

canadian adventist

december 2007

Messenger

*Happy
Holidays*

(RE-)

BAPTISM BY SNOW

I've never been one to wax eloquent on the beauty of my surroundings, but there is one day every year that grabs me like none other. Though I never know exactly when it will happen or how it will look, the day of this one event means more to me than the other 364 combined. I'm talking about the morning after the first snowfall. There is something about the silence and stillness brought by the new blanket of snow that makes my God seem very real and very close.

It all started about eight years ago when my children were babies and I was, in my own estimation, overworked and undervalued. Having always been fiercely independent, I resented relinquishing control of my life to anyone, even my own children. Then, of course, I felt guilty for feeling resentment. Then I resented feeling guilty. It was a downward spiral that appeared to have no end. I was depressed, miserable, and very, very tired. Always incredibly tired.

So it made no sense to me when, one particular morning, I leapt out of bed for no apparent reason at 4 a.m. No babies were crying; no work needed doing. There was just quiet darkness and me telling myself to go back to sleep while I had the chance. But I couldn't sleep. I felt compelled to get up and go outside.

Whispering a notice to my husband that I was going for a walk, I slipped down the hall and to the back door without waking the kids. I felt like someone was rushing me even though, in reality, this was the only time in recent years when there was no one near me who needed my immediate tending.

Still, something just kept saying "hurry and go outside."

When I opened the door, I immediately saw that my world had been transformed! Snow had fallen overnight erasing the dingy and dirty world I'd been living in and leaving in its place a soft, twinkling wonderland. Instantly, I recognized the voice that had woken me and urged me to get outside. It was my Father, and now He said—I'm still not sure that it wasn't audible—"Look what I did! I couldn't wait to show you! Won't you come out and enjoy this with me?" And I did. We walked and talked and sang and danced in the snow that morning, my Heavenly Father and I. And when I went back inside to my family, I was as changed as the landscape. My heart, so heavy an hour earlier, was as light as snowflakes. My outlook, previously drab, sparkled with a thousand lights.

That was eight years ago, but every year since then on the morning of the first snow, my Father has awakened me to revel in the newness of His creation. It's a standing appointment to which I look forward all year. It reminds me that He who created me in the beginning isn't now just standing passively by admiring His handiwork but, rather, is happy and excited to recreate me over and over again, making me more remarkable every time He touches my life. And He wants to do it for you, too. ■

Crystal

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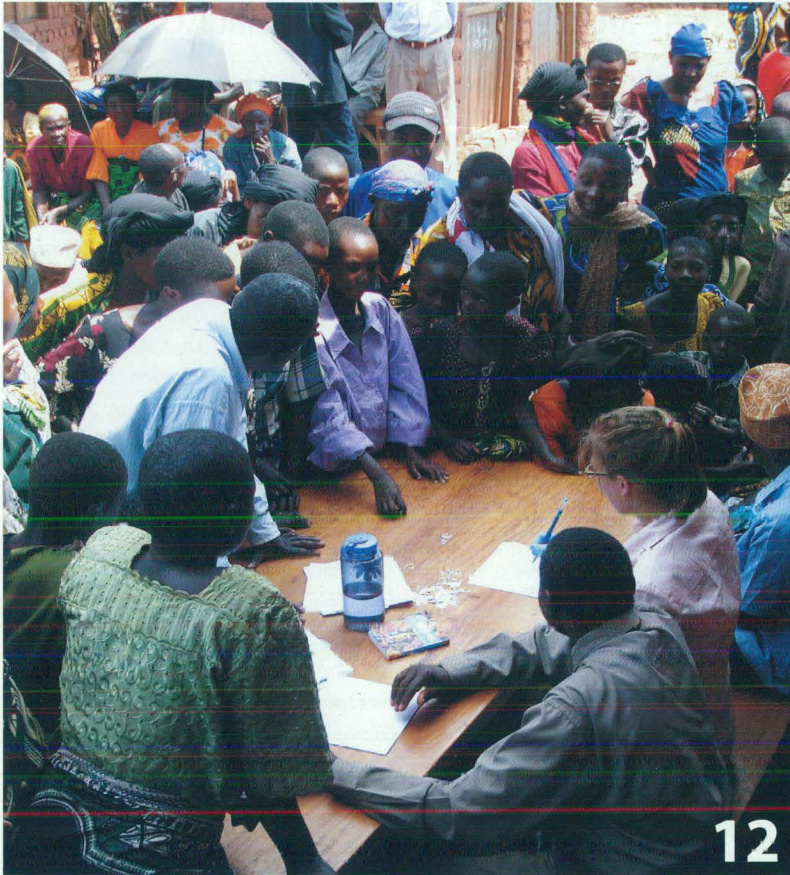
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Earth Talk

Turning Water into Grime

Ever since we were young we have been taught the "right" glass of water a day" rule. That may be good for our health, however, if we want to be good stewards of our environment, there is another thing we should know about bottled water.

