Inside:
The Baby and the Bathwater
I try to keep a straight face whenever I’m asked the question, and I innocently reply, “Stouffville,” the town where I live. This is usually met with a touch of exasperation, “No, I mean where are you from?” This is a typical Canadian question because, as an immigrant country, we all come from somewhere else. However, the question is not always innocent curiosity, but sometimes designed to identify, categorize and to determine the extent of acceptance.

We seem to more readily accept people with backgrounds similar to ours. However, when their background, their way of worship or their religious practices and preferences are different from ours, well, that’s another matter completely.

It’s not surprising then that Adventists from all over the world, but now living in Ontario, sometimes find it challenging to fully integrate. For the most part, they do not have to interact in any meaningful way– except at church. At work, they are just colleagues. Relationships are a choice. However, at church there is a different expectation. Through Christ, total strangers are now our brothers and sisters– closer even than biological siblings (Matthew 12:46-50).

Some manage it well. They readily embrace each other, regardless of background or heritage, and worship in harmony as family. They see their identity in Christ, not in national, linguistic, ethnic nor racial distinctiveness. Belonging to Christ supercedes every other method of identity. They operate on the principle of, “If you are in Christ, then you are my brother, my sister, and I’m glad that we can be together!” They exercise patience with each other and seek to understand and to love each other. They willingly put away their preferences in order to create a church environment and culture that is accepting and inclusive.

Others have difficulty. They feel uncomfortable worshipping with others who are unlike themselves– those who have different accents, worship styles, cultural and racial background and sometimes, even religious practices. In some cases, some explain that they feel that others attempt to impose their form of worship or cultural religious preference on them. Others, however, sometimes say that they aren’t given an opportunity to be involved. Coupled with the regular tensions and occasional power struggles that occur in many congregations, some find that it’s easier to simply leave and join a group of like-minded individuals or of the same ethnicity.

Sadly, in multi-cultural societies such as ours, a kind of Adventist apartheid sometimes exists. Some churches are either intentionally established along ethnic/linguistic lines, or they have evolved into mono-cultural congregations. Rarely do these churches reflect the diversity of the surrounding community. Consequently, evangelistic success is often reflected among people from the same cultural or ethnic background. These churches do not identify with the surrounding community.

What disturbs me most is our apparent satisfaction with the status quo in contrast to the larger community’s dissatisfaction. The motto of a recent student council election at an Ontario university was, “Unity Is Our Goal. Diversity Is Our Strength”. Can we, who identify ourselves as “God’s Remnant”, also legitimately lay claim to such a motto? I hardly think so.

The doctrine of ‘equal but separate’ born out of America’s racial difficulties, belongs to the past. Even its justification by some that ethnic groups are best at evangelizing their own is shown to be suspect when we consider that Jehovah’s Witnesses and others both worship and effectively witness multi-culturally in our province.

As the Ontario Conference seeks to implement the R.E.A.C.H. strategy (see page 13), we have a wonderful opportunity to significantly change how we operate. One of the key components in this strategy is ‘alignment’ or working together, bringing our diversity and skills to accomplish common objectives. Alignment means that we see and treat each other not as a Filipino, Ghanaian or Chinese brother, but simply as a brother. It calls us to be intentional in worshipping and working together as a family. This is not easy, but we need to attempt it.

Some are already doing this by choosing to attend a church where he or she is a minority. They are trying to create mixed churches that reflect the surrounding community. Others have learned that our churches are not social clubs designed for our comfort. They recognise that the purpose is to win others in the community to Christ. They purposely put aside their cultural and religious preferences so that when diverse people from the community visit their services, they enter a familiar cultural environment. This does not mean that we abandon our heritage. No, it means that we have Canadian churches comprised of people from diverse cultures, heritage and languages, worshipping and working together.

God’s people will not be separate in heaven. Any form of separation– whether or not we have drums in church, by language, by geographical heritage or by skin colour– will not have any place in God’s kingdom. So, why should we who have been saved by His grace tolerate it now?

If I’m in union with God, let me seek to be in union with my brother and with my sister. After all, people will know that we’re His disciples when we love one another.

Halsey Peat, Editor
Letters to the Editor

Why Do I Do What I Do?

Dear Editor, your editorial, Why Do I Do What I Do? (Winter 2011), stimulated my thinking when I read it. No surprise, since it encouraged your readers and me to be thinkers and not reflectors of other people’s thoughts.

In my experience as an Adventist Christian, I have found that we Adventists are petrified of examining truth for ourselves. Sabbath School classes have become places where questions are asked, the “right answer” is sought. I wonder if this is why so many vote with their feet and don’t show up until the 11 o’clock worship service. At least in that service there is the potential for something a little more original as the preacher lays out on the line what the Spirit said to him or her that week.

The “right answer” is often the one handed down to us by Adventist pioneers and sadly not ones that we have discovered for ourselves through study of the Bible. The irony is that the Adventist pioneers were adventurous Bible students who had a wide range of opinions. They pushed at the boundaries of biblical knowledge and, for example, came up with fresh interpretations of prophecy. Some of their interpretations they borrowed, such as their understanding of the millennium. Others they came up with were original, such as the Sanctuary doctrine. They organized Bible conferences in which they presented and defended their ideas. I cannot remember ever having heard of a Bible conference being held where differing ideas were presented. I wonder, who can even remember the last time they saw anyone creatively grappling with biblical truth in the pages of our Adventist publications? Again,ironically, this was the norm for our pioneers. Today, we have cast in stone the ideas of a generation long gone. We have become timid and afraid, afraid of encouraging fragmentation and disunity. So we have remained reflectors of our pioneer’s thoughts, and their ideas have become fossilized to a large extent in our minds. As a consequence, we are in danger of becoming irrelevant in the shrinking world of social media, the worldwide web and the microchip. Thank you for challenging us to be thinkers.

A. Wilson, Durham

“Help! I’m Being Discriminated Against!”

It was with interest that I read this article, Help! I’m Being Discriminated Against. Two points come to mind in its reading.

First, “the burden of proof . . . rests with the employer”. It will be quite easy, though, if the worker is not consistent in Sabbath-keeping. Asking for Sabbath off to attend church is one thing, but once church is over and the employee engages in secular activities and boasts about “getting the Sabbath off” not only might make it difficult for the employee once found out, but also it casts a sour pall upon the church.

I am a retired nurse who worked every second Sabbath. My second point is this: I was often confronted by my church family that; one, I should not be working Sabbaths; and two, since I am working these Sabbaths, then I should be turning over my wages to the church to “atone” for my sin of working on the Sabbath. Talk about being discriminated within the church! Today, I am questioned by young health care workers about my experience and how they should deal with the problem of Sabbath-keeping while providing health care. I do wish to thank you for making clearer the church’s stance of Sabbath-keeping while providing health care. I do wish to thank you for making clearer the church’s stance of Sabbath-keeping while providing health care.

However, I’m glad that I’m now retired and no longer have to face those issues. Thank you for providing “Ontario Highlights”. It provides an element of ‘connectiveness’ – especially for those of us living in the far north.

Alison Down

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One of the mythical origins of the old idiomatic expression, “don’t throw out the baby with the bathwater”, is said to have come about from the 15th or 16th century when the baby was the last one in the family to bathe in the same bath water. It was so filthy that the baby was in danger of being thrown out with the dirty water. It has come to mean that we should be careful to firmly hold onto the important and valuable when discarding the unimportant and worthless.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been greatly blessed with many wonderful truths. These truths are the “baby”, and they are clear evidence of how God has led this movement. However, human nature (the “bathwater”) means that we have not always appreciated these truths for what they are. On occasions, we have even misrepresented them and caused some people to reject them and to ‘throw them out’.

Growing up in the Adventist Church, I had a very black and white understanding of what was right, true and spiritual. I simply accepted what was taught to me in church. When I became a young adult, I came face-to-face with the reality that we’re not as perfect as I thought. Only God is perfect. I was just an immature idealist. I began to see discrepancies, inconsistencies, disagreements, not in what God says, but how we sometimes interpret and live out His words. Bitterness set in, and the church seemed more like George Orwell’s Big Brother rather than a humble band of Christ’s followers. Church became less relevant and important to me, and I almost threw out the baby with the bathwater by discarding what Christ teaches.

My experience is not unique to the Adventist Church. A close friend of mine became an agnostic after experiencing some of the toxicity in the church in which he grew up. He was so put off by the professed followers of Christ that he threw out the baby with the bathwater by discarding what Christ teaches.

Jesus reveals redeeming and transformational truth, but He also shows us how humans tend to make everything in their own image, even religion—turning it from a blessing to a curse. Neuterizing the gospel is not restricted to Christ’s day, and the danger of throwing out the baby with the bathwater still exists. A clear example is the health message.

Adventists firmly believe that the Bible teaches a wholistic truth that covers every area of life. That is, Jesus came to give abundant life now, and true spirituality affects everything in life. We believe that following Jesus isn’t an important part of life; it is life. He is the centre of everything we do. The wholistic message that the Adventist Church draws from Scripture is that Jesus is both Saviour and Lord of our life. We are, therefore, to live healthy in all areas of life—spiritually, emotionally, socially and physically.

While we understand that living in a sinful world is detrimental to our health and that our choices may also significantly impact our health, we believe that God’s original intent is for all His creation to enjoy health in every sense of the word. Consequently, as a church we take it seriously to foster good health in our members and in the community around us.

