“O come, let us worship”

Special worship edition
I remember the first time I took one of my sisters to a premier league soccer game in England. Well, ‘took’ might not be the correct word— the plan was to take a male friend who was passing through the UK. When it was time to leave for the game, my sister just seemed to materialize. It turned out that she thought that my friend was worth getting to know better.

So, there we were at the game, and my sister was soon cheering, shouting and singing with the rest of us. The thing is, my sister did not know the first thing about the game and had never shown any interest in learning. At first, she took her cues from my friend but was soon under the influence of the huge crowd and was caught up in the game. Later, she said how much she enjoyed the game but, to my knowledge, it was the last one she ever attended.

I used to have a similar experience whenever my father called for family worship, or when we attended church on a Sabbath. I didn’t really know what it was all about, neither was I interested in finding out. Sometimes I went to family worship kicking and screaming and holding on to the door posts only to discover that I enjoyed it, especially after my father regaled us with a church-related humorous story, such as when the pastor’s dentures fell out while he was preaching.

Church was different. I had friends at church so even when the service was long and boring, it didn’t really matter. We always found something to occupy ourselves. If it were lively, I’d find myself really involved in the singing and listening to the sermon and having a good time. Like my sister at the soccer game, I’d be caught up in the moment, influenced by the mood of those around me but not invested in what was really taking place. Upon reflection, I didn’t really understand what was happening. I simply did what everyone else did and called it worship.

Could it be that this is what many of us do? Whether we were raised in the church or come into it in later life, have we simply adopted a ritual and believe it to be worship? We sing hymns, read a few verses from the Bible, dare to close our eyes without falling asleep during a very long prayer, collect money ‘to pay for the utilities’, along with our tithes and listen to a sermon, but do these things really mean anything to us? Can we say that we have actually worshipped? Did we meet God? Were we keenly aware of being in the presence of the Mighty Creator, the El-Shaddai? What did we offer Him? Has our worship experience made any difference to us, and how has it affected our daily living?

Worship, the most important aspect of our response to God, is too often the most neglected. There seems to be a paucity in personal devotion, a famine of meaningful family worship and a passivity in our corporate worship. Some local church leaders have responded to the cries for change from their congregations, but too often the response has been to adjust the order of service or to adopt a style from another congregation or even denomination. A change of style should not be confused with worship. We need a biblical understanding of worship.

A quest towards a biblical understanding of worship is a key element in the church growth strategy of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Its importance is reflected in the publication of this special worship edition of Ontario Highlights with articles by David Schwinghammer, Daniel Linrud, Mansfield Edwards and the editor. Schwinghammer’s Released to Worship lays a biblical foundation and answers the question, “Why worship and how do we worship?” Linrud’s The Key to Spirit-filled Worship makes the point that meaningful corporate worship will only occur when we are daily walking with God. Edward’s The Uniqueness of Adventist Worship recognises the role theology plays in determining corporate worship and calls for Adventist worship to reflect its theology. The editor concludes the series with a look at the role of praise and worship in the life of the believer.

Someone once warned that the formula, “Belief minus worship equals practical atheism”, can easily be applied to anyone who neglects to worship God as Creator, Saviour, Lord and soon-coming King. Failure to worship God is a denial or refutation of His existence. There’s nothing of equal value in the Christian’s life than to experience the fullness of knowing God and to approach Him and to adore Him in worship. Seek to be a worshipper and not fall into the slumber of practical atheism.
What does God desire in our worship of Him? What are we supposed to do in worship? Are we only to use organs and pianos, or is it appropriate to have praise teams accompanied by instrumental bands? Am I only to worship on Sabbath? Why do some people raise their hands, kneel, shout or even dance in church? Just what is worship anyway?

These are just some of the questions that have been raised in an effort to discover what appropriate worship is and how it should be expressed in our time and culture.

The Bible is full of rich examples of worship that have brought joy to the heart of God. The principles of worship found in the story of Israel’s release from slavery in the book of Exodus may very well surprise you.

**The Encounter**

Moses encountered God at the burning bush on Mount Sinai. There he was told that God had heard the cries of His people in their oppression by the Egyptians, and that he was sent to secure their release. "I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Ex. 3:10).

God wanted to release His people to worship Him (Ex. 4:31). Moses was to bring the children of Israel to that very mountain to worship God. The question is, what exactly did God intend Israel to do at that mountain? How were they to worship Him?

"They were going to set up a building, with ample parking, mother’s room, soft pews and state of the art sound system? What were they actually released to do?"

**Worship as Real Life – Lifestyle of Service and Devotion**

Throughout the story of the Exodus, there are two words used to describe worship: ‘abad’ and ‘shachah’.

The first Hebrew word that is translated as ‘worship’ in our English Bibles is ‘abad (aw-bad) which means ‘to serve’. God heard the cries of His people who had been forced to serve Pharaoh, and now by their release, was making provision for them to serve God and Him alone. They would be given the freedom to give God devotion, respect, honour and service. In this sense, ‘abad’ is the commitment to serve with a lifestyle of complete devotion. What a great definition of worship!

The word ‘abad’ is used over 200 times in the context of service. If one is to ‘abad’, then he or she has chosen to serve another as a subject or has become a servant of. It is often used in relations to idols.

In both accounts of the Ten Commandments, ‘abad’ is used in the third commandment, where God instructed His people not to worship idols, “You shall not bow down or worship (‘abad’) them, for I the Lord am a jealous God…” (Ex. 20:5, Deut. 5:9).

It is also seen in the fourth commandment in reference to work: “Six days you shall labour (‘abad’), and do all your work…” (Exodus 20:9 Deut. 5:13).

Repeatedly, ‘abad’ is used in reference to a life of acts of service and devotion. The verses that follow the decalogue make God’s will and desire for His people abundantly clear, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut 6:5). That is true worship! God asked the people for this type of radical devotion and service. They were called to give themselves completely to God, in all they did and all they were to become.

Although the big picture definition of the word is a lifestyle of devotion, there is the reality that Pharaoh sent the people away to ‘do’ something, not just ‘be’. In other words, he was anticipating that they were going off to participate in a religious festivity. Moses needed the people and the animals in order to ‘abad’ the Lord.

Within this worship lifestyle of service are three other components: Respect, Response and Ritual.

**Worship as an Act of Respect and Reverence**

The second Hebrew word, often translated as ‘worship’ and used over 160 times in the Old Testament and here in Exodus, is the word ‘shachah’ (shaw-khaw). Exodus 4:31 says, “When they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped (shachah)”. What were they actually doing? They bowed in respect and reverance.

The Bible records many examples of actions of respect and reverence. In Genesis 19:1, Lot bowed down (shachah) before two angels. Genesis 33:3 records the account of Jacob bowing (shachah) before his brother Esau. The act of bowing down in respect and devotion before God in worship is not limited to the earth as we see in Nehemiah 9:6, “You
alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship (shachah) you.”

In each of these accounts, the word ‘shachah’ is used to describe the action of respect, most often bowing down to the ground.

Worship as Response

There are over 130 accounts where the word ‘shachah’ is used when referring to an action of response that is spontaneous and authentic. For example, when Abraham was given the land to bury Sarah, he immediately responded, “rose and bowed down (shachah) before the people of the land, the Hittites” (Genesis 23:7,12).

Another example of worship as response is when Israel became aware that God gathered the Israelites at Mount Sinai, he told Moses, “You will remember that I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; and in reverence will I bow down (shachah) toward your holy temple” (Psalm 132:7).

Worship as Ritual – Practices at a Place or Event – Regular and Routine

There are many examples in the Bible where God’s people performed actions of worship at events and places that were regular and ongoing. You will remember God instructed Moses to release His people to worship. They were to go to the mountain to perform sacrifice and celebrate a festival. When God gathered the Israelites at Mount Sinai, he told Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship (‘shachah’) at a distance…” (Exodus 24:1). Here God was asking them to perform an act of worship before Him at a specific place.

In Deuteronomy, God instructed Israel how to worship and how not to worship. They were to engage in rituals of sacrifice, cleansing, thanksgiving, celebration and remembrance of God’s mighty acts. He made it clear that they were not to apply the practices and rituals of idol worship to God.

