SDACC Re-elects Its Officers

Dennis Marshall, General Vice President, page 19
Where’s the Joy?

Let me confess: Every Sabbath, I’d go to church—pastors are supposed to go to church—but something was missing! It was always wonderful to meet with the church family and worship but something was missing. When I shared my feelings with a colleague, he reluctantly said, “Well, perhaps you’re not as close to God as you used to be”.

It wasn’t what I wanted to hear because it sounded like criticism, but what he said made sense. I’ve always believed that when something is wrong, a person should always look at self first and genuinely ask, “Is there something that I have done or failed to do that has contributed to this problem?” I did that and turned up a negative result because I was experiencing a pretty meaningful relationship with God. So, what was the problem?

I realised what was missing when I visited another congregation. I observed a lacklustre Sabbath School where the superintendent berated the members for lateness, a heated argument between a teacher and a member of a Sabbath School class, and leaders attempting to speak above the movement of people and the buzz of conversation between services.

When the worship began, I looked around at a sea of sombre-looking people who seemed to be simply enduring what was happening. Their smiles were reserved for their friends or for the cute babies in their mother’s arms. The children retrieved their colouring books and set to work because the long service did not take them into consideration.

The praise team gave its best. However, the songs were not written for congregational singing, so the congregation simply stood and listened to them sing. Few people seemed to be enjoying what was happening. That’s when I realised what was missing from their worship and from mine—there was no joy! It was the same thing in my congregation and in others I had seen.

Since then, I’ve seen many other congregations and, with few exceptions, it’s the same story—there is little or no joy in worship. Joy, the feeling of great pleasure and happiness, according to the Oxford dictionary, is a rare experience in our corporate worship. So, it’s not hard to see why some members stay away from church or make sporadic appearances. Yes, there are members who seem to enjoy the routine of church-going and fulfilling their religious obligations, but even some of these have to be pretty tenacious to return weekly.

So, where’s the joy?

Someone’s bound to say, “We take joy to church. We don’t go there to find joy!”

It’s true that the attitude we take to worship often determines our experience, but I’ve taken a joyful attitude to church before, only to have it severely dented or snatched away by routine, dullness, entertainment and poor organisation masquerading as worship. Where’s the joy?

Since a congregation is a collection of people who have been saved by God, saints with a sure hope of eternal life, shouldn’t their church be the place where the sum of their joy cannot be equaled by any other collection of people?

A quick search for the word ‘joy’ in the Bible reveals numerous passages where God’s people are seen celebrating God’s victories, taking great pleasure in offering their means, joyful in God’s presence, singing and shouting for joy, clapping their hands. The Bible paints a picture of worshippers who are ecstatic in the presence of God. They delight in Him. Is this how your church worships?

Corporate worship of God should be far more joyous than the unabashed joy we experience when our favourite sports team wins a game. When fans arrive at the arena, their sole purpose is to cheer for their team and enjoy the game. When their team wins, they revel in its success.

We cannot leave our worship services to chance. It’s not enough to simply fill in the slots on the programme each week. Our leaders have a responsibility to thoroughly prepare worship and its environment so that God, His glory and His salvation will always be our focus.

Worship must be planned so that God’s nature and His attributes are always revealed, and provision is made for us to respond with our entire being.

Where’s the joy? It could be found in the summer at a day of fellowship held by the Seventh-day Adventist African Churches in Ontario. As the goodness of God was revealed in worship, the choir began to sing His praises and worshippers could not remain seated. Many joined in the praise and began dancing, happy in God’s presence. Others, not feeling comfortable with dancing as a mode of expressing their joy, were no less joyful and happily sang, clapped and uttered prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Where’s the joy? It was found in a small congregation as they recently celebrated a Jubilee Sabbath and experienced God’s blessings. Their worship was so fulfilling and happy that they did not want it to stop!

Where’s the joy in your congregation?

References
1. 1 Samuel 18:6
2. 1 Chronicles 29:29; Psalms 27:6
3. Acts 2:28; Jude 1:24
4. Psalms 33:3
5. Psalm 47:1

Halsey Peat, Editor
The Road Ahead: A New Strategy for a Changing World

An Interview with the Ontario Conference President

Since spring 2011, Ontario Conference president, Mansfield Edwards, has been speaking about REACH, a new strategy by which the Seventh-day Adventist Church can effectively bring about change in North America. He even hosted a workshop for the conference directors on June 16 with Dr. Paul Brantley, vice president for strategic planning in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Brantley took time to explain the new strategy and how it may be implemented at both the conference and the local church levels.

Highlights editor, Halsey Peat, recently interviewed Mansfield Edwards to discover what has motivated his passion for this new strategy, REACH.

Peat: Dr. Edwards, Please tell our readers why you have embraced this new strategy and what does it mean?

Edwards: I hardly need to say that radical change is affecting the world. Economies are unstable. The political landscape keeps changing, and the church in Ontario and in the world is faced with what some consider as the most challenging period since its inception in 1863.

When athletes face the ultimate test of the Olympics, they talk about how they must “take it to another level.”

The challenges that confront us as God’s people demand a timely responsiveness like never before in history.

Ellen G. White clarifies, “It is essential to labor with order, following an organised plan and a definite object.” - Manuscript 24, 1887.

Here are some of our challenges as I see them:

Our churches in Ontario face challenges hardly imagined a few years ago. Let’s face it, our children and youth face distractions and temptations that we never experienced. Obviously, the devil is modifying his strategies, for he knows that he has but a short time. Our challenges include:

- Increasing materialism
- Increasing secularism
- Economic hardship
- Family breakdown
- Indigenous population largely unreached by the Church
- Many towns and cities in Ontario without an Adventist presence
- New concepts of morality that either clash with biblical teachings or are not addressed by them.

To say that there is much to be done in these last days is clearly an understatement.

Peat: From what you are saying, it could appear that we are floundering or don’t know how to effectively meet these challenges.

Edwards: Not at all! While we face serious challenges, we are also living during a period of opportunities not seen for decades. Consider:

- There is an increasing search for meaning and purpose, which secularism and materialism cannot fill.
- Advances in social media can place our message within the reach of everyone in a shorter period of time.
- A surging interest in health and wellness is an entering wedge for our message.
- An increase in the immigrant population provides opportunities for soul-winning, as well as additional support for our missionary teams, as many Adventists are included in the wave of immigrants. It is against this background that our administrators, along with our dedicated team of directors, have spent time in praying and planning for a strategic direction in our pursuit of great things for God in Ontario.

Peat: Is this where REACH comes in?

Edwards: Absolutely. REACH is an acronym meaning: Revival and Transformation; Education for Discipleship; Alignment within the church; Community Outreach and Evangelism, and Healthy Leadership and Management. It was initiated by the NAD and we are using it to shape our plans and to develop our local priorities.

Peat: So, using REACH what do the conference’s strategies and priorities look like?

Edwards: Let me outline it for you:

1. Revival and Transformation

Ellen White says, “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work.” – SM1:121.

This is more than simply a slogan. Following revival, every church is to seek not just a reformation but a complete transformation of the life. Hence, we speak of revival and transformation.

2. Education for Discipleship

We want to see every youth and adult learning, maturing and led to follow Christ. This is imperative for our church.

3. Alignment within the Church

At both the conference and local church levels, departments working together in a synchronized way to carry out the mission of the church. Members, regardless of ethnic differences, joining together, united by the higher culture of being born again in Christ, to win our province for God. “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” – 1 Cor. 12:27.

4. Community Outreach and Evangelism

We must be clear: The church is not for entertainment nor is it for relaxation as a religious or social club. Our role in this world must be distinct: “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organised for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning,
it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency.”

5. Healthy Leadership and Management

It was Jere Patzer who said, “It is easy for a multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural, multigenerational church to have so many programs that the fundamental focus of God’s remnant church can be lost.”

Good things can sap our energy and resources and yet, not contribute to the direct accomplishment of our vision. We need healthy leadership and good management at all levels of our church. This is the leadership that will help us maintain our fundamental focus.

Peat: I appreciate the outline you have shared. However, are we to look forward to additional details and some specific plans?

Edwards: As the REACH strategies are sharpened, they will be shared with each congregation. Meanwhile, I encourage each congregation to begin thinking about its purpose in terms of these strategies.

I also appeal to our leaders on every level to be always sensitive to the fact that Jesus is the church’s principal leader. – Eph. 1:23.

Let us lead as we are led by Him.

Peat: Thank you.

How Do I Know if I’m Doing God’s Will?

How do I know if it is God’s will for me to marry this person? What about the new job offer, is it God’s will for me to take it? How am I to know what God’s plans are for my life?

These and similar questions are common to many Christians who have heard that God not only has a plan, but a specific plan for their lives. Consequently, for some, life is a meandering time of uncertainty and frustration as they struggle to determine what God’s plans are for them.

Many Christians acknowledge that God has a plan for their individual lives because they have read or repeatedly heard Jeremiah 29:11 quoted, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” and apply it to themselves.

When people talk about God’s plan or His will for their lives, they are not always talking about the same thing. There are some who believe that God’s plan is like a blueprint that God has mapped out for their lives—school, career, marriage partner, etc. Individual choice and personal accountability have little or no bearing.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not believe that God operates in this way. However, the way some Adventists understand God’s will or plan for their lives suggests a leaning towards it. It is not unusual to hear someone say when turned down for a job, “It was not God’s will for me,” even when he or she was not suitably qualified for the position or a better candidate was selected. This attitude is similar to the Islamic “inshallah” that ascribes every eventuality, good or bad, to God’s plan and purpose.

It is in the area of relationships where this leaning towards a divine pre-planning seem to be most evident. Some individuals will argue that his or her fiancé is the direct result of God’s answer to prayer. While this might very well be true at one level or another, some take it so far as to state that even if one of them had been living in a different country, God would have worked it out so that they would still meet and be married because it was His plan for them to be married. The choice, they say, is God’s.

Contrary to the conviction of some of the romantically involved, there are a number of people other than one’s fiancé to whom one could marry, be equally happy and blessed by God. Marriage bliss is not restricted to only one, pre-ordained person. It is not a matter of “that’s the person God has chosen.

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for me’. Rather, it is a matter of preparedness, timing, location, and a willingness to follow God’s guidance through biblical principles.

Another area of confusion and frustration regarding God’s will is in the spiritual realm where some believe that God has chosen a particular role for them. If they are not serving in this yet undiscovered role, they are living in disobedience to Him and are plagued with guilt. They try so hard to discover His will that they forget to delight in His goodness and mercy.

Does God play hide-and-seek with His children by hiding His will from them? This concept is clearly contrary to Scripture. So, what does the term God’s will mean and how does it affect the lives of His children?

In Scripture, it is clear that the ‘will of God’ refers primarily to two things: God’s desire that everyone is saved and become Christ’s disciple. In John 6:40, Jesus says, “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Understanding this about God’s will provides a framework for living and removes uncertainty and frustration about discovering His will for your life.