Adventists run the largest Protestant health network in the world, second only to the Catholic Church. In 1850, when the life expectancy in America was 41 years old, many of the church’s discoveries from the Bible were way ahead of their time. In a world where meat was eaten as much as could be afforded, the church taught that going back to the original diet in the Garden of Eden, a vegetarian diet, was actually the healthiest choice, and at least to abstain from biblically forbidden foods for the sake of our health. In a world where excess was
normal, the church taught to be moderate with what is good, and abstain from what is not good. In a world where only the poor would drink plain water, the church taught the value of pure water, both internally and externally. In a world where fresh air was seen as the source of many diseases, and thus people lived cooped up in closed spaces, the church taught the need for pure fresh air in the home. In a world where a city like New York City, a city of over 600,000 people, only had 1300 bathtubs\(^1\), the church taught the importance of personal and environmental hygiene. The church went so far as to say that there was a connection between physical and spiritual health, and even a connection between physical health and mental attitudes; ideas that were quite new in that day. The Adventist Church was not the originator of all these ideas, but it was the first church to bring them under one roof as part of their fabric of belief and teach them to the world. Have these ideas borne fruit? Unequivocally yes!

Today, all these and multiple other church teachings have been verified by science. Adventists are known to be among the longest lived people groups in the world. The principles work, and our health message is an incredible witness to the world and can even be a greater blessing.

**How We Messed It Up**

Since 1863 Adventists have been proclaiming that what humans eat affects spirituality. At a time when doctors recommended smoking to clear the lungs, Adventist hospitals prohibited tobacco and stated that tobacco severely damaged users. Over a hundred years later, there is now solid medical evidence for most of Ellen White’s claims about tobacco and healthy living. Today, the western world is constantly emphasizing a wholistic view to health that sounds remarkably Adventist. Meanwhile, there is a wave of Adventists who reject these principles and have stopped reading Ellen White altogether! What happened? It and make it into a way of earning salvation. Some well-meaning and faithful Seventh-day Adventists will read a compilation of the inspired writings of Ellen White about health and take things so far out of context that they not only place their health at risk but teach that Adventists who eat meat will not be translated at the Second Coming. Ellen White referred to people who misunderstood her

Dr. George Knight, Adventist church historian, makes some powerful points about how skewed things can become when it comes to lifestyle. Knight envisions a pyramid model for understanding our spirituality. At the top of the pyramid are, of course, Jesus and the cross. Everything underneath the pyramid points to the apex, relationship with God. The point of religion is relational, putting God at the centre. The next level down is doctrine or knowledge. Doctrine is important because it allows us to understand God so we can relate to Him better. Doctrine is instrumental, not an end in itself. In Matthew 25, Jesus says that the judgment turns on one point: whether or not you loved your neighbour. Ellen White reiterates this in her book, *The Desire of Ages*.\(^3\)

In Knight’s pyramid, lifestyle is the final level. Health reform is a lifestyle, but it is not an end in itself. Health gives us a clear mind and body to better love each other, to better understand doctrine, to enjoy life abundantly as Christ desires. When Christ is not at the centre, doctrine and lifestyle are useless, having been made into pseudo-saviours.

Hence, you’ll get people saying things like, “Can I do this and still be a Christian?” This is not even a Christian question. It’s like a husband who says to his wife, “How far can I go before you consider it

\(^{1}\) Dr. George Knight, *Ontario Highlights*, Spring 2012.

\(^{2}\) *The Desire of Ages*.

\(^{3}\) "Legalism is obedience based on external law or rules, not internal principle. Why don’t I kill? Because the law says I mustn’t and I’ll get in trouble if I do. Legalism is one of the core reasons for how something beautiful from God, like the health message, can become a curse once we’re through with it. Over the years, people excited by the health message have even attempted to legislate health message and become extremists as practising “health deform” instead of “health reform”?

For a significant amount of people, the health message is about compliance to external rules rather than about being healthy. Legalism makes us park our brains. We become people that trumpet vegetarianism but end up supporting a big food processing industry that uses massive amounts of fats and salts in its meat substitutes. Meat substitutes were not supposed to be a mainstay of vegetarianism, but rather as a bridge to a good diet. Legalism makes us throw out the baby (good health) and keep the bathwater (rule conformity), and it has sickened our message to the world.

So, we have people who, instead of following the principle of healthy living, try to be healthy for the unhealthiest of reasons.

**Wrong Focus**

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adultery?” When relationship with God is the point, our questions change.

Too many Adventists have made lifestyle the centre, reducing relationship with God to whether we eat meat or french fries.

We’ve created a system in which it’s possible to ‘behave’ our way into holiness. This is false religion, the wrong focus. Nothing must be allowed to take the place of Jesus at the centre. Instead of trying to simply follow external religiosity, we need to enter into relationship with God; otherwise, we’re simply worshipping the blessing rather than the Blesser.

**It Isn’t About Us but Who We Follow**

When Jesus came, He did so in the context of a Jewish rabbi among the chosen Jewish people. He upheld the Old Testament as God’s Word and declared that they spoke of Him. However, the Jews took all those beautiful truths and made an idol of them, made them about themselves. Their religion was about them, about how God had favoured them and how the Messiah would set them free. Jesus put it all on its head. He showed them who the Father really is. He showed that religion as an institution to connect us to God ‘had outlived its usefulness because God has come directly to mankind. Likewise, church is not about itself. Too often, when people hear the health message, instead of hearing, “Look how amazing God is!” They hear, “Look how amazing our church is!”

I want people to come to my church because they see Jesus here. We’ve got to get ourselves out of the centre and give that place to the One to whom it belongs—Jesus! Then, the church makes sense. Then, the message about health draws people because it’s yet another facet of a loving God who died to save us.

In a world where health issues are running rampant, where the vast majority of cancer and heart disease and diabetes and depression cases are from lifestyle choices, our church has a unique and beautiful message directly from God. We are to simply be the catalyst, the middle man, the go-between, the holy priesthood to connect God and His truths to the world. Let’s rediscover the beauty of our truths as they are found in Jesus and repent of the legalistic, misdirected, and prideful mess that it has often become. It was Jesus who said, “I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

**Footnotes**

1. George R. Knight, Ellen White's World, p. 30
2. Counsels on Diet and Food, p. 202

Frank Dell’Erba
Pastor
Harmony Church/Toronto Italian Company

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“Pastor, I Don’t Want to Offend Anyone; I’ll just Stay Seated.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. I asked, “But you’ve got such a beautiful gift, why won’t you use it for the Lord?” The reply came as I feared it would: “I must not be worthy or accepted by God; I just better stay in the background.” She had so much to contribute to give God glory and add value to the church, but someone along the way made it very clear to her that a woman was never to step onto the platform during the worship service.

For years, the leaders of the church spent countless hours in discussion and arguing over the issue. Praise God that today the church appreciates all its members of all ages and gender and encourages everyone to use their gifts for the Lord regardless of what part of the church building they use. Unfortunately, before the church reached this position, the young lady was no longer attending.

On another occasion, I noticed a young man get up from a Sabbath School class and storm out of the sanctuary. When I finally caught up with him, he exclaimed, “I’m too tired of it all. I just wanted to be accepted by the church”. Since childhood, he had a gift for percussion and rhythmic instruments. He had successfully and faithfully used his gifts in the school band as it travelled to local churches. His high school years had been a challenge as the few times he used his gift in the church, one or two members quickly made their way to find him to tell him that he was a ‘servant of the Devil’ and should be ‘ashamed to play the drums in church’.

He said many, if not most, of the members came to him to thank him for the respectful and gentle way he played his instrument, and how much they were blessed, and that he was active in the church. Unfortunately, the harsh and hurtful demeanour of the other members left a scar.

“I’ve had to deal with this type of attitude for many years,” he said. “So, I stopped coming for a while. But I soon realised that I needed the church, even if some didn’t need me.” My heart broke as I heard him continue.

“| I was sitting in the adult Sabbath School class, and the lesson was to be on the grace of God. The teacher went on |
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Are your words and actions driving people away?
to Offend Anyone; I’ll Just Stay Seated”

words and actions driving people away?

a tangent and made a very clear point that drums are an instrument of the Devil and all who play them are as divisive as his demons.”

He explained that he had tried to play other instruments, but soon realized he had a natural talent for percussion. Today, he rarely attends church.

Most recently, I have had the privilege of inviting three teen girls to join me in leading out in worship in song. It was their first time with our praise team, and as we prepared our hearts through the Word and prayer in the rehearsals, they were deeply moved by our rich experience. Words cannot express the joy of seeing our young people engaged in heartfelt worship and praise to our God.

On Sabbath morning, we prayed that the Lord would use each one of us as instruments for His glory. When we went forward to begin our time of worship in song, I watched the young people take their ear muffs. Construction noise-reducing ear muffs.

We wanted to offer God our sacrifice of praise, but many in the congregation were focussing on this one individual. I saw young people in the balcony stand and point. I saw others in the back laughing and giggling.

After the worship service, as I asked the team to gather for a time of prayer, I reminded each one that our offering of praise was to the Lord and to keep their eyes on Jesus. One of the teens who had joined us for the first time responded, “If that’s what a praise team goes through, I don’t ever want to be part of that again”. Tragically, she hasn’t, and neither have the other two.

Our actions speak louder than our words.

John wrote, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” 1 John 4:7-8

It’s hard to believe that the one who wrote these words was once called a “Son of Thunder”, who, at one time, had little regard for others. With his brother James, he had even wanted to call down fire to destroy the Samaritans because they did not welcome Jesus. I’m sure they thought they were justified in their request. However, it’s interesting that Jesus rebuked them, rather than the Samaritans. The harsh way in which they wanted to deal with people who had differing opinions troubled Jesus.

Another time John wanted to stop someone from outside their group from casting out demons, but Jesus stopped him. “Whoever is not against us,” says Jesus, “is for us.” John felt that casting out demons could only be done one way, by one group. Jesus differed. It was as if Jesus were saying,

“Even if the method is different from what we are used to, if they are sincere and are acting in my name, let them do it.” He went on to say that it is a serious offense to cause a believer to lose their faith, especially the little ones.

