in Ontario. Over 20 children played, representing seven teams in this division.

Everyone is excited to see more young people studying the Word of God. This has been strengthened by the addition of the Pre-Junior Division. Pastor Millett, the Youth director, says that that the future is bright for Bible Bowl in this conference. “Only good can come out of being people of the Book, and Bible Bowl is challenging members to draw deeply from this fount that connects us to our Saviour,” he is quoted as saying.

Not only was a new division added, but the number of teams hit an all time high of forty-five, representing more churches than ever. Twelve churches sent members to play this year. The rapid development of Bible Bowl in Ontario is causing serious growth pains, and the coordinating committee is scrambling to keep up with these developments. Darlene Pisuena-Rey mentioned that, “(when it comes to encouraging Bible study) this is a good problem to have.” There is no wane in appreciation by the participants and supporters of this highly challenging Bible learning event.

Bible Bowl in Ontario is modelled after the games played by Seventh-day Adventists across the United States. The committee here has modified the rules to include a thrilling rapid-fire middle round of questions that pushes each participant to answer questions without the support of team mates. This adaptation was showcased for consideration as a permanent part of the games at the National Bible Bowl Championships in Atlanta, Georgia, at the end of October. They not only demonstrated the Lighting Timed Round (LTR) but challenged the rest of North America when our conference champions played among a field that has seen Ontario as one of the conferences with a high number of winning over the years.

All teams are now preparing for 2010 when Bible Bowl will be expanded. Discussions are underway to perhaps have two leagues (an east and a west) here in Ontario. The top teams would advance to a championship series to decide the conference champs. This approach will need more equipment, more organization and an additional Sabbath of play for all involved.

Players and supporters are also excited that in 2010 the National Bible Bowl Championships will be played in Toronto and hosted by the Youth Ministries Department of the Ontario Conference. As the organizers of Bible Bowl are apt to say, “Everyone who studies the Scriptures is a winner!”

Bible Bowl Championships Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1st Position</th>
<th>2nd Position</th>
<th>3rd Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Juniors</td>
<td>Meadowvale</td>
<td>Willowdale</td>
<td>Mount. Zion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior Youth</td>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>Toronto Central</td>
<td>Mount Zion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Youth</td>
<td>Mount. Zion</td>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>Willowdale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Adult</td>
<td>Malton</td>
<td>Downsview</td>
<td>Willowdale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>Scarborough</td>
<td>Mount Zion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Ontario Bible Bowl Teams Third in North American Division Championships

After their thrilling victories in the Ontario Bible Bowl Championships, Brampton’s Junior Youth and Malton's Young Adults teams were placed third in the North American Division’s Bible Bowl Championship in Atlanta.

Four teams from Ontario made the long bus ride to the two day championships held on October 23 and 24. They went prepared to challenge the best teams from across North America and continue the tradition of bringing home at least one trophy. Not only did they challenge but proved themselves to be among the best.

Youth director, Pastor Cyril Millett, said, “Our teams handled themselves very well. I’m really proud of them. They played well, and I’m very happy for what they have achieved. Even our two teams that did not reach the top three positions still demonstrated their worth, and I’m grateful for their dedication and hard work.”

The teams returned to Toronto tired but thankful for being part of an exciting Bible Bowl experience.

The Bible Bowl Coordinating Committee is now getting ready for next year as they put plans in place to ensure that Ontario’s teams have the best chance of doing well.

It is expected that 2010 will be a very exciting year for Bible Bowl in Ontario because the NAD championships will be played in Toronto.

Ontario Bible Bowl Teams Third in North American Division Championships

Lambert Takes Pathfinder Council Helm

On Sabbath, October 17, 2009, Russell Lambert was voted as the executive coordinator for the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council (OCPC). He received the overwhelming approval of nearly 200 delegates, representing all churches belonging to the Pathfinder Ministry of the Ontario Conference that met at Grace Apostolic Church in Scarborough.

Lambert, an elder at Mississauga Seventh-day Adventist Church, has previously served the OCPC in various capacities for many years, including being executive director (2000-2004). Accepting the position, Lambert spoke of his love for the Pathfinder Ministry and pledged to do his best to give the council the spiritual leadership that it requires. He gave tribute to his immediate predecessor, Alex Rowe, who served for two successive two-year terms and asked that the good team spirit that was demonstrated under Rowe’s leadership be continued. He also asked for the prayerful support of everyone in order to continue building Pathfinder Ministry in Ontario.

In addition to Lambert, the delegates also voted Ermine Leader and Chester Lewis as assistant executive co-coordinators. Both come from a strong tradition of Pathfinder leadership.

The convention, and its business session chaired by Dr. Janice Maitland, Conference Education superintendent and outgoing OCPC associate executive coordinator, was more than simply the election of new leaders. Worship, instruction and inspiration filled a major portion of the time. Each segment of the day was permeated by the theme, “Spirit-filled Leadership”.

Featured devotional speakers and seminar leaders were Pastor Kenton Perrin, OCPC chaplain; Pastor Halsey Peat, Conference Communication director; Pastor Cyril Millett II, Conference Youth director; and Pastor Edwin Martin, Conference associate Youth director and Pathfinder specialist.