There is little doubt that anyone disputes that God’s will is for everyone to be saved. However, in regards to discipleship, some will point to Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD…” and argue that God’s will must have a wider application. They identify Bible characters such as Moses, Samson, Hosea, Jeremiah and Paul as examples of God having specific plans for the life of each of His children.

It is important to consider the context of Jeremiah 29:11. The Jews were in captivity in Babylon. To counter their despair, Jeremiah sent two letters advising them to be patient and trust God in their seventy-year sojourn. God was full of love for them and He would, in His own time, fulfill all His promises to them. They were to pray and seek out the fulfillment and to unrestrainedly turn their hearts to Him.

In this passage, God is specifically speaking to an exiled nation many centuries before the birth of Christ. It does not say that God has specific plans outlined for the lives of each of His children. However, there are some principles that may be applied to the lives of people today:

1. God will fulfill His promises to His people.

2. He may be counted on.

3. He is not against us. On the contrary, He is for us. It is not His will or purpose to harm or hurt us. His thoughts or His plans are ‘for good, not for evil’.

There are no biblical passages that directly say that God has specific plans for the lives of individuals. While some may argue for inference from some passages, such teaching is either the result of extrapolation of biblical accounts or the misapplication of some scenarios.

The reference to Bible characters such as Moses, Samson, Hosea, Jeremiah and Paul falls into the latter category. Each was specifically called by God to perform a particular task in leading God’s people and His church. God made it very clear to them what He wanted them to do and prepared the way for them to do so. To infer from this that God has a particular path or purpose for everyone is to stretch the point way beyond its application and contradicts the teaching that God has given us the power of choice. What may be understood from this about God’s will or plan is, that if He has a particular task for you to perform, He will not leave you unaware or uncertain about it. He will clearly reveal what He wants you to do, even if He does not explain His purpose to you. Meanwhile, His plan, His will is for you to live a life of discipleship, living as all Christians are expected to live, in total dependence on Him, loyal to Him, confident in the Holy Spirit’s guidance, and fully committed to fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Does this mean that God is not involved in the lives of His people? Not at all; God is very concerned about how we live (3 John 1:2).

As a disciple you do not have to struggle to determine what is God’s will. All that is needed for living according to His will is found in the inspired words of Scripture. Paul says it this way, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Scripture may be considered as the revealed will of God. It is this revealed will to which Paul refers in Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, … 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world… Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

So, how do I select a marriage partner? How should I determine which career to follow? The answer is not complicated. It is, live as a disciple and obey the revealed will of God.

Disciples, by definition, are those who follow Jesus. They are in close relationship with Him. Close relationships exist because there is regular, intimate communication with Him. This speaks of the
Building Marriages that Last

Marriage and family counsellor, Hymers Wilson, continues his series on marriage and family relationships that could help save your marriage or help you to prepare for marriage. The first article 'For Better or For Worse' Doesn't Have to Be 'for Worse' was printed in the Summer 2011 edition and may be found online at www.adventistontario.org

When my father passed away in August 2010, my parents had been married for 58 years. How does a marriage last that long, especially when we’re all seeing marriages of people that we know and love crash and burn after months or a few short years? Sadly, it’s a common tragedy which is an all too frequent part of our experience. However, in my experience as a counsellor working with couples, I’ve noticed a few special characteristics of couples whose marriages stand the test of time.

Marriage is great! I know from experience. For this reason I’m deliberately striking a positive note because it would be so easy to focus on doom and gloom. We don’t usually hear from the couples who are happily married because it doesn’t make the news, nor is it the stuff juicy church gossip is made of. I mean, how many times have you heard someone commenting on how beautifully a couple relate to each other? How many times have you talked to someone about a couple’s beautiful characteristics that keep them together?

Before I go further, I want to make it clear that I’m talking about couples who have happy marriages that last. I’m not talking about couples whose marriages last because they’re just hanging on, barely tolerating each other because they have no other option but to stick it out to the bitter end.

The first thing I’ve noticed about couples whose happy marriages last is a spirit of compromise. Couples compromise because they love each other and are emotionally mature.
Love motivates them to compromise instead of being selfish. They’re able to give and take. They’re flexible. They can agree on taking turns to visit their relatives. They’re able to be flexible about which movies to watch. The husband will watch the occasional home decorating show with his wife instead of stomping out of the room in disgust. The wife will watch the occasional football game with her husband instead of running for the telephone to talk to her girlfriend. None of them insists on having his or her own way.

I’ve also noticed that these couples also discuss their plans with each other, and they function as a team. In my childhood, I learned from playing team sports that while a team has individuals with a variety of skills, it functions best when the different abilities and personalities operate with one united goal in mind – to win! In marriages that last, it isn’t important to win arguments or assign blame when things go wrong. Instead, the couple has one paramount goal in mind—the preservation of a happy relationship.

This leads to my third observation about couples whose marriages stand the test of time. They are able to communicate freely about their plans, their likes and dislikes. They can talk openly about their disappointments or she is trying to get across to you. I’ve noticed in my own marriage that if I’m quick to disagree and shoot down an idea, a plan, or a dream that my wife may have, it can build resentment. If, on the other hand, I express support and join her in brainstorming and even planning to carry out a wish, she will often see the pitfalls and the obstacles on her own. It means that I don’t have to function as judge and jury for every idea. I don’t have to take it upon myself to point out all the reasons why an idea can’t work. Besides, however good I may feel about myself, I’m truly not the fount of all knowledge!

I mentioned that couples that stay together are able to effectively communicate their needs to each other. They’re especially able to do so in the vitally important area of sexual intimacy. They are aware of each other’s sexual needs and find each other deeply satisfying, not merely because they can talk about their needs, but because they take the time to do the things their partner finds satisfying. Sexual intimacy is never used as a reward for a good (usually meaning, compliant) spouse. Withholding sexual intimacy is never used as a punishment for an errant husband or wife. Couples whose marriages stand the test of time resist the temptation to allow resentment about each other’s sexual needs to build to a breaking point where one or the other shuts down and stops talking about or practicing intimacy. These couples make a point of thinking about the intimacy needs of their spouse and constantly look for ways they can delightfully fulfill those needs instead of frustrating them. If they have children, they are careful to balance their attention between the children and their spouse.

Balancing needs of children and spouse is an area which can be easily neglected. Couples bringing up children may often have more than one full-time job to contend with. First, they may have one or more jobs outside of the home. Then they have the full-time job of caring for the children. When they’re young, children need full-time supervision. It takes a tremendous amount of energy and demands all the ingenuity and intelligence a couple can muster to provide for children. Couples who stay together happily married are able to find ways to get a break from the children and spend time with each other even if it is for a few hours or a few days. Couples without children make a point of planning vacations together and finding time to get away from work and other responsibilities. They find the time so that they can focus on each other. These couples resist the temptation to spend all their time working and making money and attaining things. They choose to spend some of their time building their relationship which is, in a way, like money in the bank!

Finally, although there are other important ingredients that couples who remain happily married enjoy, I end with the spirit of forgiveness. In my previous article in the summer edition of Ontario Highlights, I mentioned the biblical truth that no one is perfect. Couples whose marriages last and remain happy and satisfied with each other are able to forgive each other, not keeping scores or rehearsing their partner’s faults ad nauseam. They not only forgive each other, but they are able to cease doing the offending thing that caused the rift in the first place.

If you adopt these practices of couples whose marriages happen last, I guarantee your marriage will also stand the test of time. In the next issue, we will discuss raising children as well as spirituality and religion in marriage.
“A ‘Karita’ Care-Package Helped Me Stay in Church”

How Churches Can Support Students Away from Home

Whoever named her did well. With the name Karita meaning ‘beloved’ or ‘generous love’, it must have been difficult for Karita Francis to be anything other than the thoughtful and generous person she is.

When Karita was chosen by her local church to serve as the education leader, one of the most significant things she immediately did was to create care packages for students who were studying away from home. On at least one occasion, she drove from Toronto to Hamilton to personally visit a student from her church and present her with a care package. It was a generosity, according to the student, that will never be forgotten.

Since the end of August, many young adults have left their homes and their local congregations and moved away to universities across Canada and elsewhere. Unless there are others like Karita to reach out to them, it is likely that only a few of them will ever make an Adventist Church their spiritual home again. The others will be lost to the secularizing environment of public universities.

For most young adults, most likely still in their teens, leaving the security of home and church can be a daunting experience. Even the excitement of making major changes in life is unlikely to compensate for the fear of uncertainty and of being alone.

What are you and your church doing to help the young adults who have gone from your congregation to a distant college or university? If a university is located near your church, what are you doing to receive students into ministry and fellowship?

A young adult who recently moved away to school identified three areas where the church can be effective in providing support to students away from home: The responsibility of parents, the home church and the receiving church.

The Responsibility of Parents

It really goes without saying, parents must inform the pastor, church clerk and educational leader when their children plan to move away to school. Parents should also provide the church with full contact information, university and course of study. Too often churches are unaware that their young adults have left for university until their presence is missed. Unfortunately, in some churches this is not until some months later.

Responsibilities of the Home Church

As soon as a local church receives information that one of its young adults plans to leave for a distant university, it should begin making plans to acknowledge his or her decision. In some churches, a recognition service is held for all students who are moving away to school. Their contribution to the local church is celebrated and gifts are presented to them. Finally, the pastor prays a prayer of blessing on them after which refreshments are sometimes served. The students leave with a clear indication that their church truly cares. No one should leave for school without some form of public recognition by his or her local church.

In truly caring churches, the education leader and the pastor will make a personal visit to the young adult before he or she leaves. It is a friendly and encouraging visit, one that helps to maintain contact with the young adult while he or she is away.

One of the most important responsibilities of the local church is the need to make early contact with the churches in the city near the university where the young adult will be attending and to pass on contact information. The local congregation should not simply assume that the young adult will automatically seek out the church.

Sometimes, distance becomes prohibitive for cash-strapped students. The local church should also maintain regular contact with its young adults, sharing information, providing ‘Karita’ care packages, and taking an interest in their lives and educational progress. Social media network sites like Facebook make this very easy.

Responsibilities of the Receiving Church

Churches in college and university towns/cities have privileges, opportunities and responsibilities unlike other churches. Almost yearly, these congregations are blessed with the presence of bright new talents. These, often termed ‘cream of the crop’, young adults will be present for possibly four years. This is clearly a privilege and should be highly valued and utilized. These young adults may also be a means by which other young adults, with whom they form friendships, may be reached.

Recognising the high importance that receiving churches should place on this ministry, Cyril Millett III, director for Campus Ministries for the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, asks, “Has your church or congregation had a conversation on how new
students attending higher educational institutions will be integrated into ministry and fellowship? Have strategies been put into place to welcome them and to help them feel at home in your church community? Has someone or a team of warm-hearted people been tasked and equipped to ensure that even one young adult who contacts your church or whose friend or relative contacts your church follows up to ensure that they come and continue as a part of your congregation? Are you reaching out to those who may not be looking for a church home but would consider your church a place of worship or refuge if they knew about your fellowship?”