Paul gives the same counsel in this regard. If there are those who have different opinions over issues that are disputable, we are not to discourage them. The NIV puts it this way, “You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat…Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.”

What can we do about it?

Let’s replace grumbling with gratitude, and gossip with grace. Let’s choose to be understanding, not demanding; caring not critical; gentle not judgemental; tolerant not impatient; open-minded not argumentative; nurturing not confrontational and positive not negative. Let’s reason together with love and share our burdens as Jesus taught us. Let’s resolve to settle disputes with kindness and pray for discernment that ‘disputable issues’ will be seen for what they are. Let’s lift one another up and encourage as many as possible to be with us when we see our Jesus face-to-face.
Family Life Profile

We are pleased to introduce the individuals and families who share so much of themselves and their time to help build strong families in our churches and communities. Our second family in this series is comprised of Elvis and Ruth Baah-Gyebi, with their three children, Michael (17) and twins, Benita and Andrew (14).

Elvis and Ruth are relatively new to Canada, having migrated from the United Kingdom in 2008. However, their passion for family ministry, and their academic and professional training in clinical counselling soon saw them working together closely with the Family Ministries department of the Ontario Conference.

Ruth has a passion for raising awareness and educating people on sexual abuse. Elvis says that among his loves are “putting a smile on people’s faces and sharing the word of God through preaching”. As head elder at the recently-organised Milton Seventh-day Adventist Church, he is able to do both. Ruth serves as the Family Ministries leader, but in her younger years, she had even considered becoming a pastor.

“As a family,” says Ruth, “we love to share our faith with non-believers. So, we like to give Bible studies, hand out literature and mentor whenever we can. We also try to model to our children the value in befriending and attending to people’s needs.”

The Baah-Gyebi family unit is very close and spend a lot of time together praying and playing board games, amidst a lot of laughter. Elvis is clearly the family comedian, and the children happily laugh at his jokes. Ruth, having heard all his jokes before, fondly smiles and shakes her head. However, they are most satisfied when ministering to others or entertaining at home.

Elvis explains that it’s all part of their family and professional philosophy. “We’re committed to trusting in God and keeping hope alive,” he says. “Isaiah 40:31 summarizes our philosophy really well, ‘those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.’ We really want to bring hope to those who are chained by negative emotions and need to be freed by the blood of Christ”.

While they pray and plan for the fulfillment of their dreams, Elvis and Ruth are fully involved in family ministries. They both serve on the Advisory Committee of the Family Ministries department of the Ontario Conference and work tirelessly to provide support in the planning and organising of programs and events in the province. Even when the training demands long distant travel with the conference director, they still give of their time and skills.

If that were not enough to keep them busy, they strongly believe in giving back to the community through volunteering at a distress centre, mentoring teenagers and operating various community and church support groups.

Ruth and Elvis have been happily married for what Elvis describes as “19 wonderful years” and are both looking forward to rewarding companionship as they grow older together.
Are You Unknowingly Giving Your Child Caffeine?

Caffeine consumption among children is increasing, and it is disturbing. In the March 2011 issue of the Journal of Paediatrics, 228 parents who were surveyed reported that their 5 to 7 year-old children drank approximately 52 mg of caffeine daily and their 8 to 12-year old children drank 109 mg daily.

Most parents do not intentionally give their children coffee to drink. However, their children are using caffeine through other means, such as chocolate in its various forms and flavoured coffees (latte, Cappuccino, etc.). Also, children are now using large amounts of iced tea (with between 67-76 mg of caffeine), caffeinated beverages, and energy drinks.

Of particular concern is the increase in energy drink consumption. Lack of regulation of these drinks means they are easily accessible. Also, some parents are unaware of the high caffeine content of energy drinks. The Hospital for Sick Children's aboutkidshealth observes that energy drinks contain very high levels of sugar, and the caffeine content in many of them exceeds 500 mg – equivalent to the caffeine in 14 cans of carbonated, caffeinated drinks. “Even more alarming is that energy drinks often contain even higher levels of caffeine through other additives, such as guarana.* So, even when a label lists the amount of caffeine, the actual amount could be a lot higher due to these other additives” (aboutkidshealth).

Increased caffeine consumption can also have an effect on a child’s behaviour, sleep patterns and blood pressure, according to Registered Dietician Ashley Murphy. The large amount of caffeine in energy drinks can lead to physical dependence and addiction (aboutkidshealth). One source concludes that because of the potential health risks, stimulant-containing energy drinks have no place in the diets of children or adolescents and should never be consumed (Paediatrics, May 2011, p.1188).

Instead of using energy drinks to boost energy levels, children and youth should be encouraged to:
- Eat meals (particularly breakfast) that are high in fibre. Fibre takes longer to digest, thus allowing the body to maintain a higher level of energy throughout the day.
- Drink more water between meals. The mildest form of dehydration saps energy and can cause headaches, poor concentration and overall impairment of bodily functions.
- Reduce foods high in added sugar and/or high-fructose corn syrup. Excess sugar causes fluctuations in blood sugar and may result in a decrease in energy levels.
- Exercise a minimum of 30 minutes each day. This can be done in 10 minute intervals. Among its multiple benefits, exercise has been shown to increase energy levels, mental focus and oxygen transport throughout the body.

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have listed caffeine among the substances to avoid because of its harmful effects on the body. Becoming addicted to a substance like caffeine is easy, but giving up the habit (or any other harmful practice) is possible by God's grace. Remember, we practise good health habits to protect the command centre of our body temples, the mind, the dwelling place of the Spirit of Christ (Seventh-day Adventists Believe, p.281). We honour God when we are faithful in stewardship of our health.

*Guarana seeds contain about twice the amount of caffeine as coffee beans.

Caffeine is a diuretic (a drug that causes frequent urination) and can drain the body of energy. It can also cause upset stomachs, headaches, bedwetting, irritability, anxiety and even heart arrhythmias. Dr. Martha Grogan of the Mayo Clinic warns that high amounts of caffeine and sugar may cause nervousness, impaired sleep and nausea. She also notes that increased risk of a potential heart problem rises when energy drinks are consumed along with alcohol, an individual is dehydrated, or when the drinks are consumed quickly before a sporting event. "Serious medical problems, including fainting or even a heart attack can occur due to consumption of energy drinks in these situations," she adds.

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“Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

As members of the Ontario Conference Board of Directors concluded their first meeting for the year on January 29, 2012, they could not help but sing praises to God for all His blessings throughout the past year. Despite the continuing ill-effects of the global economic crisis that started in 2008, the Ontario Conference was able to post respectable gains in its operations.

Among the highlights from the year-end reports of the president, executive secretary and treasurer are:

- Baptisms for the year totalled 928. This is slightly lower than the 946 in 2010. Other additions by profession of faith, letter and adjustment amounted to 613, for a total addition of 1,541 new members during 2011.
- Membership losses totalled 1,198. These came in the form of letter, death, apostasy, missing and adjustment.
- The net membership gain was 343, resulting in a year-end level of 29,863. The percentage increase over the previous year was 1.16.
- There are 153 congregations consisting of 120 churches, 20 companies and 13 branch Sabbath schools.
- Gross tithe income amounted to $29.22 million, up 3.69% from the previous year. The Ontario Conference accounted for 44% of the total tithe income for Canada in 2011. In U.S. dollar terms, it ranked No. 12 among the 58 conferences in the North American Division.
- Ontario Advance offerings increased by 16% to almost $613,000, while mission offerings went up by 15% to a little over $900,000.
- Compared with the budget, both total revenue and total expenses posted positive variances of 7.90% and almost 1%, respectively. Given these favourable variances, the Ontario Conference expects a net surplus for 2011 instead of the budgeted deficit of $575,000.

In their reports, the three executive officers also gave credit to everyone who, in one way or another, contributed to the achievement of the successful results – church members and officers, pastors, Bible instructors, teachers, departmental directors and office support staff.

While much has been accomplished, a lot of work is still needed to be done to advance the gospel cause and reach the 13 million people residing in Ontario.

The meeting ended in a season of prayer and thanksgiving.

Ulysses Guarin, Treasurer
The Society of Adventist Communicators (SAC) named Ontario Highlights in its awards ceremony during the closing banquet of its annual convention, October 20-22, 2012 in Lombard, Illinois.

Ontario Highlights, the official magazine of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, received an Honourable Mention in the Corporate Communication category: Constituency Report (Print) class for its 2009 Constituency Report edition. The Best in Class was awarded to Atlantic Union College’s Quinquennial Constituency Meeting book.

Halsey Peat, Ontario Highlights editor, was unaware that the Conference’s magazine had even been considered, much less to be placed second. “This came as a real surprise to me,” he said, “but I’m really pleased that the Ontario Conference is becoming more visible in North America. We have a great conference, and we want everyone to know this through the pages of Highlights.

Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, who heard of the award while away at the North American Division’s Year End Meetings, said that he was proud of his communication director’s “hard work and his faithful service of consistent quality”. Peat, however, was quick to acknowledge the help of others.

“Highlights is a team effort,” he said, “and I’m indebted to Sarah Gouda and Denise Putt for their significant contribution. Also, I have to thank Dr. Daniel Linrud, our conference executive secretary, who was confident enough to nominate my name in the first place.”

SAC executive director and North American Division Communication director, George Johnson, Jr., says, “Professional growth and development are greatly enhanced with this award’s presentation. It is exciting to see the pride and recognition given to these hard working communication professionals”.

The award, presented to Peat in abstentia, now occupies a prominent position among framed cover pages of Highlights on his office wall.

