Inside:
- The Struggle to Evangelize a Secular Society - Part 2, P. 4
- It’s Simple, Really: Faithfulness or Cheating P. 7
Editorial

Searching for the Unity Formula

I couldn't believe I had not seen it before. Maybe my youthful idealism had blinded me to it, but there it was in Acts 6:1—problems in the early church! I read the passage again and again, but no matter how often I read, the message remained the same—Grecian Christians felt that their widows were being discriminated against by the Jewish Christians. Subsequently, seven deacons were appointed to ensure equal treatment for everyone.

As a youth in my late teens, my view of the early church had been restricted to Acts 2:42-48. It was just after Pentecost, when all the believers were together, had everything in common, cared for each other with glad and sincere hearts and continuously praised God. Divisions over gender, ethnicity and race belonged to the modern church, not the early one. For some naïve reason, I thought that squabbling over religious practice and theology was alien to the time of the apostles. Then I was brutally confronted by the discrimination in Acts 6 and was forced to acknowledge that the problems we face in church today are not new.

My idealism has faded with the years. Sometimes, as I observe power struggles, political shenanigans, disunity and attempts at control, I have to be very careful to avoid the slippery slope of cynicism. However, when I see church members, especially young people, becoming passionate about their faith and becoming involved in the mission of the church, I have great hope for our church and I feel privileged to be part of it.

The question of unity is one of the problems that seem to perplex our church. Periodically, the call for unity is heard at various levels of the church, including the local level, but we fail to even agree on its meaning. Unity remains elusive, so we settle for the status quo as its surrogate, and as soon as any threat is perceived, we quickly circle our wagons around it. The status quo becomes sacrosanct, immutable, beyond investigation.

The early church was never afraid to confront the question of unity. The status quo did not seem to matter too much to them. In Acts 15, the young church was faced with a crucial issue that threatened their unity. Some men from Judea went to Antioch among the Gentile converts and told them that in order to be saved, they had to believe and practice the Ceremonial Law, including circumcision. Paul and Barnabas met them head on and debated with them. It caused such an uproar in the church that the elders appointed Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem to counsel with the leaders of the Jewish Christians there.

It is the outcome that is so instructive for today’s church as it grapples with issues of unity. The text shows how both sides presented their case in a spirit of respect and understanding (vv. 6-18). They considered the issues as they related to salvation, God’s grace and how God had given the Holy Spirit to the Gentile Christians. Finally, James suggested, “We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” (v.19). While he was a Jew, steeped in the Law of Moses, he concluded that it was not necessary to impose what he valued on the Gentiles. No doubt James and the other Jewish Christians cherished the Law of Moses and greatly valued its benefits, but he recognised that it was unnecessary for salvation. Hence, unnecessary for unity.

Unity here is seen as one set of rules for the Jewish Christians, another set for the Gentile Christians. It was a recognition that one group of Christians will operate differently from another group. Yet, they recognise that they all belong to Christ and count each other brethren. They are united in the substantives, but separate in the inessentials.

However, James also recognised the sensitivities of his people regarding certain practices, such as eating meat with blood and food offered to idols and asked that these be avoided. He was saying, “These things are really repulsive to us, so even though it may not be a problem for you to eat meat that is not kosher, please do it for us, your brothers”. He was also aware of the shameless immorality prevalent among some of the Gentiles—often as part of their worship—and included sexual immorality among the four things to be avoided.

This was a call for compromise. Unity means that there are times when one or more groups of believers may need to compromise and give up some of their rights for the sake of others. Compromising is never one-sided. The Jewish Christians chose to desist from requiring the Gentiles to observe the Ceremonial Law. For their part, the Gentile converts accepted four prohibitions.

The spirit of unity in the early church as evidenced in Acts 15 is one of appreciating differences in regards to non-essentials regarding salvation, refusing to impose what we believe to be true, our practices on others and a willingness to compromise for the good of all. Could this be the missing unity formula?
I have ever seen. It is varied in its content and attractive in so many ways. Then there is the superb editorial. The time is far spent when Christians fail at understanding God through Jesus Christ instead of through a literalistic, humanly-tainted interpretation of what God is like. You are so correct at the paragraph beginning with: “It all goes back to the age old problem of how we view God...” Indeed the Old Testament was shaped within the matrix of human attributions of what God is like based on human cultural biases and emotions. Yet, a proper view of the Doctrine of Inspiration yields to the overwhelming conviction that our God of love, mercy and grace was present and seeking to lead His children to higher and higher understandings of Himself - preparing them to receive Him “in the fullness of time” in the person of Jesus Christ.

You asked the question, “Are we in danger of imposing sinful humanity’s emotions on God by saying that He is offended by particular things of which He has not made any such declaration?” If your readers perceive God to be petulant and retributive based on Moses’ attributions, they too will manifest the same characteristics and be quick to justify it as godly. I emphasize, there is a way to understand the unwarranted attributions to God by Bible writers yet be fully devoted to the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures.

So, thank you in a profound way for writing as you did.

Douglas Devnich
The Struggle to Evangelize a Secular Society

Part 2

In part 1 (Ontario Highlights, Summer 2012), it was shown that Postmodernism is not impressed with Christians, and even sees them as being responsible for many of the world’s ills. In many ways, Postmodernism may be seen as post-Christianity. It should not be assumed that countries like Canada and the United States are Christian societies.

Secular people are not interested in someone simply telling them about a Bible that is absolute. We are living in an age that is increasingly becoming like that of the New Testament where most people do not have previous knowledge of the Bible or of God as the one true deity. We can no longer meet people on the level of Bible knowledge alone; we need to live out the truth we espouse. If we want to reach the secular mind, we will need to become living sermons of all that we teach. The secular mind will be won by the same thing that won people in Christ’s day—truth coupled with love in action.

Evangelism and the Secular Mind (Postmoderns)

Let’s begin by talking about the evangelism scale.

Imagine that a person at 0 is someone without any knowledge of the gospel, probably an atheist. A person at 10 is a fully committed, baptised disciple of Jesus Christ who is using his or her spiritual gifts. At which interval does evangelism occur? All of them!

We tend to focus on people going from 9 to 10, where they decide to be baptised and become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Are baptisms important? Of course they are! We are called to make disciples of all nations; that’s our mission. However, we forget that most people are not even at step 1, much less step 9. If we view going from step 9 to 10 as our only standard for evangelism, then Jesus Himself was a failure. We often fail to realise that in His ministry, Jesus only accomplished 0-9 with many thousands of people. However, at Pentecost, they went to step 10.

Jesus did an amazing amount of sowing, and we have to do the same if we are to reap a huge harvest. Sowing is just as evangelistic as reaping is, and if we are to reach secular people, we have to work with them, often from point 0, and carefully nurture them step by step on the way to 10.

When was the last time your church spent evangelism funds on steps 0-9?

Some Ways of Reaching Out

So how can we reach the secular mind?

First, discover what Postmoderns are attracted to.

It has been said that there are three great human values that God implanted in us: truth, goodness, and beauty. Modernism has focused exclusively on truth. Postmoderns are more attracted to values of goodness and beauty. Scripture is full of goodness and beauty. It contains overriding value of loving one another and taking care of the poor and widowed. The Psalms reveal rich music and inspirational poetry. The beauty of the stories Jesus told; the metaphors describing Jesus as the Bright and Morning Star, the Lily of the Valley, etc., can be very attractive to Postmoderns. On the other hand, a church that concentrates on doctrinal purity but does nothing to help people, has no genuine goodness, and does not celebrate beauty through music and art and expression, is unattractive to Postmoderns.

Secondly, for Postmoderns, belonging precedes becoming. They want to feel that they belong before they are willing to become members. This was the way of Jesus. As one author put it, “Jesus threatened people with inclusiveness”.

This is the reverse of churches filled with Moderns where you first have to become a member before you belong.

If Postmoderns attend your church through friendships with someone, accept them as part of your community. Involve them in the life of your church community, and they will feel that they belong long before they are baptised.

Thirdly, belonging and becoming precede believing. When Jesus met the woman at the well, He made her feel like she belonged, and in that acceptance she became, and finally she believed. She immediately proclaimed the gospel to her townspeople.

Seven Factors for Making Postmodern Disciples

1. The relational factor.

Count conversations, not conversions. Don’t rush decisions, don’t do the hard sell. Keep the conversation going, just as Jesus did with the rich young ruler.
**FEATURE**

2. **The narrative factor.**
   It's about...
   * their story (listen!).
   Jesus often would ask questions to initiate conversations
   * your story. Share your personal story. It's always better than just trying to convey a propositional truth.
   * God's story (proclaim). The gospel must be presented as a story, not as a set of facts, rules, propositions and laws. Jesus presented the gospel in parables for people to easily understand.

3. **The communal factor.**
   “The greatest hermeneutic of the gospel is a community that lives by it.” – Leslie Newbiggin. Truth must be lived out in us, or else it's just words. Adventist pioneers had what was called the social meeting, but it was not a social as we understand it today. It was a time of fellowship, testimony, accountability and sharing of the Christian life. Today, our churches tend to be almost exclusively cognitive experiences.

4. **The process factor.**
   Instead of the usual “decision-discipleship” model (where a person attends an evangelistic series for some weeks and then is a "disciple"), we need to make discipleship a wholistic process as Jesus did.

5. **The Holy Spirit factor.**
   This is the understanding that God is already working in everyone, calling them to Himself (moving them along the evangelism scale). Paul puts it this way, "I have planted the seed, Apollos watered it; but God made it grow". We may not see the harvest, but we must be faithful to do our part. It's for this reason we seek out 'God-opportunities' or 'God-moments', where God has already been at work, waiting to use us to draw people to Him. 'God-moments' could be in the supermarket or at the bus stop, or anywhere.

6. **The learning factor.**
   See evangelism as part of my own discipleship, not just theirs. Approach every conversation with Postmoderns humbly, knowing that God has much to teach us, and we too can learn from others. If a method isn't working, throw it out and try another.

7. **The missional factor.**
   Evangelism is recruiting people for God's mission here on earth, as well as getting them ready for heaven when Jesus returns. This means that the church is active in our world, making a difference.

---

Postmoderns are not attracted to a church that simply sits on their hands and waits for heaven but do no earthly good. Following the example of Jesus, we are the first to steward God's creation. We live counter-culturally against the values of society like consumerism, workaholism, and 'keeping up with the Joneses'. Church begins when we walk out the door of our churches and go into the world from Sunday to Friday.

---

Five Things Postmoderns Need Most

Postermoderns need to be:
1. **Invited.** This is best done through friendship. Jesus had friends among tax-collectors, prostitutes, and pagan Romans. This means that the church has to be serious about creating relationships with the 'unchurched'.

2. **Interested.** We must be relevant. If a method isn't working, throw it out and try another
way. We should have no sacred cows.

3. **Involved**, given something to do.

4. **Inspired.** Postmoderns need to be given a sense of ownership. They are tired of a world where big corporations, big government, and big institutions tell them what to do and how they should live. They want to be part of the process.

5. **Included.** Good leaders help to create other leaders, not horde power. This is the way to create healthy growth. The ultimate goal of an apple tree is to produce other apple trees. Jesus discipled the 12 so that they could go and disciple all nations.

**Postmodern Conversion Process**

The secular-minded person can be converted, moved along the scale (even from zero) because of the very nature of Postmodernism. They are often discontent with life (the idea that all truths are equal and that we can create our own truths will not satisfy). Ultimately, only Jesus can satisfy.