Pastor Edwin Martin took time to give tribute to his predecessor, Pastor Charles Leader, and presented him with a plaque on behalf of the OCPC.

The OCPC exists to assist young people, ages 10-15, to personally know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. It provides leadership, resources, guidance and training for local churches and their Pathfinder clubs.

If you would like to see a Pathfinder club established in your congregation, speak to your pastor today.

For more information, call Pastor Edwin Martin, conference Pathfinder specialist, at 905-571-1022 ext. 223.

L’investiture Oshkosh Développe le Ministère des Eclaireurs d’Ottawa

Il y a deux ans, sept aspirantes chefs-guides, venant de trois églises différentes de la région d’Ottawa (L’Ottawa Français, l’Orléans Français et les églises Adventistes d’Orléans), ont exprimé leur désir de suivre une formation pour répondre aux besoins qu’elles sentaient dans la jeunesse de leurs églises. Dès le départ, leur devise était «Viser Plus Haut».

Elles ont atteint avec bonheur leur objectif lors de leur investiture comme chefs-guides durant le Camporee explorateur international 2009 qui s’est tenu à Oshkosh au mois d’août.

Le thème du Camporee, “Le Courage de se Dresser” reflète avec justesse les traits de caractère que ces sept jeunes ont démontré au cours de leurs deux années de périple pour atteindre leur but. Elles ont ainsi fait face à de nombreux défis mais sont restés déterminés à réussir car elles souhaitaient un leadership solide à la jeunesse d’Ottawa à travers le Ministère des J.A. Leur succès a rendu gloire à Dieu.

Le Sabbat, 5 septembre 2009, s’est tenu une cérémonie de consécration des sept nouvelles chefs-guides de l’Ottawa. Le pasteur Charles, ancien directeur adjoint de la jeunesse et spécialiste J.A. pour la Conférence d’Ontario, sa femme Ermine et Mary-Yvette Denney, coordinatrice des consécrations pour le district
For six nights in mid-September, Belleville Seventh-day Adventist Church held a unique series of studies in the book of Revelation. Each night, 25-35 people, including seven visitors from the local community, turned out to hear Pastor Sereivudh Ly, minister of Belleville Adventist Church, present fascinating insights from the book of Revelation.

Each evening, attendees enjoyed a light supper and had the opportunity to mingle and make friends before getting down to the study of Revelation. Some took the opportunity to talk about what they had learned and eagerly reached for their workbooks, containing session materials as well as supplemental reading, as soon as the time arrived to commence the night’s study.

As Pastor Ly led in the studies, Revelation’s symbols of churches, seals, angels and messengers took on meaning. It was clear that the Holy Spirit was opening the understanding of attendees.

Long-time member and serving elder in the church, Barb Truoo, said, “I think I better go back and study some more.”

A younger member, Jennifer Parent, was definite about how much she had learned. “Previously, my understanding was quite superficial,” she said.

Others said they received a new look at the prophecies and developed a deeper appreciation for Revelation’s application to their life.

At the close of the last night, everyone was invited to attend a weekly follow-up series.

Marie Clarke

Oshkosh Investiture Grows Ottawa Pathfinder Ministry

Two years ago, seven Master Guides in-training (MIT) from three churches in the Ottawa region: the Ottawa French, Orleans French and Orleans Seventh-day Adventist churches, sensing the needs of youth in churches, shared their desire for necessary training to meet the needs. From the very beginning, their goal was “Aim Higher.”

They gladly reached their goal when they were invested as Master Guides during the International Pathfinder Camporee that was held in August at Oshkosh.

The camporee’s theme, “Courage to Stand” aptly reflects the character trait that the seven MITs demonstrated during their two-year journey to reach their goal. They faced many challenges but were determined to be successful because they wanted to give good leadership to the youth of Ottawa through Pathfinder Ministry. They credit God with all their successes.

On Sabbath, September 5, 2009, a consecration ceremony was held in Ottawa for the seven newly invested Master Guides. Pastor Charles, former associate youth director and Pathfinder specialist for the Ontario Conference; his wife, Ermine, and Mary-Yvette Dennery, eastern region district coordinator of the consecration, led out in the ceremony. The ceremony was a time of praise to God and the new Master Guides expressed their commitment to offer their entire beings to the mission assigned to them. They also invited the congregation to adopt their goal, “Aim Higher” as its own.

As the seven Master Guides take up new responsibilities of Pathfinder leadership in Ottawa, they are praying that God will bless their work and that Ottawa will become known for its strong Pathfinder Ministry.

Belleville’s Six Nights of Revelation

New Master Guides with Pastor Charles Leader (centre)
On the weekend of July 11–12, TLN (Telelatino Network), the City of Toronto, Hillcrest Village Business Improvement Association, and other sponsors launched “Salsa on St. Clair,” a Latin street festival along St. Clair Avenue West in Toronto.

Thousands of people from the Latin community and nearby neighbourhoods gathered at the venue to enjoy dancing to the Latin vibe and rhythm of salsa, lively performed by bands and tasting different Hispanic dishes.

The last thing festival-goers expected to see was a stall representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church members from both Maranatha and Bet-el Spanish Adventist churches pitched a booth at the site. In a prudent, yet determined manner, a team of youth and adult members took the initiative to tell everyone they met at the festival that there is hope in Jesus.