David desired to go before God in worship at a regular place. “But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; and in reverence will I bow down (shachah) toward your holy temple” (Psalm 5:7).

“Let us go to his dwelling place, let us worship (shachah) at his footstool” (Psalm 132:7).

Here, he describes a dwelling place for the Lord where His worshippers could come and worship. In John 4:20-24, the woman at the well understood worship to God as a ritual restricted to a...
place. She said, “Our fathers worshipped (proskuneo) on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem”.

Jesus quickly clarifies the fact that worship to God is not restricted to a place or form. He said, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship (proskuneo) the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem…. true worshippers (proskuneo) will worship (proskuneo) the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers (proskuneo) the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers (proskuneo) must worship (proskuneo) in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21, 23, 24).

Summary

The Bible is full of examples of worship as an action of ‘RESPECT’, ‘RESPONSE’, ‘RITUAL’ and ‘REAL LIFE’ service. There is not one example of worship where God’s children were called to sit and do nothing. That clearly is not worship. Each account of worship is participatory and engaging. The words used to describe worship are verbs suggesting an action or response.

Worship to God was not limited to one practice or one place. God gave His children the freedom to authentically come before Him with an offering of respect, response, ritual and real life service. David captures the essence of these four principles when he wrote, “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before Him; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness” (1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 29:2).

So, what have we discovered? God delivered the children of Israel and brought them to Mount Sinai to serve Him. There, they performed actions of respect in response to His mighty acts. They performed actions of ritual through their sacrifices and practices. And last, but certainly not least, it was God’s desire that they give their life and allegiance to Him through service and obedience. Is this what your worship is like?

God’s last day followers will restore worship to the lifestyle it should be. The first angel of Revelation 14:7 releases God’s children to worship, shouting out that God alone deserves our respect, glory and worship. Let’s respond with our whole heart, soul and strength. That’s true worship!

1. All texts are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.
2. Ex. 5:3; 8:8, 25,27,28,29
5. Deuteronomy 12:2,4,31

Congratulations, Dr. Dorzilme!

On June 1, 2010, Pastor Nephtaly Dorzilme, minister of Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church and Parkdale Company, successfully defended his Doctor of Ministry dissertation at Andrews University.

Following his passion for happy marriages and strong families, his field of study was family life. His dissertation, “Helping Parents in the Toronto Seventh-day Adventist Churches Understand and Deal with the Challenges of Adolescents and Work Towards a More Harmonious Relationship” will, no doubt, help to meet a pressing need of many parents across the entire province.

“We congratulate Dr. Dorzilme,” said Dr. Errol Lawrence, Ministerial director of the Ontario Conference, “and look forward to families being strengthened because of the expertise that he brings to us.”

2o. Encuentro Matrimonial

El Hogar que yo soñé

Lo que Dios puede hacer en favor de usted y su familia

2010

Fecha: 13 y 14 de Agosto

Presentadores: Jorge y Nibia Mayer

London Ontario

Información y reservación: Anna Perez 519-913-2279 o nampil2010@gmail.com

2010
The Keys to Spirit-filled Worship

Every Christian desires to experience Spirit-filled worship. It is what our souls long for. Yet, perhaps you have gone to church desiring such worship only to leave feeling unsatisfied and disappointed. Many have had this experience time and again. But, this does not need to be our experience.

When we gather to worship the Lord together on Sabbath, if we are to experience the majesty of God, the fullness of Christ, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, then we must be personally prepared for this sacred event. There are demonic forces anxious to deny us the blessings of Spirit-filled worship. We must guard against this. If worship is to be more than merely a corporate gathering of God’s people, if it is to transcend intellectual assent and extravagant programming and get to the heart of the worshipper, then we must prepare ourselves accordingly.

The prophet Micah understood this when he posed the questioned in Micah 6:6-8 (KJV):

“Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Thy God?”

Micah understood that we could not just show up for worship in nice clothes presenting our songs, our music and our offerings. If we are to be the worshipers God desires, then we are to walk humbly with God each day. This requires that we understand who God is and know Him personally.

There are at least five keys to preparing ourselves for Spirit-filled worship:

1. Acknowledging That We Are Hopelessly Lost

The Bible repeatedly tells us that we are hopelessly lost. In Isaiah 53:6 (KJV) we are reminded that “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.”

We need to meditate on the fact that each of us is helplessly lost, and we are in desperate need of Christ. Without Him, we are hopeless. As this becomes a point of daily meditation, in humility, our hearts are drawn to God.

Few things are as toxic as a church full of people who are not humbled by their own desperate state and need of Christ. Meditating on our need is a key to authentic worship.

2. Internalizing God’s Wondrous Forgiveness

The second key to preparing ourselves for Spirit-filled worship is internalizing God’s wondrous forgiveness. A spirit of grateful worship is the natural response in the life of one who has fully internalized God’s wondrous forgiveness. When we internalize God’s forgiveness, then we become forgiving people.

The parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18 reminds us that while it is very easy to receive God’s forgiveness, failure to fully internalize it results in acting in unforgiving ways. This may be the way that religious people behave, but it is never the way that spiritual people conduct themselves. This is unacceptable for God’s people.

Jesus wants the forgiveness we experience in our own lives to flow out 360 degrees: to those above us in leadership, to our peers, and to those under our leadership. Anything less implies that we have not truly experienced God’s forgiveness ourselves. And if we are not continually personally experiencing the gracious forgiveness of Christ in our lives, then we are not able to worship God with the level of intense gratefulness He deserves.

And furthermore, our fellowship and community of worship is often fractured because we tend to be unforgiving toward our fellow worshippers. Nothing strips worship of its blessings faster than a foul, unforgiving spirit of an ungrateful flock.

3. Embracing Our Adoption by God

A third key to preparing ourselves for Spirit-filled worship is fully embracing our adoption by God. This critically affects our core identity.

My mother was adopted at the age of three. She was loved and cared for by her adoptive parents. I saw firsthand the incredible difference the right adoptive parents can make in a person’s life. Yet, the person who has been adopted must still fully embrace it. Many adopted children do not—even my mother had trouble with it. She could never seem to fully embrace her adoptive identity. Yet, as far as her adoptive parents were concerned, she was fully their daughter.

Our adoption is no less real or less complete than my mother’s.

John 1:12, 13 (NCV) says, “But to all who did accept Him and believe in Him He gave the right to become children of God. They did not become His children in any human way—by any human parents or human desire. They were born of God.”

Galatians 4:6-7 (NCV) proclaims that, “Since you are God’s children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, and the Spirit cries out, “Father”’. So now you are not a slave; you are God’s child, and God will give you the blessing he promised, because you are His child.”

It is crucial that we understand who we are—we are God’s children, adopted through Christ. Although born into the slavery of sin, we are no longer slaves! We don’t have to exercise the old tendencies toward serving self and worrying about our own accomplishments or advancement. We are free to live as God’s children—and He will take care of everything else! That is truly good news and a big relief!
5. Surrendering to God’s Transformation

As we fully surrender ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are transformed. Our characters, our personalities, our desires, our hopes, our dreams, our goals, our purposes, our attitudes, our relationships, and our ministries are transformed. We are purified and we begin to live, worship and serve like “…a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that [we] may declare the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His wonderful light…” 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV).

If the church is to be a light to the world around us, then we must have the Light of life ourselves. Gloomy members and religious leaders are not men and women of light. But if we have the Light of life in our lives, then we are transformed from darkness to light. And our ministries become beacons of light and hope to a dark and lost world. Our worship will be like a kaleidoscope of brilliant, colourful beams of light streaming from God’s Spirit within us. People’s hearts will be transformed from hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, and purified like gold. This is what God desires for each of His children and for His church. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Understanding the full significance of this, Ellen White exhorted, “There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church…. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, ‘not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts’” (Zech. 4:6).” EGW, 1 SM 124 (1887).