Since Postmoderns see no real meaning or real purpose to life, they can:

1. Be led to Christ through contact with friendly, kind and helpful Christians;
2. Converted to community where they feel loved and cared for and where they are not judged;
3. Be led to make a commitment to Christ. Belonging helps to lead them to believing, accepting, and then committing themselves to Christ;
4. Experience growth. Once they belong to community and have Christ, they grow in this atmosphere;
5. Learn to care for others. They can start reaching out to others and begin the cycle anew.

**Life Development**

We are best able to reach the secular mind when we consider evangelism as ‘life development’. As such, approach it as a one-to-one relationship. Expect it to be long-term because you want to move the person along the spectrum, in some cases, from 0 to 10. Prepare to meet the person’s needs—following Jesus’ method. Take evangelism outside of a building into the community. The church is not a place. It’s a group of people called out for a specific purpose. Be open to the Spirit’s leading in your evangelism and the way He multiplies gifts according to your needs. Finally, don’t stop—it’s a process. Keep going.

**Suggested Programme**

1. **Socializing**—talk and share refreshment (1 hour). Let the person see Jesus in you as you interact.
2. **Life story**—for a given topic, share your experience.
3. **Giving thanks**—conversational prayer.
4. **Exploring life** (the topic)—Bible based, but always practical. What does this tell me about God, and how should I live today?
5. **Application**—what does it mean for me or ‘now what’? How does this change the way I get up in the morning?
6. **Commitment** (prayer time).

**Conclusion**

Whether we like it or not, our world is Postmodern. While it sometimes appears that Postmoderns have no time for God, it is not necessarily so. People are still looking for answers, but looking in the wrong places. They are lost without even knowing it, but they are seeking for meaning, crying out for the good news of the gospel.

If we don’t do something, who will? The gospel is the same; the love of God is the same, but in order to show them that Jesus can fully meet their needs, we need to adjust our mindset and approach.

We need to pray that God will cause us to love the secular-minded in the same way He does—our hearts must break for them.

Matthew 9:36-38 says, “When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

This is the compassion we need as we reach out to evangelise the secular world.

Frank Dell’Erba
Pastor, Harmony Church/Italian Company

**Registration Information for the Ontario Conference School of Evangelism**

**Two Tracks Available:**

- Lay Evangelism & Credentialled Lay Preacher
- Conversion Process

**Class of 2014**

2 Locations

- Heritage Green Seventh-day Adventist Church 349 Issac Brock Drive, Stoney Creek
- Greater Toronto Area Church to be arranged

Registration forms are available at your church or online under Personal Ministries.

Register online today at www.AdventistOntario.org

For more information contact the Ontario Conference Personal Ministries Department Rose Marie Dunn-Kalynko at 905-571-1022 Ext. 111

Cost: $200.00 (Includes $150.00 Non-Refundable Deposits)

Session 1 begins Sunday, April 21, 2013

Frank Dell’Erba
Pastor, Harmony Church/Italian Company
She described her father as a “philandering drug dealer” and her long-suffering mother as a “simple-faith Christian woman”. Yet, she and her siblings knew that they were loved by both parents and her father’s illegal activities provided for all their needs. Then her father met Jesus, turned his back on his former life and found himself without financial means.

“We became poor,” she said, “and then the pastor came to see us and told us how we can have money.”

The pastor introduced them to the biblical truth of tithing and spoke of God’s promise in Malachi 3:10 of pouring out a blessing on them. Her mother’s sceptical response was, “Tithing is for rich people. We aren’t rich. With a big family of eight people, we can’t afford to tithe.”

The pastor kindly encouraged them and explained the value of depending on the Great Provider and not on their own limited resources. “My mother who handled the family’s meagre finance was touched by the Holy Spirit,” she said, “and started setting apart pennies from every little income that came to our family and gave it as a tithe. What has left such a profound impression on me as a young girl was that from then on, we were never in need. Our income began to increase, and we even had abundance that overflowed to others.”

She remembers that at first it was difficult for the family to tithe because the family’s small income made it hard to trust God, but her mother’s leap of faith made everything work out.

She concluded, “The lesson remained strongly engraved in my heart and having experienced the blessings, I continued what my mother taught me to ‘tithe every blessing that comes from the Lord’, and when I look back, I smile with a grateful heart and almost disbelief at where we were and where we are now, and I sing with David, ‘I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.’ Psalms 37:25”

I know the young woman in the above account very well. She is always cheerful and praising God. As she said, she personally experienced the result of faithfulness in returning tithe to God.

I agree with her that there are times when it is difficult to trust God, usually because we think our resources are insufficient. There is some truth to that because our resources are insufficient. However, the ‘leap of faith’ comes when we recognise that God’s resources are abundant.

It is holy to the Lord and “is used as the revenue of the gospel” (E. G. White, Counsels on Stewardship, p.79).

What is meant by ‘revenue of the gospel’?

Some people are committed to being faithful and return a tithe. However, unbidden, they choose to take on the responsibility of using the tithe for what they consider to be ‘honourable projects’. The tithe is to be used for one purpose only—to sustain the ministers whom the Lord has appointed to do His work and to carry the burden of the flock.

God determines its use and says, “I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel…for the work they do while serving in the Tent of Meeting” (Numbers 18:21).

Self-determination of tithe use has, from time to time, led some people to withhold their tithes as a means of political control, pressure or to show dissatisfaction with their pastor, local church or with the conference leadership.

It is unfortunate that more of us do not experience God’s promised blessings. Maybe, it’s because we are inclined to think that all our income is ours to do as we wish with it. The Scriptures clarify that a tithe belongs to God. Malachi 3:8-10 clearly teaches this. One part of our income is different from the rest.
I believe that this is done in ignorance because those who do so are unaware that withholding tithe is rebellion against God. It is He who says in Malachi 3:10, “Bring ye all the tithes in the storehouse…” (KJV).

Verse 9 is even more intense, “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation” (KJV). Here, robbed means ‘forcibly taken from God’. Ellen G. White counsels in an article entitled “Existing Evils and Their Remedy” in 1890, “…dare anyone, because of this, withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God? I dare not.”

The storehouse

Some people argue over what is meant by the storehouse and its location. Malachi was quoting God as He spoke from His sanctuary, inviting His people to bring the tithes to the storehouse. It is a clear invitation to take the tithes from where one is to where He is—in His house. The church is figuratively known as the House of God. The ‘storehouse’ refers to rooms in the temple at Jerusalem, which were used to store the tithe that was to be distributed to the Levites. Since their economy was agricultural, they brought tithes in many forms, such as grain and livestock. The Bible makes it clear that specific persons were assigned to the collection and distribution of the tithes to the Levites and priests (2 Chronicles 31:12-16).

Our economy in Canada today is vastly different from that of ancient Israel, but the principle remains constant. Tithing is still a tenth of ‘our increase’ or our income, and the storehouse is the church, the representation of God’s house, His sanctuary. The organisation of His church is such that the headquarters become the main storehouse. Individuals are sacredly responsible for its distribution according to the Bible and accountable to God for its stewardship. When faithfully done, the entire church is blessed and the gospel is spread.

A Call to faithfulness

Like my friend, however, each member—myself included—is called to exercise faith in God and return a grateful tithe to His storehouse. While we are sometimes tempted to either look at our meagre resources and doubt God’s promises, or allow negatives to determine our actions and withhold God’s tithe, let us trust God’s promise and obey Him. Withholding God’s tithe is cheating Him and denying ourselves abundant blessings. Be courageous and accept God’s challenge in Malachi 3:10, to put Him to the test by being faithful and see what He will do for you. Be sure, He will do something that will amaze you because He has promised.

President M. Edwards
Your Amazing Liver—Your Body’s Best Friend!

Could you live without your liver? Just how important is it to you? Consider, your liver holds about 13 percent of the body’s blood supply at any given moment. All the blood leaving the stomach and intestines passes through the liver for processing. It also breaks down nutrients and medication into forms that are easily assimilated by the rest of the body.

It is the largest gland in the body and one of the most important organs of the gastrointestinal tract. Several vital functions have been identified with the liver, but its primary functions are to refine and detoxify everything we eat, breathe, and absorb through the skin. When the liver has broken down harmful substances, its by-products are expelled from the body as either feces or urine.

Vitamin storage is another function of the liver. It stores vitamins A, B12, D, E and K, as well as minerals such as iron and copper. Additionally, it stores sugars, regulates fat stores, and controls the production and excretion of cholesterol. The bile, produced by liver cells, helps in the digestion of food and absorption of essential nutrients. It neutralizes and destroys poisonous substances and metabolizes alcohol. It is valuable in helping the body resist infection and remove bacteria from the bloodstream. This bile is stored and concentrated in a pear-shaped sac called the gallbladder until it is needed in the digestive process. The liver also participates in the activation of vitamin D.

The liver does its work silently, continuously. One source describes it as the body’s engine, pantry, garbage processor, food refiner, garbage disposal, and guardian angel—not just a silent partner but the body’s best friend. It is the body’s internal chemical power plant, converting nutrients in the food we eat into muscles, energy, hormones, clotting factors and immune factors.

The liver is an amazing organ. Here are some facts to remember to help you care for your liver so that it can continue its constant, essential work.

- Fumes from paint thinners, insect sprays, and other aerosol sprays accumulate in tiny blood vessels in the lungs and are transported to the liver where they are detoxified and discharged in bile. The amount and concentration of those chemicals should be controlled to prevent liver damage. If you use these items, use a mask, cover your skin, and ensure they are used in a place with good ventilation. Be sure to remove any chemicals from your skin with soap and water as soon as possible.
- Including fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, and seeds in your diet is key to good health in general and great for liver health in particular because of the potential of these foods to promote the formation of new liver cells.
- Excess calories in the form of carbohydrates can add to liver dysfunction and can cause fat deposits in the liver. A build-up of fat in the liver can result in inflammation and scarring (fibrosis). The more serious form of this illness can cause severe liver damage and eventually lead to liver failure or liver cancer in about 5 percent of those with the illness.
- Excessive amounts of some vitamins, Vitamin A in particular, may be an additional source of stress and is very toxic to the liver.
- There are certain plants that can cause liver toxicity. Consult with your medical practitioner before using herbal treatments.
- Alcohol places an enormous strain on the liver and often causes permanent damage and scarring of the cells in a condition called cirrhosis. Hepatitis, an inflammatory disease of the liver, can also result in liver damage with possible imminent death resulting from acute hepatic failure.
- If you must use prescription, herbal, and over-the-counter medication (particularly those that contain acetaminophen), do not ignore the manufacturer’s directions. The liver can break down these substances if used as directed. Overuse of these medications may cause injury to the liver.
- In its effort to keep us healthy, the liver is often overtaxed. Those who are overweight or morbidly obese are at risk for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). This is caused by a buildup of fat in the liver resulting in inflammation and scarring which impair liver function.
- Exercising for a minimum of 30 minutes a day will increase the flow of blood to the liver, thus enhancing its function. We are created in the image of God and are the crowning work of creation built for the glory and praise of our Creator God. Caring for His magnificent creation is an act of stewardship. This is not an option. “You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies.” I Corinthians 6:20.

Maria McClean, Health Ministries Director

Sources:
Johns Hopkins Medicine; Hepatitis Foundation International; Barron’s Anatomy and Physiology the Easy Way, L. Edward Alcamo, et al.
“I’m strongly encouraging every congregation to embrace the REACH strategy in 2013,” says Pastor Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, in a letter to pastors in November. “I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is guiding His church in Ontario along a very deliberate path that will see a remarkable transformation in the life and mission of His church.”