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“Sign up for a free Bible!”
Happy Family Seminar at Toronto West

When Adrian Constantin sat down to a free community meal at Toronto West Seventh-day Adventist Church, he did not realize that he was starting a journey into a relationship with Jesus. After the meal, he was invited to the youth prayer group, led by Pastor Patrick Jacques, where he experienced such a connection with other youth and, more importantly, with God, that he couldn’t resist the urge to continue attending. On October 10, he was among eighteen happy converts who were baptized at the conclusion of Toronto West’s Happy Family Seminar, September 11 to October 10.

Nineteen-year old Cassy Woodley is one of the converts. She was excited when she joined Rexdale Outreach Community Choir (ROC), based at Toronto West Adventist Church. For the past two years, the choir, comprised of community youth, has been her joy. However, her greatest joy was being baptized, along with her mother, Catherine.

“Four months I had been struggling with believing in Jesus,” said Cassy, “but God used the seminar to show me the truth about who He is.” The baptism of both mother and daughter reflects both the focus of the church on the community and the theme of the seminar led by the local minister, Pastor Allan Chichester.

“We are committed to meeting the needs of our community,” said Chichester, “and we wanted to hold a series that both delivered the gospel and empowered families.”

Forty days of prayer and fasting, door-to-door team visits, prayer walks for the community, community dinners, lay Bible instructor classes and home study groups were just some of the activities that prepared Toronto West’s community for the seminar.

Nightly, members, regular visitors, and community guests attended the meetings. Dedicated church members shuttled guests to the meetings. Some attended from as far away as London, Ontario. Five weeks and twenty-four sermons later, eighteen persons were baptized. The sermons, strategically organized, clearly presented the Gospel and empowered families within the church and in the community. As the series began, it was evident that the emphasis on the family was what was needed. Nightly, attendees demonstrated a keenness to learn and understand the knowledge and insight from the messages delivered eloquently and powerfully by the evangelist, Pastor Allan Chichester. Visitors and guests alike expressed their appreciation for messages that directly touched their lives.

Pastor Chichester was careful to emphasize that truly happy families are those that pattern their lives on Christ. The relevance and success of the series have greatly inspired the church leadership and motivated the members to continue reaching out to the local community with the gospel.

Sherene Cole Watson, Communications

Adventist Singles Ministry Walk n’ Roll at Variety Village

On September 20, a number of volunteers from Adventist Singles Adult Ministry (ASAM) joined celebrities, NHL players, Olympic medalists and many others on Variety Village’s 3rd Annual Walk n’ Roll.

This year’s Walk n’ Roll helped Variety Village reach its goal of 1,000 participants, attracting a community of supporters who share a common hope for the future of an integrated society where people of all abilities can feel welcome and accepted. The money raised will support vital programs offered at Variety Village.

ASAM’s outreach program, under the leadership of Andrew Skytte, is in the process of securing a time schedule to have a class on Christian Education for children and youth with disabilities and for their families.

ASAM also organized the Christmas program on November 22 for the sponsors and benefactors of Variety Village.
Prison Visits Results in Baptism at Toronto Hungarian Church

Toronto Hungarian Seventh-day Adventist Church recently welcomed four precious souls who offered their lives to Jesus through baptism and committed themselves to lives of service.

Among those who were baptized were Mihály Besszer, whom Pastor Károly Nagy first visited in prison last year. Subsequent visits led to prayer and Bible studies. Soon after his release, he claimed God’s forgiveness and committed himself to following Him through baptism. The Lord performed a miracle in his life, and now he enjoys a ‘double portion’ of grace.

“It has been a positive experience,” said Pastor Nagy, “for our church to see the restoration in this young man’s life as a result of his powerful conversion testimony.”

The grace of God was no less for the other three new members of Toronto Hungarian Seventh-day Adventist Church. Zsofia Berki, Gyöngyi Király, and Ernő Berki each have their own experience of God’s forgiving power and can testify of His goodness.

Pastor Nagy sees the baptisms of the four converts as “a rain drop from the latter rain” and looks forward to the time when “will soon be poured out in full measure so miracles and great conversion stories will be seen in Ontario, Canada and around the world.”

For the past year, Filipino Canadian Church has been reaching out to its community through practical and helpful community projects.

In March 2009, twenty-two participants attended six full days of training and education in the areas of human rights, immigration and labour justice, effective communication, stress management, oppression, violence and abuse and building networks of individuals facing similar challenges to support each other. They also joined Filipino Canadian Church in one of its health screenings in the park.

On June 28, 2009, the ‘1st Caregivers Advocacy Training’ graduation exercises was held in the basement of Filipino Canadian Church with 22 graduates in the presence of sponsors from different sectors of the community.

Graduates and staff from ANC acknowledged the support and dedication of Filipino Canadian Church to the success of the program. Among the proposals, support for caregivers and new immigrants was identified as a priority.

Shortly afterwards, a group of members was officially organized and teamed up with the staff of Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC). A grant from ANC and funds from the church allowed the church to implement an advocacy training and support project for newcomers, nannies and caregivers in the Bathurst-Finch community.