As a people who gather to worship God and desire to be used by Him, we must always focus our lives and worship on Him, surrendering to the presence and power of His Holy Spirit. He is with us every step of the journey. It is our responsibility as God’s people, to take seriously our own preparation for our corporate worship, so that it may truly be a dynamic, meaningful, transformational, Spirit-filled encounter with God.
The Uniqueness of Adventist Worship

The first three commandments make it clear that God alone is to be worshipped. The Bible also makes it very clear that God is particular about the way He is worshipped. The detailed description of Cain and Abel’s worship clarifies, in God’s response to their offerings, that God is particular.

They both erected altars. They each brought an offering. Abel presented a sacrifice from the flock, in accordance with the Lord's directions, “And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offerings”. Cain’s offering was rejected. Two brothers, two different responses from God, two different theologies drove their worship.

There is a significant relationship between theology and worship, between our beliefs and how we worship.

Revelation 14:7 insists that we must be a worshipping people. True Adventist worship should have three basic ingredients:

1. Adventist worship should inspire awe
   The first angel of Revelation declares, “Fear God and give glory to Him”. This “fear” suggests reverence and awe. Corporate worship must emphasize both the transcendence and the immanence of God. God is great and God is here. God is above us and God is among us. This awareness must pervade our worship. Hence, the primary purpose of worship is to experience God, not simply to feel good.

2. Adventist worship should be joyful
   Revelation 14:2 & 3 describes the redeemed in worship. “The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song” (NIV).

   God is present in our very midst, and He deserves our highest praise. The song of Revelation 4:8 remembers what God has done in the past and looks to the future in its praise to God. It recognizes that God is eternal, “Who was and is and is to come”.

   Celebrating the presence of God in our midst at worship was just as central to David’s proclamation, “In Thy presence is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11).

   The joy is in His presence. Separation from God’s presence was the psalmist’s greatest fear. “Do not cast me away from Thy presence and do not take Thy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51: 11 & 12).

   There is every justification to rejoice over the victory Christ has secured for us over sin, death and the grave. It is this that makes believers worshippers.

3. Adventist worship should be experiential
   Of the song the 144,000 sing, Revelation 14:3 says, “No one could learn it” (NIV).

   Why? Because it is a song of personal experience. No one else can worship for us. Worship is not routine. It is not tradition. It is a personal interaction between the Creator and the worshipper.

   Significant to Seventh-day Adventist worship are our beliefs. While all our beliefs provide a solid basis for our worship and a framework for its expression, there are three particular doctrines that must influence our worship. Together, they demand a worship that is unique to Seventh-day Adventists. They are: the Sabbath, the Priestly Ministry of Jesus and the Second Coming of Jesus.

The Sabbath and Worship

The Sabbath reminds us of creation when God gave us time. It also reminds us of redemption in which God gives us eternity. That is what we are called to “remember” when we gather for worship. We must remember our creaturely dependence upon God. It is in Him that we live and move and have our beings.

For many Christian congregations, worship is based on something that happened in the past, in particular the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

Seventh-day Adventist worship centres, not only on past events, but also on something that is happening in the present. What happens
in the present is so vital that it will affect the future.
Therefore, all three time-dimensions of human existence – past, present and future – are involved in worship. When Adventists gather for worship, they are connected by faith, not simply to past historical events, but also with the present ministry of our Lord in the heavenly sanctuary. Our worship has its focus in heaven.

Hebrews, after describing the role of the Old Testament High Priest declares in chapter 8:1 & 2, “Now the main point in what has been said is this: We have such a High Priest who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man”.

It is because we have such a High Priest ministering in heaven that the writer says, “Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:6).

This is obviously a reference to the worship of God’s people. Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is positioned as the finisher of salvation. His death, resurrection and ascension were the beginning of His ministry. His high priestly ministry is taking place just prior to His second coming and the final judgement (Hebrews 9:21-28).

What Jesus is doing in heaven is designed to give meaning to our worship, especially in these last days, and not just to provide interesting information.

**Worship and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**

In our worship, the Seventh-day Adventist Church not only looks back in grateful memory, but also looks forward in confident hope. Our hope rests firmly on the biblical promises concerning the imminent return of Jesus Christ our Lord. As we worship, we must worship with the awareness that we are on the threshold of His coming.

Hebrews 10:25 admonishes the church not to forsake “our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near”.

The “day” referred to, here, is obviously a reference to the final appearance of Jesus Christ. The return of King Jesus to claim His bride, the church, to be with Him forever.

It is in anticipation of this “day” that the church worships. In worship, our hearts reach out toward that great consummation. Ellen White declared in 5T, p. 609, “To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ’s representative, are God’s appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above”.

It could be said that every Sabbath, the worship of the church is in rehearsal for the day of the Lord when He shall appear. That is why our worship must take place in the context of Revelation 14.

In the interval, between His ascension and His return, the church worships. Our worship and all its components must be a sincere expression of a deep longing for our Lord to come. It must be expressive of our confidence in His promise that He will come again. Let us worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

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**New Ministry for Senior Adults**

A new ministry for senior adults will shortly be launched in the Ontario Conference. Some may be asking the question, “Why a ministry for senior adults?”

The 65+ age group is currently a fast-growing segment of our nation’s population. Today’s baby boomers will be the largest elderly generation in the world’s history according to Ken Dychtwald in his book, Catch the Age Wave. Additionally, more people are living active lifestyles going into their eighties and even beyond. The church must value and affirm the worth of all persons in all stages of life.

What is noticeable is that our culture places value on business, productivity and youth. As a result, older people who are no longer part of the bustle of society are undervalued and underappreciated. Their past contributions are sometimes forgotten, and their stories are rarely heard. Our conference is intentional in launching a ministry for senior adults, which we pray will add life to their years and hopefully years to their lives.

According to biblical values, eastern cultures are right in showing respect for advanced age. Leviticus 19:32 says, “You shall rise up before the gray headed and honour the aged”.

From an outreach or evangelistic perspective, surveys indicate that among the general adult population, the older a person gets, the more important religion becomes to his or her life. This creates a great need for a specific ministry to reach out to the aging adult population.

Quite recently, we have put together a Senior Adult Ministries Advisory Committee. This committee will share specific strategies of this new ministry through articles and also directly with local churches in the conference.

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Dr. Mansfield W. Edwards, President
Worship: More Praise than Style

Just the mention of the word ‘worship’ in an Adventist church, and it can become a point of disagreement. Some cry out for something new, something more exuberant. Others are adamant about maintaining what they inherited from their parents 40 or 50 years ago. There are some voices that may even be heard, hankering after the ‘good old days of Adventist worship’ without realising that they could never identify with the charismatic style of early Adventist worship. Unfortunately, the debate is usually about worship style.

Any debate about worship style is missing the point. Changing a style of worship may very well please some voices that may even be heard, hankering after the ‘good old days of Adventist worship’. It is characterized, amongst others, as an authentic love conversation between Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). Worship is the continuous love conversation between God and man. This is the emphasis of Daniel Linrud’s The Keys to Spirit-filled Worship, where he says that in order to experience the fullness of corporate worship, the believer must daily walk with God. A believer cannot live a life exempt from personal, daily Spirit-filled worship and expect to experience the joy and fullness of corporate worship. This is perhaps why some believers find little meaning in corporate worship. He or she might perform acts of worship, but if his or her life is not given over to God, those acts are simply a performance of religious ritual.

Religious ritual, no matter how solemn, beautiful or even thrilling, is not necessarily worship (although worship may sometimes be expressed through rituals). Even if the ritual (worship style) changes, the absence of worship remains. Could this be the reason that sometimes there is an atmosphere of criticism, hostility and pain in some congregations? Congregations where the fruit of the Spirit is clearly visible are those whose members are worshipping beings. These are not perfect, sinless beings, but sinners who have accepted Jesus as their Saviour and seek to live by His grace and in obedience to Him. These grace-covered sinners – Christians who live in submission to God and are walking with Him – are those who are able to praise God in corporate worship.

Praise is the overflowing of a thankful heart under the influence of God’s compassion. It is a spontaneous act; not something we try to work on expressing but the natural expression of a heart full of seeing, experiencing and feeling the greatness and goodness of God. It is how we express our adoration, admiration and gratitude to God. So, when believers whose life style is a life of worship gather for corporate worship, the outcome is praise. Like personal worship, our corporate worship is characterized by praise.