In his letter, Edwards reminded pastors that their congregations have been hearing about the REACH strategy since January 2012 and are now expecting to see it implemented in the local churches.

“We have designated Sabbath, January 19, 2013, for a conference-wide launch, and we would love to see every church involved,” he said. “No church must be left behind. No one must miss out on this opportunity.”

He also re-iterated that REACH is not a slogan, but a prayed-for, Spirit-led and thought-out strategy that will significantly change the way the Seventh-day Adventist Church operates in Ontario. It recognises that some churches do not have a clear purpose. Year after year they simply amble along, going through the year without any clear goals or objectives. While some boards are exceptions and do establish goals, these goals are not often communicated to the membership; neither are there specific strategies planned to help them accomplish their goals. The REACH strategy is designed to sharpen the focus of each church on the main five areas of church life and to determine how and when they will accomplish their goals.

The five main areas are summarised by the acronym REACH:

Revival & transformation: The focus is on personal and corporate spiritual renewal and the transformation of the entire life of the individual and the church through a deeper connection with God.

Education for discipleship: Moving beyond simply baptising people. The goal is for every youth and adult to be learning, growing and becoming more like Christ. In summary, discipleship.

Alignment within the church: This describes the church and its departments living out the truth of Scripture where each part of the body works together for the good of the entire body. None more important than another. This fosters cooperation, effectively connecting with everyone within the church family.

Community outreach & evangelism: The church must be relevant to its community, always reaching out to meet the needs of people and to win them for God’s kingdom. There is no need for its existence if it does not do this.

Healthy leadership & management: The stewardship of God’s church is placed in the care of humanity. It deserves spiritual leaders who are well-trained, both in the professional ministry and local volunteers, for its management and the fulfilment of its mission.

REACH is not intended to replace nor supersede the vision and strategies the local church has diligently created. Rather, it recognises and readily embraces them and even helps to clarify them, giving them greater prominence and helping the church reach its goals.

The conference administrators and directors have been working on the overall strategy for over a year, and it has now reached the point where local churches can join in the process and apply it to their local situations. To aid them in this the president, since January of 2012, has himself made presentations to pastors and church officers in the various regions of the province. Articles have been written in the Ontario Highlights; pastors have been led through the process and a planning guide given to them. The planning guide has also been made available for everyone on the REACH resource website, www.reachontario.org. Conference directors are available to each ministerial district to assist churches in the process.

Some pastors have already introduced it to their churches and are keen to see it fully implemented. “We are excited about REACH!” said Pastor Dave Baker, lead pastor at Immanuel Church. “We have already set aside an entire day for its launch. It will be great because it will determine the direction of our church for the next two years.”

Pastor Jesse Anunciacion is equally committed. “We are embracing REACH in Mount Zion Filipino,” he said. “Our planning for next year is all about it. We see it, not just as a programme, but as a step in the right direction for our church.”

In his letter, Edwards asks congregations to begin a month of spiritual preparation as outlined in the planning guide or of its own devising. They are to pray for God’s Holy Spirit to lead them as they commence the work of embracing REACH.

It is anticipated that the spiritual preparation will be completed in each church by January 31, 2013, and the church can begin the process of implementing REACH.
In just a few weeks, Christmas and the holiday season will be here. For many, this means long hours of shopping, preparing for and travelling to family gatherings, entertaining friends, and finishing year-end projects. In order to survive the demands of this period, remember to budget time for nature to restore you through rest and sleep.

Sleep deprivation can be costly at many levels. Researchers and staff at the Johns Hopkins Sleep Center have observed that symptoms of chronic sleep deprivation include irritability, fatigue and inattention. These can ruin the holiday spirit. Additionally, Mayo Clinic’s Sheldon G. Sheps reports a possible link between sleep deprivation and increased blood pressure. He observes that people who sleep five hours or less a night may be at higher risk of developing high blood pressure or worsening already high blood pressure. This may happen because “it’s thought that sleep helps the blood regulate stress hormones, enabling the nervous system to remain healthy. Over time, a lack of sleep could hurt the body’s ability to regulate stress hormones, leading to high blood pressure” (Sheps).

It is also important that your school-age children get adequate sleep. During the holidays, some parents allow their children to break the regular patterns established during school. While children gladly welcome a delayed bedtime, once school starts, resuming their routine may be problematic and may be marked by fatigue, drowsiness, and lack of interest, attention, and motivation (aboutkidshealth – Hospital for Sick Children).

The bottom line: Try not to allow the deadlines and social engagements of the season rob you and your family of adequate rest and sleep. Have a safe, blessed, enjoyable and restful holiday season.

First Quarter Sunset Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunset Time</th>
<th>Ottawa</th>
<th>Kingston</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>Windsor</th>
<th>Sudbury</th>
<th>Th. Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JANUARY 4</td>
<td>4:34</td>
<td>4:41</td>
<td>4:54</td>
<td>5:04</td>
<td>5:13</td>
<td>4:51</td>
<td>5:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4:41</td>
<td>4:49</td>
<td>5:02</td>
<td>5:11</td>
<td>5:21</td>
<td>4:59</td>
<td>5:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4:50</td>
<td>4:57</td>
<td>5:10</td>
<td>5:20</td>
<td>5:29</td>
<td>5:08</td>
<td>5:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>5:06</td>
<td>5:20</td>
<td>5:29</td>
<td>5:38</td>
<td>5:18</td>
<td>5:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEBRUARY 1</td>
<td>5:10</td>
<td>5:16</td>
<td>5:29</td>
<td>5:38</td>
<td>5:47</td>
<td>5:29</td>
<td>5:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5:30</td>
<td>5:36</td>
<td>5:48</td>
<td>5:57</td>
<td>6:05</td>
<td>5:50</td>
<td>6:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>5:40</td>
<td>5:45</td>
<td>5:57</td>
<td>6:06</td>
<td>6:14</td>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>6:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>7:09</td>
<td>7:12</td>
<td>7:24</td>
<td>7:32</td>
<td>7:39</td>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>8:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>7:18</td>
<td>7:21</td>
<td>7:33</td>
<td>7:40</td>
<td>7:47</td>
<td>7:40</td>
<td>8:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>7:27</td>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>7:41</td>
<td>7:48</td>
<td>7:55</td>
<td>7:49</td>
<td>8:23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During September 13-15, over 300 people attended what could be termed ‘the most important single event of 2012 in the Ontario Conference’—the Festival of the Laity. It was held at Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill.

No other single event so far this year can match the Festival of the Laity for its evangelistic potential. With over 20 high-calibre speakers and presenters from across North America, attendees learned how to use Jesus’ methods to win people.

Among the numerous workshops, there were those that taught how to reclaim missing members, how to evangelize in the urban setting, church planting, effective small group ministry, unleashing the power of the Internet for evangelism and winning parents and entire families through child and family evangelism.

Attendees were spoiled for choice, and some had difficulty remaining in one workshop because they wanted to sample others.

The Festival of the Laity was also a time for inspiration. Keynote speakers Pastors Mansfield Edwards, Alvin Kibble and Leslie Pollard, clearly inspired attendees during plenary and worship sessions.

Edwards, president of the Ontario Conference, stepped in for the North American Division’s vice-president, Kibble, when a travel delay caused him to miss the opening meeting. Kibble was able to speak at a later time. Oakwood University’s president, Pollard, challenged festival attendees to “get ready for a revolution in mission” as God brings His work to a close on earth.

Ontario Conference School of Evangelism (OCSE) graduates and present students were in for a special treat. When former General Conference president, Robert S. Folkenberg, and current director of ShareHim evangelistic initiative, heard of the school of evangelism, he offered to provide graduates and students additional training using ShareHim’s successful approach to personal evangelism. Over one hundred took advantage of the opportunity and learned practical training in how to effectively witness for Jesus.

Folkenberg will be remembered for some of his notable quotes:

“In some churches, the baptistry is public housing for spiders.”

“When you don’t want to be involved in evangelism, go and buy a casket!”

As a result of attending Folkenberg’s presentation at the Festival of the Laity, some OCSE graduates now have the opportunity of possibly working in ShareHim’s evangelistic projects overseas. All who were trained by Folkenberg have now joined the front rank evangelists in Ontario. A number of these have already started using their newly acquired skills to witness of God’s love and to win people for Jesus.

Festival organiser, Pastor Eustace Williams, was clearly pleased with how it turned out.

“I never doubted that this would be a good festival,” he said, “because our presenters were of the highest calibre, but the overwhelmingly...
enthusiastic response of our members who attended told me that the festival went far beyond their expectations.”

Some of the comments on the evaluation forms reinforced his conclusion:
“God was surely in this place.”
“Thanks for an excellent conference!”
“A wonderful event, I will support the next one.”

This is my first time attending, and I was truly blessed. I am happy with the new direction the church is taking. I am on fire for Jesus.”

Other comments suggested improvements that could be made.

It was a relieved Williams who spoke, because registration had been unusually low, and he had had to make an extraordinary effort to encourage church members to attend. Some attendees reported that the festival had not been promoted in their churches and they had heard of it elsewhere. He was full of praise for pastors and elders who had promoted the event in their churches but was disappointed that others had not done so. He was also very grateful for the work of his tireless assistant, Rose Marie Dunn-Kalynko, whom he described as “doing a superb job”.

As news of the success of the festival reached the churches, there is no doubt that there were some members who regretted that they had not attended.

“Hopefully, they will plan to be among the first to register for Festival of the Laity 2014,” said Williams.

Photographs:
From top to bottom:
1. Dr. Pollard with Dr. Edwards
2. Robert Folkenberg (left) and Alvin Kibble (right)
3. Eustace Williams, coordinator
4. Happy attendees

Two Thousand Dollars OCPC Award for Two Pathfinders

In 2010, the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council (OCPC) made a landmark decision to establish a Pathfinder Scholarship to aid Pathfinders in their quest for post-secondary education. The year 2012 marks the reality of that decision, as the first scholarships in the amount of $2000 each were awarded to two well-deserving Pathfinders, Jyssica Delpeche and Michelle Lafleur.

Pathfinders and in the community. Throughout grades 9 – 12, she maintained an average of over 90% and went on to become the salutatorian of her graduating class. At the graduating ceremony, she received awards in Music, Biology and Chemistry.

Jyssica Delpeche

Jyssica Delpeche, from Downsview Morningstar Pathfinder Club, was given the award for her academic achievement at Crawford Adventist Academy and for her involvement in Pathfinders and in the community. Throughout grades 9 – 12, she maintained an average of over 90% and went on to become the salutatorian of her graduating class. At the graduating ceremony, she received awards in Music, Biology and Chemistry.

Jyssica has also been very active in her local Pathfinder club as a counsellor and in the community, teaching sign language with regular performances at the Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf. She is currently attending Canadian University College, where she is pursuing a degree in Biomedical Sciences in preparation for her goal of becoming a neurosurgeon.

Michelle Lafleur

Michelle Lafleur, from Ottawa French Pathfinder Club, is a graduate of Ecole Secondaire Publique De La Salle, an elite school with an arts program. Like the first recipient, Michelle is an exemplary student achieving and maintaining academic excellence while being actively involved in her community. She is a Master Guide trainee, whose passion for serving is exemplified in her extensive community involvement for which she received the Lieutenant-Governor’s award for youth accomplishment in her community. Michelle is currently attending the University of Ottawa in the French Literature and Education program; she has a passion for teaching and believes the Lord can use her as a teacher to impact future generations.