Membership in The Society of Adventist Communicators is open to all communicators who are Adventists. Visit their website at adventistcommunicator.org.
Ontario Pastors Walk in Jesus’ Footsteps in Bible Lands Tour

The visit took in the usual tourist sites, but it also included some of the less popular but important locations. The purpose was to learn as much about the land in Bible times. So, they took time to learn and discuss.

Some pastors were so impressed with what they experienced that they daily updated their blogs for their congregations.

On the fifth day, Pastor John Scott wrote: “Sunday saw us ending the first half of our journey and moving slowly into the second and final half. We sang for worship, ‘That’s Why We Praise Him’ as a medley with ‘It is Well’ and ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’. Pastor Edwards, in his introduction to the next few steps of the journey, expressed that this is the time when we trace the steps of Jesus between the transfiguration and Calvary. He said, “Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, not on a donkey (Luke 19). If he rode in on a horse, he would be understood as a warrior taking over the throne. So, Jesus rode in on a colt, fulfilling Zechariah’s prophesy (Zechariah 9:9), not to establish an earthly throne, but more importantly, to be seen as a saviour building a heavenly one.

“Once again, we’re on the road, but this time on foot. The Garden of Gethsemane is not too far from Mt. Olives. After all, the garden is just across the Kidron Valley, near the Brook Kidron (John 18). Nestled into what is already a garden area is The Church of All Nations. It was built to commemorate the place where Jesus was emotionally spent when he prayed using those familiar words; ‘Let this cup pass from me’ (Luke 22). According to the biblical record, Jesus was identified by the betraying kiss of Judas; he would be arrested, and the disciples would scramble for cover from the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-53). Inside the church is the Rock of Agony, believed to be the rock upon which Jesus pleaded with God. Interestingly, Gethsemane literally means ‘olive presses’.

“In that Upper Room we sang, ‘Let Us Break Bread Together’ and read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.”

Scott also wrote of when they stood on the hills where it’s believed that the
Since January 22, Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, and executive secretary, Dr. Dan Linrud, have been meeting with pastors, elders and church officers in their regions to explain the conference’s REACH strategy.

“REACH is the revival, nurture and evangelistic strategy of the church,” he told each group of attendees. “At the conference office, our directors and staff are really excited about what this can do for our church over the next few years, and you have been invited here so that you may also share in this excitement. We want you to get an understanding of what this is all about and for you to go back to your churches and spread the word.”

In each of his presentations, the president carefully explained that REACH is much more than simply a slogan.

“We’re not dealing with a slogan or buzz word,” he said. “This is about turning our conference around and seeing God work miracles in the lives of our members. For years we have been preaching about raising the spirituality of our members, winning souls for God’s kingdom, nurturing, discipling new converts and becoming relevant to our communities, but little has been achieved. If our churches embrace REACH, they will see these things happen. Whereas our growth rate is presently fairly low, we will see higher growth rates that will astonish us. Instead of losing so many of our young people, I am confident we will see far more remain in God’s church, becoming actively involved in the life and mission of the church.”

Hundreds of local church officers and their pastors have already attended REACH meetings in Hamilton, London, Toronto, Ottawa and most recently, in Sudbury. Many attendees have expressed their approval for the strategy and pledged to introduce it to their congregations. Among them was Mark Ewen who took the time to write an email and said, “I want to commend the conference for the REACH program, and I am praying for its success. Jesus is coming soon, and therefore, the gospel will be preached in all the world. In my experience with conference administration, I would recommend that the conference become more deliberate and proactive in administering this wonderful program.”

As churches set about adopting REACH, they are able to call on the active participation and support of the directors of the conference. Each director is well-versed in all aspects of implementing the strategy and is willing to sit with the leaders of each church as they commence their work.

Concluding, he asked that the pastors of Ontario remember the needs of the work to be done in Israel.

It is unlikely anyone from the group will easily forget Israel and his or her trip. Returning to Canada on February 22, some were already speaking of their intention to return for a second trip—when the weather is warmer.
Youngest Registrant as OCSE Launches Four New Schools

Thirteen year-old Kendrick Ireland from Kitchener-Waterloo Seventh-day Adventist Church is the youngest person to register for the Ontario Conference School of Evangelism (OCSE), as four new schools were launched in the space of just eight days (March 24-31, 2012).

Pastor Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, was the keynote speaker at Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa Adventist Churches for the launch on the afternoon of March 24 and 31, respectively. He was joined by Pastors Halsey Peat, Theodore Sargeant and Eustace Williams, three of the four organisers of the OCSE.

Although intended as a time when registered and prospective students could meet their teachers, the launch of the new schools was also a time of worship and inspiration. At Kitchener-Waterloo, the praise team and band from Hamilton Mountain Church led out in vibrant worship.

As Edwards prepared to commence his message, he took time to mention his appreciation for the initiative of the school’s organisers. “I must commend Pastors Lawrence, Peat, Sargeant and Williams,” he said. “In the OCSE, they’ve started something that will have a significant impact on the growth of this conference. We’re blessed to have them as directors.”

Basing his message on Matthew 8, the healing of the demon-possessed men, Edwards said, “When Jesus commanded the demons to ‘go’ from the man, it’s the same word used to command us to ‘go’ and make disciples of all men in Matthew 28:18-20. The same power is associated with it. We can be confident that as we ‘go’ and reach people with the gospel, we do so with the same power of God!”

Edwards also showed how the school of evangelism is closely linked to the conference’s REACH strategy.

“These men became the first evangelists in Decapolis. Jesus rescued them, and while they wanted to remain with the Saviour, Jesus sent them to go back to their families and back to their villages to tell them what Jesus had done for them. We cannot do any less! Those of you who register for the OCSE are in fact positioning yourselves to be an integral part of REACH.”

A number of people responded to Edwards’ invitation and joined the registered students and teachers for a consecratory prayer.

Pastor Eustace Williams was clearly pleased with the outcome and said, “When we were led to begin a school of evangelism, we had no idea that it would grow so quickly. Who would have thought, a year ago, that we would now be operating six schools across our province? But God always has a greater plan than ours. We are praying that many more of our church members will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity and be part of God’s plan”. At both locations, pastors representing nearly all the churches in each region were clearly visible, and their presence demonstrated their strong support for the school of evangelism. Even those who are not involved in teaching courses for the school have committed themselves to assist in making it a success. At least three pastors from across the three regions have even led their church boards to provide financial assistance for their members who register for the school.

At Kitchener-Waterloo, two schools were launched for the Southern Ontario region churches and one for Western Ontario. The Southern Ontario schools will be held at Kitchener-Waterloo and Hamilton Mountain, while South London will host the Western Ontario school.

It was also mentioned that an announcement will be made in the near future that a new school is being planned for Northern Ontario. The new schools will follow the same curriculum as the original school held in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and will offer training in personal evangelism and lay preaching. In March, a second school began in the GTA, offering the same curriculum. This curriculum will not be offered in the GTA or any of the other regions for the next two years. In 2013 and 2014, specialised courses in areas such as Small Group Evangelism, Family Evangelism, Youth Evangelism, etc. will be taught. However, these courses will only be open to those who have graduated from the basic training that is presently being offered.
On January 29th, over 200 ministry leaders in the GTA region of the Ontario Conference met for an intensive half-day of training at Mt. Zion Seventh-day Adventist Church on how to initiate and grow successful ministries for families, women and men in their local congregations.

Conference directors and advisory members, along with other professionals and lay coordinators, led out in the training activities held for this event sponsored by the Ontario Conference.

“It was a really excellent program, and the training was very relevant,” said Andrea Gayle. “We’re very glad we had the opportunity to come. We’ll definitely be using some of these ideas and recruiting other team members to share what we learnt.”

The training was a unique partnership among the Family, Women and Men’s Ministries of the Ontario Conference and followed two consecutive years of successful partnership in leadership training. Pastor Glenn DeSilva, Men’s Ministries director, remarked that it was an excellent turn out of males for his training.

Pastor David Rogers, a volunteer photographer on the day, described attendance as “robust”, as he observed the capacity of some of the breakout rooms being stretched to the limit, with literally wiggle room only. It was clear that attendance had doubled that of last year’s.

Equipping leaders with resources to develop active ministries and to prepare their teams to locally work with their congregations was the key component of the training event. Two plenary sessions covered basic topics, such as The Character of Effective Leaders, presented by Joan Rogers, Family and Women’s Ministries director; and Writing for the Media, a communication workshop presented by Pastor Halsey Peat. Participants’ feedback acknowledged that the presentations were both extraordinary and helpful but left them desiring more. Many made unsolicited pledges to attend future training events, and a chorus of attendees lamented that the training was only half a day.

**Training in Three Regions**

This training session was the third in a series organised by Joan Rogers, and conducted in three regions of the province. The first was held at Camp Frenda, October 21-23, for advisory members, one month after her tenure began.

“We were encouraged to dream it, believe it and live it!” says Edwina Apaw, who was among 35 advisory members who attended and who preached for the Sabbath service.

“What stood out for many of us as leaders on Sabbath afternoon,” said Jennifer Desmond, “was learning that a vital ingredient of any effective ministry is investment in the leadership team through training and team building exercises. This process of discipleship entails continually teaching and developing leaders to be good, effective and courageous.”

On November 26 an Abuse Prevention Day, organized by Sis Lucy Spencer, was successfully celebrated at the Ottawa (Benjamin) Church. Joan Rogers delivered a sermon titled “End It Now”, which was featured live on churchpond.com.