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On June 28, 2009, the ‘1st Caregivers Advocacy Training’ graduation exercises was held in the basement of Filipino Canadian Church with 22 graduates in the presence of sponsors from different sectors of the community. After this event, one of the staff of ANC brought her grandchildren to Filipino Canadian’s yearly Vacation Bible School program.

Since November, a second advocacy training has been completed, and plans for 2010 are under consideration. In each case, Filipino Canadian Church is playing a very active role.

Sammy Adriatico
Mount Zion Buddhist Church
Breaks Ground after Thirty-Three Year Wait

October 11, 2009 is a date that will forever be part of the history of the work among Koreans in Ontario because it was when Toronto Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church broke ground for its church building. The date is even more significant because it marked the end of a thirty-three year wait.

“You have waited a long time for this moment,” President Mansfield Edwards told the audience of members, visitors and guests, “and God has richly blessed your patience and diligence. Your dreams will soon be realized when you move into the beautiful edifice that you plan to build here.”

The mild and sunny October day reflected the feeling of thankfulness among the Korean membership in Ontario.

“We are very happy for this day,” Wan Kim told Highlights. “We are really excited because we have waited so many years for this moment.”

Rosemary Seo, wife of the church pastor, said, “Everyone is thankful to God.”

Thanksgiving was reflected in the rich musical selections and the retelling of the journey to obtain a church building from 1976 until present.

Pastor Edwards was joined in the symbolic groundbreaking by Mr. Ulysses Guarin, conference treasurer; Mr. Birthe Chan, conference property manager; Pastor Dae Doo Seo, Toronto Korean church pastor; Pastor Young Jae Yang, Western Toronto Korean church pastor; Mr. Don-sup Chung, head elder; Mr. Martin Forskin of EMCOM Construction; and Mrs. Doris Cheung, architect.

The two-acre property at 4150 Chesswood Drive, Downsview, will make it the third Seventh-day Adventist church building within five minutes of each other. It is anticipated that the church building will open by July, 2010.

Mount Zion Gives Thanks with Mortgage Burning

Mount Zion Filipino Church in Downsview, Ontario, celebrated its traditional Thanksgiving service on Monday, October 12, 2009, by burning its mortgage.

Almost every seat was taken as members turned out to give thanks. While there were many personal reasons to give thanks, the burning of the mortgage was an extraordinary reason to celebrate God’s goodness. In addition to the happy and grateful worship which included music by the church choir and the Golden Circle Seniors Ministry choir, church treasurer, Lyn Tenerife, gave a brief report on the mortgage and loan history of the church building. In a lovely termination ceremony senior pastor, Edwin Martin; associate pastor, Joseph Batiancila; first elder, Ezekiel Lucrida, and Lyn Tenerife lit the loan paper. The congregation watched with quiet fascination as it was completely engulfed in flames.

Originally signed on October 1, 2005, the $150,000 Revolving Fund loan was payable in 12 years, but by God’s grace, it was paid down in four.

After listening to the Thanksgiving message given by Pastor Edwin Martin, thankful members shed tears of joy and gratitude as they stood to give personal testimonies.

Everyone was touched and deeply blessed to listen to the sentiments expressed by Sisters Pauline, Lorna Buchanan, Suzette Frias, Marivic Pangilinan on behalf of Chelsey Pangilinan and Brothers Preciliano Tolentino, Neph Mendoza, and Cesar Esquerra.

Members took the opportunity to personally thank and recognize their friends and family with hugs and fresh cut flowers and gave generous donations of non-perishable food items to be used at the Mount Zion food bank.

In keeping with tradition, the Thanksgiving service was followed by a sumptuous luncheon and fellowship.

Judy Gamez, Communications
Orleans-French Church Prepares for ‘2010: Year of Lay Evangelism’ with Ten Baptisms

Orleans-French Adventist Church is excitedly preparing for next year’s Year of Lay Evangelism after a two-week evangelistic series resulted in ten baptisms.

There was an atmosphere of excitement during the last days of the evangelistic meetings as preparations were being made after the number of persons grew from two to six and then finally to ten.

The meetings, held at the Orleans United Church from September 12 – 26, 2009, were the reaping part of work done with youth and young adults from the church and with those who had ceased attending church.

The speaker, Roody Alexis, from Quebec, a long-time friend to some of Orleans-French’s members, preached riveting messages that not only convicted the ten who were baptised but also inspired others to recommit their lives to Jesus.

The baptismal service was a time of joy and celebration. The addition of two baptismal candidates from Ottawa East Adventist Church to the ten from Orleans-French caused even greater celebration, and there were joyful expressions of “To God be the glory,” from several members.

Since the baptism, there has been a renewed sense of spirituality among the church members and a spirit of revival is in the air. They are now praying for their ten new members and have pledged to surround them with love, support and to guide them in their path with Jesus.

The church is already thinking and planning for 2010, the year of lay evangelism.

Fourteen Baptised at Hamilton Filipino-Canadian Company’s First-Ever Evangelistic Meeting

Even before the series began, members were excited about reaching out to the community with the gospel, and everyone played an important role in its planning and eventual success.

People turned out and listened to the powerful presentations by Pastor Gerry. Individuals were convicted by the Holy Spirit and made decision to accept Jesus as their saviour.