He suggests that these churches could start by:

- Being intentional and start talking about what it can do to welcome students.
- Collecting the contact information of those who are willing to help in different ways. Keep this information on file; review it periodically and use those who are willing to help.
- Collecting the contact information for every student visiting, or that you have been told is attending school in your area. Include in the file any information on what the students have done in their home churches, their area of study and skills they may have. Keep this file active; grow it and use it regularly.
- Looking for ways to integrate all students and especially those in their first year of studies (Freshmen are more interested in finding an affinity group to join. Your church can be such a group, especially if you consistently provide food).

It is not unreasonable for a congregation or campus ministry to check in with uninterested students once every month to see what’s going on in their lives, to express Christian care, and to invite them to something at church that fits their immediate concerns or needs (If a student asks you not to contact them, respect their wishes, checking after a year to see if they still feel the same way).

One student living and studying away from home suggests that the church could work on a welcome package for the new students. This could be delivered to the home or residence of the student by one of the church members. It immediately creates a connection for the student to the church.

Conversations with students always raised the issue of transportation and food. Often churches are not within easy reach of the college or university, and the students, dependent on often sketchy public transportation, have to make a significant effort to attend church. One suggestion is that it would be appreciated if members could sometimes help with transportation. A local meeting point could be close to or at the university. One young adult pointed out the local church should not expect attendance at Sabbath School when transportation is an issue.

Some caring churches recognise that a good home-cooked meal is always welcomed by students. In the week they either struggle with bland cafeteria food or with cooking the cheapest food they can buy. Some churches plan potlucks at least once a month. On other Sabbaths, members invite students home for lunch and fellowship.

Friday evening is often the most difficult time for many Adventists living away at public universities. It is lonely, especially when they were accustomed to family worship. Caring families sometimes invite a student home for a meal and family worship. They offer a home away from home. It is best when transportation is also considered.

There are a host of other ideas that churches may use to help young adults retain their connection with their faith and church. “Among these,” says Millett, “is to obtain a list of job possibilities at Camp Frenda for the summer, or from businesses owned by church members, etc. and send the list to the students.”

Some churches create a 12-month guide of ideas and activities in their ministry for young adults at university/college.

What is your church doing? What are you doing?
For ideas on what your church can do, contact the Campus Ministries Department of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Halsey Peat

Resources
Books
99 Thoughts for College-age People by Chuck Bomar (Simply Youth Ministry)
College Ministry 101: a guide to working with 18 – 25 year olds by Chuck Bomar (Youth Specialities)
Reach the Campus; Reach the World edited by Steve Case (AdventSource)
The Word on Campus: a guide to college ministry by Kirk King (AdventSource)
You’re on Your Own (but I’m here if you need me): mentoring your child during the college years by Marjorie Savage (Simon and Schuster)

Websites:
www.acflink.org (the website for Adventist Christian Fellowship)
www.threadsmedia.com (a website with articles and resources for young adult ministry)
www.ReachingTheCampusTribes.com (you can download the free e-book about campus ministry by Benson Hines)
Together, We Can…

Together is a powerful word. On September 24, I was sitting among hundreds of believers, from across the country who sang the chorus, “Altogether, Altogether, we can tell the world about His endless love. Together we can praise the Lord, together we can kneel in prayer...” This was the theme song for the 17th Regular Meeting of the Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. As it was sung many times throughout the session, the words began to impact my thinking. It is true that together, with God, we can do anything. Together, we can accomplish far more than any one of us could ever dream of on our own. Together, we can! That was God’s plan from the beginning.

I left the session empowered and inspired. I took time to reflect on how many individuals are engaged in ministry and using their gifts for the Lord across our great province. And then it dawned on me, that there are many who have chosen to stand by and watch as others carry the load. My heart saddened to the reality of how many are missing out on a great blessing called ‘together’. What a joy it is to partner with others in the local church who share in the vision to see God’s work grow. Together we can!

As I began to analyse the remittances from the treasurers of each church in Ontario, I could see that there is so much more we could do together (see data below). There is a golden opportunity for everyone to join in and be part of God’s kingdom work. What a great privilege! Imagine what God could do if we all got together and committed to being faithful stewards in God’s kingdom! Together, each one can commit to returning to the Lord a faithful tithe for the advancement of the gospel. Together, we can increase our giving towards the work of God in Ontario. Imagine, each child in Christian Education! Not only because it’s the best option, but because ‘together, we can’ make it available to each child. I think of what could happen if we increase our giving for missions and other Sabbath School initiatives. There is no limit to what God can do when we partner with Him.

You can’t do it alone. I can’t do it alone either. But “Together, we can!” Below you will find a summary of the percentages in tithe increase/decrease comparing this year’s giving reports to the same time last year. Look to see how your church has done in its financial stewardship. Does it reflect your personal faithfulness to God? It’s important that you see this information so that we can celebrate God’s blessings and commit ourselves to faithfulness. Thank you for your faithfulness and may God bless you as we move into our future, together!

### Organization’s Name

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### The Highest Honour, the Greatest Joy

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, blessings flow out from Him to all the creatures He has made. In His infinite love He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature, and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those are brought nearest to their Creator who thus become participants in labors of love. He who refuses to become a “laborer together with God,” the man who for the sake of selfish indulgence ignores the wants of his fellow men, the miser who heaps up his treasures here, is withholding from himself the richest blessing that God can give him.—Ellen G. White, Counsels on Stewardship, p. 23.3.

### The Little Things

Little things can make a huge difference in someone’s life. Today’s mobile phone offers users many more capabilities than voice mail or text messaging, and manufacturers continue to add an array of features.

Roaming, for example, allows you to use your phone in multiple countries. You can send and receive data and faxes, access to the Internet, and GPS is integrated into many devices. Applications like a clock alarm, calendar, calculators and games are standard on most devices; video and music are a must for some.

Have you ever considered that your mobile device could actually have a huge impact on the life of an unbeliever? I was listening to the “Focus on the Family” broadcast: ‘Making an Impact in Your World’ (26.08.2011 www.FocusOnTheFamily.com) about ordinary people in everyday situations who are having an extraordinary effect on the world around them by simply living out their faith.

I was moved by the story of Jim Omi, a high school custodian, who helped shape a school’s spiritual atmosphere. Working the midnight shift from 10 p.m. – 6 a.m., Jim longed to be used in full-time ministry but soon realized that God was speaking to him in a different way. While praying about his work and fitting into God’s kingdom, he concluded that he could serve God in his present role.

Working long hours in an empty school building was pretty scary at times, to say the least, and Jim was determined to change it. Using his iPod, he decided to plug it into the school’s PA system and fill the building with his favourite praise and worship songs. He was soon convinced that he was anointing the entire building with God’s presence in a very unique way.

Jim didn’t stop there. While walking through the school performing his duties, he prayed, brushing the lockers with his hand as he walked by, praying over each one. Soon those who knew what he was doing recognized that he was making a difference. One prayer group in the school turned into ten. One pastor, on hearing about his ministry, thanked him and said, “You’re pastoring and you don’t even know it because you’re praying over people’s lives, for God has given you a special passport into this school.”

God uses people in everyday situations because many of them have access to unique places. Little things can make a huge difference, and the devices on which we’ve become so dependent are powerful tools. Who would have thought an iPod in the hands of a custodian could set the stage for such an impact?

We can all be stirred by the Spirit of God to move where we see the opportunity. You don’t need a degree or some special piece of equipment; all you need is a heart that’s ready to serve, right where you are.

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. Colossians 3:23

By Cyril ‘Ceejay’ Horrell


Ontario Highlights | Autumn 2011 | 12
What would one expect to be seen of our church through the eyes of a senior? I see a church that has undergone some changes in the last forty years. While some bemoan change, I believe that growth necessitates change. Even as the church has grown and changed, I see it as still longing for the soon return of Jesus. I see our church as still committed to sharing the gospel with those who have not heard it and to following the teachings of the Bible.

So, what has changed? I have seen change in how we interpret or understand the teachings of the Bible and hence our practices. When I joined the church as a teenager, my understanding was that wearing any jewellery, even a wedding band, was wrong, sinful. We understand it differently now.

Important things I have since forgotten. And, oh yes, also accept Jesus as our Saviour! I am not sure if that message was the intent of our pastor’s teaching, but that was the message I received. Legalism? It’s so easy to come up with things we need to do, isn’t it? I remember saying at the time, “The Seventh-day Adventist Church has so much wonderful knowledge. I wish we could blend in some of the heart and spirit that our Pentecostal relatives have”. It was nice to attend church, but it seemed to me that we were lacking some real church spirit.

What do I see today? Our church has changed. It has grown. Today, our message is more Christ-centred than it was forty years ago—at least in some of our churches. I still wish we had more ‘heart and spirit’. Do we still tend to be legalistic? Overall, I think we do. Many of us still do or don’t do certain things because we believe it to be a requirement, because it is written in the law, or because we want to go to heaven! If we were to seek Jesus, become totally committed to Him, desire Him to change us and make us His disciples, we won’t even need a list of do’s and don’ts. And, we will have lots of ‘heart and spirit’.

There are other ways in which we have changed. Some of our exclusivity is gone. I remember thinking that Adventists were God’s children, God’s friends, but others? Well, if you are not with Him, you are against Him. You must be His enemy. Remember when we had ‘the truth’? Or when we would ask, “What year did you join the truth”? Not only did we have the truth, but as an organization, we were the truth. And only we had the Spirit of Prophecy. Actually, the Spirit of Prophecy wrote many books for us! I still hear terms like, “The Spirit of Prophecy writes…” or “The guidance we have been given in the Spirit of Prophecy”. Of course, the reference is to Ellen White (1827-1915) whom we correctly acknowledged had the prophetic gift, but to whom we incorrectly ascribe the title ‘Spirit of Prophecy’. That might not be too bad internally, but it is a strange message to any newcomers.

Of course, we attended schools with our own; we socialized with our own and, if possible, we worked with our own. We never wanted to mix with ‘people of the world’. We tended to avoid knowing our neighbours. We didn’t want to be ‘of the world’. Some preferred to live in Adventist communities. I see that, while some of the exclusivity is now behind us, we still tend to like being in our own Adventist bubble.

I am delighted to be a member at Harmony Seventh-day Adventist Church where the focus is Jesus Christ. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, our pastor encourages us to be a growing church. I see both my local and world church in need of growing by taking time to study and learn from God’s Word, to personally know Jesus and experience His presence in our lives, to become His disciples and to follow Him! I long to see a church where our focus is always on Jesus and the gospel He brings to us. I long to see a church where we are involved in the world, where we truly minister to the needs of our neighbours in both words and deeds without being part of the world.