Praise is the expression of God’s people in worship. It is the music of God’s love played constantly on the strings of a heart and life full of God’s love, expressing it in words and in action.

The Scriptures say it this way, “Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings” (Ps. 33:2), and “Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands” (Isa. 42:12).
In worship then, praise may be expressed by singing, kneeling, praying, speaking quietly or shouting aloud, standing with outstretched arms, giving of offerings, testimonies, and other acts of approval and thanksgiving.

Praise is often seen as a time of celebration and joy. In praise we proclaim God's mighty acts, we sing of His mercy, triumphs and love. We testify of His saving power, and we pray, offering our thanksgiving and commitment to His lordship.

It is important to differentiate between performance and praise. Praise is founded on worship and is the expression resulting from the worship of those whose lives are filled by the Spirit. Generally, performance, regardless of how well-rendered or meaningful, can be the expression of religious words or actions from a life devoid of both worship and submission to God's will. However, the person who is truly praising God may be described as "performing to an audience of one"—God.

The Bible says that God loves to hear our praise so much that it describes Him as "inhabiting" or being enthroned on our praise. "But thou art holy, O Thou that inhabittest the praises of Israel" (Ps 22:3 KJV).

There must be something fulfilling when we praise and worship together! This is why the writer of Hebrews strongly counselled, "Let us not give up meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25).

To witness others praising God in corporate worship is also beneficial for the sinner or one who is no longer offering daily worship to God. To experience an atmosphere of praise and worship is to witness the power of God in the life of His people. In Acts 16:25-31, when the jailer heard Paul and Silas, in prison, singing and praising God and witnessed God's response to their praise with the earthquake, the Spirit of God moved Him to ask, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

To praise God is to lift Him up before the world, even when, as in Job's life, disaster strikes. It becomes a time of evangelism as the Holy Spirit works to draw men and women to Himself. The promise of Jesus is, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32 KJV).

While Jesus was speaking of His death, it is clear that the text may be applied to praising God publically and testifying of His marvellous grace.

Our part is to praise God. Ellen White recognized this and counselled, "We need to praise God more" (Steps to Christ, p 102).

Praise is powerful! It is a weapon in the hand of God's people. II Chronicles 20:22-25 records the account of God's people, Judah, besieged by three different kingdoms. In preparation for the battle, King Jehoshaphat called the entire nation to worship God. He then set singers to sing and 'praise the beauty of God's holiness' (20:21). As they began to sing and praise, God destroyed the enemy (20:22). Praise was their weapon.

When faced with difficulties and problems, all that God's people have to do is worship and praise God. Instead of seeking a solution to the problem or allowing it to overcome us, we simply need to worship and praise God and allow Him as Sovereign Lord to determine the outcome.

Imagine if your church is faced with a major problem. The pastor, instead of calling a business meeting, calls the church to an evening of worship and praise! This is the example of Jehoshaphat and his country, Judah. He considered the problem, discussed it and sought God's guidance. God said, "worship". Praise flows from the heart of an adoring worshipper. It is the language of the redeemed—those born of the Spirit.

Praise teams and worship leaders, especially, need to live exemplary lives of worship. Preparation to lead corporate worship requires a daily and close walk with God in humble submission to His will. They recognize the difference between performance and praise and prayerfully seek God's Spirit to make them people of praise. They see their role as God's cheerleaders. They do not lead praise by trying to motivate people, but rather to inspire worshippers through
‘More Praise than Style’
Continued from page 11

The Adventist Book Centre is installing a new operating/inventory system on our computers in order to serve you better. Both the Oshawa and Willowdale ABC’s need to be closed while training and installation takes place for this system. We will be closed from August 29 until September 6 inclusive.

Of course, we’re closed from August 29 until September 6 inclusive.
secure exemption from membership and from financially supporting unions on religious grounds. The exemption means that dues are re-directed from the union to a charity, usually of the union’s choosing. The employee does not gain financially. In this way, an Adventist in Ontario may freely choose not to financially support a union.

How Do I Gain Religious Exemption?

Church members may secure their religious liberty and gain exemption from membership and from paying union dues by carefully following the instructions below:

1. To begin the process, call the Ontario Labour Relations Board (1-877-339-3335) and request an application kit for religious exemption. The test for exemption is three-fold and must include support for each branch of the test. Therefore, the following documents will also be necessary:
   a. A letter from your local pastor stating the length of time you have held membership in the church and your membership status—a member in “regular standing”.
   b. A letter comprising your personal statement of your religious convictions. This must include the following:
      i. A statement saying that you have a sincerely held religious belief.
      ii. You must show that your belief is tied to a divine precept (quote appropriate scripture), church writings (quote Ellen White) and to official church statements (all are available from the Ontario Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department).

2. Fill out the application, attach the supporting documents and return it to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

When faced with difficulties, help may be obtained from the legal counsel at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, www.sdacc.org/en/departments

Halsey Peat
PARL Director

For a detailed treatment of this subject, see Should Unions Be Paid Their Due(s)? by H. Keith Juriansz, 1996, available from the PARL Department, Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.


The Seventh-day Adventist Church now has 16,300,000 members around the world. The figures were reported to the church at its general session in Atlanta by the president, Pastor Jan Paulsen. He also spoke about the number of baptisms during the past five years: “Since we met together in St. Louis, Missouri, we’ve welcomed some 5 million people into church membership; on average, almost 3,000 men and women every 24 hours.”

He went on to say that in 1863, there was one church member for every 373,143 of the world’s population; today, the ratio is closer to one Adventist for every 400 people.

It was Paulsen’s last report as president of the world church, having served in that capacity since 1999. On June 25, 2010, a new president was elected.

Pastor Ted N.C. Wilson, a former vice president of the world church, is the new president of the world church of Seventh-day Adventists.

The new world church leader also said, “Go forward in lifting up Christ and proclaiming God’s grace; go forward in presenting the three angels’ messages; go forward in pleading for revival and reformation; go forward in following the Bible as it reads; go forward in reading and adhering to the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy; go forward in proclaiming to the world the good news of salvation and the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ.”

He also cautioned about various threats to the church in the form of unscriptural fads and encouraged members to look to their own church for leadership and guidance in following Bible principles.

His sermon touched on many areas such as worship, Ellen G. White as God’s inspired prophet, The Great Controversy theme, the church’s traditional understanding of scriptural interpretation, the literal six-day creation of the world, the Remnant, grace, the need of revival and reformation and uplifting Christ. In nearly all areas, his message represented the traditional position of the church, and the affirmative response of many in the congregation more than indicates that he had struck a harmonious note with them.

Later, during the closing meeting, the stadium was ablaze with colours of every shade as the long-awaited parade of nations took place. ‘Ambassadors’ from every
nation represented at the session, dressed in national costumes and carrying their nation’s flag, paraded to the enthusiastic applause of an estimated 66,000 people.

“We are celebrating our uniqueness, and we are celebrating our togetherness”, announced Elizabeth Viera Talbot, co-host of the programme, with Fred Kinsey and Garrett Caldwell. “We are celebrating our diversity, and most of all, we are celebrating our unity in one mission -- our mission to lift up Christ so high that He will draw all people to Himself.”

For many, this is always one of the highlights of attending a General Conference Session and a significant way of bringing it to a close.

Elected Officers

Among the officers elected are:
President -- Ted N. C. Wilson; Secretary -- G. T. Ng; Treasurer -- Robert E. Lemon.

Dan Jackson
Elected as North American Division President

For the first time in many years, the results of a General Conference Session has had an immediate effect on both Canada and Ontario with the election on June 28 of Pastor Daniel Jackson, 61, as president of the North American Division.

He replaces Don Schneider, who has served as President since 2000.

“God never calls us to do things we are capable of, and this thing is so much bigger than me. But He has called, and I accept this with the greatest humility and with extreme gratitude to Don Schneider,” said Jackson.

During his career, Jackson has served the church as a pastor, teacher, administrator, and is currently the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, a position he has held since February 1, 2002. His departure means that his wife, Donna, has to leave her position as Family and Women’s Ministries director for the Ontario Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In North America, G. Alexander Bryant and G. Thomas Evans, executive secretary and treasurer, respectively, are the other two officers who were elected to work with Jackson.