Sam Munoz was one of those who recommitted their lives to God having wandered from God many years ago. Another individual, Mhar Leonardo, after attending one night, met Pastor Gerry in a member’s home. After that encounter with Pastor Gerry, he decided to be baptized.

The Holy Spirit led even entire families to salvation.

The De Jesus and Rico families had been having Bible studies with church members and decided to attend the meetings. Rolly Rico was the first to request baptism. He was soon followed by his wife, Juliet, their children, Cyrene and Angelo, and their dad, Felipe.

In addition to the 14 baptisms, there are others who are presently having Bible studies. Meanwhile, the entire membership, still overwhelmed by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, is looking forward to 2010, the year of lay evangelism, when God will use each person to make an impact on the lives of the people in the city of Hamilton.

Mario Diamante
Communication
Ajax Members Continue to Serve Their Community

The members of Ajax Community Adventist Church are living up to the “Community” part of their name. On the second Sabbath of each month, members—including uniformed Pathfinders and Adventurers, visit Windborne Long-term Care Facility in Ajax. The residents eagerly look forward to their visits, and their smiling faces reflect their joy when they arrive.

Under the leadership of Cornelius and Angela McIntyre, the members sing, play instruments and share the love of Jesus with the residents. On the third Sunday of every month, in less formal attire, the performance is repeated at the Ballicliff Residential Home in Ajax.

The goal of the Ajax Church is to be active agents for Christ in the community. They have committed themselves to be accessible to the community and to assist in meeting the community’s needs in any way they can.

Judy Hutchinson-Boyce Communications

Haileybury’s ‘Ladies’ Day Out’ for Community Women

Recently, Ruthann MacDonald and her friends from Haileybury Seventh-day Adventist Church successfully hosted the second Sunday afternoon Ladies Day Out at the Golden Age Club in the small mining town of Cobalt.

Welcoming smiles and lovely table settings greeted the women who attended. Shortly after, they enjoyed a delicious vegetarian dinner served by five men dressed as chefs. However, the meal was only part of the event.

The entertainment-filled afternoon included the singing of familiar hymns and choruses, but a highlight of the program was Interlink Choir, singing the COBALT song accompanied by Gaetan Pleufle dressed in his mining garb. Ann Margetson, our local poet laureate, shared some of her poetry and encouraged those present to join her in writing poetry and even offered to host a poetry writing class.

Amber, a local florist, demonstrated how to arrange a bouquet using fall flowers and greens to prepare an extra special tabletop bouquet. Afterwards, a draw was held for the bouquet and several other door prizes were awarded, some of which were homemade.

For many, the highlight of the day was the keynote speaker, Evelyn Glass, from Minnesota who presented “My Life is Like a Soft-Sided Bag”.

Her humourous illustrations greatly assisted her serious message that many people are weighed down by unnecessary “burdens”. She also spoke of the worth of each person and the importance of a good self-esteem.

Attendees were clearly delighted.

“I just want to say thank you to Mrs. MacDonald for the lovely afternoon,” said one lady, “I don’t know how you can do all that and not even ask for an offering for your church.”

Ruthann was just happy that everyone had such an enjoyable time and it has inspired her and members of Haileybury to hold another Ladies’ Day Out.
Lindsay Company Promotes Healthful Living at Community Exhibition

“Hi, would you like a free blood pressure measurement and health age assessment? It only takes a few minutes!”

These were the words that greeted fair-goers at the Lindsay Central Exhibition, as they approached the Adventist Health Screening booth, run by Lindsay Seventh-day Adventist Company. About two hundred people accepted the invitation over the five days of the fair (September 23-27, 2009), and many more received free pamphlets and books on physical and spiritual health.

One lady, stopping by the booth, asked, “You’re a church, right? What’s that got to do with health?”

When told that the Adventist Church views a healthy lifestyle as one of the ways in which people may experience abundant living as promised by Jesus, she smiled and said, “Oh, I never thought of it that way.” She took the free book that was offered to her.

In preparation for the event, Frances James trained volunteers from Lindsay Company to make the most effective use of their booth. Consequently, when they set up their booth in the concession building, they confidently approached visitors to the fair.

Among the volunteers who took turns to man the booth was local pastor, James Anderson.

He was there each afternoon with Cindy Laird-Wesley and was present for the daily 5:00 pm draw for those who completed a health seminar interest survey. Prizes included a “Health Power” book and “Live Healthy” DVD. Some of the prize books and DVDs were won by owners of surrounding concession booths.

In addition to distribution of free health books, the book Steps to Christ was also given away. These were handed out by 9-year old Liam Swain, who purchased the books with his own money. His younger sister, Erin Swain, and her friend, Bethany Wake, wanting to be fully involved, handed out ADRA calendars and other books to passersby.

The volunteers were thrilled by the response of people who visited the booth. “We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of sharing health and spiritual materials,” said Lora Burgiss and Rijna Wilms.

Pastor Anderson was especially pleased that many good contacts were made and was glad that volunteers from Lindsay Company were able to share with their community.

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New Workers, Pastoral Changes

We welcome Patricia Ferreira, Leonard Hild, Tania Mendez, Andrew Thomas, Barbara Wittock, Pastors Anthony Reid, Francis Douville, and Brother Leonard Northe to the Ontario Conference.