While not all changes are good or necessary, I praise God for those that have helped us to place Jesus at the very centre of our focus, our lives and our worship. I praise God that our church continues to hold the Bible as the foundation of our faith and that we still believe in the soon-coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We might not have all the answers, but we know we are part of God’s church on earth!
How Do You Rate Your Sabbath School Teacher?

There seems to be a multitude of reasons some people do not always feel motivated to attend Sabbath School. Even those who look past its early start and the late conclusion of the worship service, sometimes wish that their Sabbath School teacher would do things differently. They are tired of being preached at in the Sabbath School or asked questions that are designed to elicit a particular answer. They want to engage in meaningful and respectful discussion and to not listen to someone who is determined to impose a particular viewpoint on the class. So, how does your teacher measure up? What makes your teacher an effective Sabbath School teacher?

A question usually asked by thoughtful Sabbath School members is, “What do I really want from my Sabbath School?” Effective Sabbath School teachers always ask, “What do I want my class to grasp from the Sabbath School lesson?”

Do you sense that your teacher has asked himself or herself this question? Do you sense that your teacher has sufficiently understood the lesson in order to even ask this question?

Ideally, the teacher should preview the entire quarter’s lessons in order to get an overview, but not all are able to make that kind of sacrifice. However, you would expect the teacher to at least start to prepare the lesson a week ahead by looking at the complete week to get the big picture, and not leave it to Friday night.

While Friday night is often useful for reviewing the lesson, effective teachers usually make good use of the earlier portion of the week. After previewing it a week earlier, they study the Sabbath School lesson carefully at the beginning of the week to thoroughly understand its message. Only as the lesson is understood can the teacher begin to prepare to teach. Effective teachers will usually study the lesson a second time—this time with you and the class in mind and will begin to prepare a teaching outline. You will find that you will get more out of the lesson if you follow a similar approach.

You can usually tell when your teacher has not done much preparation. He or she is unable to apply the lesson to you or your fellow class members; there is little or no direction, just floating from day one to day two, until, thankfully, the superintendent brings it all to a close. Effective Sabbath School teachers prepare the lesson in such a way that even those who have not seen the lesson are able to understand the central truth of the lesson. Whenever they make a point, they also demonstrate its significance and relevance to your life. If your teacher is effective, you will often have a sense that he or she has intentionally taken you on a carefully planned journey. Effective teachers always have a clear goal and know how to get there and do not fall prey to your classmates who love to go off on tangents.

Perhaps the word ‘teacher’ is an incorrect way of describing qualities demanded by the role. A more suitable description is ‘facilitator’.

So, how do you rate your teacher or facilitator? Is he or she sufficiently disciplined that he or she manages preparation time well, finding suitable illustrations and activities? Does he or she make the best use of the class period? Do you enjoy and learn from the activities?

These are important questions because you and your fellow class members want to feel fulfilled and refreshed at the end of the lesson. When you feel that you have “been in the presence of God” and left feeling a “hunger for God”, you are motivated to return and tell your friends about your Sabbath School.

As you have been reading this, perhaps you have been mentally rating your facilitator and discovered that he or she simply does not fit the bill. Are you able to do better? It really takes skill, a certain level of dedication, commitment to the study of the Bible and consistent hard work to be an effective Sabbath School teacher. Ellen White said, “Teachers are needed who, with enthusiasm, combine true dignity…who can inspire thought, arouse energy, and impart courage and life.” (Counsels on Sabbath School Work). They actually need
Is a tactful, careful and considerate listener. The Sabbath School class is about having fun, experiencing renewal and transformation and becoming effective in God's service. It functions best with an effective facilitator and with you as a well-prepared and responsive participant.

1. Inspires students to think for themselves and to express their own ideas sincerely
2. Is emotionally stable and mature
3. Has an infectious enthusiasm for teaching that inspires students to want to teach
4. Is friendly, democratic, tolerant and helpful
5. Seeks to understand the problems most often met by students in their work
6. Organizes materials and prepares carefully for each class meeting
7. Regards himself/herself as primarily a facilitator for the class, rather than a subject-matter specialist
8. Leads students to assume responsibility and checks their progress
9. His/her behaviour reflects Christian ideals
10. Is a tactful, careful and considerate listener.

It was ‘All In’ at Ontario’s camp meeting, held on July 9 at the International Centre, Mississauga, as over 9,000 members and friends came together to make Camp Meeting 2011 the most attended meeting since 2005. Members from across the province responded to the call to be ‘All In’—to be completely and unreservedly involved in fulfilling the mission of the church in Ontario—and attended camp meeting as a sign of their commitment. Perhaps, others attended because they heard that the worship was planned to “lead everyone into an experience with God”. They were not disappointed.

“Why can’t we have worships like this in our churches every Sabbath?” asked a church member from the Greater Toronto Area.

“I wish that our camp meeting could be like this!” said one visitor from the United States.

“They were not disappointed.

“If it was a day full of blessings, and God was with us all day!” exclaimed Pastor Daniel Sanchez.

One of the many viewers watching the live Internet broadcast was full of praise and wrote:

“What a wonderful organisation we belong to. I’m so happy to be part of the family of God.”

There were many more similar comments from a multitude of clearly satisfied worshippers. They arrived on Sabbath morning, not knowing what to expect after last year’s popular ‘Parade of Nations’ feature, but their expectations were high since camp meeting had been advertised as the culmination of two months of revival and transformation across Ontario. Soon they were praising God that they had chosen to attend.

In hall 5, the adults could clearly state that the worship experience was one they had never before experienced at
any previous camp meeting.

“We established a worship committee at the office and carefully planned the worship so that members would have an experience with God in worship”, said Pastor Mansfield Edwards, conference president. “It was our intention to model what could take place in the worship services of all our local churches.”

One feature of the worship was the testimony of Rev. Majed El Shafie, a former Moslem from Egypt who converted to Christianity and who experienced torture for his faith. He is president and founder of One Free World International.

Other guests included Dr. Rudi Maier, the recently appointed president of ADRA International, who spoke at the close of an exciting and well-presented Sabbath School programme and also in hall 4 during the afternoon.

Perhaps the greatest surprise of all came in the form of the preacher, Pastor Rex Edwards, retired from active ministry for many years but still serving his church at the Biblical Research Institute. Worshippers were amazed to see someone who is clearly very senior in age preach with such vigour and vitality. His powerful vocabulary, precise diction and enunciation captured his hearers and served as the perfect vessel to carry his profound, biblical message.

In hall 4, the youth and young adults had their own service away from the teens in hall 4a. This new feature saw nearly 2,000 worshippers delight in their high-octane praise and worship session and extended-length sermon with Pastor Ryan Simpson from Bermuda.

For the first time, over 800 teens attended the service that was specifically planned for them. As the service began, they cautiously warmed to the praise team and guest preacher, Pastor Ann Roda. Pastor Roda, despite arriving with laryngitis, did not allow it to hinder her dynamic delivery of her sermon. She captivated the teens with both her energy and substantive message.

Across the hall from hall 5, close to 1000 children demanded the best that many volunteers and 25 pastors could muster. They sang, laughed, clapped, prayed, learned, jumped and engaged in a host of activities that yearly trigger a keen desire to attend camp meeting.

Commissioning and Ordination are two of the features that many church members eagerly anticipate. The afternoon programme saw the commissioning of Brent Bol and Berkel Williams to the teaching ministry and the commissioning of Elizabeth Pule and ordination of Joseph Amankwah, Darryl Blahovich, Kwame Brobbey, Garth Dottin, Roger Esteves and Eduardo Monteiro to pastoral ministry.

By the close of the day, nearly half an hour after sunset, campers were already wondering how next year’s camp meeting on June 30, 2012 can be more satisfying and fulfilling than this has been.
Ontario Conference Commissions Pastor Elizabeth Pule

Elizabeth Pule, née Rosete, is the first female to be commissioned as a pastor in the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She was commissioned on July 9, 2011 during the ordination and commissioning service at camp meeting held at the International Centre in Mississauga.

When Pastor Pule began pastoral ministry as an assistant pastor in January 2005 at Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church, it was a dream come true. While working as a student missionary in New Zealand in 1999, she had felt a compelling call to pastoral ministry and began preparing herself academically. She graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in December 2004.

A product of Adventist education, attending Crawford Adventist Academy (CAA) from K-12, Elizabeth currently serves as the chaplain at CAA. She enjoys working with students and their families, equipping leaders for tomorrow and taking every opportunity to share Jesus’ love. Pule is married to Pastor Orlando Pule, associate pastor at Willowdale Adventist Church. They have two energetic sons, Gabriel, 4, and Isaiah, 3.

The ordination of women to pastoral ministry is not practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, the church recognises that God calls both men and women to serve Him in ministry. In the commissioning of Pastor Pule, the Ontario Conference and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada are in harmony with the policies of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists and follow the practice adopted by a number of divisions across the world.

There is no separate charge or prayer for ordination and commissioning. Commissioned and ordained pastors receive the same charge and prayer. However, they receive separate certificates.

In the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, commissioned pastors may serve at all elected positions in the local conference including the position of president.

Elizabeth is one of two female pastors serving in the Ontario Conference.

Former Pentecostal Pastor Baptised at Ontario Camp Meeting

Brian Sutherland, a former pastor of an independent Pentecostal congregation in Moosonee, was baptised on camp meeting Sabbath, July 9. He was baptised by Pastor Frankie Lazarus after Sabbath School at the nearby Toronto West Seventh-day Adventist Church and presented to the campers by Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, in the evening.

Sutherland made the long journey down from northern Ontario to camp meeting in order to be baptised.

His spiritual journey to God’s church began after he became convinced that the Bible is very clear that the Sabbath is the correct day on which to worship. He began his search for Sabbath keepers in Moosonee and was led to the Galupo family. Pat and June Galupo have been living in Moosonee since 2007 and have been witnessing to people living in the far north. They were instrumental in the baptism of two Native Canadians in the Moose River in 2009.

The Galupo family introduced Brian to Bible Instructor Alison Down, and he began studying the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He resigned his position and membership in his former church and requested baptism.

Upon his return to Moosonee, Brian began sharing his new-found truth with relatives and friends. He is already giving Bible lessons to one of his uncles, and at least two members of his former congregation have started Bible studies with an Adventist member in Moosonee. A few others have shown interest.
“Young Enough to Serve” at Southern Ontario Regional Camp Meeting

The organisers of Southern Ontario’s regional camp meeting, June 10-11, were very intentional when they selected the theme, “Young Enough to Serve.” In their programming for the camp meeting at the Norfolk County Fairgrounds in Simcoe, they featured a number of the region’s children in a marvellous display of music and the spoken word, showing that service can begin from a very early age.