The OCPC is pleased to be able to provide this assistance to Pathfinders to help them accomplish their educational goals. All Pathfinders are encouraged to take advantage of this financial resource. Go to www.ontariopathfinders.ca for more details.

First Quarter Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JANUARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26  Sab PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26  Sab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27  Sun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2  Sab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-16 Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Sab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Sab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16  Sab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2  Sabbath Mini-Festival of the Laity (Eastern GTA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-17 March Break/Youth Week of Prayer (suggested date)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fan the Flame Camporee in Quebec had barely ended last summer when the anticipation of Shine4Ever Ontario Conference Pathfinder Camporee started to set in. Over 1,400 Pathfinders, staff, parents and families gathered for the annual Ontario Conference Pathfinder Camporee at Guelph Lake Conservation Area on July 18-22, 2012.

As the buses arrived bringing Pathfinders, representing 40 clubs from across Ontario, heads could be seen poking outside the windows eager to get a glimpse of the campsite. Members of the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council (OCPC), along with Pastor Edwin Martin, associate Youth director/Conference Pathfinder director, were on hand to welcome them.

Shine4Ever opened with the customary grand Pass-and-Review Parade before the OCPC executive, Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, Pastors Cyril Millett and Edwin Martin of the Youth Ministries department of the Ontario Conference. The 2012 camporee was declared officially open by Pastor Edwin Martin followed by a dramatic balloon release, signaling the commencement of four days of fun, activities, making new friends, worship and learning.

There was never a dull moment as Pathfinders hopped from one honour station to the next and then on to camporee activities, campsite duties and night-time programme participation. Bible Marking, Braiding, Photography, Camping Skills, Drawing and Painting, Edible Wild Plants, Fire Building & Camp Cookery, Geocaching, Glass Painting, Kites and Soccer were just a few of the honours to be earned this year. Camporee activities included tests of skill in the ‘Can-tagious’, ‘Traffic Jam’, ‘Egg and Spoon Race’, Geocaching Course, Kite Flying, ‘Blind Man’s Knots’ and ‘Monkey Bridge Construction’.

During the evening, Shine4Ever guest speaker, Pastor André Anderson, assistant pastor of the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church, captivated everyone with his alluring stories, relating directly to the young people and challenging their thinking.

Fourteen decided to be baptised in the lake that afternoon. Several others chose to be baptised in their local churches upon their return.

The time at Guelph Lake went by all too quickly, and before long, it was time to break camp, bid friends goodbye and revel in the memories and the life lessons learned at Shine4Ever. As they prepared to board their buses, some were heard saying:

“I had fun. I bonded with friends and made new ones. The sermons were also inspiring because of what is going on my life.” – Shauna-Gaye (Toronto West Cassiopeia).

“I loved the maze. It looked small, but it was fun. I also enjoyed the prayers in the different languages.” – Jenette (Spanish Bet-El Red Hawks)

“Camp was pretty amazing with the preaching and all the friends. I loved the volleyball, top shot, maze and drilling.” – La-tisha (Immanuel Eagles)

Photographs by: J. Decena, J. Gamez, K. Esch
Lately there has been a tug-o-war in some churches over whether or not drums are appropriate for Adventists to play. For me, a former member of the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Drum Corps, I find myself biased and on the side of pro-drumming. At the recent Shine4Ever Pathfinder Camporee, this partiality of mine was only solidified.

Although I am not part of Mississauga’s Pathfinder club (commonly known as ‘Sauga’), I spent much of my time at camporee with them. On one occasion, Sauga decided to take their drum corps to an empty field near the main road of the campground. This spot allowed them privacy from the other clubs with drum corps and also allowed other Guelph Lake campers to stop and watch the practice.

While Sauga practiced, two women approached and asked if the drum corps would be willing to visit their group campsite to play for their father’s 50th birthday. Soon we were all making our way to the birthday campsite.

At the birthday campsite, Sauga played three beats that were thoroughly enjoyed and recorded by some in the birthday crowd. One of the women came over to talk with me and asked me all about the group, wondering if they were part of a school band or just a bunch of friends getting together. I replied that we were neither, but that we were just one club out of a much larger worldwide organisation called ‘Pathfinders’. I went on to describe what Pathfinders meant and what we stand for. I closed by telling her, “We’re an organisation that believes in empowering the youth of today to make a positive impact and difference in the world around them”. She was amazed and thrilled to find we believe so much in our youth and want to help them live better lives. She then asked me if she could donate to “this awesome organisation”. When she gave me the donation, someone else from there noticed and decided to donate as well. It was truly a blessing. Over and over they expressed how remarkable it was that we were concerned with making a difference in the lives of youth.

Yes, I hope and pray we blessed them, but I also know for myself that they blessed me too. So while the dispute over drums may continue, for me, one thing is clear: That day in the field, when we least expected, God used the drums as a witness.

Heidi Weidner
“If you don’t have religious freedom, you don’t have evangelism,”

Says World PARL Director

“If you don’t have religious freedom, you don’t have evangelism,” Dr. John Graz, General Conference Religious Liberty director, told pastors, religious liberty leaders and members at Willowdale Adventist Church on Sabbath, August 25, 2012. “Religious freedom is fundamental to our mission as a church.”

Speaking first at the two worship services and later in the afternoon, Graz told the congregation and religious liberty leaders that they should not be complacent about religious liberty.

“There are over two hundred million Christians being persecuted in 2012,” he told them. “Celebrate the freedom you have in Canada and call on the government to ensure that it will be maintained.”

Graz, who travels extensively around the world, often to represent Seventh-day Adventists who are imprisoned or awaiting execution, told story after story of people who have been imprisoned or killed because they became Christians. He also said that the Seventh-day Adventist Church “promotes religious freedom even for those who oppose us”.

Graz was in Toronto for the International Religious Liberty Association’s (IRLA) annual meeting of experts, held for the first time in Ontario at the University of Toronto, August 20-22, 2012. He remained in Ontario to participate in the Ontario Conference’s Religious Liberty Weekend, held at Willowdale Adventist Church. He was joined by Dr. Livi Olteanau, PARL director for the Euro-Africa Division, Barry Bussey, former General Conference PARL liaison to the United Nations, Dr. Daniel Linrud, Ontario Conference executive secretary and Halsey Peat, Ontario Conference PARL director.

In the afternoon, both Graz and Olteanau gave presentations. Olteanau highlighted religious liberty issues taking place in the Euro-Africa Division and how the church is dealing with them. Most of the issues relate to the taking of examinations on Sabbaths in educational institutions.

In a question and answer session hosted by Halsey Peat, the panel consisting of Graz, Olteanau and Bussey fielded questions from the congregation.

When Peat raised the question of how members should respond to news arriving by emails regarding the Sunday Law and other related end-time matters, Graz counselled that members should not give much credence to them.

“If there is any validity to any of these stories, you will not need to check your emails,” he said. “You will hear news of this through the official channels of the church.”

Additional comments from other panel members highlighted the value of being vigilant without falling prey to scaremongers and conspiracy theorists.

As the meeting concluded, Graz expressed his hope that he will be able to return to Ontario. Afterwards, a number of people used the opportunity to approach the presenters and engage them in conversation.

2013 Bible Conference

“The Book of Revelation & Fulfillment of Prophecy”

April 26-28

With Dr. Ranko Stefanovic
Associate professor of New Testament, Andrews University

Friday & Sabbath, Trinity Pentecostal Church
900 King St. E. Oshawa, ON

Sunday, College Park Church
1164 King St. E. Oshawa ON

Register online: www.adventistontario.org
Apple Creek Takes Bible Bowl 2012 by Storm

On August 18, 2012, rookie Apple Creek took Ontario's Bible Bowl competition by storm when its three teams powered their way to first place, two at their first attempt, at Mt. Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Previous to this championship, the name Apple Creek was never used in the same sentence with Bible Bowl, but after winning three of the five categories, this will definitely change.

Apple Creek won first place in Pre-Junior, Junior Youth and Adult categories. They dominated the semi-finals and final matches by winning every game played.

Apple Creek’s Jewel Bailey noted, “It was truly a case of David and Goliath as the teams came up against the formidable Brampton Bible Bowlers — the revered, long-time reigning Bible Bowl champions across most groups in the Ontario Conference”.

Apple Creek entered the tournament in 2011 with a junior team that was placed fourth.

Despite Apple Creek’s stunning success, Brampton continues to be a significant force in Ontario’s Bible Bowl championships. The other two winning categories, Senior Youth and Young Adults, were won by Brampton. Brampton also has two teams in second place and one in third place, making a total of five teams in the top three positions. No other church has as many. Only Mt. Zion, playing on home ground, came close with two teams in second place and two in third.

Bible Bowl 2012 games were held on August 12 and 18. Downsview church hosted the elimination on Sunday, August 12 and final games were held at Mt. Zion on Sabbath afternoon and evening, August 18.

A total of ten churches participated in this year’s tournament, with 35 teams involving 173 participants, 30 volunteers and over 150 supporters. While this was less than the record-breaking 17 churches and 47 teams in 2011, the competition was no less intense.

“Bible Bowl was lots of fun but was also lots of work. I really enjoyed my Bible Bowl experience and enjoyed studying the Bible with my dad. I learned a lot about the wonderful stories in the Bible, and I am looking forward to next year’s Bible Bowl.”

Elvern Nannton-Clarke, veteran young adult player, shares her experience:

“Bible Bowl has been a wonderful experience for me. It is one of the motivating factors for me to read my Bible…Bible Bowl helps me grow spiritually, and I am able to make connections with the stories I have read from one book of the Bible to another.

“Remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained. If I did not give it a try, I would not be as excited about Bible Bowl as I am now.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category &amp; Age Group</th>
<th>Finalist</th>
<th>First Runner Up</th>
<th>Second Runner Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Junior 6-9</td>
<td>Apple Creek</td>
<td>Mt. Zion</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors Youth 10-15</td>
<td>Apple Creek</td>
<td>Brampton 1</td>
<td>Mt. Zion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Youth 16-22</td>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>Mt. Zion</td>
<td>Toronto Ghanaian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult 23-35</td>
<td>Brampton</td>
<td>Willowdale</td>
<td>Mt. Zion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We recognise that last year was a bumper year for Bible Bowl in Ontario,” said Pastor Cyril Millett, Youth director for the Ontario Conference, “but the arrival of new teams in this year’s tournament indicates that the future of Bible Bowl can only get brighter. Our objective is to see our young people studying the word of God.”

Pre-Junior from Apple Creek, Daniel Esson, is glad he and his father became involved in Bible Bowl. It was his first time.

“We recognise that last year was a bumper year for Bible Bowl in Ontario,” said Pastor Cyril Millett, Youth director for the Ontario Conference, “but the arrival of new teams in this year’s tournament indicates that the future of Bible Bowl can only get brighter. Our objective is to see our young people studying the word of God.”

Pre-Junior from Apple Creek, Daniel Esson, is glad he and his father became involved in Bible Bowl. It was his first time.

“We recognise that last year was a bumper year for Bible Bowl in Ontario,” said Pastor Cyril Millett, Youth director for the Ontario Conference, “but the arrival of new teams in this year’s tournament indicates that the future of Bible Bowl can only get brighter. Our objective is to see our young people studying the word of God.”

Pre-Junior from Apple Creek, Daniel Esson, is glad he and his father became involved in Bible Bowl. It was his first time.