Patricia Ferreira is the new head teacher at London Adventist Academy. A graduate of Canadian University College and the University of London, UK, she holds a Masters degree in Education and has previously served as a head teacher of Monega Primary School.

Leonard Hild returns to Ontario as principal of Peel Adventist School, Caledon. Since 1983, he has taught students of all ages from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12 in both private and public school boards. He holds a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration.

Tania Mendez is the Elementary French and Physical Education teacher at Crawford Adventist Academy in Toronto. She holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Psychology and Education.

Andrew Thomas is the principal for the High School of Crawford Adventist Academy. A former member of Apple Creek Church in Markham, Mr. Thomas graduated with a B.A. degree in Religion and Theology from the Northern Caribbean University in Jamaica. He is currently completing his Masters degree in Education, with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction.

Barbara Wittock joins Peel Adventist School as the grade 3 and 4 teacher. Currently completing her Ontario certification, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and a Post-graduate Diploma in Education and Training.

Pastor Anthony Reid joins the pastoral staff at Apple Creek as associate pastor, replacing Omar Palmer. An ordained minister who previously served in the West Indies Union, Pastor Reid and his wife, Wendy, have been living in Toronto for the past two years. They have a 20-month old daughter, Amarissa.

Pastor Francis Douville comes from the British Colombia Conference where he was associate pastor at Aldergrove Adventist Church Church. He was installed as the new pastor of Living Word Christian Fellowship in Hamilton on November 28, 2009. He replaced Pastor Daniel Linrud.

Brother Leonard Northe is the new Bible instructor at North Adventist Church. He contributed his time and abilities to the congregation at Toronto North Adventist Church. He is the new Bible instructor at Toronto Central Church. He and his wife, Hilda, have one adult daughter, Latoya.

Former Officers and Directors of the Conference

Pastor Derrick Nichols, former president of the Ontario Conference, was installed as senior pastor of Kendalwood Church on October 24. A week earlier Pastor Antonio Bueno, former executive secretary, was installed as senior pastor of the Bowmanville congregation.

Pastor Wayne Martin, former Sabbath School, Community Services Director and ADRA representative, is now the senior pastor at Apple Creek Church. Mr. Vernon Langdon, former Associate education, is the new field representative for the Planned Giving and Trust Services Department and the Church Building Investment Fund.

Transfers

Omar Palmer, associate pastor at Apple Creek, to Meadowvale as senior pastor; Edgar Nunes, senior pastor at Bowmanville to College Park as associate pastor; Robert Putt, associate pastor at College Park to senior pastor of Cobourg Company and Addington-Highlands Group.

Leaving Ontario

We say adieu to Drs. Ken and Frances Schander, Pastor Kristopher and Lois Zygowiec, Pastor Daniel Catangay, Dr. Wesley Torres, Pastor Juan Fresse and their families.

Pastor Ken has served as senior pastor of Willowdale Church for the past twelve years. His wife, Frances, has served in the Education Department of the Ontario Conference for the last five years as both an associate superintendent and superintendent of education. They moved to the British Columbia Conference where Pastor Ken will take up new responsibilities as pastor and Frances will work in the Education Department of the conference.

"Leaving Ontario" continued on page 24
“Leaving Ontario” continued from page 23

Pastor Kristopher and Lois Zygowiec accepted a call to California after serving in Ontario for just a year. Pastor Kristopher was the senior pastor at Bronte Church. His wife, Lois, served as administrative assistant to the president of the Ontario Conference.

Pastor Catangay, his wife, Loida, and their children, Marc, Lorraine, Marianne and Dan, have been in Ontario since January 1998. He served at both Bramalea and Filipino-Canadian congregations as their senior pastor. They will be taking up a new assignment with the Florida Conference.

When Pastor Torres, his wife, Angela, and their children arrived in Ontario, they went directly to Hamilton Mountain Church and have been there for the past seven years. Pastor Torres has accepted an invitation to serve in the British Columbia Conference and will take up his new appointment as Personal Ministries, Church Growth and Evangelism director in February 2010.

Pastor Juan Fresse has accepted a call from the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference to serve as pastor of a two-church district. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have been at Living Word Fellowship for the past three years where he served as assistant pastor.

We deeply appreciate and highly value our workers and the sacrifices they make to build God’s kingdom. The strength of our conference is due, in large part, to their willingness to be used by God. Those leaving will be greatly missed. We are very thankful to them, and we are honoured that we were able to work together in Ontario. We pray that God’s richest blessing will be on them as they continue serving God in other areas of ministry.

Pastor George Ivkov ‘Calls It a Day’ After Nearly Fifty Years

‘Mr. CBIF,’ Pastor George Ivkov, is finally calling it a day after nearly fifty years of ministry.

For the past 37 years, he has worked in Ontario as a pastor, church and school builder and, since his ‘official’ retirement in 2002, the promoter of the Church Building Investment Fund (CBIF).

Pastor Ivkov moved from Yugoslavia to Ontario in 1970. In 1972 he commenced employment in Ontario as pastor of Cornwall Adventist Church. During his time there, the church was organized, and he gave leadership in starting an Adventist school in Glengarry.