Revision to Church Manual

A great deal of time and discussion was devoted to revising the church manual. Each church in Ontario will also be directly affected by some or all of the 95 revisions that were voted.

These include:
1. There will no longer be any ‘deaconesses’ in church. The gender-neutral term ‘deacon’ will be used to refer to both males and females. Both males and females will be ordained in their service as deacons.
2. Churches cannot make up or attempt to enforce their own rules about standards of church membership. Every church has to abide by what has been adopted by the General Conference in session. This means that individuals cannot be dropped from membership because they do not attend church or do not return tithes or offerings.
3. Inclusion of stronger wording to make church-related activities safer for children.
4. Clarifying aspects of dealing with sexual offenders in the congregation. This includes blocking a former sexual offender from transferring to a new congregation without written notification of their past.
5. The inclusion in several chapters of a statement requiring background checks and certifications for all church employees and volunteers who work closely with minors.
6. New language on pages 23, 25 and 26 would make it possible to downgrade the organizational status of a local church when it dwindles in size or becomes unable to govern or fund itself without outside help.
7. On page 87, formation of the “Ambassador Club” as a parallel organization to the Pathfinder Club, for teens and young adults “ages 16 through 21”.
8. In the chapter on church standards, in the statement on marriage, marriage is defined as a “relationship between one male and one female” (p 131).

The new manual will reflect all the revisions and invalidates all previous manuals. It will shortly be published and will be available at the Adventist Book Centre.
“Spiritual” was the word used by many as Ontario’s one-day camp meeting drew to a close a few minutes after 9:00 p.m. at the International Centre in Mississauga on May 29, 2010.

Satiated from the abundance of the day, campers searched for the most appropriate adjective to describe their experience and quickly settled on “spiritual,” smiling as they did so.

An enthusiastic Alona Abla from Mount Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church, said that she loved all the speakers for their spiritual orientation and described her experience as “awesome” and “blessed”.

First-timer, Lorna Alfred from Toronto Central Adventist Church said, “It’s been a really good experience. I really liked it—the preaching, the singing—it was good!”

Others spoke of the new feature—the Parade of Nations—as something new and rich in its significance as well as its presentation.

“The Parade of Nations left me thinking as what it will be like when we get to heaven,” said Apple Creek’s Edson Ambersly.

Another member who had been watching the Parade of Nations via the broadcast on his computer at home was so inspired by seeing so many nations represented in national costumes and carrying their flags that he decided that he had to be present and immediately made his way to the International Centre.

The Parade of Nations was a first for Ontario’s camp meeting, and it was also the first time that Pastor George Brown and Pastor Hyveth Williams were the selected guest speakers.

Brown was clearly a drawing card for some campers. As a former president of the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, he is well-known and greatly loved by a significant number of members in Ontario, who were formerly members of the Inter-American Division.

In anticipation of this, the seating was increased to 6,000 in the adults section. Nearly all of these were taken, but it seemed as if some people still preferred to remain standing at the rear of the hall.

Brown preached for both the morning and evening services. His first sermon, “There Must Be No Retreat,” was based on Israel’s liberation from Egypt as recorded in Exodus 14. He identified three perils against which the church must guard in taking God’s message to the people of Ontario—the peril of the status quo, the peril of detours and the peril of regression.

Speaking of the church, he said, “We as a body of believers do not constitute
a monument. Ours is not a mere philosophy. Ours is not a mere culture. Ours is not an enterprise. We are a body of believers, a growing, redemptive, historical movement, raised up by God Almighty to accomplish a work in this world!”

He encouraged the church in Ontario to be a “Spirit-filled empowered body of believers”.

He concluded that the church in Ontario does not have any reason to retreat and must not be fearful in moving forward. “Because Christ is with us,” he said, “we have nothing to fear!”

Meanwhile, in the Youth and Young Adults service, Pastor Hyveth Williams was telling nearly 2,000 worshippers that the same power Jesus used to raise Lazarus from the tomb (John 11) is also available for His people to live successful Christian lives and to become instruments in God’s hands.

She used the examples of Jesus commanding the people to roll away the tomb stone and remove the grave clothes from a newly resurrected Lazarus to demonstrate the responsibility Christians have towards others. “We must help to loosen people from their grave clothes of sinful habits,” she said. “Those who are suffocating, burdened with sin and sorrow, need our help to free them.”

She particularly emphasised the need for church members to help people who are new to the faith or who have been hurt.

Ten persons responded to the appeal to accept Jesus as their Saviour.

The ordination of four pastors and commissioning of five teachers in the afternoon was one of the camp meeting’s highlights.

Teachers Andon Boyce, Kevin Cameron, Edwin Mansook, Lucilla Naidoo and Rose Wilson were commissioned. Pastors Frank Dell’Erba, Jagos Ivanovic, Philip Lee and Jayson Levy were ordained.

Ordination speaker, Dr. Ganoune Diop, director of the Global Mission Study Center in Maryland, drew parallels to the selection of priests in ancient Israel as the people’s offering to God. He also cited the example of God’s relationship to His people as their pastor as a model for pastors to follow.

The afternoon programme in the Youth and Young Adults section featured a presentation by Richard Fangrad from Creation Ministries International in Guelph, Ontario. He presented a riveting and thought-provoking biblical account on creation and evolution to show the Genesis six-day creation account as completely reliable.

Camp meeting’s regular features of concerts, education, evangelism and numerous ministry display booths were also prominent.

For many people like O’Brian Alexander, a youth from Toronto West Church, camp meeting also provides a time of rich fellowship.

“It’s a great social experience,” he said. “You can get to talk with other people and hear how they like it. You also get to make new friends. I like it.”

O’Brian can look forward to seeing his new friends at camp meeting of July next year when once again everyone can look forward to another time of a rich spiritual experience.

Camp Meeting 2011 will take place on Sabbath, July 9, at the International Centre, Mississauga.
On Sabbath, May 29, 2010, four pastors and five teachers were respectively ordained and commissioned at the Ontario Conference’s camp meeting held at the International Centre, Mississauga. The service was held at 4:30 p.m. in Arrow Hall in the presence of nearly 5,000 members and visitors.

Four teachers, Andon Boyce, Kevin Cameron, Edwin Mansook and Lucilla Naidoo, teach at Crawford Adventist Academy in Toronto. The other, Rose Wilson, is a teacher at Peel Adventist School in Caledon.

Three pastors, Frank Dell’Erba, Philip Lee and Jayson Levy, work in the Greater Toronto Area. The other, Pastor Jagos Ivanovic, works with the congregation in Sudbury.

Commissioning and ordination services are among the most valued services for church members. The high attendance at this and previous year’s services attest to the strong belief of church members in the biblical teaching that God calls some men and women for particular service.

In the commissioning service, Dr. Janice Maitland, Ontario Conference education superintendent, spoke of the significance of the act of commissioning in the life of the teacher. It is the solemn recognition of the church that God has called men and women to dedicate themselves to the teaching ministry. “The teacher,” she says, “is entrusted with the care of young, impressionable minds for God’s kingdom.”

In the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, the teacher’s role in a Seventh-day Adventist school is recognised as both evangelistic and pastoral.

Andon Boyce has been teaching Mathematics and Computer Science at Crawford Adventist Academy since 2002. He is married to Paula Phillips, and together, they parent their two children, Caleb, 17 months and Isaias, 2 months.

Kevin Cameron began his teaching career at Crawford Adventist Academy nearly ten years ago.

He extends his teaching of English into his favourite hobbies of creative writing, drama and film-making. Kevin is married to Simone. They have two children, McKenna, 6, and Kendall, 3.

Edwin Mansook is a musician. He ‘lives and breathes’ music and uses his gifts to teach his pupils to glorify God. Edwin has served at Crawford Adventist Academy for nearly nine years and is currently the chairperson of the Music Department. He and his wife, Rhonda, have an eleven-year-old daughter, Janay.