From the moment the Little Angels trio – Rachel Lumbangaol (age 7), Stefana Gabudean (age 9) and Rachel Harrynarine (age 8)—began singing “Farther Along” until Leah Dehn concluded her short sermon, the congregation knew that something wonderful was taking place. The young preacher, eight year-old Delano Gentles, told the congregation, “All things are possible with God!” Nine year-old Emily Hutchinson, smiling, confidently talked to over 600 people as if she were sharing an exciting story with her best friend and testified of how she convinced her mother to allow her to be baptised. Twelve year-old Kendrick Ireland amazed everyone, except his mother, with his exceptional dexterity and concentration as he flawlessly played 25 bells. The congregation had hardly recovered from its amazement when, to its sheer delight, the Little Angels Trio was joined by other ‘little angels’ and beautifully sang as the Little Angels choir.

Attendance at the camp meeting was swelled to over a thousand by a number of believers from Western Ontario. With no camp meeting planned for their region this year, many took advantage of the balmy weather to attend Southern Ontario’s camp meeting to hear Saskatchewan-born Pastor Lonnie Melashenko, former Voice of Prophecy speaker/director; Pastor Sung Kwon, executive director of the Adventist Community Services in North America and Pastor Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president.

On Friday evening, Melashenko, speaker for the adults’ meeting, shared his testimony of his battle with cancer and boldly declared, “I’m here because of the grace of God.” His gratitude to God was clearly reflected in his two other presentations as he spoke of the joy of salvation and how believers should celebrate whenever a sinner is saved.

“Our joy over lost sinners who have come home should attract people to our celebration,” he said.

Meanwhile, in the youth meetings, Pastor Kwon preached to nearly 90 youth and teens, telling them that they should be open-minded when trying to reach their friends and others who are unchurched.

Pastor Edwards led the adults’ Sabbath School lesson discussion.

For the second successive year, the organisers of the regional camp meeting gave away souvenir pens. “The pens,” Pastor Jiwan Moon, camp chairperson, told the congregation, “represent our ownership of camp meeting. Our area churches have given funds and volunteered their time to make this camp a success without any financial assistance from the conference. We did it in 2010 and hopefully, we have done it again!”

Southern Ontario regional camp meeting is usually held on the second weekend of June each year.
The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) has re-elected its executive officers.

During the 17th Regular Meeting of the Members of the SDACC, held at College Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, on September 23-25, 2011, Mark Johnson, Dragan Stojanovic, and John Ramsey, were asked to serve as president, vice president for Administration and vice president for Finance, respectively. Each person was voted either unanimously or by an overwhelming majority.

The constituency also approved the creation of a new position and elected Dennis Marshall as the SDACC’s first General Vice President. It is a non-executive position, and he holds it along with his position as vice president for Education.

All other positions were also re-elected.

A full report of the session will be published in the October edition of the Canadian Adventist Messenger.

Outdoor Education: An Experience with God in Nature

During the first week of every June, grade 6 students from Adventist schools in Ontario are buzzing with excitement. They are keen to arrive at Camp Frenda in Muskoka to attend the outdoor education program.

This year, June 5-9, sixty animated pupils from Grandview, Peel, Crawford, Crawford East and Ottawa Adventist Schools arrived at Frenda for an unforgettable experience with God in nature.

The outdoor education program consists of several classes that are offered on a rotating basis during a five-day period. Pupils complete the program having acquired a variety of skills such as rope rappelling, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, craft making, first aid, fire building, camping, wild plants, knot tying and geocaching. The pupils have so much fun that they almost forget that they are in school. Here’s what some had to say during their Frenda experience:

Michael: “I’m having fun here at Frenda, and we’re really learning a lot about God. The class I like the best so far is fire-making because we learned how to make banana boats, and then ate them. I would definitely encourage other kids to come to outdoor education when their turn comes.”

Others, like Jabulani, enjoy learning water skills such as kayaking and making friends from other schools.

Marquel said that he had some questions before attending outdoor education because he is wary of mosquitoes and bears but sounded disappointed when all he saw was a deer.

Vania: “This outdoor education experience is fun, but you have to work hard. I like the canoeing class the best because there is team work to help you paddle the boat, and it’s fun in the water. Teamwork is cool. I wish I could stay here longer than five days!”

Nicholas said that he had so much fun learning that he wished he could return next year and do it all over again.

Outdoor education is as important as what pupils learn at their desks throughout the year. While they learn very useful and even life-survival skills, they are able to do so in a setting where they can experience God in nature.

Camp Frenda is a facility owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario.

Janice Maitland
For the first time ever, the Health Ministries Department of the Ontario Conference had a booth at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, August 18 – September 5, 2011.

Visitors to the CNE were surprised to discover a booth where they could lay their hands on free material and receive free blood pressure checks by medical personnel.

At times, there was a line of people waiting to have their blood pressures taken, while others helped themselves to free health literature, water bottles and pens; all emblazoned with Health Ministries information, the Seventh-day Adventist logo and name. Some people were captivated by a jar containing a replica of a pickled liver and a pickled cucumber. Most were unable to tell the difference as the liver depicted one of a human who had suffered from cirrhosis as a result of alcohol abuse.

“I drink a little,” said one woman, “but I hope that it doesn’t happen to me!”

Others wanted to see if they could successfully walk a straight line while wearing a special pair of goggles that simulated the effect of impairment after drinking too much alcohol. No one was successful!

A number of visitors enquired about the name ‘Health Ministries, Seventh-day Adventists’ written above the booth. This provided the Ontario Conference Health Ministries director, Maria McClean, and her volunteers, the opportunity to briefly explain about the church and its mission.

Pastor Errol Lawrence, who volunteered on August 22 for the 10:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily stint, explains how receptive some people were:

“When a man heard that we based our beliefs on the Bible, he told me that he’d been searching for a church that studies the Bible and asked if there was one in Scarborough. He even found it intriguing that we worship on Sabbaths, describing it as ‘cool’.”

A tired Maria McClean was clearly very happy with how things went.

“It’s been a long two and a half weeks,” she said, “but it has been worth it. So many people stopped at our booth that it was hard to keep count. By God’s grace, we’ve been able to help people to not only focus on improving their health but also their spiritual well-being. We could never have done it without the help of our volunteers who gave up their time to come down and give of themselves.”

Obtaining a booth at the CNE was not easy. In 2010, McClean was turned down. Undaunted, she applied in 2011 but was again rejected, only to hear in July that the organisers had reconsidered, and a booth was available.

McClean credits their intervention of God and hopes that future CNEs will always have an Adventist presence.

Congratulations to Denise Putt and Vernon Langdon. On July 19, 2011, the North American Division Planned Giving & Trust Services Certification Committee acknowledged their successful completion of the requirements to perform Planned Giving and Trust Services duties. They are now able to perform such duties as assigned by any accredited employing organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

Along with departmental director, Alvin Ram, Denise and Vernon now provide the Ontario Conference Planned Giving and Trust Services department with three certified individuals to help assist our members in Ontario.

We appreciate Denise and Vernon’s diligence as they completed their course work and congratulate them for passing the certification exam.
Grade 8 Adventist Graduates Speak Out

Moneshah Cephas attended Ottawa Adventist School for five years. What she loves the most about the school is the patience exhibited by teachers to ensure that students understand what they are taught. She loved making friends there and has learned to rely on God for everything, to study the Bible, and pray.

“I’d definitely encourage parents to send their children to Ottawa Adventist Elementary,” she said.

Kelly Gaston attended the school for the past four years. Comparing it with her former school, she said that it is better because “school is my family,” and the teachers give more attention to the students because the school is small. She said that academically, she did “unbelievably better” than in her former school, most probably because the teachers gave more attention to her and were more patient in their explanations.

Kelly indicated that she has also grown spiritually since enrolling in the school in Grade 5, because she didn’t know much about God. She even began attending church on Saturdays because she learned about the Sabbath at school. She loves Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”.

Gottfried Blaise-St-Vil recently enrolled at the Ottawa School. He immediately felt accepted by the school family. In comparison with his former schools, he said that while Ottawa Adventist School was smaller, it was nicer. He needed to work hard to catch up with the other students who had started the school year earlier.

Michael Golovenko began attending London Adventist School when the school re-opened five years ago. His fond memories of the school include field trips, attending plays and discussions about the Bible. One of the things Michael stated that he appreciated about the school was the good rapport built with his teacher and the fact that there was no bullying at the school. This gave him a feeling of freedom and happiness. He contrasted this to his former school where he had been bullied. Michael said that he had good mathematics skills before he enrolled in the school, but those skills have become even better. Michael’s dream is to become an architect.

Adventist education is not a “hit and miss” experiment. The benefits and strengths of Adventist education are specifically targeted and intentional. Upon completion of the evaluation of four of our schools this year, several comments by students are significant to note. Students stated that they appreciated the “family environment” of the school, the caring and nurturing manner of the teachers, the emphasis on spirituality (and not simply teaching religion), and the high academic standards that are so characteristic of our worldwide system.

To our graduates from all of our schools, we say, “Heartiest congratulations”. May the foundation you have received and the lessons learned remain with you throughout your life. May God be with you as you continue to reach for the stars academically, spiritually, physically and socially.

Janice Maitland
My Unforgettable STORM Trip to Moosonee

I must admit, I do not know who received the blessing - the people of Moosonee or me. The landscape alone was enough to capture my attention with its wild, rugged beauty. But the people stole my heart. They reminded me of what it takes to be truly happy in life. Although there is not much evidence of material wealth, the children found pleasure in simple things like skipping ropes and balloons. At the story hour sponsored by the Ontario Conference Children’s Ministries Department, it warmed my heart to see siblings looking out for and cheering one another on during the skipping rope event.

From the first day of our stay (July 10-18, 2011), I felt accepted by the residents of Moosonee. Actually, ‘at home’ might be a more accurate description. In the short time the four of us stayed in this community, the people became like family to me. Our STORM (Service To Others Really Matters) trip coincided with Creefest 2011, and it was a wonderful experience to be invited to participate in the celebrations. I felt God used the Cree Natives to show me what it means to love without boundaries.

Every morning, I woke prepared to act as God’s hands in service to the community through helping to create space for a brick walkway by the waterfront and through interacting with His precious little ones during our children’s program. Ministry in Moosonee provided amazing memories that I will treasure forever.

Meg-wich (thank you) to God and Moosonee!

Heidi Weidner

New Beginning for the Adventist Community Services Centre in Toronto

On Sunday, June 5, 2011, the Adventist Community Services Centre in Toronto was officially opened.

Although the centre has been operating at 150 Bentworth Avenue, Toronto, since 1995 after it was relocated from 528 Bathurst Street, it had not been officially opened. The building has also been renovated. For the opening ceremony, a number of dignitaries were present. They included Ontario Conference officers, Pastor Mansfield Edwards, president, and his wife Sharon; Pastor Daniel Linrud, executive secretary, and Mike Colle, MPP for Eglinton-Lawrence. A number of representatives from several churches in the Greater Toronto Area were also present to witness the official opening.

In some brief remarks, Mike Colle congratulated the Seventh-day Church for its vision and foresight to provide “such a needed facility”. He also commended them for the humanitarian work they do on a regular basis within the GTA.