“We recognise that last year was a bumper year for Bible Bowl in Ontario,” said Pastor Cyril Millett, Youth director for the Ontario Conference, “but the arrival of new teams in this year’s tournament indicates that the future of Bible Bowl can only get brighter. Our objective is to see our young people studying the word of God.”
Bet-el’s Soccer Camp on Six Nations Reserve

During July 7-10, a team of youth and young adults from Spanish Bet-el Adventist Church donned the t-shirts of STORMCo.(Service To Others Really Matters) and travelled to Six Nations Reserve in Cayuga to hold a soccer camp.

The purpose of the soccer camp was to interact with local children and show them friendship through Jesus. Each day the children practiced and enjoyed soccer games and training on techniques and other indoor activities.

Local pastor, Herb Sormin, was very pleased with the outcome.

“I am proud to say that our Bet-el youths conducted themselves in a very exemplary manner--real missionaries for Jesus, as I commended them before they left. They interacted very well with the Six Nations children.”

The feedback from the STORMCo. team has also been great. Team members are thankful for the opportunity to share with the children of the reserve and are looking forward to returning next year.

Patricia Barbosa-Camacho

And the Walls Came Tumbling Down

What do an uneven fence, a greenhouse, a wall, and trumpets that make the vuvuzela tantamount to a whisper, and a van full of boys (oh, and one girl) all have in common? Service to others really matters! Over the course of seven days, these words, forming the acronym STORMCo. were a consistent reminder of the purpose of those taking part in the endeavour to share the love of Christ with others.

On August 5, 2012, a group of seven young adults from Ottawa Seventh-day Adventist Church journeyed eight hours north to Cochrane, Ontario, to devote their time to service. The STORMCo. team, headed by Pastor Cyril Millett, Youth Ministries director in the Ontario Conference, consisted of Benjamin Amoah Jr., Kofi Amoah, Geleta Ansebo, Kennedy Ayoo, Delnita McDavid, and Stephen Muzamhindo.

The team was tasked with the responsibility of putting up a fence around the perimeter of the Ga Beh Shoo in Aboriginal men’s shelter, building a greenhouse and restoring a fence in the community garden, and leading out in the first-ever VBS organised by the Seventh-day Adventist community in Cochrane.

Although hindered by cold weather, inexperience, uneven ground, badly burnt chili, and hospital visits, the team valiantly completed its work.

Among the challenges, the team will always remember the ‘albatross of a fence’ as it was termed. Although the fence had been completed, there was a noticeable slant from one end to the other. It had to be almost dismantled and redone. Next time, string will be used to gauge the height of the posts—not merely an auger that broke and kept getting stuck in clay—and the words “eyeballing it” will forever be banned!

Over the course of the seven days, God could be seen moving and working, especially through the VBS with its theme, ‘Walls and Doors’. On the first day, six children turned up. By the fifth and final day, numbers had more than doubled. The aim was to teach the children about the faithfulness and love of God and how He can bring down even the strongest walls in our lives and open doors. On the final day of VBS, using the story of Jericho, the children decorated their walls and wrote their fears on paper with members of the STORMCo. team taping them to manmade walls. As they marched around the walls seven times and blew into their newly decorated trumpets, each wall and every fear and obstacle came tumbling down.

On August 12, the team departed for Ottawa, feeling that it had gained far more than it had given.

Delnita P. McDavid

Delnita P. McDavid
The weekend of September 14-16, 2012 was a spiritually uplifting and memorable experience for the 50 participants in the second annual Eastern Ontario Adventist Christian Fellowship Retreat. Coming from college and university campuses across Ottawa, the students gathered for the three-day event at Temple Pastures Retreat Centre in Gatineau, Quebec.

With its theme, ‘Reaching In, Reaching Up and Reaching Out’, the weekend was filled with workshops, worship, personal testimonies, games, music and, of course, good food. Guest speaker, Pastor Elizabeth Pule, associate pastor at Ottawa Seventh-day Adventist Church, inspired and challenged the participants. Also present was Azalea Lehndorff, the program coordinator at ADRA Afghanistan and A Better World, Canada. She shared her inspiring story about her life and volunteering efforts.

Throughout the weekend, a variety of topics were covered, ranging from effective relationships to prayer and spiritual gifts. Much was discussed, learned and shared.

The organisers and volunteers did an amazing job at making the retreat run smoothly, creating a relaxing and welcoming environment, where new friendships could be formed, and questions could be asked.

“None of us felt hurried, or like we needed to get somewhere, and I think we were all able to get to know each other and ourselves better,” said Laura Fluegel.

Rochelle Fraser said, “What I really liked about the retreat was getting to meet more of the Adventist youth in Ottawa and the surrounding areas, and seeing their fire to serve God.”

Terri Waller felt the sense of unity. “I felt like being surrounded by people who are trying to put God first in their lives, and it helped me focus my attention on Him too. That was very encouraging.”

As a newcomer to Ottawa myself, this retreat helped me immensely by introducing me into a new loving and supportive church family. Fellow participant, Anbu, said it best, “I thank God for the opportunity to identify a new family.”

Hopefully, the turn out and the blessings will be even greater next year!

"Reaching In, Reaching Up and Reaching Out’ at Eastern Ontario Adventist Christian Fellowship Retreat 2012

Hannah Wondmeneh
Ontario Congregations Run for the Cure

Members from at least seven congregations in Ontario turned out for this year’s Run for the Cure on September 30, doubling last year’s number.

The sunshine and pleasant temperature were greatly appreciated by participants from Ajax, Agape Temple, Bronte, College Park, Kendalwood, Richmond Hill and Willowdale Churches.

For the past two years, the Ontario Conference Youth Ministries department, under the leadership of Pastor Cyril Millett, has teamed up with the young adults of College Park Church to promote involvement with the Run for the Cure. This community-based initiative raises funds for breast cancer research and is also seen as an indirect way to promote health evangelism among the teens and young adults of our conference.

“We are encouraging teens and young adults to set reasonable goals for regular exercise that bring about physical and social benefits while at the same time being a means of outreach,” said Pastor Millett.

This year, Richmond Hill Church participated for the first time. The sixteen group members, registered as the “Richmond Hill Ramblers,” took their witness of fitness and community involvement to the streets. One of the participants on the church team remarked, “This is a really good cause and a wonderful day…who could ask for more?”

At the same time the Richmond Hill Ramblers were warming up, a group from Bronte Church was taking photos and getting ready to run and walk for the second year. With their numbers up from just a handful last year, their ranks swelled to twenty-three people this year. Wearing the green, pink and white t-shirts designed especially for Adventist participants, one member said, “Our shirts were a definite witness. I had a gentleman say that ‘Adventist stuck out to him’.

Pathfinder district coordinator, Herma Graham, drove to Oshawa for the walk on Sunday morning after having worked the night before. She wanted to support the Pathfinders and the leaders in her district so she joined Kendalwood’s Pathfinders who walked with College Park and Agape Temple Churches. Graham said that she had “a wonderful time” on the walk. With a smile on her face she added, “My only regret is that I had not taken part many years ago”.

Graham, reflecting on the involvement of the Pathfinders, their leaders and the funds raised, pledged, “Next year, as Pathfinders, we hope to raise more funds than we did this year”.

Danver Santos from the Willowdale congregation reported that several other members joined the run but signed up with other organisations or ran independently at various locations. He indicated, “There is now an awareness (of Run for the Cure) in Willowdale Church. Members have pledged to have our own team for next year”.

At the close of the event, Jen Weidner, coordinator and liaison between the Youth department of the Ontario Conference and the Run for the Cure organisation, concluded, “I believe this year’s involvement by Adventists across Ontario was a huge success. Now we need to think about things for next year”.

Re-baptism or not?

Although I’m a member and regularly attend a church in Toronto, I knew that I wasn’t quite living up to the teachings of the church. I really wanted a change in my life and to recommit my life to Jesus. When I spoke to an elder about it, he told me I needed to be re-baptised. Is that really necessary? What does the Bible say about this?

A. K. Toronto

There are at least five things to consider:

First, the Bible tells us that God loves us unconditionally (John 3:16). While we were still sinning Jesus died for us (Romans 5:8).

Second, our relationship with God is more than having membership in a church. Having said that, it is important to be a member of the church and to live up to the biblical principles it teaches. So, while we are saved through Christ’s grace, we do not want to turn that grace into disgrace by living the same way we lived before Christ came into our lives.

Third, a person who believes and is baptised will be saved (Mark 16:16). This is not a “once-saved-always-saved regardless” phenomenon. When a person is converted, there should be death to the life of sin, followed by baptism by immersion (symbolically burying the old life), followed by the resurrection (coming up out from under the water), to ‘walk in newness of life’. However, this does not mean we will never sin again.

Fourth, Paul in Romans 7:14-25, makes it clear that as long as we live, there will always be a struggle between the spirit and the flesh, but Romans 8:1 assures us that there is no condemnation.
to those who are in Christ Jesus. If we sin, it does not mean that we need to be re-baptised each time. 1 John 1:9 says when we confess our sins, Jesus is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

Fifth, for those who like to experience the feeling of being washed, the Communion service, through the Ordinance of Humility (foot-washing) may be seen as a mini baptism. So, there is no reason for re-baptism each time one sins. As a matter of fact, the Bible does not teach re-baptism. While it is true that in Acts 19, there is mention of rebaptism, it is an isolated reference to believing in John the Baptist as opposed to believing in Jesus.

With all these things in mind, just remember that God loves you and He wants you to live a life totally devoted to Him. If you sin, you have an advocate who is Jesus. Confess and forsake your sins and follow Jesus (1 John 2:1). Take another look at your relationship with Jesus and let Him help you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to follow Him.

Errol Lawrence
Ministerial Secretary

What’s Happened to the Three Angels?

Why has our church stopped using the logo of the three angels flying in the heavens?

D. R.
Ottawa

While the symbol of the three angels has been widely used in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it has never been the international standard logo of the church. It did not fully represent who we are as a church.

In 1997, the church adopted, for the first time, an international standard logo consisting of three main elements: The open Bible, the cross, and a flame encircling an implied globe.

The Bible represents the biblical foundation of our beliefs and our full acceptance of God’s Word. The symbol of the cross representing the gospel of salvation is at the centre of the logo to emphasize Christ’s sacrifice, the central theme of our faith. The flames represent the three angels of Revelation 14 circling the globe and our commission to take the gospel to the entire world. The overall shape of the flame is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

There are some conspiracy theorists among the ranks of Adventists who claim that the new logo is pagan and have even created websites to promote their views. If not the logo, then they will find some other form of conspiracy.

The logo, along with the name Seventh-day Adventists, are symbols of our identity—God’s Word, the gospel to the all the world, led by the Spirit, and proclaiming the last warning message.

Since the end of 1996, the three angels symbol has been discontinued as representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church and should no longer be used.

Halsey Peat
Communication Director

“Return a Faithful Tithe,”

 Says North American Division Stewardship Director

Dr. John Mathews

“It’s God’s desire that each of His children partner with Him in returning a faithful tithe and presenting free-will offering as acts of worship,” said Dr. John Mathews, North American Division Stewardship director.

Mathews was speaking to stewardship leaders and other attendees at the 2012 Stewardship Symposium on November 10, held at Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church in the morning and at Crawford Adventist Academy in the afternoon.

In the morning, Mathews’ timely message during the worship service at Willowdale, dealt with the present and future challenges facing the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, and God’s response.

He outlined the negative impact of materialism on the church and passionately spoke of God’s desire that His people would enter into partnership with Him as faithful stewards. He clearly stated that a significant part of faithfulness is revealed in tithing and the offerings that are presented to Him as acts of worship.