Lucilla Naidoo is completing her ninth year at Crawford Adventist Academy and is committed to integrating faith and learning in her teaching.
Lucilla is married to Raghen and is mother to their two sons, Ravell, 17, and Rowan, 11.
Rose Wilson comes from a family of educators. Her parents were both teachers, and she teaches in the same school, Peel Adventist School, as her sister, Fran.
She has served in the Seventh-day Adventist school system for eight years.

Ordination Service

Dr. Ganoune Diop, director for the Global Mission Study Centers in Maryland, USA, was the ordination speaker. A biblical scholar and linguist, Diop tasked the four ordinands to be pastors of their congregations in the same way that Jesus pastors His church. He cited Psalm 23 to spell out the work of the pastor in caring for his congregation but also urged the ordinands to remember their ‘little flock’ at home.

“Care for the larger flock must not cause you to neglect your little flock at home,” he said. “Neither should you neglect the larger flock because you are spending too much time with your little flock. Find the balance.”
It was the first ordination service for Pastor Edwards as president of the conference, but his confidence in giving the ordination charge belied that fact.
The ordination prayer was offered by Pastor Daniel Jackson, the then president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada but now president of North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Newly Ordained Pastors

Frank Dell’Erba pastors Harmony Adventist Church and Italian Adventist Company.
Frank interned under Pastor Fred Irish in the North Bay/South River district and later under Pastor Jeff Brown at Apple Creek Church in Markham.
His ministry is shared by his wife, Irene, with whom he has an active three-year old son, Nicholas.
Jagos Ivanovic enjoys being the pastor of the congregation in Sudbury. “They’re really wonderful people”, he says.
Jagos has been employed by the Ontario Conference since 2005, and his ordination is a confirmation that he is fulfilling God’s purpose.
He and his wife, Zorica, have two children, Stephanie, 9, and Gabriel, 7.
Sang Yun (Philip) Lee is primarily a product of Adventist education.
Since 2004, he has served as an assistant pastor at Toronto Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church. He is currently pursuing his Master of Divinity degree at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Michigan, USA.
Philip is married to Hye Rim (Emily). They have two young children, Enoch and Chloe.
Jayson Levy is a graduate of Northern Caribbean University (NCU).
Jayson entered church employment in early 2004 as a Bible instructor at Toronto East Adventist Church. Eighteen months later he was appointed as the assistant pastor at Scarborough Adventist Church.
Jayson and is wife, Margeaux, are the proud parents of one-year old Kaylon Robert.
While the rest of the province struggled with rain, Southern Ontario’s regional camp meeting was bathed in bright sunlight on a hot day at Norfolk County Fairgrounds in Simcoe on Sabbath, June 12.

Nearly eight-hundred adults, youth and children made it the most-attended regional camp meeting hosted by the twenty-three Seventh-day Adventist churches, companies and groups in Southern Ontario.

In the adults’ section, many members heard the camp meeting speaker, Pastor Mansfield Edwards, elected last year as president of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, for the first time.

Edwards, clearly pleased to worship with the members in the southern region, approached the theme, ‘Holy God, Holy People,’ by using the story of God’s relationship with the prophet Hosea to demonstrate God’s love and faithfulness to His people.

In the youth and young adults’ section, Pastor Glenn DeSilva, associate youth director and Men’s Ministries director for the Ontario Conference, challenged the seventy-plus worshippers to commit themselves to serving God through His church.

“When Jesus sets you free,” he declared, “He sets you free to serve!”

Music again played a major role in making the camp meeting very enjoyable and meaningful for many members. Two concerts provided inspiration and sufficient variety to meet most tastes. The warm, and sometimes enthusiastic, applause following each item demonstrated the congregation’s appreciation. However, it was the new feature, a praise, worship and testimony service, that captivated the interest of a number of members.

As the day progressed, the attendance and joyful spirit of campers pointed to a successful camp meeting. Southern Ontario regional camp meeting chairperson, Pastor Jiwan Moon, was full of praise for the area churches.

“I’m so thankful to God for how well everything has turned out,” he said. “It’s been a great camp meeting. When we learned that we would not receive the usual subsidy from the conference, it looked as if we wouldn’t be able to hold a camp meeting this year, but our churches really came together and raised all the money we needed. What’s more, the offering we collected during the divine service alone more than covered all our expenses!”

The organizers and members are already looking towards their next camp meeting in 2011.
**Welcome and Goodbye**

New to pastoral ministry in Ontario are Ardison Bernardo and Allen Decena.

**Pastor Bernardo** is the new pastor at Bramalea Filipino-Canadian, where he assumed his responsibilities on June 1. He and his wife, Maria, and their children, Sean, Fiona, and Ceanna, recently arrived from the Philippines, where he was youth pastor of Philippine International Church at the Adventist University of the Philippines.

**Pastor Decena** was born in the Greater Toronto Area to Adventist parents. He and his wife, Jelene, were members of Filipino-Canadian Adventist Church, where they were very active in youth ministry. He has just completed his ministerial studies at the Adventist Theological Seminary in Michigan.

He is the new assistant pastor at Filipino-Canadian and Faith Filipino Fellowship congregations.

Allen and Jelene have a son, Allen Jr. (known as ‘AJ’), age 10.

**Saying Goodbye**

Sadly, we say goodbye to Donna Jackson and to three of our teachers, Greg Fortney, Andrea Nagy and Maureen Westhaver.

Everyone knows the indefatigable Donna Jackson—or so it seems, because as Family and Women’s Ministries director for the Ontario Conference since 2002, she has travelled extensively across Ontario, holding numerous workshops, retreats and training sessions. Her passion for God has led her to completely devote all her waking hours (and even some of her sleeping hours) to growing strong Christian families, enriching life-long marriages, building powerful women of faith, nurturing confident singles, encouraging sexual purity and providing support for teens who become pregnant.

Donna’s departure is the result of the election of her husband, Pastor Daniel Jackson, to the presidency of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. They will be based in Maryland, USA.

She will be greatly missed because her love for people, so clearly evident to all who meet her, has set her apart as everyone’s friend. “She has the God-given ability to see the good in people,” said Sarah Gouda-Maka, “and she’s quick to recognise their talents and put them to use.”

“She has a warm, congenial personality and an admirable team spirit that we will greatly miss,” said Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards. “Her passion for God’s work, often reflected in her dedicated service in her ministries, is admirable.”

Donna was appointed to her current position in May 1, 2002, following her predecessor Jean Parchment’s departure to the United States. She was elected to the same position in 2005 and re-elected in 2009.

Donna will be greatly missed in Ontario, but the North American Division will be blessed because of her.

**Greg Fortney** has served as the teaching principal of Cornerstone Christian Elementary School, Sault Ste. Marie, since January 2009. The school’s theme of growing in Christ for the 2009-2010 school year has definitely helped him to assist his students in their spiritual journey.

Greg is leaving the Ontario Conference to further his studies in education.

Andrea Nagy was among the staff as a contract teacher when Crawford Adventist Academy East opened its doors to its first pupils three years ago. The 2009-2010 school year was her first full-time year with the Ontario Conference.

Andrea Nagy has been teaching French, music and a combined grade 1-3 class and always sought excellence from all her pupils. She will be returning to full-time studies.

Both Greg and Andrea will be greatly missed from the classroom, but their influence will remain in the lives of their pupils. We wish them God’s richest blessings in their future studies.

After seventeen years teaching at St. Thomas Adventist School, **Maureen Westhaver** is retiring. As a teaching principal, Maureen richly seasoned her teaching skills with prayer and has seen miracles happen in her multi-grade classroom. She is known as a very pleasant and patient teacher who loves her pupils and goes “beyond the call of duty” to ensure that they grasp the concepts she teaches them.

Maureen has been noted for involving her students in making blankets as an outreach tool in the community. She is also well-known for making apple pies as a fundraiser. Ontario Conference Education superintendent, Dr. Janice Mailland, describes Maureen as “a loving teacher who creates a spiritual atmosphere in her classroom that constantly reminds her students that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them.”