Pastor Edwards delivered the feature address on the subject, “The Well’s Philosophy.” His seed text was John 4:6 from which he drew a number of lessons and showed their relevance to the mission and ministry of the Community Services Department. He cited how laborious and challenging was the task faced by Jacob in the Old Testament when he dug his well but noted that Jacob did not give up. He said that by digging the well, Jacob did not think of himself alone. Jacob did not know that Jesus would subsequently drink from his well. In a direct reference to the Adventist Community Services Centre, Pastor Edwards made the unequivocal statement, “This facility must be of value and use to other organizations other than Seventh-day Adventists.”

The prayer of dedication was offered by the executive secretary of the Ontario Conference, Pastor Daniel Linrud.

The Adventist Community Services is now open to all to be used for seminars, training, meetings, workshops and some exercises, etc. Today, the Adventist Community Services determined to show love in this mixed-up world through community based ministries, programs and activities.

Theodore Sargeant
Community Services Director

For booking details, contact the onsite manager, Godfrey Beresford, at 416-782-3449.
In Cobalt, on May 29, 2011, at the annual Women’s Day Out with Ruthann McDonald and members of the women’s group from the Haileybury congregation. The seniors’ centre was packed with women from the community.

Worshipping with the Moosonee Group

Teaching the children

In Petawawa at the health booth with Pastor Djojo Sekulic and volunteers from Arnprior and Pembroke Churches, celebrating Renfrew Region’s 150th anniversary

Just Another Summer with Health and Children’s Ministries
Six New Workers Join the Ontario Conference

The Ontario Conference is happy to welcome six new workers: Belzmark Belz, Sweeney Dixon, Alexandr Kozyarevskiy, Joan Rogers, Tonnata Tjhatra and Goran Zivkovic into its ranks.

Belzmark Belz began working in the Treasury department of the Ontario Conference in early summer. Originally from Brazil, he was baptised in 2003, a year after arriving in Toronto. He and his wife, Elizabete, are members of Luso-Brazilian Church in Etobicoke where he is the current treasurer. As a good Brazilian, he prides himself in his ability to play soccer. Belzmark is responsible for Church Remittances and Accounts Receivable.

Sweeney Dixon is the new pastor for Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sault Ste Marie. Pastor Dixon comes to Ontario, having served in the Cayman Islands, Honduras Central, Belize and Bay Islands conferences. He has a passion for families, prayer, preaching, evangelism, young people and music, and looks forward to engaging in all these areas in Sault Ste Marie.

Sweeney is married to Teresa, with whom he has three children, Travis, 16; Britney, 11 and Brad, 3. Sweeney and Teresa are both fluent in Spanish and English.

Goran Zivkovic came to know Christ as his personal Saviour. He is now serving His Saviour as pastor of Toronto Yugoslavian Church. Prior to moving to Toronto, he served as a pastor before joining ADRA Serbia as its country director.

One of the few good things that resulted from the war in Croatia and Bosnia in the early 1990’s was that Goran Zivkovic came to know Christ as his personal Saviour. He is now serving His Saviour as pastor of Toronto Yugoslavian Church. Prior to moving to Toronto, he served as a pastor before joining ADRA Serbia as its country director.

He, his wife, Branka, and four-year old daughter, Sarah, were welcomed into the new congregation on Sabbath, July 18.

Sweeney Dixon is the new pastor for Cornerstone Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sault Ste Marie. Pastor Dixon comes to Ontario, having served in the Cayman Islands, Honduras Central, Belize and Bay Islands conferences. He has a passion for families, prayer, preaching, evangelism, young people and music, and looks forward to engaging in all these areas in Sault Ste Marie.

Sweeney is married to Teresa, with whom he has three children, Travis, 16; Britney, 11 and Brad, 3. Sweeney and Teresa are both fluent in Spanish and English.

Alexandr Kozyarevskiy has a Polish surname but comes to Ontario from the Ukraine via Russia and the USA. Both Alexandr and his wife, Oksana, come from a long line of Adventists and Adventists pastors. Ordained in 2001, Pastor Kozyarevskiy is the new pastor of the Ukrainian congregation in Toronto. He assumed his new responsibilities on July 1, 2011.

The Kozyarevskiys have been blessed with two daughters, Kristina and Katerina.

Joan Rogers is the Family Ministries and Women’s Ministries director for the Ontario Conference. She was appointed by the Board of Directors at its July meeting after a long selection process. Joan has a strong background in education and management but has also developed a wide range of skills in family ministries. Many of these were gained while partnering with her husband, Pastor David Rogers, in family ministries at both the local church and conference levels, but others came as a result of her pursuit for certification as a family life educator.

Joan and David have three adult sons, David, Damon and Daniel. She assumed her new responsibilities on September 1.

Tonnata Tjhatra is well-known to many in Ontario, having served as the manager/accountant of the ABC for sixteen years, between 1993-2009. A former long-serving first elder at Immanuel Church, Tonnata is committed to the mission of the church. He began his responsibilities for the Ontario Conference in the Auditing department and in Risk and Property Management in early summer. He and his wife, Fang, have two daughters, Alannah, 10, and Sarina, 5.
Tasma Lofton-Brook Retires

It’s official. Tasma Lofton-Brook is now retired. On July 31, 2011, she concluded a lifetime of full-time service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Although she was unknown to many members in Ontario because of her specialised work, Tasma’s influence was felt in every Adventist church. She was the go-to person for every church treasurer across the entire province, having served in the conference office since 1996.

A graduate of Longbourn College, a Seventh-day Adventist owned and operated institution in New Zealand, Tasma began denominational service in the accounting department of Sanitarium Food Company.

Her earlier marriage to Oliver Lofton-Brook, destined her to become a traveller. They immigrated to Canada in 1968 and shortly after began working as a payroll clerk at the Ontario Conference’s former medical facility, Branson Hospital, in Willowdale. She later operated the food store at Toronto Junior Academy (now Crawford Adventist Academy) and then accompanied Oliver to the British Columbia Conference.

At a recent event held by the Ontario Conference to recognise Tasma’s service to the church in Ontario, conference executive secretary, Pastor Daniel Linrud, spoke of her happy spirit and optimistic worldview and how it greatly contributed to the joyful working environment of the conference office. He also stated how this same disposition also calmed and encouraged troubled church treasurers. He acknowledged her patient, yet straightforward approach to people and said that it spoke of the high quality of care and professionalism she brought to her work.

When Tasma was asked of her retirement plans, she was quick to respond that she and Oliver planned to…travel!

We wish her a very happy and fulfilling retirement.

Farewell

The Ontario Conference bids farewell to Pastors Vasiliy Osadchuck, Fedor Popovitch and Oleg Zhigankov.

For the past two years, Pastor Vasiliy Osadchuck served as lead pastor for the Immanuel congregation. He left Ontario in August to take up a new position at Weimar Institute near Sacramento, California.

On June 30, 2011, after fifteen years working part-time as minister of the Ukrainian Company, Pastor Fedor Popovitch moved into retirement. Before coming to Ontario, Pastor Popovitch served the church in Ukraine for twenty years.

We wish Pastor Fedor and his wife, Olga, a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Pastor Oleg Zhigankov has left northern Ontario for the warmer climes of the Philippines where he has taken up a teaching position at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, located at Silang, Cavite.

Until his departure, Pastor Zhigankov was serving the North Bay and South River congregations as their pastor since returning to Ontario in 2010.

Calling all writers and artists between ages 6 and 14!

Here is your opportunity to participate in This Is My Story… a children's creative writing/art project.

You are invited to present art or an essay on
(a) My favourite person in the Bible OR
(b) What I enjoy about being a Christian.

If you are writing, please use 200 words or less. Essays may be handwritten. If you choose to paint or draw your story, please remember to include a short description with your art.

Send your submission with your name, age, address, email address, church, and a picture of yourself to rweidner@adventistonario.org or mail it to Ruth Weidner, 1110 King St. East, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 1H8 by November 30, 2011.

All stories will be printed in a volume that will be available for your library.
The flames of spirituality were enthusiastically fanned at the Eastern Canada Pathfinder Camporee, August 1-6, as 26 Pathfinders were baptised in the lake at Awacamenj Mino Scout Camp in Cucios, Quebec. Nearly twice that number responded to Pastor Paul Smith’s Friday night appeal, but some chose to be baptised at their home churches.

After a fun-filled week of exciting activities, learning new skills and making new friends, the baptism still emerged as the highlight for many of the 1500 Pathfinders and staff. Nightly, Pastor Smith, a youth pastor from Alberta, in his customary shorts and tee-shirt, led the camp into an increasingly spiritual atmosphere. The response to his appeal for baptism was almost immediate.

As Pathfinders moved forward, they were met by the 25 pastors who had made the journey to Quebec with them. Each pastor took two or the respondents, prayed with them and offered support for their decision to be baptised.

The journey to Quebec was a long one for many of the Pathfinders. Some came from as far as Barbados and Jamaica. However, it was overwhelmingly an Ontario Camporee, and it proved so popular that Pathfinders are asking if they could be allowed to return to Awacamenj Mino Scout Camp for the next camporee.
On January 12, 2010, the world stood and watched in horror as an earthquake devastated much of Haiti, leaving it in chaos. Most of the survivors were forced to seek shelter in tent cities. Media reports generated immediate relief from both governmental and non-governmental agencies. The scenes of devastation moved people to donate millions of dollars in help. Some members from Mississauga Seventh-day Adventist Church felt compelled to go to Haiti to help.

Eighteen months later, on July 18, 2011, with Haiti still in need of significant and urgent help, eleven members finally left for Haiti. Led by Curtis Forde, the group had earnestly prayed, carefully planned and raised the necessary funds.

In addition to fundraising, the team collected and packed over 364 kg (800 lbs) of donated items to distribute in Haiti. In order to carry everything, members of the team even gave up their two pieces of checked luggage. That meant carrying a week’s worth of clothing in their carry-on bags!

Arriving in Haiti, the team connected with Pastor Omeler, Franco-Haitian coordinator of the Northeastern Seventh-day Adventist Conference, and his twelve-member team, our mission partners from New York. The mission trip consisted of two streams: construction group and health clinics. The health clinics were held at different Seventh-day Adventist churches throughout the capital, Port-au-Prince, and Carrefour. It was at the clinics that the supplies were distributed to as many people as possible. On average, over 91 kg (200 lbs) of supplies were given out daily, but sadly, this was not enough. Often, clinics would end with people crowding the ‘pharmacy’ area asking for anything, even the boxes the supplies were carried in. Supplies were even doubled or tripled by pouring bottles of shampoo or cream into different containers such as water bottles, cutting bars of soap in half and dispensing a week’s worth of medication to each person. It soon became necessary to order additional medical supplies from across the border in the Dominican Republic as their supplies were quickly exhausted. Team members often shared their lunches with the children around the clinics. By the end of the week they had served over 1400 people in the four days the clinics were held.