“The truth is,” he said, “that North America funds a great part of evangelism that is going on all around the world.” Speaking of church members in Ontario and the rest of North America, he added, “The responsibility of the work is in the hands of those who have the capacity to make a difference.”

During the afternoon session, Mathews led a seminar regarding personal finance. At one point he identified some of the senseless, but common things people do with money, then showed how these things may be avoided. He offered many practical suggestions regarding budgeting, and purchasing items of high expenditure such as a house or a car. His emphasis was clearly on helping attendees become good stewards and living a simple lifestyle.

The many positive comments from attendees indicated that the purpose of the symposium had clearly been fulfilled.

“We can’t wait until the next Symposium,” said one attendee. “How about quarterly symposiums?” suggested another. “I wish our whole stewardship team could have come to take part in this event, what a blessing!” said another.

The stewardship symposium, organised by Pastor David Schwinghammer, Stewardship director, was concluded with a charge from Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards. Also present was conference treasurer, Elder Ulysses Guarin.
Across the Conference with Maria McClean

Toronto Perth VBS

Diversity fair

Let’s move day with Spanish Bet-el

CNE 2012

Brantford VBS

With K. Blair, Chairperson of the Board of Directors and Gurwinder Gill, Director of Patient Relations & Diversity Services at William Osler Health System
A replica of a pickled liver was once again met with sounds of “eeew” and similar sounds of disdain from patrons to the Ontario Conference booth at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, August 17-September 3, 2012.

The pickled liver was just one of the numerous attractions housed in the booth run by the Health Ministries Department of the Ontario Conference for the second year running at the CNE. It was placed beside a jar containing pickled cucumber. Most patrons were unable to tell the difference as the liver depicted that of a human who had suffered from cirrhosis as a result of alcohol abuse.

First-time visitors to the CNE were surprised to discover a booth where they did not have to pay money for items or services. Instead, they could lay their hands on free material and receive free blood pressure checks by medical personnel.

“We offered a service almost identical to last year,” explained Health Ministries director, Maria McClean, “but this year, there were so many more visitors to our booth. They lined up to have their blood pressures taken, gladly helped themselves to free health literature, water bottles and pens, and asked myriads of questions about our beliefs, church locations and ministries. Some patrons even remembered us from last year and came looking for additional materials. In some cases, returning patrons were keen to give us progress reports on how they had implemented health principles they learned from us last year.”

The uniqueness of the health booth drew significant interest from some businesses and organisations. Some even offered to partner with Adventists in health-related initiatives, presentation of health topics or to take the display to their location. A Roman Catholic and an Anglican invited McClean to give health presentations to their congregations.

A number of visitors enquired about the name ‘Health Ministries, Seventh-day Adventists’ written above the booth. McClean and her volunteers (including Marjorie Brown, Yvonne Finnikin, Annabell Hall, Jean Levy, Jennifer Parent, Pastor and Denise Putt) used the opportunity to briefly explain about the church and its mission.

“The psychics seemed to have misread their own future,” noted McClean, “and did not anticipate they would need plastic bags for the patrons who purchased items from them. We gladly responded to their request and gave them bags with our name and logo. People went home with their items in our bags.”

McClean is looking forward to next year and plans to have an Adventist presence at every CNE for as long as it is possible to do so.
Seniors Experience Fullness of Joy at Wellness Retreat

The Seniors Ministries is a new growing initiative of the Ontario Conference under the leadership of its co-ordinator, Pastor Mansfield Edwards, who encourages every congregation to appoint a Seniors Ministries co-ordinator.

Close to 150 seniors, representing around 20 churches of the Ontario Conference, gathered at the Delta Toronto East Hotel on September 28-30, 2012 for its 3rd seniors' wellness retreat with this year’s theme, “That Your Joys May Be Full”.

This year’s retreat coincided with the National Seniors Day on October 1, which recognizes the important role seniors play in our communities.

Shortly after check-in, first-time attendees soon realised why the event is called a ‘wellness retreat’—they were able to relax, take a dip in the salt water swimming pool, enjoy the sauna, walk on the treadmill or take a free 10-minute massage and health assessment.

The massage and health assessment is a staple of the retreat. Garfield Bailey, massage therapist, and Dr. Paulette Higgins-Gray, chiropractor, along with her team, willingly shared their expertise on Friday, Saturday night and on Sunday morning.

Other well-appreciated staples were Vernon Langdon’s exercise class and Alvin Ram’s presentation on estate planning.

Worship is always fulfilling. This year, those who were unfamiliar with Pastor Herb Sormin were pleasantly surprised to hear him give a moving rendition of Bill Gaither’s “He Touched Me” after concluding his Sabbath evening vesper message, “The Touch of Jesus”. They also enjoyed Pastor Milliken’s seniors’ version of “Jesus Loves Me”.

After supper, on Sabbath evening, John and Peggy Collins and their musical group, River of Life, from Simcoe Adventist Church, put on a concert that so thrilled the audience that a number of them purchased the group’s CD. Later, some of the braver seniors took their turns to sing in a karaoke contest that revealed the hidden singing talent of some seniors. It was a time of enjoyment and unbridled laughter. Prizes were awarded to the winners, courtesy of Franklin Brown of Apple Creek Church.

Earlier, on Sabbath afternoon, seniors’ ministry co-ordinators shared with the group what their seniors have been doing in their local churches.

Sunday featured presentations on seniors’ safety and security; elder abuse awareness; and volunteer programs for seniors were given by Constable Kim Tanczos and Deb Robinson (volunteer co-ordinator) of the York Regional Police Force.

At the closing ceremony, Pastor Edwards awarded plaques of appreciation to the three churches that had at least ten seniors in attendance. Mississauga, with 21 attendees, received the top award, followed by Toronto West and Mount Zion Filipino.
When Albert and Marilou decided to attend the Ontario Conference's Marriage Retreat in 2011, they expected to benefit from it, but did not realise just how much. "We found the retreat to be a transformational experience," they said. "Even our invited non-Adventist friends found the event a life-changing experience, and it saved their marriage."

They felt that it was too good to keep to themselves and decided they would sponsor a couple to attend each year.

In 2012, Albert and Marilou sponsored a couple who were on the brink of divorce, even after attending a marriage retreat run by a different organisation. The couple, J and C, said that the retreat, held at Nottawasaga Resort during April 20-22, helped to save their marriage, and they are looking forward to next year's event.

Stephanie, a personal fitness trainer, is also thankful for the impact Family Ministries has had on her life in 2012. She had recently started attending Mt. Olive Church as a regular visitor when Joan Rogers, Ontario Conference Family Ministries director, learned of her abilities. Rogers invited her to be a presenter at the Singles Ministries retreat during May 4-6 at Nottawasaga Resort. Stephanie went as a presenter, but returned having thoroughly enjoyed the weekend.

She was so encouraged that, upon returning to the church, she began Bible studies and soon after, excitedly requested baptism.

Vanessa was among those who were baptised with Stephanie. A recent arrival from the United Kingdom, Vanessa arrived at Mt. Olive Church looking for fellowship. When she was invited to the Young Women's retreat during October 19-21, she wanted to attend but discovered it conflicted with her recently acquired temporary work. She chose to attend and experienced such fulfilment that she did not regret the loss of her job.

Vanessa was baptised at the end of the recently held evangelistic series in Mt. Olive with Dr. Sydney Gibbons from Bermuda.

There are many untold stories resulting from the work done by the Family Ministries department and by the members of the ministry advisory committees. Whether it involved leadership training for church family leaders, regional outreach, Festival of the Laity, Grief to Wholeness, praise/thanksgiving and workshops, Abuse Prevention summit, Family Life certification, Singles or Women's retreat, or a praise, prayer and anointing service at camp meeting, many hundreds of lives have been greatly blessed.

The Family Ministries department is committed to building stronger families in every Adventist Church.
On July 14, 2012, French-speaking Adventists in Toronto reached a new height in their journey to establish a congregation for French-speaking people when their group, Adventiste Francophone de Toronto, was organised into a company.

The newly-minted company was organised during the worship service held at West Ellesmere United Church in Scarborough. Ontario Conference officers, Drs. Mansfield Edwards, president, and Daniel Linrud, executive secretary, and Mr. Ulysses Guarin, treasurer, were present to lead out in the organisation of the company.

The organisation coincided with a visitors’ day, and the ranks of nearly 40 regular attendees were swelled to over 200 persons. As their first act of evangelism as a new company, members used the opportunity to give evangelistic booklets and magazines to the visitors.

Toronto French Seventh-day Adventist Company is the first French-speaking Adventist congregation in Toronto. It began after a small group came together in 2007 to consider forming a French-speaking congregation to evangelise French-speaking people in Toronto. Shortly after its second meeting in February 2008, the group began worshipping in the gymnasium at Berea Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Ontario Conference gave official recognition to the group a year later and appointed Pastor Vaudré Jacques to supervise it. Sometime later, the group moved its meetings to the gymnasium at the Crawford Adventist Academy, before finding its present home in 2009 at West Ellesmere United Church, 37 Marchington Circle in Scarborough.

Presently, the company is comprised of members and visitors from a number of French-speaking countries, including Canada, Congo, Mauritius, Guadeloupe, France and Haiti. It does not content itself to be known only in Toronto, but also elsewhere in Canada and in the world, using its website, www.eaft.ca. Each month, more than 1000 visitors visit the website where they can find Sabbath School lessons, biblical studies, music, and many other interesting subjects, along with contact information. From time to time, French-speaking visitors to Toronto visit the company and are happy to find a service in their first language. However, translation is always available for people who do not speak French, so everyone is welcomed to visit. People learning French often find it very useful.

The company is committed to proclaiming the Three Angels’ Messages to the Francophiles and French-speaking individuals of the Toronto area.

It is located at 37 Marchington Circle, Scarborough ON M1R 3M6. Tel: (647) 350-0981 or (905) 499-9054. e-mail: eaft@live.ca.

Ralph Rancy

French Company Organised
(Adventiste Francophone de Toronto)

I wanted to follow the health message. I believed the health message. I prayed to be strong enough to follow it, but my human efforts failed. In the weeks leading up to the retreat, I pleaded with God to meet me there, and to help me. I knew that it was going to take a miracle to break the addiction-prone behaviour that had dogged me from childhood.

When Patrice Williams-Gordon encouraged us to ‘crush the curses’ in our lives, I knew this was a divine appointment, but I was neither strong nor brave. I held my addiction in my hand, and haltingly reached out to release it into the Saviour’s hand. As I brought my hand back to myself, I thought about what I had done. Really? Am I really giving up all the foods I’m constantly craving? Then I said to the Lord, “Yes, Father. I really mean it this time.”

As soon as those words were uttered in my mind, I felt strength flowing into me. It warmed me, and it flowed until I knew I was strong. I had signed up for the vegan menu at the retreat. I am a vegan still.

God says, “I desire obedience, not sacrifice”. There is a joy in obedience that can’t be humanly duplicated.

What God did for me, He has done for many before me and continues to do for all who call upon His name: He’s keeping His promises. We can’t be afraid to let go of what’s hindering us. May God bless your every effort. Amen.

Ann Donnelly

was baptised at Barrie Church on October 8, 2011.