Maureen begins a very well-deserved retirement at the end of the school year. Her presence in the school will be greatly missed by everyone. We wish her a happy and fulfilling retirement.
Mark Johnson, New President of the SDACC

At a specially called meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) Board of Directors on Sunday, July 18, 2010, Pastor Mark Johnson, president of Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was appointed to serve as president of the SDACC. He replaces Dan Jackson who was recently elected as president of the North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists.

Johnson was born in the United States and worked as a pastor in both Missouri and California before moving to Canada, where he has served for the last 25 years.

His Canadian service includes pastoral work at Bowmanville Church in Ontario, pastoral and departmental work in Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference before being elected as executive secretary in British Columbia Conference. He was elected as president of Alberta Conference in the spring of 2008.

Pastor Johnson and his wife, Rebecca ‘Becky’, are the parents of two adult children.

At Last: Online Registration in Canadian Funds!

Church members may now register for conference events online in Canadian funds.

Payment for orders and other materials, such as camp meeting DVDs and CDs may also be made online with a credit card.

This is a direct response to the needs expressed by church members.

The system is very simple to use. If the event requires registration, there will be a link directing the user to enter payment details.

Third-hand Smoke - a New Threat

We are all familiar with the damaging effects of second-hand smoke. We know that it contains deadly chemicals including carbon monoxide, lead, nicotine, formaldehyde, acetone, ammonia, cadmium, phenol, propylene glycol, benzo[a]pyrene, toluene, and benzene. As well, we are aware that each year in Canada, as many as 7,800 non-smokers die of lung cancer and heart disease due to prolonged exposure to second-hand smoke. It is also a fact that children who are exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to suffer Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory and ear infections, and more severe asthma. Exposure to the toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke can also result in a decrease in children’s ability to reason and understand, and can negatively impact behaviour and attention span.

Now there is another health risk that has emerged: third-hand smoke. The Lung Association (LA) describes this as a new name for an old problem. Smoke trapped in hair, skin, fabric, carpet, curtains, furniture, and toys that contain toxic chemicals which linger even after the smoker has extinguished the cigarette, cigar, or pipe is called third-hand smoke. It builds up over time and the chemicals from the trapped smoke pollute the air and are absorbed into the lungs and skin. The LA also warns that ventilation and/or designated smoking rooms, air purifiers, and fans do not offer protection from the hazards resulting from exposure because smoke will disperse throughout a building and affect non-smokers.

What is more disturbing, according to the LA, is that exposure to toxic chemicals from third-hand smoke occurs if you are in a room or car where people usually smoke, even if they are not smoking at the time. Furthermore, third-hand smoke is also found in household dust which babies swallow when they put their hands in their mouths after touching a contaminated surface. Since babies crawl on the floor and their respiratory rate is more rapid, they inhale about 20 times more third-hand smoke than adults.

In a recent Breathe Free program conducted at the Mississauga Seventh-day Adventist Church by Health Ministry Department of the Ontario Conference, a participant noted that smoking is easily one of the most disgusting, lethal habits. He cautions everyone, particularly youth, against starting a habit that could destroy individuals and their families physically, emotionally, and financially. Even though he reported that he never smoked inside his house, he agreed that third-hand smoke should not be treated lightly because of its potential long-term effects on health.

At the Festival of the Laity, August 26-28, 2010, Health Ministries will be providing training for those interested in conducting smoke cessation seminars in church communities. This would be an opportunity to learn ways to promote a smoke-free world. The deadline for registration is August 6, 2010. Visit www.AdventistOntario.org for more information.

Sources: The Lung Association, Public Health, Ontario

Maria McClean, Health & Children’s Ministries Director
Conference Community Prayer Breakfast

Mr. Jerry Ouellette, MPP for Oshawa, and Councillor Nester Pidwerbecki, deputy mayor, were among a number of dignitaries, spiritual leaders and business leaders in Oshawa who attended the first-ever prayer breakfast held at the Ontario Conference on Friday, June 4, 2010.

The 8:00 a.m. prayer breakfast was organized by the Prayer Ministries Department of the conference and coincided with the official opening of a prayer room.

Prior to the start of the breakfast, Prayer Ministries director, Pastor Eustace Williams, was very clear about the purpose of the event. “We want the community to see our church headquarters as more than simply an office building;” said Pastor Eustace Williams. “We want our community leaders to see this building as a place of prayer. Each time they are in need of guidance, we want them to think of us.”

After a warm welcome by Williams, the prayer breakfast began with joyful worship led by Pastor David Schwinghammer. The enthusiastic response of a number of guests suggests that they had not expected Adventist worship to be as lively and inspiring as it was. It was also clear that they were moved by the devotional thoughts by conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards.

One of the highlights of the morning was the rendition by a group from the staff of the song, “Shout to the Lord!” However, it was evident that prayer was the main feature of the morning. Dr. Nilton Amorim, executive secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC), led the prayer for the business community. He was followed by Dr. Daniel Linrud, executive secretary of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, who prayed for city officials. Former Ontario Conference president, Pastor Derrick Nichols, led the prayer for the spiritual leaders.

After prayer, everyone moved to the prayer room, where Councillor Nester Pidwerbecki cut the ribbon and declared the prayer room open. Dr. Dennis Marshall, superintendent of education for the SDACC, offered a prayer of dedication.

Pastor Williams brought the service to a close and reminded everyone that the prayer room is available for the community to use for prayer.

“This room is not just for the occupants of this building,” he said. “We want the community to know that if ever they are looking for a place to pray, they can come right here.”

A delicious breakfast followed in the spacious foyer of the conference office.

Fourteen Ontario Scholars Among Crawford’s Graduates

Fourteen Ontario Scholars were among forty-four graduates who received their high school diplomas from Crawford Adventist Academy at its annual graduation service on Sunday, June 20, 2010.

The impressive figure of thirty-two percent of the graduating class being Ontario Scholars (any high school graduate in Ontario who attains an average of 80% or higher in their six best grade 12 courses) was not lost on the guest speaker, Jay C. Hope, Deputy Minister of Correctional Services in Ontario. He noted how impressed he was with what he had discovered about the school and the quality of its graduates.

While there was a high number of Ontario Scholars, the entire graduating class clearly reflected the true value of Seventh-day Adventist education. Nearly a third spent their entire school life at Crawford, starting from Junior Kindergarten, Kindergarten or Grade 1. However, it was the numerous awards and scholarships that told a story of young men and women who had used their high school years to achieve their best, and so maintain a school tradition where 98% of graduates are accepted at the first university of their choice.

Graduation weekend at Crawford Adventist Academy is not a simple service. The event, spread over four days, is a lavish celebration of the joint effort of pupils, parents, teachers and churches that reflects the Adventist education ideal. This collaboration was evidenced in each service and the customary posing for photographs on Sunday morning at the close of the commencement service.

Earlier, parents had been especially honoured when class salutatorian, Erika Santiago (GPA of 90%), spoke of the sacrifices made by parents to give their children a Seventh-day Adventist education, and thanked them on behalf of the graduating class. This earned rapturous applause from the capacity audience of parents, family members and friends.

When the ceremony was over and graduates posed for their photographs, the happy, smiling faces, hugs and kisses, even the tear-filled goodbyes, signalled that the high school years had finally come to an end. A new beginning awaits them.
On July 11, Toronto West's athletes were crowned CYSA's track and field champions for the first time in the 12-year history of the competition at York University. They arrived at the track ready to do their best but did not really expect to win—that would be a competition left for last year's champion, Philadelphia, and the previous title-holders, Apple Creek, to battle out. Even before the opening ceremonies began, Toronto West and everyone else became aware of the absence of not only Philadelphia and Apple Creek but other giants, such as Perth Avenue and Mississauga.

The absence of Philadelphia and company meant that what is usually the largest track and field event in Ontario was greatly reduced. In the 100m, the scarcity of athletes resulted in some heats becoming finals because there were only enough athletes for one heat. For example, in the women's 17-19 age category, Hamilton East’s Monique Rodney and Chanel Williams were the only competitors! The ‘no-show’ of the athletes meant that their supporters also stayed away. So hundreds of spectators were missing, and no one seemed to have any answers. Perhaps it was the world cup final in South Africa.