“We were really blessed by the amazing sermon of your director,” said a pastor from Grenada who tuned in to churchpond.com. “It addressed very crucial issues that are in the church.” Other highlights were a special presentation of alarming statistics and facts by a police officer on abuse and people trafficking in Canada, and an animated enactment of a poem from the perspective of an abused female.

A half day of training for the leaders of the Eastern Ontario region followed the next day.

“Training plays an integral part in the success of leaders,” says Rogers, who believes that she is not only privileged but obligated to develop and nurture others. “I am blessed to have the support of Gary Adamson, Janice Anderson, Edwina Apaw, Khalilah Bruzual, Jennifer Desmond, Ruth & Elvis Gyebi, Frances James, Euthie Morris, Nicole Smith, Bonnie Sormin, Roslynnne Thompson, Jennifer Watson, Joan Wilkinson, and Pastors Nephtaly Dorzilme, David Rogers and Floyd Spence. They are wonderful, incredible individuals who have dedicated their time and efforts in promoting this ministry because of their commitment to God.”

Joan Rogers,
Family & Women’s Ministries Director
“Safe Swimming in Crocodile Cove”
Students Learn About Living Their Faith on Campus

“I want you to be able to swim safely in Crocodile Cove,” Pastor Antonio Bueno told seventy-five students from over twelve Ontario colleges and universities.

Pastor Bueno, a former university professor, was keynote speaker for the annual Campus Ministries Retreat held at Camp Frenda, February 10-12, for Adventist students at Ontario’s colleges and universities. The Bowmanville church pastor, assisted by his wife, Liliane, led out in four sessions. He outlined the challenges to maintaining faith on secular campuses, and encouraged them to know, live and share their faith on their campuses and in the wider community.

Pastor Bueno’s theme, “Safe Swimming in Crocodile Cove,” struck a chord with his listeners, some of whom are lone-Adventists on their campuses. They eagerly embraced his messages and really appreciated the discussions and prayers that concluded each session.

“Pastor Bueno’s seminars provided insight and revelation,” said Alexandra Yeboah from Ryerson University.

While Pastor Bueno’s messages proved to be the highlight for many attending the retreat, there was also time for inspiring worship, laughter, fun on the snow-covered hill and great meals.

Each retreat is also a time for reports, testimonies and planning. The students, and the five pastors present, talked about their campus club activities and outreach endeavours. They exchanged ideas and encouraged each other in their efforts to strengthen ministry on the campuses of Ontario’s colleges and universities.

“I also was inspired by the campus reports and testimonies,” said one student. They resolved to redouble their evangelistic efforts on the campuses where Adventist clubs currently exist and, in the coming school year, to start work on the campus of York University and other campuses.

Name Change

Among the organisational decisions taken was the vote to change the name of the ministry from “Adventist Ministry to College and University Students” (AMiCUS) to “Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF).” The campus outreach in Ontario is now aligned with the official title of this ministry across the North American Division.

Campus Ministries director, Pastor Cyril Millett, was clearly happy with the outcome of the weekend. “This was our largest attendance ever,” he said, “and it was clear that just about everyone greatly benefitted from it. I can easily see most, if not all, our attendees encouraging their friends to return with them next year.”

His joy was shared by many who were heard to comment as they departed that “It was truly a blessing (to attend the retreat),” and, “It was definitely an unforgettable experience!”

The students returned to their campuses revived and ready to serve the Lord. They are committed to personal spiritual growth and to continue the work of transforming their campuses for Christ. Isn’t that what Christian fellowship should engender in the lives of students?

ACF in Ontario is open to all Adventist students and their friends on the campuses of Ontario’s colleges and universities. The annual retreat welcomes all ACF’s members, along with public campus employees and pastors who work in college and university towns.
Go on, Be Social; Use Social Media and Be a Witness

So, you use Facebook. Maybe you are an avid tweeter or recently signed up with Pinterest or one of the myriad social media sites. But, are you really social?

The internet may be described as a ‘pull medium’ in that it draws people in—but only on the basis of their interests. Rarely do people accidentally find pages they’re not looking for, and websites don’t have an automatic audience. In the world of social media, people often connect through their common interests. This makes it ‘social, personal and intentional’.

Recognising this, some people and churches will sometimes use social media to post their messages, thinking that they reach thousands of people. Rarely is this so.

Matt McKee in his ebook, “Be Social: The Social Media Handbook For Churches” (email me to request a free copy) says, “You cannot just blast your message out like a shotgun onto social media and expect it to make a difference. You have to view the online social services as an interactive means to making personal connections with individuals”.

In other words, social media is a great opportunity to witness about God when you make personal connections with people.

Here are the facts about the Internet mission field (adapted from InternetEvangelismDay.com). It’s filled with millions of unsaved people who:

- are accessible and who openly share their opinions, thoughts, feelings, concerns, fears and needs;
- enjoy connecting with other people and meeting new people;
- are willing to post pictures of themselves and their information.

So, you can know quite a bit about them even before you communicate.

The Internet is a place where it’s okay to be creative and different, to just be you; where people openly debate, discuss and exchange ideas—including spiritual ones; where people enjoy hanging out, a place where people laugh and are sometimes silly; that is close to home—you can get there quickly, and it does not require immunization, a passport or plane tickets, and it’s free. It’s a place where you can measure effort.

So, you can easily connect with people without any fear.

Whether you’re a church or an individual, don’t be overwhelmed. Function in the area of your passion, and be social, personal and intentional in your use of social media. Begin building healthy relationships and creating value for your friends and audience. The more content, the more exposure, and to be effective, you should be consistently creating content that falls into one or more of the following areas:

Educate - Your friends and visitors will value you for taking the time to equip them and address their questions, concerns and the things that mean the most to them.

Entertain - Social media is your channel, and providing rich entertainment builds relationships and broadens your follower base; they, in turn, will share the things of value you post.

Report - News, especially good news, helps to strengthen relationships.

Socialize - Create opportunities for your audience to interact with you.

Community (koinonia) remains the foundation of our faith. If your online community can learn to experience and express the kind of community the New Testament proclaims, hearts will experience change. Go on, be social, use social media, build relationships and be a witness.

Cyril ‘Ceejay’ Horrell
www.CeejayHorrell.com
www.facebook.com/
Ask the Conference

Do you have a question about your church, and you’re not getting an answer? Ask the Conference. Send your question to the editor, hpeat@adventistontario.org

Dear Editor,

In the Winter 2011 edition of Highlights, the article “Help! I’m Being Discriminated Against!”, was really helpful to me. I’m a healthcare worker and sometimes I have to work on Sabbath. Friends at church tell me that when I do, I’m supposed to give the wage to the church. Is this so?

In some parts of the world this seems to be the common practice among some pastors and their congregations. They argue that since Sabbath work is sometimes a necessity for healthcare workers, and it’s in order to do good on a Sabbath, the person should not gain any personal profit from it. The person is simply following the example of Jesus in doing good in harmony with Sabbath-keeping. Some pastors, therefore, strongly encourage the person to return the wage paid for Sabbath work to the local church. Since this has been practice for many years in some places, it’s not often questioned.

While the principle of no personal gain for Sabbath work is a good one, it’s not a policy of the church to require that a member returns his or her wage to the church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church highly values the spiritual teaching of Christian stewardship. The principle of stewardship is based on a personal relationship with God, not on a tax or compulsion of the church.

When we return tithes and give our free-will offerings, we do so, not because the church requires it, but because of our loving relationship with God and our acknowledgement of our total dependency on Him. To require or compel individuals to return wage paid for Sabbath work would be a violation of this principle.

Unfortunately, the good intention of a pastor or a church member to ‘encourage’ you to return the wage to the church can have the effect of placing pressure on you and creating guilt, thus negatively influencing any free-will decision you may make.

Simply put, what you decide to do with wage earned for Sabbath work, as with all financial resources placed in your stewardship, is between you and God.

Halsey Peat, PARL Director

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the very objective opportunity Highlights allows for us to voice our concerns and receive answers. My question is, why does Sabbath School have to start so early? Is 9:15 or 9:30 a.m. written in stone and can never be changed, regardless?

The farming culture in which the Seventh-day Adventist church was born during the 1800s may have influenced the times set for the Sabbath worship services. It was the common practice for most denominations to conduct their main worship service on Sunday morning because it suited the life of the farmers who, with their families, were the backbone of the church. Therefore, the early Adventists coming from the same background, simply continued the same practice when they began worshipping on Sabbaths.

In the mid and late-nineteenth century, people rose very early and went to bed early. Children often did chores at 5:00 in the morning before going to school. Life was very different from how it is today. Conditions are different. However, we accept that the entire Sabbath day – sunset Friday to sunset Saturday – is sanctified, holy and set apart for worship of God as the Creator and Maker. Therefore, Sabbath School and divine worship can be done any time between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday. There are a number of our churches in our conference and around the world that conduct their worship services on a Sabbath afternoon. Others start at various times on Sabbath morning. Some churches set their start time based on the needs of their members and find that attendance at most services is usually higher than normal.

Closely related to this, Ellen White says, “The Sabbath School and the meeting for worship occupy only a part of the Sabbath. The portion remaining to the family may be made the most sacred and precious season of all the Sabbath hours” (6T 358).

Ellen White seems to say that the Sabbath School and the meeting for worship occupy only a part of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is also for family togetherness; therefore, the Sabbath services should be of reasonable length. They should not be too long, thus making room for other meaningful activities during the Sabbath hours.

In Ellen White’s time, the Sabbath noon meal at home where the family gathers around the table to eat and fellowship after church, was an important aspect of the Sabbath, and should still be today. Other references in the same book also speak of spending the afternoon exploring nature, making missionary visits, visiting the sick, etc. Happy memories and habits can be formed by ‘making the Sabbath a delight’ that will last through time and eternity.