The construction group spent their week in Leogane, a village in the country. Although their task was to build a house for a family who had been living in a dilapidated shack since the earthquake, they constructed a home that was able to house two families.

The team, consisting of males and females, erected the house from the ground up. Local people gladly pitched in and even offered the team mangoes. Once the building was complete, an impromptu consecration service was conducted in both English and Creole for the family.

The trip also included a brief time to see some breathtaking scenery that reminded them that Haiti is a beautiful country. The team made many friends and were reminded of the value of helping others.

Leslie-Ann Ross
On July 10, 2011, over ninety Adventurers (children 4-9 years of age) and their families eagerly descended on the grounds of Camp Frenda. After hearing of the enjoyable time that the twenty-three Adventurers had last year, almost four times the amount excitedly gathered in the bright and balmy Muskoka air for the second annual Ontario Adventurer Family Camp. The five-day camp was to be a time of sheer delight and fun.

Shortly after arriving, the Adventurers were directed to select activities in which they would participate over the following few days. Faced with exciting activities such as horseback riding, rock-climbing, water sports, gymnastics, mountain biking, fishing and archery, some of the Adventurers could be excused for thinking that they were in a candy store unsure of which to eat first. Other activities, such as tie-dyeing, model rocketry, crafts, guitar, photography and nature study gave them the opportunity to express their creativity. These later allowed them to earn honours and awards.

Adventurers enjoyed the newly renovated Frenda facilities that boast a resort-like feel with comfortable and modern accommodations and delicious vegetarian meals.

Each day began and ended with dynamic praise and worship sessions held either in the worship hall or by campfire, led by a stellar group of camp counsellors. Guest speaker, Pastor Dave Schwinghammer, delivered entertaining and interactive messages for each of these meetings, and the energy among the campers was absolutely electric. The camp theme song, Indescribable, embraced both the mood of the week and the view of a God that defies human comprehension—a truly "amazing God".

It was evident that the Adventurers and family members from across the province all had a truly unforgettable experience. Camp Frenda director, Pastor Glenn DeSilva, envisioned a week where parents and children would truly engage and spend time together, as this is the "primary desire of children". He challenged families to "stay in the moment and to enjoy one another". And this, they truly did—with gusto!

The Adventurer Ministry in Ontario, under the leadership of Pastor Millett (director), Pastor Martin (associate director) and Velma Morgan (executive coordinator), is a vital and vibrant church ministry that is currently active in numerous churches. This ministry trains children to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through Bible study, nature exploration, recreation, relationship building and witnessing. The Adventurer program prepares children for the Pathfinder Ministry. It is the hope of many that the popularity of this amazing Adventurer Ministry, as well as the Youth and Family Ministries at Camp Frenda, will continue to thrive since it is very evident that God is using both of these ministries in a tremendous way to draw hearts to Himself.

Ladine McKenzie-Dowe

From May 8 until June 18, 2011, Brampton Seventh-day Adventist Church dedicated 40 days to prayer. Led by the Youth Department of the church, the 40 days of prayer was in preparation for the youth-led evangelistic series, “KEEPIN’ IT REAL”.

In the last fifteen days of their prayer series, they launched a most memorable and Spirit-filled evangelistic meeting, with Pastor Mathew Feeley as the preacher. In his messages, Pastor Feeley shared some of his personal experiences and spoke of the sad, wilderness period of his life when he did not know God. However, he gladly testified of how the Lord snatched him from the hand of the enemy and saved him.

The meetings resulted in four precious souls being dedicated to the Lord through baptism.

Theresa Jordan
South Asian Church Plant in Brampton

On Sabbath, August 20, 2011, over 30 members and friends came together at Norval United Church in the little township of Norval, just west of Brampton, to celebrate their first Sabbath as the Brampton South Asia Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship.

As the congregation joyfully worshipped and praised God for His leadership, there was a sense that a new and exciting ministry had begun. With over one hundred thousand residents from Southern Asia living in the Brampton area, there is great evangelistic and reclamation potential.

This became evident over the past three years when some members of South Asian ancestry living in Brampton and attending Willowdale Adventist Church felt a need to worship together as a cultural group and to reach out to others from their cultural background.

Willowdale Church voted to sponsor the new group and appointed Pastor Rick Bacchus to serve as mentor and liaison. It also voted the sum of $3,000 to assist the group to meet its start-up costs. That being done, the wheels were set in motion to secure a low-cost, yet suitable place of worship for the group in the Brampton area. After an ardent search by Bro. V.T. Thomas and others, the Lord led the way to the Norval United Church.

In this venture of faith, Brampton Southern Asia Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship has set a noble example and demonstrated, once again, the true Adventist pioneer spirit – that of entering new cultures and people groups with the gospel message of a loving Saviour. They are joining forces and combining efforts with tens of thousands of others around the world, leading the way in taking the name of Jesus to people and in helping them to fall in love with Him.

Norval United Church is located at 486 Guelph Street, Norval, ON, L0P 1K0.

Four Being Baptized from Ajax’s KidZone Bible Class

On April 30th, 2011, Kenyon Flash, Casey Pointer, Kumar Stoddart, and Savannah Weir were baptized. They were the first to be baptized as a result of Ajax Church’s KidZone Bible Class for Juniors.

KidZone Bible class grew from a strong belief among Ajax’s leaders that the church’s juniors needed to have a better knowledge of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its teaching prior to taking the important step of baptism. To this end, under the guidance of the first elder, Francis Marcellin, and Personal Ministries leader, Velma Morgan, Lance Flash took the initiative to start the first KidZone Bible study class last summer 2010.

The Bible class includes 14 Bible study guides produced by the Voice of Prophecy. The guides incorporate interesting stories, illustrations, and bright colours designed to attract children ages 9-12. Students had access to a hard copy of the lesson and were also able to complete the lessons on the Internet.

A total of twelve students completed the class and received their certificates. After the baptism, conducted by Pastor Rupert Gray, other graduates have indicated a desire to be baptized in the future.

The success of KidZone has made it an on-going part of Ajax Adventist Community Church’s evangelistic strategy. This past summer saw the start of a new session.

Judy Hutchinson-Boyle

WANTED

If you’re skilled in creating Apps, please contact the editor at hpeat@adventistontario.org
Fourteen Baptized at Berea’s ‘A Ray of Hope’ Evangelistic Seminar

On June 25, 2011, fourteen people were immersed as Berea Seventh-day Adventist Church concluded its month-long ‘A Ray of Hope’ seminar.

The congregation experienced a rich blessing that will never be forgotten as Amazing Facts’ Tim Jones, enthusiastically led the seminar each evening.

At the end of each night’s seminar, Bible study lessons pertaining to the sermon, were given out. These lessons were informative and helped people to understand God’s love for them. Certificates of completion were awarded to fourteen people at the concluding service when the baptism was held. Local pastor, Charles Leader, and Tim Jones immersed the new converts.

Preparation for the seminar began with members going into the streets and handing out flyers, promoting ‘A Ray of Hope’. It did not matter how busy the streets were, members committed themselves to invite everyone they met.

Teams of dedicated members also committed themselves to ensure the successful operation of each seminar. It was a time when the entire church came together and diligently worked to make ‘A Ray of Hope’ one of the most memorable and successful evangelistic series held at Berea in recent years.

Hundreds Turn Out for Gabby’s Gift 2011 Wheel Walk Run


The benefit walk was to help raise awareness in the local Newcastle community to the effect of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus on the lives of families impacted by them.

Spina Bifida is a neural tube birth defect in which the spinal column fails to develop properly, resulting in varying degrees of permanent damage to the spinal cord and nervous system. Hydrocephalus is a medical condition in which there is an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in the ventricles, or cavities, of the brain.

For more than 35 years, the Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario (SB&H) has been committed to making a positive difference in the lives of individuals with these birth defects. The Spirit Wheel Walk Run (SWWR) is a one-of-a-kind fundraising and awareness initiative that takes place in June, the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Awareness Month.

In celebration of this special month, Sharon & Maurice Ennis hosted their third annual Gabby’s Gift Wheel Walk Run. Their four-year old daughter, Gabrielle, was born with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

Pathfinder Club, was noisy and attracted the attention of the residents. Some of them later joined the supporters at the local recreational complex for a fun-filled family day that included a barbecue, face-painting, an energetic show by Kingsway College Aerials gymnastics team and a friendly shoot-out competition with “Deke”, mascot of the Oshawa Generals.

Regional councillor, Willie Woo, was on hand to participate in the day’s activities and even joined in the walk.

Sharon Ennis held a launch and book signing of Gabby’s Gift – Hope in the Heart of a Child, her journal written about her daughter. In her book, Sharon shares their painful experiences and struggles on the journey of caring for a child with Spina Bifida. Councillor Woo was among those who purchased a signed copy. Portions of the proceeds from the book will go towards raising funds for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

It is hoped that a cure will soon be found. Visit www.GenesisOnePublishing.com to order your copy of Gabby’s Gift – Hope in the Heart of a Child in support of the Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Association of Ontario.
Nepean Seventh-day Adventist Church's fun day on July 10, 2011 received a huge boost when nine days earlier the local newspaper, Barrhaven Independent, dedicated over half of page 7 to it.

In what should be a model for other Adventist churches, Nepean's communications team sent out a media release to the newspaper and a reporter, Jeff Morris, visited the church building and interviewed Manuel Donoso, the local pastor.

Morris was clearly impressed with the church building, calling it "one of the finest community buildings in Barrhaven".

The interview allowed Pastor Donoso to speak about the local and global church. Speaking of the family fun day, Donoso is quoted as saying, "We want to introduce ourselves to the community. We are a community church, and we have a friendly congregation. We want to invite people so that we can meet our neighbours in Barrhaven and welcome them."

The article listed the activities for the day and even included information about the Vacation Bible School planned for July 18-22.

On Sunday, July 10, a large number of people from the community turned out between 1 – 4 p.m. to enjoy the fun day in the church's parking lot. It was clear that many had read the story in the newspaper, but others were simply on their way out for groceries and saw the activities and decided to join in.

It was truly a community event with lots of games, a bouncy castle, reptiles from Little Ray's Reptiles, booths, free refreshments and an ambulance from the city that gave short tours to the children.

Six community children signed up for the VBS, and eight adult Bibles and five children's Bibles were given away.

Nepean Church has other plans to become involved in its community, and one year after its opening its new facility in 2010, it is looking forward to more people from the community entering through its doors.

Communications Department

Scarborough’s Senior Ministry

Seniors’ Ministry at Scarborough Seventh-day Adventist Church is alive and well. It is said that life begins at age 80. That was definitely evident at our recent seniors’ banquet, held on Sunday, August 14, 2011. The banquet was full of life and was an elegant presentation of how Christ is working in the lives of our seniors.

The Seniors’ Ministry is a vibrant part of the ministries of Scarborough Church. Seniors are engaged in every aspect of the church's ministries. The ministry involves the young people, facilitating a bridge between youth and seniors. A demonstration of this was very noticeable at the recent and previous seniors’ banquets, as the youth served the seniors. The seniors are truly an integral part of our church life.