His move to Sarnia in the West saw him involved in starting and completing the church building and in the opening of a church school. A pattern was set and most of his other moves saw him involved in church plants, church building programmes and opening church schools.

From Sarnia he went on to pastor Toronto Yugoslavian Church, Oakville Church (now Bronte), Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge and finally Agape Temple. During his five and a half years at Agape Temple the congregation purchased land and paid it off in three years. Shortly after his retirement in 2002, he was asked to be in charge of CBIF program which he enjoyed tremendously and which yielded excellent results from willing members.

Pastor Ivkov moves into retirement with mixed feelings. “In every district”, he said, “it was a pleasure and a blessing for me to serve the Lord and His people, and if I have to do it again, there would not be another profession except for ministry. My wife Ethel was beside me all these years and was very supportive. The Lord has been so gracious to us all those years and blessed us with success in ministry. I’m going to miss my pastoral activities.”

Had Pastor Ivkov continued in ministry until June 2010, he would have completed 50 years in ministry.

His future plans include involvement in his local church whenever he returns to Ontario at the end of each winter.
The Kingdom Dress Code

The chief curse of the Church is legalism. Judgementalism is the principal biproduct of legalism. Judgementalism and legalism are: two ‘isms’ among us that need to be ‘wasm’s’.

Legalism is obsessive attention to the requirements of the law with little or no feel for the intention or spirit of the law. Judgementalism is the inclination to make personal, moral judgements about other people.

Legalists are bound and shackled by lists of dos and don’ts and are intimidated and immobilised by others’ demands and expectations.

That is a miserable state to live in. Reduce Christianity to legalism and there are only two routes to fulfilment. One is to achieve pseudo-intellectual stimulus by amplifying the law into regulations to cover more and yet more life situations until you have the whole of life cramped. The second is to go around with your mental clipboards of dos and don’ts firing off verbal volleys in the direction of perceived rule-breakers.

Legalism and judgementalism are symptomatic of states of insecurity and unconversion. The victims of the legalist judgementalists tend to be the young, the vulnerable and those who have just begun their search for truth. I know of hundreds (and I’m sure there are thousands) of those who have been driven away from our midst by judgementalists. True, judgementalists occasionally introduce people to the Church. But what sort of Adventists do their converts become? They are apt to be cloned in their own image.

Legalism does not produce obedience. The reverse: it produces hypocrisy. Obedience comes as Christians relate to the Person of Jesus, accept the free gift of His grace and allow Him to transform them from the inside out. Legalistic judgementalism is a cult of externals. Authentic Christians have been broken, acknowledge their need of God’s grace, have received that grace and begun a day-by-day walk with Jesus in the course of which they have become more and more gracious.

Legalistic judgementalism was a chief curse of the Church during the ministry of Jesus, and obliged him to devote so much of his ministry to a crusade against Pharisaism. Legalistic judgementalism was the chief curse of the early Church and obliged Paul to target Judaizers in his first letter, Galatians, and in most subsequent ones. Legalistic judgementalism is the chief curse of the end-time Church. Legalists respond to the offer of the riches of God’s grace along these lines: ‘Don’t want it! Don’t need it! I’m rich enough already! I can achieve my own salvation!’ To them the Risen Christ says: ‘You say, “I’m rich. I don’t need a thing!” But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.’ Pharisees are called Laodiceans these days. And there are two scary things about Laodiceans. First, there’s a lot of them about. Second, they’re likely to be unsaved. Why unsaved?

Because the letter from the Risen Christ to the church at Laodicea indicates that He has been shut out and is knocking to be let in. Legalistic judgementalists are apt to be very fierce about dress code. Dress code requirements vary widely from culture to culture and generation to generation, but most judgementalists don’t know this. They overlook ‘the weightier matters of the law’ such as mercy. As a consequence they mercilessly have at people of a different culture or generation for dressing differently from the way they dress.

Are we to assume, then, that the Lord has no dress code?

When high priest Joshua stood before the angel and was accused by Satan, it was Satan who was rebuked, not Joshua. What mattered to God was that his high priest was ‘a brand picked from the burning’. Joshua’s ‘filthy clothes’ were taken away and replaced by clean clothes. The angel said to Joshua, ‘See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.’ So the garments that matter are garments provided for us to replace our own. Jesus spoke often about a great wedding banquet to which the King would invite everyone. Banquets took time to prepare because they catered for a great many people and lasted several days. Hence, in addition to the initial invite, it was necessary for the King’s servants to announce when all was ready and it was time to ‘come to the banquet’. When that happened, invitees made up all kinds of excuses not to attend. The King told his servants, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys... and make them come in, so that my house will be full.’ Those who came included the poor, the lame, the blind and the victims of injustice.

However, one of those who came was rejected by the King because he had offended the royal dress code. He was, you will recall, the man without a wedding garment.

Who was he?

He was a man who had insulted the host by refusing to wear the wedding clothes provided.

He was a complacent sort of fellow who pushed his way into the King’s banquet in the ‘filthy rags’ of his own righteousness on the assumption that his best was good enough for God. Only it wasn’t, and it isn’t. He was not fit to be seen before God, let alone to enter his Kingdom feast.