Theodore Sargeant, Sabbath School Director
More than 60 percent of Seventh-day Adventists worldwide are women. Less than 40 percent of American Adventists study their Bible once a week.

Regularly cited at Adventist board meetings and business sessions, these and other so-called church statistics are not actually known to be factual. Many familiar “facts” might better be classified as “anecdotes, hunches and instincts,” says Adventist researcher, David Trim.

“Anecdotal evidence replaced by ‘actual data’. Beginning this year, his office will oversee a major research project to survey the opinions, attitudes and spiritual life patterns of Adventist pastors, church members, institutional employees and college and university professors worldwide.

Trim, who directs the world church’s Office of Archives, Statistics and Research, wants to see anecdotal evidence replaced by “actual data”. Beginning this year, his office will oversee a major research project to survey the opinions, attitudes and spiritual life patterns of Adventist pastors, church members, institutional employees and college and university professors worldwide.

“We need to know what is actually happening in the church, not just what we’d like to be happening,” Trim says. That knowledge can equip church leaders to use money and resources more judiciously and effectively, he says.

“It wasn’t until last year that top church officials first voted to establish an ongoing budget for Adventist research meant to inform the church’s strategic plan. Previously, Adventist research was conducted sporadically, with limited focus and funding, and almost exclusively in North America,” Trim says. “This time around, the plan is for a ‘rigorous’ survey carried out in each of the church’s 13 world divisions.”

While much of the anonymous polling will take place this year, some surveys may continue into early 2013, with full results due back at world church headquarters by June of 2013.

Survey questions will go beyond age, gender, ethnicity and other statistics-based research to ask about attitudes and opinions on spiritual life, fundamental beliefs and values, church leadership, Adventist institutions and fellow members, among other topics.

“The Adventist Church is committed to a strategic planning process that provides direction based on a body of evidence,” says Michael L. Ryan, a world church general vice-president and vice-chair of the church’s Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee.

“All strategic planning is really only for one reason: How do we better advance the mission?” Ryan says.

How beneficial the results are depends largely upon whether Adventists worldwide fully engage in the survey. Trim says, “There’s no way to track survey results back to individual respondents, so researchers are hoping members will feel confident in giving honest answers—not what you think we’d like to hear.”

In some cases, survey results might spur church leaders to launch programs that would “modify our behaviour and practices,” Trim says. Other results may prompt better communication between leaders and members.

“If people are unhappy with an area that’s fundamental to our faith, then we can educate and explain to members why this is essential,” Trim says.

While he expects that much of the research will be published by Adventist scholars, Trim says that some of it will remain confidential.

“My hope is that we would not only get answers to really important questions, but, as a by-product, we would also increase the research capacity of the church.

“I think at times we have made decisions based on who can give the best speech at a church business meeting. Somebody who gets up and has a burden on his heart and says, ‘Brethren, I feel we should do thus and so,’ and he’s eloquent; he’s impassioned, and he uses all the right Adventist buzzwords and everybody says, ‘Amen, vote the money.’ And often nobody asks, ‘Is this really reflecting a need wider than this one person’s perception?’

“More and better Adventist research will equip leadership to use church money and resources in the best possible way rather than the most immediately appealing way.”

He also hopes the church’s growing commitment to research will help boost member confidence in Adventist leadership. They’ll know that research is steering leadership toward better informed decision-making and, ultimately, better methods of spreading the Adventist hope.

Church leaders expect the first wave of surveys to begin by the end of April.

Elizabeth Lechleitner

Reprinted with permission from Adventist News Network. This article is a slight abridgement of the original.
On March 20, 2012, retired Bible instructor, Sister Miriam Francis, age 84, was laid to rest at Buttonville Cemetery in Markham, following a funeral service at Apple Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church. She died, surrounded by her family, on Thursday, March 15, 2012, after a brief illness.

Sister Francis’ illness and subsequent death came as a shock to many as she had appeared to have been in good health, even though in her mid-eighties. However, it soon became clear that a cancer had overtaken her system and quickly hospitalised her. News of her death was received with great sadness by many, especially by those whose life she had touched, and there were many, especially in her work as a Bible instructor.

Miriam first served as a full-time Bible instructor in Ontario for six years before retirement in 1992 but continued doing what she loved most—leading people to Christ—as a part-time, stipendary worker, for nearly another decade.

Miriam has been described as having “a quiet and unassuming demeanor, but having a tenacious spirit”. Other descriptions include, “small in stature, but a giant in faith, deeds and love”. However, Halsey Peat, the pastor with whom she worked at Kingsview Village in the late 1990’s, referred to her as ‘the consummate Bible instructor’.

The funeral service at Apple Creek Church was attended by her family, friends, church family, Bible instructors, pastors and conference representatives. Among the mourners were some she led to Jesus. These included two who had since become pastors.

The service was officiated by Drs. Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president; Vaudre Jacques, her pastor; Earl Cameron, her nephew and professor at Northern Caribbean University and Errol Lawrence, ministerial secretary of the Ontario Conference.

On February 26, 2012, Sister Ilona Mora, wife of retired pastor, Imre Mora, went to her rest.

The funeral service, officiated by Pastors Jakov Bibulovic and Goran Zivkovic, was held on March 2 at Skwarchuk Funeral Home in Bradford, Ontario.

In the early 1980s, Ilona and her husband came to live in Ontario where Pastor Mora served part time for nearly seven years as pastor of the Hungarian Company. She was a faithful supporter of his ministry and continued to support him as she had previously done while serving as a pastor in the former Yugoslavia.

Ilona was the mother of Ethel Ivkov, wife of retired pastor, George Ivkov. Two of her grandsons, Aaron and Andrew Mora, are teachers at Crawford Adventist Academy.

“Adventists Have ‘Preferred Status’”

Says Advent Health Care

Seventh-day Adventists seeking residence in either Valleyview Residence in Toronto or Heritage Green in Hamilton have ‘preferred status’, says Advent Health Care, owners of the two nursing homes.

This means that Adventists are given priority over other applicants and can look forward to being placed higher on the wait list.

Brian Fenton, Advent Health Care president, explains that when applications are made through local Community Care Access Centres, applicants must “ensure that their application indicates that they wish to be placed in one of these homes and that they are Seventh-day Adventists. This will give them preferential access to our facilities”.

According to Fenton, the government supports placing individuals in homes that are religiously and ethnically suitable to their needs, and therefore preference is given to individuals that qualify. The only people on the waiting list that are given higher priority are very urgent placements from hospital or home to prevent hospital admission.

While this has been the policy of Advent Health Care, it was not widely known in the Adventist community. It is expected that more Adventists will now consider applying for nursing homes that will cater to their spiritual and religious needs.

Valleyview presently has 342 people on its wait list. Of these, seven are Adventists and they are all near the top.
Durham Seniors Wined and Dined at Agape Temple

Seniors from Agape Temple Adventist Church and the Pickering-Ajax community were wined and dined in fine style on Sunday, October 30, 2011, at the first Agape Community Club Seniors’ Garden Banquet.

Hosted by the church’s recently revamped Seniors department, the banquet was no simple Sunday evening brunch. Instead, it was a formal affair that featured a four-course meal, a live musical band and live entertainment.

As the seniors arrived, they were led along a pathway of flowers to the entrance to the gymnasium. When the doors opened, they were amazed to see, not a gymnasium, but an autumn inspired banquet hall, complete with full table settings with tables and chairs draped in white with touches of peach.

The seniors were escorted on white carpet to their seats by members of the Agape Aqualights Pathfinders, their attendants for the entire evening. It was the Pathfinders who later exquisitely served them each course of the restaurant-quality meal throughout the evening.

To help the seniors commemorate the event, a photo booth, complete with white arches and ornate seating, was set up just outside the banquet hall doors.

The majority of the 150 guests had nothing but good things to say about the banquet.

“It was great. The food was great; everything was just right,” said Theresa McLaren, one of the guests. “And it was nice, the mixture of the young and old,” she said, referring to the presence of the pathfinders at the event.

Angie Saunders, head of Agape's Seniors department and the lead coordinator for the event, is convinced that the hard work involved in hosting the event was more than worth it.

“At the end of the day, it’s all just for the seniors,” she said. “Sometimes it's so easy for them to be overlooked, but we want them to know that they are special and appreciated.”

Although no plans are currently in place, there are many who would love to see this event become an annual Agape tradition.

Communications Dept.

Toronto West Graduates Its First Life Coaches

On February 4, 2012, twelve Toronto West members graduated as life coaches and received certificates from Southwestern Adventist University, in an inspiring ceremony held at the church.

The twelve new life coaches recently completed months of in-class studies designed to help individuals engage in a collaborative process in order to facilitate positive, desired changes in another person’s life. The coaches are equipped to help with career choices; relationship building; money management; developing spiritual, mental, physical or emotional well-being and addressing marital issues.

The course was a response to the recognised need for both spiritual and social support in the church and in the local community. To address some of the critical issues facing people in difficult times, the church invited Dr. Marcel Sargeant, professor at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, to develop a series of studies in life coaching. Petra Bridgeman, Norma Brown and Greta Liupakka facilitated the training.

Dr. Sargeant was present for the graduation, where he gave a compelling address and presented the certificates. Following the address, the life coaches enthusiastically shared their stories with selective members of the congregation.

“The pastors have the majority of the work,” said Hartley Springer. “With this professional training, I can fill the gap in helping the pastors look after the flock.”

Springer also noted that coaches should “help people tell their story by trying to ask questions to get them to start from the beginning and not the ending.”

The graduates are now equipped with the skills and resources necessary to fulfill their duties as life coaches in the church. They will launch out into the community at a later date.