CYSA’s track and date clearly clashed with the world cup final between Spain and Holland, but it does not explain what happened to the teams from churches in division A (500+ membership) since the division B churches (membership less than 500) were well-represented. Their absence simply meant that many more athletes from other churches were able to earn medals. This is not to say that their victories were of lesser value. In most cases, the competition was as fierce, and excellent times, such as David Rudder’s 11.2s for the men’s 100m (age 17-19), were still posted. So, nothing should be taken from Toronto West. Its athletes arrived at the stadium prepared to do their best and they did. The name Toronto West is now on the division A trophy, along with those of Apple Creek and Philadelphia.

Kendalwood, Division B Champion Again

Division B

Kendalwood’s athletes are the division B champions for the second successive year. They repeated last year’s strategy of doing the necessary training, then filling as many events with as many athletes as permitted in order to get at least some points in each.

Kendalwood is a relative newcomer to CYSA’s annual track and field meeting, but in the few years since it started, its athletes immediately made their mark and gave notice that they are not a flash in the pan. A second win has underscored Kendalwood’s firm grip on the championship.

CYSA welcomed the athletes from Hamilton East Church who were making their first appearance. They displayed skills that, in a few seasons, will make them serious contenders for division B’s crown. Five
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Year-old Ajax Church also made its first outing and gave notice that it had arrived to stay and compete. However, it was Agape Temple and Kanisa, the silver and bronze medal positions, respectively, that showed that division B promises very tight competition in the next few years.

In division A, Toronto East’s athletes announced their presence and determination to compete with the best from division A by taking gold and silver in a number of key events. Their silver position is well-deserved. Next year, they will plan to return even stronger.

The sudden and unexpected arrival of a violent thunderstorm in the late afternoon caused the early closure of the games. Left without any cover, spectators and athletes were exposed, and their safety became a matter of serious concern. CYSA did the right thing when it abandoned the meeting at that point.

After years of trying to run a flawless event, CYSA should celebrate 2010 as the year of success, even with the abandonment of the meeting. CYSA’s board listened to what athletes and supporters said about the previous year’s meeting and had worked hard and corrected nearly all of the major difficulties. They are to be congratulated. It was just a shame that the likes of Apple Creek, Philadelphia, Mississauga and a full representation from Perth Avenue were not there to enjoy it.

Apple Creek Wins CYSA’s First Domino Tournament

Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church, usually known for its athletics prowess, won first place in a Christian Youth Sports Academy’s (CYSA) first domino tournament on March 20, 2010 at Toronto Central Adventist Church.

Apple Creek’s duo, Lesmore Jordan and Albert Allman, resisted fierce competition to win the coveted prize. CYSA’s president, Kester Griffiths; tournament judge, C. Isaacs, along with CYSA’s board members, were on hand to present their awards.

Host church Toronto Central’s Pastor Samuel McKenzie and Trevor Morrison were runners-up, followed by third-place Scarborough Church’s Oswald Rock and Peter Monfort.

Christian Youth Sports Academy (CYSA), better known for its annual track and field day in July, says that the tournament of exciting games, fun, fellowship and food also raised funds for its educational award scholarships.

Dominoes is very popular among many Adventists of Caribbean descent and is played regularly. It is likely that other churches will enter next year’s tournament.

Final Positions

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<tr>
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<td>North Eastern (NY)</td>
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Apple Creek Wins CYSA’s First Domino Tournament

David Rudder’s golden run

Plenty of colours on and off the track

Albert and Lesmore

CYSA First Relay Championship
York University
August 29, 2010
Ajax Church Moves to Southside Worship Centre

Ajax Seventh-day Adventist Community Church now meets for worship at Southside Worship Centre at 55 Emperor St., Ajax, after worshipping at Refuge City Pentecostal Church for the past five years.

The congregation held its opening service at the Southside Worship Centre on Sabbath, May 1, 2010. Pastor Errol Lawrence, Ministerial director and Church Growth coordinator of the Ontario Conference, delivered the sermon and challenged each member to become active evangelists in Ajax.

Pastor Jason Luscombe, minister of Southside Worship Centre, was also present and warmly welcomed the congregation. He charged the congregation with the responsibility of “warming up the pews with the Holy Spirit on Saturdays” so that the Spirit will be waiting for the host congregation on Sundays. He also spoke of the importance of all congregations working together to “spread God’s Word to our respective communities”.

Judy Hutchinson-Boyce, church communications secretary, said that the move was part of the congregation’s goal to be active agents in its community. “We want to be accessible and assist in meeting the needs of our community and to proclaim the message of the loving God,” she said, “and our new meeting place will make it easier to reach these goals. We now have a facility that allows for more consistent programming and more access as we aim to serve the residents of the town of Ajax”.

She also spoke of the congregation’s appreciation of Pastor Lance Brown of Refuge City Pentecostal Church.

Southside Worship Centre is located at 55 Emperor St., Ajax, Ontario, L1S 1M9 (across from the Rouge Valley Hospital). Visit the church online at www.ajaxsda.com or call 905-231-9859 for more information. Better yet, worship with the congregation on a Sabbath (9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.) or for prayer meeting service on a Monday evening at 7:30.

J. Hutchinson-Boyce

Perth Avenue Church Sends Aid to Church in Haiti

On May 10, 2010, the ship carrying a container from Perth Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church set sail for Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

The container was loaded on April 22 with 185 boxes of food, children’s, men’s and women’s clothing by volunteers from the church. They happily worked hard to prepare the boxes, knowing that they were sending relief to fellow believers at Temple 1 Seventh-day Adventist Church in Port-au-Prince.

The container was the result of the church’s response to the Haiti earthquake appeal by the Ontario Conference president, Pastor Mansfield Edwards, earlier this year and was made possible by a benefit concert held at Perth Avenue on February 27.

The inspiring evening of music and spoken words featured Dr. Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, as guest speaker, along with a number of outstanding artists including Norwill Simmonds, Ladine McKenzie-Dowe, Tiffany Campbell-Dailey, Ryan Nevahurd Daley, and By Faith. The concert, hosted by Donald McLeod, raised over five thousand dollars for the appeal.

The organizing committee, inspired by Matthew 25:35-45, is working with Temple 1 Adventist Church to help them rebuild the church.

Singles Live Out Loud for Christ at Annual Retreat

Lively ministry, open fellowship, useful workshops and devoted worship—these were at the heart of the Live Out Loud Adventist Singles Retreat 2010, during May 21 to 23 at Sherkston Shores Beach Resort, in Port Colborne, Ontario.

The retreat featured several speakers, including keynote speaker, Dr. Jeffrey Brown, president and Family Ministries director of the Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Dr. Brown, author of the book, Single and Gifted: Making the Most of Your Singleness, covered a wide range of topics pertaining to singleness, including those that addressed living for God, healthy relationships and the benefits of being a Christian single.

Three other engaging speakers were featured: Campbell Page, pastor of New Life Adventist Church in Oshawa; Mickey Hutchinson, a caseworker with Toronto Social Services and a leader in meeting the needs of our community and to proclaim the message of the loving God,” she said, “and our new meeting place will make it easier to reach these goals. We now have a facility that allows for more consistent programming and more access as we aim to serve the residents of the town of Ajax”.

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J. Hutchinson-Boyce
Pearl Harrison has lived longer than anyone else at Scarborough Seventh-day Adventist Church. On February 23, 2010, she celebrated her 99th birthday with her beloved church family with a fellowship meal that was prepared in her honour. Pastor Winston Hurlock was joined by the officers of the church and many others in extending greetings to her. He spoke of her value as a member of the church and how she had faithfully served the Lord for over 60 years since her baptism. He presented her with a token of love from the church family.

Pearl was born in Clarendon, Jamaica, and was a member of North Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in the capital, Kingston. She has been a member of the Scarborough congregation for the past 30 years. Pearl is the happy mother of four children, twenty-one grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren who are all hoping to celebrate her 100th birthday in 2011.

“Singles...”

continued from page 26

in implementing community-based programs; and Maria McClean, Health and Children’s Ministries director for the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Another memorable aspect of the retreat was the fellowship. Saturday night was a creative mix of activities, laughs and fun memories.

Nikki Rampersad

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