Ana’s Baptism at Toronto Romanian Group

Toronto Romanian Seventh-day Adventist Group rejoiced with two new converts as they were baptized on June 12, 2011. Ana Casolteanu from Alexandria, Romania, discovered the truth of God’s Word by watching Hope TV. Last autumn, she began attending worship services at the church and eagerly took every opportunity to study the Bible and learn of God’s love for her. Her growing knowledge and new experiences with God led her to accept Jesus as her Saviour and to request baptism.

Pastor Karoly Nagy prepared her for baptism and was very happy to immerse her during the service on June 12.

Presently, Ana is the only member of her family who has embraced the Adventist faith. She is praying that her faith will hold firm and that others from her family will one day follow her and share in her joy in Jesus.

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Kaya and the Broken Bible
Camp Frenda Evangelism

Fifteen year-old Kaya will never forget her first summer at Camp Frenda during July 31- August 14, 2011. It was unlike anything she had ever experienced before. Yes, she enjoyed all the exciting activities, but it was the spiritual atmosphere that really captivated her. Coming from a Muslim background, she did not know much about Christianity, but the devotionals and discussions at camp really stimulated her interest.

After a number of conversations with her counsellor, Carol, Kaya wanted to read the Bible for herself, but the only Bible that could be found was an old Bible with its cover broken and hanging off. This did not trouble Kaya. She was so thrilled with her own Bible that she took it everywhere she went—even to meals and activities.

Over the two-week Teen Camp, staff began to notice how she was changing. Arriving as a shy, retiring girl in the first week, she was clearly becoming more confident. By the end of the second week, she was part of the praise team, leading the song service at worships. When Carol informed camp director, Pastor Glenn DeSilva, about Kaya’s broken Bible, he ordered a brand new one from the Adventist Book Centre for her. To Kaya’s obvious delight, Pastor DeSilva presented her with the new Bible during the morning worship on the final Sabbath of camp.

Kaya’s attendance at camp this year was due to the value placed on Camp Frenda by her foster parent, Sheila. Over ten years ago, Sheila, who is not an Adventist, learned about the camp from a neighbour and sent her foster children. As she saw the positive impact of the camp on the children, she made sure that each year she would send her children. Kaya had only been living in Sheila’s home for two or three months before she was registered to attend camp.

Kaya’s story is not unusual for Camp Frenda. Yearly, there are similar stories of young lives that have been changed as they have experienced the spiritual atmosphere of the camp and the loving, caring attitude of the staff. Someone described Camp Frenda as “Jesus, in action!” This summer, four young people, including Pastor DeSilva’s eighteen year-old daughter, Amairis, were baptised in the lake.

Camp staff has purposed to maintain contact with Kaya and will visit her and take her to the nearest Adventist church to her home. Perhaps you may want to sponsor a child to attend Camp Frenda in 2012. For further information, contact Lila Oliveira at loliveira@adventistontario.org.

Hispanic Adventists March in Toronto for Family Values

On June 4, 300 members of the Seventh-day Adventist Hispanic community marched through the main streets of downtown Toronto in its second ‘Parade of Christian Witness’.

The members from the Toronto Spanish, Spanish Bet-el, Maranatha and Hope Spanish congregations marched, many in Adventurer and Pathfinder uniforms, to promote Christian family values.

Led by Pastors Daniel and Efrain Sanchez and other church leaders, the marchers carried banners and distributed books and pamphlets. Some marchers happily marched in beautiful sunlight along the streets of Toronto.

As they marched, many people stopped to see what was taking place. This allowed some of the marchers to speak with them and explain why they were marching.

When the march was finished, the pastors and members were thankful and praised God for how He had led them.
BOOK REVIEW

Available online from Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

Ellen White encourages us to study the Book of Revelation for it is “truth that concerns our present and future welfare” (8T302). It needs “close and diligent study” (Ev 197). Yet, over the past 100 years since Ellen G. White died, knowledge of the Book of Revelation has not advanced much beyond what has been gained then. We have simply recycled what was already established.

I applaud Terrence Harrison’s effort to delve into the themes of Revelation. His book on the 144,000 is a bold one that draws us in the direction Ellen White indicated. The subject is well researched and boldly interpreted.

The book is profitable for four reasons:

(1) It provides us with sufficient information in one place for us to draw an informed opinion on the subject.

(2) It takes us out of the valley of indecision concerning the literal or symbolic interpretation. There is enough presented to declare with certainty that the symbolic interpretation is correct.

(3) It impels us to reconcile the 144,000 with the great multitude of Revelation 7. Harrison presents a very credible case that both groups are the same. To him, the sealing of the 144,000 is the means by which the great multitude came into being. While this is new and startling to many, it is meat for further study.

(4) Harrison presents the biblical as well as the Ellen G. White sources for his interpretations.

Overall, Harrison has moved us forward on the subject in a way that will help to dispel obscurantism, indifference, and extremism. He brings us to address other themes like the sealing, the twelve tribes of Israel from the Old Testament to the New Testament, Biblical numerology and the progressive nature of truth. The 144,000 Literal or Symbolic? demonstrates that in the kingdom of God there is progress and reward for those who work diligently. It is now left for us to further the research and for Harrison to expand the volume.

Reviewed by Vincent Lue, pastor of Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.

Terrence A. Harrison holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Ministerial Theology, and a Master of Divinity degree. He has been a student of Bible prophecy for many years. The 144,000; Literal or Symbolic? is the first of five books he plans to write. The second book, on human sexuality, will be available in summer 2012. Terrence, a member of Perth Avenue Church, recently completed a four-year period as the religion teacher at Crawford Adventist Academy in Toronto.
Philadelphia Regains CYSA Crown
Kanisa/Hope Combination ‘Division B Champions’

Philadelphia’s athletes returned to the Christian Youth Sports Academy’s (CYSA) 13th annual track and field meeting at York University on Sunday, July 10, 2011 and regained the coveted championship crown.

Dr. Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, was on hand to witness the light blue-shirted team from Scarborough power its way around the track to win the championship for the second time.

After last year’s absence, Philadelphia returned to a sunny and hot July day determined to show that its win in 2009 was not a fluke. From early in the day, the light blue shirts seem to dominate many of the events, but they were not alone. Apple Creek, sixth successive CYSA champions, also returning after a year’s absence, would not simply allow Philadelphia to have its own way. Apple Creek’s athletes quickly demonstrated that they had seriously trained for the occasion. With the inclusion of outstanding athletes such as LaToya Austin, with her freshly-minted MD degree from her studies abroad, and Amir Barbara, the new boy-wonder, it was uncertain as to who would emerge as champions.

However, it was Philadelphia’s depth of athletes as well as its cadre of fast and furious young men and women and its vocal supporters that won the day by over a hundred points. Philadelphia also came close to winning the relay championship were it not for the strength and superb technique of Apple Creek’s relay teams and the disqualification of one of Philadelphia’s quartets. The relay title was Apple Creek’s compensation.

Toronto West, 2010 champions, came in fifth place.

Kanisa Fellowship and Hope Church Win ‘Division B’ Championship

While Philadelphia and Apple Creek were in fierce competition for the ‘Division A’ title (churches with membership over 500), Kanisa Fellowship’s union with Hope Church swept away 2010 champions, Kendalwood, to emerge victorious as ‘Division B’ champions (churches with membership less than 500).

A jubilant Kanisa/Hope team was thrilled with the victory. Hope’s athletes have not participated in many years, but the taste of victory will ensure that they will return next year. Kanisa seemed to have arrived out of nowhere. Prior to 2010, Kanisa did not have much of a presence at the CYSA track and field meeting, but in 2010 its athletes earned the bronze medal position. Kanisa arrived and gave notice that it was ready to challenge for the title. The combination with Hope Church was clearly a winning move and even gave them the third place overall.

Last year’s champion, Kendalwood, finished in third place, 59 points behind second place Agape. It will have to do far better if they hope to be considered as serious challengers next year.

The 2011 championships will be remembered as one of the most successful and exciting ever held by CYSA. The weather was perfect. For the first time in nearly three years, it was a rain-free event. The spectators and athletes arrived to enjoy themselves and they did just that.

Some of the athletes recorded times very close to those set by professional athletes. Dr. Mansfield Edwards, himself a former sprinter, who was runner-up to the lightning-fast Pastor John Brooks of New York, in the over 40’s pastors race in 2007, was astonished. “Do you see those times?” he asked, “These young men can compete at almost any level!”

Perhaps the police team from Peel Regional Police that arrived and placed the challenge to run against any six volunteer male sprinters should have observed the times before issuing its challenge. The challenge sounded like Goliath’s challenge to Israel to send out its champion to fight him. As the challenge was repeated over the intercom, six young Davids finally rose and slowly walked to the starting line.

When the race concluded, the two police officers certainly knew that they had been in a race. They came in second and in sixth place. Members of the 6-member police team also participated in other events. They indicated that they will return in 2012.

Perhaps one of the key elements contributing to the success of this year’s meeting was CYSA’s decision to remove some of the events. This, combined with the improvement in reducing the time taken between races, helped to bring the day to a close by 6:15 p.m.

Clearly, CYSA is to be congratulated for its hard work in putting on what is arguably the best meeting in recent years. However, there are some outstanding
questions that need to be considered:

While the athletes operated with admirable sportsmanship, are their churches becoming so competitive, so determined to win, that they resort to ‘rent an athlete for the day’? Do some of the athletes running for some churches even know where the church they represent is located?

While the event can be used as an evangelistic tool, would it not be fairer if those ‘rent an athlete’ at least have had some previous interaction with the church? What are CYSA’s regulations on this? Is there any way of enforcing the regulations? Can churches be disqualified if they include athletes who are prohibited by the regulations from participating?

We look forward to a level playing field.

CYSA president, Kester Griffiths, presents CYSA shirt to Pastor Mansfield Edwards

CYSA Championship Table

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<thead>
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<th>Place</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>530</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Apple Creek</td>
<td>428</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kanisa-Hope Lightning</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agape Temple</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Toronto West</td>
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Relay Championship Top Three Positions

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>172</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kanisa-Hope</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change of Church Information for Addington Highlands and Lindsay Companies

Addington Highlands Company has changed its name to Madoc Seventh-day Adventist Company, due to its relocation to 135 Elgin Road in the town of Madoc, Ontario.

Since September 17, 2011, Lindsay Company has been worshipping at its new place of worship: Liberty Baptist Church, 331 Logie St., Lindsay, ON K9V 6L2.

Leamington Church is requesting any information re. the following individuals. If you know their whereabouts or have information on how they can be contacted, please contact Dirk Zinner, pastor, at 519-322-1644 or email: dzinner@adventistontario.org.

Sheila Adams - Sheryl and Marley Holland - Brian and Scott Johnson - Heather Mason
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