Michelle Richards
Barrie’s Bible Class Results in Seven Baptisms

For the last six months, I have been part of Pastor Jakov Bibulovic’s baptismal class at Barrie Seventh-day Adventist Church. To say that there is a strong bond between the dozen or so individuals in the class would be something of an understatement. Once the door closes on the rest of the church, there is a unique and stimulating fellowship of laughter, listening, learning and love for God. How we express our passion for God’s message is as diverse as our backgrounds.

Pastor Jakov, along with his wife Ljubica (a former pastor in Serbia), passionately and patiently guides our group through God’s message. With our primary focus on the fundamental beliefs of the church, we never move on from a subject until it is thoroughly discussed. From the book of Daniel to the understanding of the sanctuary, we take a hermeneutic (the study of the interpretation of the Bible, encompassing everything in the interpretive process from verbal to non-verbal forms of communication) approach to each topic. Our pastor wants each class member to have a clear understanding of God’s message, and how it is meant to be interpreted and applied.

On Sabbath, December 17, 2011, I witnessed six of my classmates and friends commit themselves to God through baptism. As a third generation Adventist, I have always taken baptism for granted. Watching these souls embrace a faith I have always known but not always followed, filled my heart with joy and gave my skin goose bumps. Their baptism reminded me that God wants each of us to be part of His heavenly family, regardless of who we are, and what we have done.

Baptised were: Travis and Diane Clarke, who bring a vast knowledge and love of healthy living. Rich Ruffo is gifted with understanding and ability to articulate the Scripture. His wife Holly is hungry for the message. Her brother, Patrick Westover, carries one of the largest Bibles I have ever seen as if it’s a feather, and the words, written in old English, simply roll off his tongue. And Betty Smith brings a sense of personal testimony to everything that is discussed and often shows up for class with one of her friends.

Prior to the baptism of this group was the baptism of Anne Warner, an enthusiastic, keen and learned soul whose prayers most often express so profoundly what is on the minds and in the hearts of each class member. The preparation for this moment and its power is due to a dizzying set of circumstances that only God knows. Some time in the very near future my plan is to commit myself as a sanctuary for God.

Sean George

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Sean George
Sabbath, February 11, 2012, saw the ‘best church in the world, Milton’ being inaugurated into a full-fledged church after 17 years in the making. Nearly 200 friends, family and well-wishers gathered at the Milton Senior Centre to celebrate this historic occasion.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the afternoon. Dr. Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, and Elder Ulysses Guarin, Conference treasurer, were present to lead out in the ceremony. Several pastors who had nurtured Milton Church over its life, including Pastors Carlton Roulston, Stanley McFarlane and Anthony DaCosta, were also in attendance.

Dr. Edwards admonished the fifty-five charter members to diligently continue the work that had been started in Milton and to spread the gospel message to all corners of the community.

Milton Adventist Church came into existence as the result of a few members, such as Dorothy and Augustus Burton, Enid Davis and Mary Williams’ desire to spread the gospel in the town. The Milton Group was born when eleven persons met to worship at John Toneli Sports Club on Sabbath, October 21, 1995. In November 1997, the Milton Group achieved company status with Pastor Jack Friesen as the first pastor and Enid Davis as the Bible instructor.

Milton is the fastest growing city in Canada, and the church members, led by Pastor Clarence Baptiste since February 2011, are excited to be in the community and to be part of this growing phenomenon.

The membership, representing Canada, Britain, the Caribbean, the Philippines, Scandinavia and the Ukraine, is strong and growing. Our mission is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to all peoples within and beyond the Milton community as exemplified by Jesus.

Seventh-day Adventist members living in Milton are encouraged to join the Milton congregation (Milton City Hall, Hugh Foster Hall, 141 King Street) in their aspiration and determination to grow and bear fruits in the community. For directions and ministry times, please call 647-825-7448. Praise be to God!

Ruth Gyebi

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**ACROSS**

5. To help your muscles and bones grow and to keep you healthy; sleep renews and strengthens your _ _ _ _ .

7. In the morning, your eyes and brain are signalled that it is time to wake up by _ _ _ _ _ .

8. Your body needs rest at night, but while you sleep, it is still _ _ _ _ _ _ .

9. During stage 3 and 4, you are in a _ _ _ _ sleep.

10. To help you concentrate, solve problems, and learn, sleep refreshes your _ _ _ _ _ .

**DOWN**

1. A full night of sleep helps you stay active all day by giving you enough _ _ _ _ _ _ .

2. Our brain makes a chemical that makes us sleepy called _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

3. Five or six times a night, you go through one sleep _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

4. Rapid-Eye-Movement sleep is the stage when we _ _ _ _ _ .

6. Each cycle of sleep has _ _ _ stages.
Mt. Zion’s Mission Trip
Baptises Seventy

When we left Toronto on December 14, 2011 for the Philippines, we did not dream that our mission trip would result in over 70 people being baptised. But that is what happened.

Sixteen of us from Mt. Zion Filipino Church went to San Vicente in the province of Palawan with the intention of helping the people there and to share the message of God’s love. However, we soon found that we were the ones that were blessed, and it made a lasting impact on our lives.

Shortly after arriving at our destination, our team of young adults, coordinated by Andrew Skytte-Alivio, and including Pastors Jesse Anunciacion and Edwin Martin, Ontario Conference associate youth director, spent the first few days learning about the town and how we could offer practical help. In no time, we painted a local basketball gym floor and repaired and repainted rooms in a private and in a public school. We also joined forces with a battalion of the Philippine Marines, barracked on the outskirts of the town, and worked alongside them in community work. One of our most meaningful experiences was when we held a worship service at their headquarters, which was when we hosted the Friendship Games, was a key component to our mission trip. Between the powerful evangelistic sermons delivered by our young lay preacher, Jay Sunio, (translated into Tagalog by our lead pastor, Pastor Jesse) and the nightly interactive children’s program, we soon got to know the faces that kept coming out every night. I got to know three sisters named Jacquelyn, Renalyn and Madelyn. We befriended each other, and they invited me to their little Nipa hut (a native house that’s traditionally been made with bamboo tied together and covered with a thatched roof using nipa/anahaw leaves) and introduced me to their family. Even though they had very little and had to face some of the harsh realities of daily life in the Philippines, I was humbled by their happy spirit.

Nearing Christmas, we distributed eight boxes of toys, canned goods and clothing, generously donated by Andrew Skytte-Alivio. These brought joy to many children and their parents.

Our greatest joy was to witness the baptism on December 24 of no less than 70 people (including the three sisters), most of whom were in their teens and early twenties. Pastors Anunciacion and Martin joined local pastor, Job Fabellar, in immersing the converts in the sea by the beach at San Vicente.

While we were happy to return to our families in Canada, we felt sad that we had to leave so soon. Our team experienced a real sense of fulfillment during this mission trip; we are grateful to God for the blessings we received.

Jennette Britanico

Twenty New Converts Spurs Ajax’s Growth

Two baptisms, held three months apart, have increased Ajax Adventist Church’s membership by twenty. On January 28, 2012, to the joy of the congregation, four new converts were baptised.

Three months earlier, at the close of its “Signs of the Times” evangelistic series on October 8, 2011, when sixteen persons accepted Jesus as their Saviour and were baptised, the church was filled to overflowing with thanksgiving and praise.

This was the largest number of people baptised during a single event in the church’s seven year history. The baptism of January 28 also resulted from the evangelistic meetings.

The series, led by Evangelist Charles Skeete and held from September 16 until October 8, allowed both members and visitors alike to discover the power of God and make life-changing decisions. Skeete’s dynamic preaching was complemented by the dedication and tireless work of Madge Wilson as a Bible instructor and the nightly inspirational and soul-stirring singing of Norwill Simmonds.

With Skeete’s sermon topics like, “Can’t Touch This” to “How to Get High and Not Die”, the memory of the series will long remain with those who attended.

The members are grateful for the leadership of the Personal Ministries team, led by Velma Morgan, for motivating them to win souls for God’s kingdom.

Judy Hutchinson-Boyce
Thinking Big at Pembroke and Arnprior

With just six to fifteen members each, the congregations at Pembroke and Arnprior are small, but they believe in doing big things for God—resulting in three baptisms so far! “We wanted to let our community know that we are here and that God has great things in store for them,” said Pastor Djoko Sekulic, “so we started with a prayer walk in the neighbourhood surrounding the churches.” They did this for several weeks before following it up with a distribution to every house in the neighbourhood of copies of *The Desire of Ages*, a DVD from *It is Written* and a pamphlet, inviting people to watch *It is Written* on television.

In both towns, they were able to set up stalls in the local malls where they presented health literature. This was followed up by a health seminar with Phyllis Valliers and a cooking class with Marie Clarke. Over a dozen members from the community attended the seminar.

“God gave us three precious souls,” said Pastor Sekulic, “one in Arnprior and two in Pembroke, and this is just the beginning.”

He said that one of the things that worked really well was a church family camp to which they invited people to join them for an entire weekend. Also in the summer, they plan to set up a literature table in the park where they will give away 300 copies of *The Great Controversy*, along with some other books.

“We are planting the seeds now,” said Sekulic, “and hoping to reap the harvest in the future.”

A First for Ontario Adventists as Toronto West Hosts Toastmasters International

Toronto West Seventh-day Adventist Church proudly celebrated the graduation of 25 youths from an eight-week Toastmasters program on Saturday, March 3, 2012. The 4:00 p.m. graduation service included youths from both the congregation and the local community.

Each graduate was given a certificate, while others were also awarded pins and certificates for being most improved, displaying outstanding citizenship and showing leadership. The pride of the youth as they accepted their awards was felt and shared by parents, friends and peers.