In the months prior to the retreat, I was grappling with old habits and patterns. I took steps forward, but I wasn’t getting the victory that I knew was available, and I knew why. It was my addiction to food. Instead of reaching to Jesus for the comfort that I, a child who had been physically, verbally and emotionally abused, felt desperate to receive, I reached for chocolate bars, chips and ice cream, steaks and fried chicken, and everything else sweet and tasty.
Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for Ontario Adventists

Ontario Adventists featured strongly among the recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

In addition to Pastor Daniel Saugh (Ontario Highlights, Summer 2012), Pastors Jesse Anunciacion, Allan Chichester, Winston Hurlock, Mr. Norman Brown and Mrs. Pauline Christian were also known recipients.

The Honourable Mark Adler, MP for York Centre, presented the Diamond Jubilee Medal to Jesse Anunciacion on September 2 during the Second Annual Caregivers General Conference, hosted by Mount Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church. He received it on behalf of his congregation for its work in community service through its food bank and its ministry to the caregivers in the Greater Toronto Area.

Norman Brown, supervising principal for Toronto Adventist District School Board, had to travel to Ottawa to receive his award.

In a ceremony, held at the Senate Chamber in the Parliament Building in Ottawa on Friday, October 26, he received his medal from The Honourable Senator Anne Cools in “recognition of [his] distinguished and exemplary contribution as an educator of the young, [his] faithful service to [his] community and to [his] church”.

Brown holds membership at Toronto West Church.

Allan Chichester, lead pastor of Toronto West Seventh-day Adventist Church, received his medal in recognition of his work and the work of the congregation in the community of North Etobicoke.

Dr. Kirsty Duncan, MP (Etobicoke North), presented the award in a ceremony at Rexdale Community Hub on November 13.

Pauline Christian, president of the Black Businesses and Professionals Association, is well-known among Adventists in the Greater Toronto Area as an avid supporter of Adventist youth development. However, it was for her “outstanding community work in Ontario” that The Honourable Margaret Best, MPP (Scarborough-Guildwood), presented her with the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal on November 1, at the Allstream Conference Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto.

Christian is a member of Apple Creek Church.


Hurlock, lead pastor at Scarborough Seventh-day Adventist Church, was given the award for his “dedicated service to his peers, his community and to Canada”. McKay also commended Hurlock for his quick response to assist the broken community in the aftermath of the shootout at a Scarborough children’s block party on July 16, 2012.

The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal was created to commemorate Her Majesty’s 60 years of loyal service as Queen of Canada. It has been awarded, on behalf of Her Majesty, to 46,000 recipients across Canada for their distinguished services to their communities.
Barrie Church Recognises Community Leaders

Pastor Daniel Linrud presents gifts to community leaders

It was with great pleasure that Barrie Seventh-day Adventist Church presented appreciation awards to the leaders of its city on Sabbath, October 13, 2012.

Presentations were made during the worship service to Jeff Lehman, mayor of Barrie; Patrick Brown, MP for Barrie; Chief Mark Neelin, Barrie Police; Chief John Lynn, Barrie Fire and Emergency Services; Cal Patterson, The County of Simcoe warden, and Andrew Robert, The County of Simcoe director and chief of paramedic services. Chief Lehman was accompanied by his wife, Claudia. Pastor Jakov Bibulovic, minister of the congregation, assisted by Dr. Daniel Linrud, executive secretary of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, presented gifts of awards and books to the community leaders.

Dr. Linrud preached the message during the worship service. In his message, Linrud pointed out the importance of public service work, but stressed that it is God who allows leaders to be in these positions and that they are expected to serve with the utmost respect and consideration for others.

In this community event, the congregation clearly demonstrated its gratitude to those leaders who give of themselves to serve. By inviting them to join them in worship and receive appreciation, the church hopes that they will recognize not only its appreciation, but will see how God is in control of every aspect in their lives. In turn, they will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be led to share this wonderful message with their families, friends and staff.

Mary Costa-Modena

H.O.T and Real in Southern Ontario

It was all about being ‘HOT’ and ‘Real’ at Guelph and Hamilton Mountain Seventh-day Adventist Churches on August 25 and September 1, 2012, respectively.

Both churches hosted P.A.T.H Drama Ministries (Praise All To Him) and Khalilah Bruzual’s My Life Is a Testimony, for a day of worship, drama, testimony, encouragement, sharing, challenge and commitment.

P.A.T.H and Bruzual made two presentations, H.O.T (Honest, Open and Transparent)—The Christian Journey and Let’s Be Real)—designed to create an atmosphere where youth and young adults feel comfortable enough to share and ask questions about real issues they have to deal with.

In Guelph and Hamilton Mountain Churches, the purpose was clearly accomplished. Youth and young adults were stimulated by the drama and Bruzual’s testimony and opened up (although initially hesitant) and spoke about the issues they face. Leaders spoke appreciatively of the experience:

“A thousand thanks for coming... You all opened a good door for Guelph youths. We usually don’t have the opportunity to talk openly and that’s why we are quiet...It has been and will continue to be a blessing.” Polyania,Guelph

“My Thanks to you for a meaningful Sabbath! I particularly appreciated the drama presentation in the evening. It felt real and presented an authentic view of what families face in our crazy world. May the Lord continue to bless you and all involved in the team’s ministry.” Pastor James Rooney, Hamilton Mountain

At each location, the programmes closed on a note of encouragement and assurance that God is present to help each person through his or her struggles and to overcome trials.

P.A.T.H has utilized their unique talents to spread God’s message through theatrical and creative expression. They have incorporated their drama ministry in various areas of church life and in the community. Their goal is to teach the message of being a Christian as they try to reach, touch and bless individuals through their drama ministry.

My Life Is a Testimony is a personal ministry where Khalilah Bruzual speaks about a variety of everyday life issues that she has experienced and how God has helped her overcome. Its mission is to help others avoid or overcome life’s hardships.

Both ministries will continue to be available to share the messages of hope, love and overcoming. They are available to support your church program and may be contacted by phone at (416) 841-8634, (416) 988-5125, or by email at pathministries101@gmail.com, info@mylifetestimony.com, or visit www.mylifetestimony.com, www.mylifetestimony.com/PATH/index.html.

Chris Perrotte

Ontario Highlights | Autumn/Winter 2012 | 28
During the week of August 6 - 12, 2012, over fifty children, many from the surrounding neighbourhood, attended ‘SonQuest Rainforest’, a Vacation Bible School hosted by Barrie Seventh-day Adventist Church. Each day, from arrival at 9:30 a.m. until pick-up at 3:30 p.m., the children were presented with a different challenge. On day one, they were encouraged to “Get It,” which prompted them to seek God’s love. On day two, they were challenged to “Get Found;” just like the lost sheep. On day three, the children were asked to “Get God’s Love” in which they were taught about God’s desire to bless them and answer their prayers. Day four reminded the children to “Get Praying” for those around them, and on day five, the children were excited to “Get Going” and share God’s love with others.

At the end of the week, the children were officially welcomed as explorers at SonQuest Rainforest and at the graduation ceremony, they presented a short program to their parents.

SonQuest Rainforest’s organisers considered the VBS as a great success and were very happy with the attendance of so many children from the community. In addition to the value of the crafts, Bible activities and games, there was a sense that the seed of God’s Word was planted in the hearts of many children.

Shaina Charles
Remembering
Pastor Ralph Benjamin Juriansz
October 4, 1927 – August 10, 2012

When Pastor Ralph Juriansz fell into his final sleep on August 10, 2012 to await the coming of his saviour, the Ontario Conference membership lost a faithful friend.

From the moment Ralph Juriansz arrived with his family in Canada in 1968 and took up a teaching position at Kingsway College, it seemed as if he stepped into the heart of everyone he met.

“He loved people and endeared himself to them,” said Alvin Ram, Planned Giving and Trust Services director of the Ontario Conference.

Juriansz served Kingsway as a teacher and later as dean of students until April 1985 when he began working as a pastor with the Ontario Conference. Prior to his arrival in Canada, he served as a school principal in Tasmanian Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Australia, a dean of student in India and in the land of his birth, Sri Lanka (formerly known as Cylon).

He completed his undergraduate ministerial training at Australian Missionary College (in 1964 the name was changed to Avondale College) and his graduate education at Andrews University.

Juriansz’ love for people was especially evident in pastoral ministry, and he loved sharing God’s Word with them. He was gifted in helping people make the decision to accept Jesus as their Saviour. Even after his retirement from full-time pastoral ministry he actively supported his local congregations at Good News and Living Word Fellowships.

In 2003, Pastor Juriansz was asked to assist part-time in the Planned Giving and Trust Services department. With full-time enthusiasm, he immersed himself into the work of a field representative, and today the conference is reaping the benefits of his labours.

Illness finally forced him to retire in 2007. He finally fell asleep in Jesus in his 85th year.

He was the beloved husband of Myrtle, much-loved father of Lloyd, Sandra, Jeremy, and the late Joanne, and the loving grandfather of ten grandchildren.

He is missed by many across Ontario, but all are looking forward to seeing him again at the resurrection.

Filipino Canadian Church Commemorates 9/11

On Sabbath, September 15, 2012, Filipino Canadian Seventh-day Adventist Church included a special “9/11 Commemoration” as part of its service. The chosen theme, “Never Forget”, was aptly selected since it was a day to remember the lives lost and sacrificed on the tragic event of September 11, 2001, as well as to honour the local emergency responders who are constantly on the front lines preserving the lives of others.

Senior officers from Toronto (North York) local emergency responders accepted the invitation and gave a short talk about their experiences and memories of that day. The church presented them with plaques of appreciation. Receiving plaques for their divisions were Superintendent Selwyn Fernandes, unit commander of 32 Division Toronto Police Services, Commander Michael McCallion, District 5 - Special Operations, Toronto Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Chief Mike Hocking, North Command, Toronto Fire Services.

During the program, a video, which vividly portrayed the moment when the Twin Towers were hit and collapsed, was shown. It touched hearts and even brought tears to some. Pastor Theodore Sargeant, Community Services director of Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists offered a prayer for the emotional healing of the families of the 9/11 victims and for the safety of the emergency responders, who painstakingly do their duty to save lives in the midst of tragedies, and sometimes even putting their own lives at stake.
Southern Ontario’s Un{entitled} Youth Rally

Today, many feel they are entitled to certain things in life. However, several youths in Southern Ontario wanted to challenge that idea. On May 25-27, youths from the churches in Southern Ontario held Un{entitled}, a rally geared towards high school youth and college-age students.

It is the second year that a youth rally has been held in the region. Last year it was hosted by Living Word Fellowship, but this year it was extended to youths from all Adventist churches in the region.

The weekend had its official start with a worship service on Friday night. Frank Dell’Erba, pastor of Harmony Church/Italian Company, was the guest speaker for the weekend.

Sabbath was an all-day event. More youths showed up for worship and heard Pastor Frank, as he is often called, touch on how entitlement issues often mask brokenness and the fact that people are too easily pleased. “God wants us to have much more,” he said, “but it’s only when we grow through challenges that we are able to handle more truth, more joy and more life. Challenges are part of growth, and entitlement issues only seek to bypass that.”

After a hearty lunch, there was a lively roundtable discussion on the theme. The sermon had really stimulated thinking, and a number of youths enthusiastically shared their opinions.

Later, interactive games gave everyone a chance to get to know one another. As much fun as everything was, however, everyone was anxiously waiting for the highlight of the evening--paintballing!

The weekend concluded on Sunday with a community project at the Eva Rothwell Centre in Hamilton. Youths unselfishly gave of their time by cleaning up the neighbourhood and serving food to the needy. They also helped children from underprivileged families with some fun activities, such as face painting, baseball and soccer. Kingsway College’s gymnastics team, the Aerials, travelled from Oshawa to perform and taught a workshop to the children.