The Kingdom dress code? The garments given by the King ‘woven in the loom of heaven’ (without) one thread of human devising 100% Heaven-made; 0% manmade. As Isaiah said, ‘For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.’ That is the Kingdom dress code.

To the man dressed in the tattered rags of his own righteousness, the King said, ‘“Friend, . . . how did you get in here without wedding clothes?” The man was speechless.’ (Matthew 22:12)

Why speechless? For the first time he realized that sin is more than breaking rules and righteousness more than not
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Associate Director Visits Ontario

The meeting was the result of Edward's keen interest in the Disaster Chaplaincy Credential programme that is offered by Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) and Adventist Community Services (ACS).

“After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans,” said Edwards, “I was appalled by how ill-prepared and ill-equipped Adventist pastors were to offer meaningful help. In light of our understanding of Scripture, last days events and the increase of disasters, I want our pastors to be able to effectively respond to these disasters.”

Edwards explained that the meeting had been very helpful and that Councell was excited by Ontario Conference’s interest.

The Disaster Chaplaincy Credential is also termed “Community Chaplain”, and it is designed to help pastors to effectively represent their churches in times of crisis and need. As fully qualified and endorsed Disaster Response Chaplains, pastors will have the training and credibility to provide professional response to a traumatic event in their communities or to a National Disaster site.

It is Edward’s hope that all Adventist pastors in Ontario will become Community Chaplains. He believes that the meeting with Councell will help to make this possible.

Councell is a graduate of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University and served as a chaplain with the United States Army for thirty-two years.

References:
1 Matthew chapters 5 and 23 record the teachings of Jesus that take apart the cult of Pharisaism.
2 See Revelation 3:14-22.
3 Revelation 3:20.
4 Matthew 23:23, KJV.
5 Zechariah chapter 3. See especially verses 2-4.
7 Isaiah 64:6.
8 COL, pages 309, 311.
9 Isaiah 61:10.

Chaplain Councell presents Bible set to Pastor Edwards

Many congratulations to Egberth Jeffers on achieving his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Accounting and Finance. The degree was awarded by the University of Liverpool, UK, on December 8, 2008.

Mr. Jeffers is one of the internal auditors of the Ontario Conference and holds membership at Toronto West Adventist Church.

Congratulations

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CD Review:
Norwill Simmonds’ “He Loved Me With A Cross”

Norwill Simmonds doesn’t just sing songs; he lives them out on stage. And because the stage is often in Adventist churches and the message is the Gospel, that’s where Canadians have met him for more than two decades.

Finally, “This Song of Worship,” gives us 24-7 access to this talented and blessed instrument of God’s love.

It’s taken him 37 years to deliver – from the suburbs of Montego Bay, the entertaining of hotel guests, his introduction to Canadian audiences at age 12 through the Peoples Church television program, to singing adventures across Greater Toronto – and the wait has been rewarded with a blessing in time for the holidays.

“I didn’t want this to be about me,” Simmonds says, and you know it’s not false modesty. The sentiments ride every chord and note of the disc. “I want to convey the feeling that you are in the presence of God.

“Sometimes I think of just pouring out myself to God, knowing what He’s done for me…”

As I’m writing these words, the track “God Is Able,” fills the room, almost on cue: “Who can make the mountain move out of my way…God is able…and he won’t fail.”

“I live what I sing. I believe what I sing. I sing with conviction because the whole intention is to pull others to Christ. When a household takes home a Norwill Simmonds CD, I want them to know that he’s genuine, that his ministry is for real.”

In the background, the musical bridge in the title song, written by Dana-Marie, soars with:

“Awesome Father, My creator, living water flows through me. Precious Jesus, my redeemer, you are worthy of all praise.”

The entire disc is infused with strong and delicate touches of Christ. One favourite; the next day, it’s the haunting transporting of the mind from earth to heaven with the plaintive intro to the traditional, “Be still and know that I am God.”

With the gift exchange season upon us, this is the kind of gift that will keep on giving – one that points to the ultimate Gift, Jesus Christ.

The CD is available at all ABC bookstores. Or at www.4nsm.com. 10 songs. $15.

Norwill Simmonds does’t just sing songs; he lives them out on stage. And because the stage is often in Adventist churches and the message is the Gospel, that’s where Canadians have met him for more than two decades.

I’ll never forget the day Norwill Simmonds stood up to sing one of his then- signature songs, Larnelle Harris’ “He Loved Me with a Cross.”

A small, unrelated commotion broke out in the packed audience, and Norwill held up his hand, calmed the combatants and proceeded to take the congregation on an unforgettable musical journey along the bloody road to Calvary.

What ensued over four minutes of God-inspired ministry was neither act nor imitation, not a show, not a spectacle, but the transformation of a song into a real, breathing pathway to God.

It was clear then: this was no ordinary vessel, but one ordained and used by the living God to bless His creatures.

With the release of his first CD, “This Song of Worship,” the man affectionately known as “Spurgie,” shows that his walk with Jesus continues, in word and song, in art and in life. And how blessed we are.

Royson James

Royson James is a sometimes singing partner of Norwill Simmonds, fellow Sound Idea member, and recipient of many blessed moments experiencing his ministry.

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