Toastmasters is an international, non-profit organization that develops the leadership and public speaking skills of youth and adults. Started in 1924 by Ralph C. Smedley in the basement of a YMCA in Santa Ana, California, Toastmasters International has gained more than 270,000 members in more than 13,000 clubs in 116 countries. This is the first time the program has been conducted in Ontario by a Seventh-day Adventist Church.

When asked why she decided to start the program in Ontario, Nicole Bernard, president and coordinator of the local chapter, said, “As a member of the church, I wanted to give this opportunity to our young people. I see a great need. With texting and social media, young people are losing essential communication and social skills that will negatively impact them later on in life when it comes to resume writing, interviewing skills, communicating and presentation skills. Good skills are necessary within the schools and work environment and, most of all, within relationships. We need to bring them back and equip them with the right tools before it is too late.”

Beginning on January 8, the program taught the participants the importance of chairmanship, voice intonation, speech structure and vocabulary. The goal of the program is to train and empower young people to become exceptional leaders of tomorrow by fostering sound characteristics that will carry them through their lives.

For more information on Toastmasters International, visit: www.toastmasters.org

Nicketa Grant
Local Mayor Attends Waterloo Company’s Church Organisation Ceremony

The mayor of Waterloo, Brenda Halloran, was a guest of honour at Waterloo Seventh-day Adventist Company’s organisation into a church on Sabbath, January 21, 2012. Halloran was joined by the officers of the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Pastors Mansfield Edwards, president; Daniel Linrud, executive secretary; Elder Ulysses Guarin, treasurer and Pastor Errol Lawrence, Ministerial director, as they presided over the organisation ceremony.

The 3:30 p.m. ceremony was part of the worship service, normally held at 11:00 a.m. but specifically planned for the afternoon to facilitate the many guests who wanted to attend. The time change allowed over 120 guests, including two directors from the Ontario Conference and pastors from nearby Adventist congregations, to share in the 34-member congregation’s historic celebration.

The service was led by Pastor Edwin Emerson, minister of the congregation. His joy was clearly apparent and reflected the mood of the congregation as he introduced and welcomed the various dignitaries and guests. After the mayor was introduced, she spoke of her delight in sharing in the celebrations and invited the congregation to join her and other faith communities to help make Waterloo a better place in which to live. Mary Tassoni, one of the pioneers of the church, presented Halloran with a bouquet of flowers.

The organising ceremony included a review of the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, formation of the church nucleus, dedication of the church officers and a litany of consecration. Pastor Mansfield Edwards followed by preaching the sermon, “God’s Church”, based on Mark 16:15-20.

He told the newly-formed church that whenever they meet to worship, they should expect great things. He said, “The lesson from Mark 16 is: your faith, your bright light from yesterday is not good enough for today. You need fresh faith for today and for tomorrow!” He also told them that as a new church, they “must not forget anyone who has fallen by the way”. “Be a gracious church,” he told them. “Be a forgiving church, a growing church and a loving church”.

The service was followed by a splendid banquet held in the church hall.

The planting of the congregation began in 1997 through the vision and efforts of Enid Davis, Esserene Walker, Bert and Henry Officer and Lincoln Nunes. They were soon joined by the Tassoni family and others who formed the core of a resident group. Growth resulted in them receiving “Company” status on June 17, 2002.

Waterloo Seventh-day Adventist Church (www.waterlooadventist.ca) meets for Sabbath fellowship at Emmanuel United Church, 22 Bridgeport Road West, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 4V7.

For more information, please contact:

Pastor Damson Oppon: 416-558-8510 or by email at doppong@hotmail.com
Elder Sam Kutondo: 905-550-6668 or by email: skutondo@gmail.com
Tembeka Keswa: 647-204-8717 or by email: tkeswa07@yahoo.ca
Saying Welcome and Good Bye

Welcome

The Ontario Conference is pleased to welcome Carl Hewitt to the staff at the conference office.

Carl is the new assistant to the director of Information Technology, and replaces NickVelinov. A member of Toronto West Seventh-day Adventist Church, Carl is married to Kareen Howell, with whom he has two children, Joshua Caleb (7) and Noah Daniel (5).

Carl assumed his new responsibilities on March 5, 2012, and has quickly immersed himself in his work.

Good Bye

Since the start of 2012, six conference employees have moved on to work in other areas of the world.

After nearly five years serving in Ontario, Pastor Roger Esteves accepted a call to serve in British Columbia. Formerly, associate pastor at Toronto Portuguese Church and Cambridge Luso-Brazilian Goup, Roger is now working as a pastor in Kelowna. He and his family left Ontario on January 15.

Pastor Abner Lopez, assistant pastor at Windsor and Windsor Spanish Churches, has left Ontario after nearly four years. His ministry at both churches was especially appreciated by youth and young adults. He left Ontario on December 31, 2011.

Pastor Eduardo Monteiro left Ontario on February 17, after accepting a call to serve as a pastor in the New Jersey Conference. He was pastor of Lily of the Valley/Ottawa Spanish Companies. Eduardo and his wife, Patty, came to Ontario in summer 2006 and faithfully served in the Hamilton and Ottawa areas. Since arriving from the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference eight years ago, Pastor Campbell Page has served as pastor of New Life Church in Oshawa. On Sabbath, March 31, he said farewell to its members. Campbell has accepted a call to serve in the Florida Conference as of April 30.

Pastor Guerlyng Martins has accepted a call to serve in the Southern New England Conference. He leaves the Ontario Conference on April 28, where he has been the lead pastor at the Toronto Portuguese congregation since January 1, 2003.

On March 15, Joel Hazelwood bid farewell to his colleagues at the conference office to travel to his homeland, Trinidad, in response to a call to serve as associate treasurer in the Caribbean Union.

Joel has faithfully served the churches in the Ontario Conference as an internal auditor for seven years and developed long-lasting relationships with many local church treasurers.

In Trinidad, Joel, is able to play cricket—a sport he enjoys and at which he excels—on a regular basis. Joel is accompanied by his wife, Rosalind, and children, Joselle and Noel.

“It’s always a sad time when we see our workers leave,” says Pastor Mansfield Edwards, president of the Ontario Conference, “but we recognise that God has other plans for them. However, we are grateful to them for the time they served in our conference. Each made a unique contribution to this conference, and we truly appreciate them and their labour. Thank you, Roger, Abner, Eduardo, Campbell, Guerlyng and Joel. We wish you and your families God’s abundant blessings in your new sphere of service.”

East Coast Canadian Tour
August 13th - 20th, 2012

Quebec City - Nova Scotia - Cape Breton - Fredericton - Moncton - P.E.I. - New Brunswick - Halifax - Charlottetown

Total cost includes travel, accommodation breakfast and Sabbath lunch.
Cost: Quad $860 - Double $1055 - Triple $945

For information to register, please call:
N. Wheatle: 905-826-9287
S. Dowers: 905-826-8642
N. Pennicott: 416-249-0808

Proceeds go to Perth Avenue Church building fund
Camp meeting 2012 promises to be one of our best ever at the International Centre in Mississauga.

Everyone attending the International Centre at 6900 Airport Road, on June 30, can expect a time of joyful, inspirational and uplifting worship; Christ-centred, prophetic and life-changing preaching; wonderful fellowship, renewing friendships and making new ones.

In 2011, emphasis was placed on helping attendees celebrate their commitment to God. This year, we want to broaden and deepen the celebration so that the expected 9,000-plus people can experience the joy, beauty and power of God.

Camp meeting 2012 will embrace the theme that has become the main focus of our conference—R.E.A.C.H. (see article on page 13). Special emphasis will be placed on its foundation—living the life that has been revived and transformed by God. This theme will lead the focus of the services in halls 5 (adults), 4 (young adults) and 4A (teens).

Speakers

**Dr. Ron Smith** is the president of Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and former vice president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and editor-in-chief of Message magazine.

Dr. Smith has served in the Seventh-day Adventist gospel ministry for 32 years, including work in the Northeastern and Southern California Conferences. Among the various pastoral assignments he executed, he served as senior pastor of the Berean Church in Los Angeles, California and the Ephesus Church in Harlem, New York.

He is a registered clinical psychologist and a marital and family therapist.

Dr. Smith has been married to Yolanda for 32 years. They have two adult children, Dawn and Ron II.

In hall 4A, the teens are in for a special surprise. A former Cirque du Soleil Ka entertainer in Las Vegas turned Seventh-day Adventist youth pastor—**Ricky Schwarz** is a young man called by God.

Pastor Schwarz' testimony is a life of EVIDENCE, a word by which he empowers young people to be a living evidence for their God. He is currently the youth pastor of Visalia Adventist Church, California, where he and his lovely wife, Stephanie VanWart, make a wonderful ministry team. Among their many activities, they are very busy assisting in a new church plant called The Ark, and most recently, leading out in the new discipleship training school, TORCH (Teaching Others and Reaching Cities for Him). We are happy that Pastor Ricky will be speaking to our teens on June 30.

Speakers

**Pastor Seth Yelorda** as their speaker. Pastor Yelorda presently serves the Orchard Park congregation in Tennessee but will shortly begin new responsibilities as a youth pastor of Mt. Rubidoux Seventh-day Adventist Church, Riverside, California. He is married to his beautiful wife of two years, Holly Watkins.

**Southern Ontario Regional Camp Meeting**

**June 8-9**

Theme: “Follow Me! – Be Like Jesus”

Speakers: Dr. Gaspar Colon, associate professor of Pastoral Ministry at Columbia Union College; Mark Johnson, president of SDACC; Dr. Mansfield Edwards, president of Ontario Conference and Dr. Hiskia Missah, associate youth director of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Location: Norfolk County Fairgrounds, 172 South Drive, Simcoe.