A number of participating youths said that seeing the smiles on the children’s faces was truly rewarding.

Gabriela Paz, A student at Andrews University

BAPTISMS

Latter Rain Church Baptises Twenty-One Converts

Twenty-one new converts were baptised during the Voice of Hope evangelistic series held during October 19 to November 10, 2012 at Latter Rain Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Evangelist Claude Edwards, who served as both preacher and singing evangelist, captivated the audience with messages of love and hope in Jesus Christ, occasionally using drama and comedy in his presentations.

As a result of the preparatory work done by church members, the series was well attended and eight people were baptised at the end of the first week. At the close of the second and final week, eight more were baptised. However, when it was evident that a number of visitors still had interest in learning more, the meetings were extended to a third week. A third baptism was held, and five more individuals were baptised. Others are still considering baptism as the church continues to share the news of Jesus’ love in its community.
Bracebridge Baptism

September 8, 2012 was a high day for Bracebridge Seventh-day Adventist Church as it welcomed Colin Wood to its family. Colin was baptised a week earlier in a baptismal service conducted by Pastor Carter Stanley in Lake Roseau at Camp Frenda. Several members were present to witness the baptism.

Church leaders took time to thank members who were instrumental in leading Colin to God. 

Marion Stanley

Sarnia Church Welcomes Seven New Members

Sabbath, September 1, seven precious souls joined Sarnia Church.

Pablo Mendoza, Bryan Kawamura, Elynn Brault, Nigel Fluegel, Beatriz Mendoza, and Maddie Fluegel joined by baptism, and Michelle Lemonius joined by Profession of Faith.

In the picture, Pastor F. Stele, far right, addressed the new members, encouraging them in their new commitment for Jesus.

They were all presented with flowers, Andrews Study Bibles and baptismal certificates. The church family also prepared lunch in their honour, and all enjoyed a wonderful fellowship.

Twenty-Three Baptised as Philadelphia Church Concludes Evangelistic Meetings

With a new church property and a deep desire to reach the community with the gospel, Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church held a soul-reaping event during October 6-27, 2012, resulting in twenty-three people being baptised. The dynamic ‘Living with Hope’ series was led by Evangelist Joseph Amankwah, associate pastor of the church, and singing Evangelist Katia André.

The evangelistic series was part of a multi-faceted year-long approach by the church to reach its community since moving to its new location in November 2011. The approach included a revival series in April, various seminars on finance, health and family, as well as family counselling sessions.

By the opening night, on October 6, members were excited as visitors entered the church. A prayer band was on hand to pray during the meetings and attendance steadily grew.

By October 27, a total of twenty-three individuals sealed their commitment to Christ in baptism (including one renewal).
Every baptism at Toronto Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church is unique and very meaningful. However the baptism of four new converts on September was especially meaningful because each one had an extraordinary story.

Jason, by a miracle of God, escaped from North Korea, and eventually made his way to Canada. By the grace of God, we were led to connect with him, and we established a friendship that led to Bible study. Sisters Joo and Claire simply walked into church because they were searching for truth. Again, through friendship and Bible study, the Holy Spirit led them to the love of Christ and baptism.

Members of the church are witnessing that God is truly working among them. Youths and young adults are growing in Christ and as they witness God’s miracles, there is a greater desire to become part of God’s work in Toronto.

In Pyo Hong, Assistant Pastor

Driving 1,275 Kilometres to Be Baptised!

Nine year-old Isaiah knew exactly what he wanted and would not be dissuaded. He had decided to be baptised and wanted to do so in one place only—at the church where he had grown, Living Word Christian Fellowship. There was only one problem, in July 2010, along with his family, Isaiah had left his home in Hamilton and moved to Baie-Sainte Anne in New Brunswick to start a new life, 1,275 kilometers away. Along with another church family from Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, his family drove the 1,275 kilometres to Ontario for him to be baptised on June 23, 2012.

Isaiah and his family were not the only ones who travelled far for the baptism. Others travelled from various parts of Ontario and even from as far as Burtonsville, MD in the United States to witness the baptism of Khamphath Keochanh (Kam) made her decision to be baptised because she wanted to belong to Jesus. While studying the word of God, she learned to love Him and now wants to be just like Him.

Serge Malette requested baptism while attending a prophecy seminar led by Pastor Francis Douville for a small group every Sabbath morning. Serge now truly feels reborn and is proud to be a part of the Living Word church family.

It was a special moment for all when Kaitlyn Satelmeyer surrendered her life to God and was baptised by her grandfather, Elder Gerry Karst, retired General Conference Vice-President. Kaitlyn knew in her heart that she was ready to give her life to Jesus and followed the urgings of her granddad. Elder Karst travelled all the way from Burtonsville, Maryland, to baptise his granddaughter, and the church family was happy to witness a loving family moment.

The members voted enthusiastically to receive Kam, Serge, Kaitlin and Isaiah into the family of God and gladly welcomed them into Living Word Christian Fellowship.

Davilyn Henderson

Members of the church are witnessing that God is truly working among them. Youths and young adults are growing in Christ and as they witness God’s miracles, there is a greater desire to become part of God’s work in Toronto.
Sharing Faith at Hanover Results in Baptisms

Members of the Hanover Group have been actively sharing their faith in many ways. So it was with great joy that they gathered on two separate occasions to see God reaping the fruit of their labours. On Sabbath afternoon, July 21, John Pronk was baptised in the waters of the Durham Conservation Area. He first did Bible studies with Pastor Peter Caran and was nurtured by the caring members of both the Hanover and Harriston congregations. Two months later, on September 29, Erwin Robb was baptised at Owen Sound Adventist Church. Erwin was first introduced to Adventists through the friendship of Mirko Sever, a retired literature evangelist. Mirko saw Erwin working on his front lawn one day and struck up a conversation. In no time, the conversation had turned into a series of Bible studies led by Elizabeth Rossen and Mirko. Elizabeth is a former Bible worker in the Ontario Conference and is the leader of the Hanover Group.

As God’s people work together to spread the seed of the gospel and the Three Angels Messages, good things happen, and souls are won to God’s kingdom. As such the Hanover Group will continue to reach out and expect a harvest.

Sixty-Six Baptised at Toronto Ghanaian Evangelistic Meetings

Toronto Ghanaian Church concluded their summer evangelistic series (August 10-25) with a baptism of sixty-six converts.

The speaker was Dr. Andrews Ewoo, evangelist and administrator at Andrews University, Michigan.

The meetings were initially planned to run three nights weekly, but the enthusiasm of the visitors led organisers to add additional days.

Nightly, the church was filled to capacity, and church members willingly stood to allow visitors to sit. The series was broadcasted live via Trinity Radio and Yonkodo Radio, both Internet radio stations.

Sixty-Six Baptised at Toronto Ghanaian Evangelistic Meetings

Kwame Sarpong
Communications

Two Baptised at Toronto Romanian

On August 26, 2012 Toronto Romanian Seventh-day Adventist Church family witnessed, with great delight, a much-anticipated baptism. Our heavenly Father answered our earnest prayers and by His grace, two precious souls were added to our congregation. We praise God for these wonderful conversion experiences! On the day of their baptism, the two candidates—Ion Iulisca and Ionel Priscaru—proved to be genuine missionaries having invited family members, friends and acquaintances.

The baptism was a unique occasion in our church for a number of visitors to hear the good news of the gospel being presented through the Word of God, poems, and praise songs. The two newly baptised were welcomed as members into the church family on September 1, 2012.

Our hope and desire is that the Lord would continue to add many more of His faithful children to His kingdom!

Pastor Karoly Nagy
Eight New Workers for Ontario

Marcos Paseggi began his ministry as a translator for Adventist World, Real Time Faith, and Cornerstone Connection in the Inter-American Division. His passion for Christ has driven his ministry. Today, Marcos serves Nepean Seventh-day Adventist church and Ottawa Spanish Company as the assistant pastor. Marcos is married to Cintia and they have a son, Aidan, and a daughter, Elie.

Sherry Augustus is the new chaplain at Crawford Adventist Academy. She attended the University of the Southern Caribbean. She is passionate about Jesus and desires to nurture that same love for Christ in the students at Crawford Adventist Academy. Sherry is married to Gregory Augustus. They have a son, Iyani.

Paul Casey comes to Ontario from Newfoundland where he has been a pastor for many years. A kind and gregarious person, he will bring smiles to many faces as he ministers to the members of North Bay and South River Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Paul is married to Jennifer and they have two teenage children, Kayla and Adam.

Steven Couto has re-entered the ministry as the interim pastor of Toronto Portuguese Church and the Cambridge Luso-Brazilian Group. He is married to Julie-Ann with whom he has a son, Alexander.

Sheldon Imperio recently graduated from the Adventist University of the Philippines and is beginning his ministry in Toronto. He serves as assistant pastor of Filipino Canadian Seventh-day Adventist Church and Faith Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Charles Skeete was a pastor in Trinidad before immigrating to Canada. Charles and his family settled in the GTA, and he was employed by City of Toronto. Recently, the Lord called Charles back into pastoral ministry. He assumed his new responsibilities on October 1 as pastor of Hamilton East Seventh-day Adventist Church. Charles is married to Catherine, and they have two children, Darren and Darnel.

Dexter Smith was born and raised in the GTA and now takes up responsibilities as the assistant pastor of the Kingsview Village Seventh-day Adventist Church. He recently married Melissa Williams, and together they will serve the Lord through ministry and education.

Paul Smith is new to pastoral ministry and to marriage. He is assistant pastor of Mississauga Seventh-day Adventist Church and Oakville Group. His wife is La-Dana Manhertz, whom he married on October 14.
Ontario Adventist Schools Celebrate Adventist Heritage

Adventist schools in Ontario celebrated October as Seventh-day Adventist Heritage month.

For the entire month, schools used displays, lessons, and various modes to highlight the work of Adventist pioneers. For some pupils, it was the first time they had heard the names of some of the pioneers.

The children at Crawford Academy East were fully engaged and were fascinated with what they learned:

In our class, we did some art work on four of the Adventist pioneers and learned a lot about them. I learned that the Lord used Ellen White to give her messages so she could share with the rest of the world.”
- Tiffany Mars, grade 6.

“We did a biography of the pioneers. I learned that Ellen White wrote many books as a result of visions she had. I would like to have a vision too and write a book.”
- Joshua English, grade 5

“We learned about James White that he was a preacher and he got 1,000 people to preach.”
- Jasmine Cordell, grade 4

“James White was a president of the Church four times. I would like to do this again next year and learn about William Miller.”
- Alyssa Kennedy, grade 4

“I learned about Ellen White, the woman who started the Adventist Church. She liked to write and she wrote lots of books; she loved God so much.”
- Cheryl Styles, grade SK.

“I learned about William Miller, and he was serious because he wanted God to come. He told the people that God wasn’t coming and he felt sad.”
- Marissa Reid JK.

The decision to denote October as Adventist Heritage Month resulted from a council meeting of principals in April following a review of statements made by Ellen White:

“The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. . . Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame their events into song that parents might teach them to their children . . . The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old.” Testimonies for the Church 6:364, 365

“The heritage of many and varied peoples are celebrated annually, so why not focus on our Adventist heritage and keep alive the history of our church?” asks Dr. Janice Maitland, Education Superintendent. “If we do not intentionally review our history, chances are that it could get lost thorough out present as well as our future generations of Adventists. This is the first time that we have been intentional about celebrating our heritage, and it is something that we plan to do yearly.”