These days, we see obnoxious culture in other countries that is considered "disrespectful" for convenience rather than the traditional custom water. I recall that has caused a massive bottled-water industry since 1978, the bottled-water industry sales grew by over 200% percent.



Some quick facts about bottled water:

- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization released a study in 1997 concluding that bottled water is over twice as expensive as tap water.
- Many bottled water companies, including Nestlé, are privately owned (Nestlé's CEO is the 10th richest person in the world).
- Approximately 22 percent of bottled water is produced from tap water.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found that bottled water is often contaminated with chemicals, including lead.
- Canadian Tap Water is often cleaner than bottled water.

October 2007

RE: "Earth Talk," October 2007

I would like to take exception to Chad Kettner's article, "Turning Water into Grime," about the use of bottled water.

First, human health is important, so how much of that 2000% increase in the bottled water industry is because people are now taking seriously their need to meet their minimum daily allotment of H₂O? A lot I'll bet. This is a good thing.

Second, although I agree that fluoride can help prevent tooth decay, fluoride does not belong inside the body. If one wants fluoride, one should get their teeth treated at the dentist's office. This is probably more effective anyway.

Third, there is some bottled water that I wouldn't give a nickel for, but Aquafina is considered one of, if not the, purest water on the bottled water market. Where the water came from—the tap or the lake—is irrelevant. What matters, is what is inside the bottle. Some water is so awful that only reverse

Your Words

“...there are too many variables to indiscriminately demonize the bottled water industry.”

osmosis or distillation can cure the problem. Most people cannot afford one of these systems. If the water from the tap tastes bad, no one is going to drink it.

I could say more about this topic, but let me suggest that there are too many variables to indiscriminately demonize the bottled water industry. Until municipal water treatment plants can deliver pure, toxic-chemical-free water with a pleasant taste to the faucets of all Canadians, the discriminating water enthusiasts will vote with their environmental consciences and their palates.

—Claude B., Windsor, Ontario

RE: "Facebook," September 2007

As a part of the 85% of the population that you have dubbed "a technological relic," I am actually sending you an email. Can you imagine that! I was utterly appalled that *five* pages (including the

cover page) of the *Messenger* would be devoted to the title "Facebook is our Future." Facebook is our future???

But my dismay at that was nothing compared to what I experienced after I read the article. Now, I am not against Facebook. However, the fact that no cautions or warnings were included is, in my estimation, reckless journalism. No matter how policed the sight is, there are risks and these were not addressed.

—Carol T., Lacombe, AB

[editor's note: Yes, there are risks attached to Facebook use, as there are with most anything. Though the article was an opportunity to comment on these, it did not simply because it was not intended to be a 'how-to' article on Facebook use. The *Messenger* would certainly encourage readers to familiarize themselves with any risks and act with due caution.] ■

E-mail comments to cholloway@sdacc.org or mail them to Editor, *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, 1148 King Street East, Oshawa, ON L1H 1H8. Be sure to include your name, contact information, and the name and date of the article(s) you are referencing. 200 words maximum. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Not all letters will be published.

Q & A

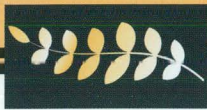
I've noticed that the *Messenger* is printing more articles like you'd find in the *Review* and less news of what is happening in the conferences. What is up with that?

When it comes to our content, *Messenger's* top priority is the news. Period. It is the reason we exist—to communicate Church news from coast to coast—and we have not forgotten that. But we cannot print what we do not have!

The *Messenger* relies upon church members—that'd be YOU—to report items of interest from your region. We don't have staff writers and, even if we did, we couldn't possibly be as effective reporting YOUR news as YOU are. We don't ask that your prose be perfect (that's what an editor is for). We don't ask that your photos be fabulous (well, it would be nice, but ...). We only ask that you think about what you'd like to be reading in the next issue and then go write that.

You can submit your completed articles directly to us (no need to go through your conference office) via the "Upload Centre" on our website. We're waiting to hear from you.

(Check out our writers' guidelines at www.sdacc.org/messenger for help getting started. If you need more help, contact the editor at cholloway@sdacc.org)



Diluting Forgiveness

by Nilton Amorim

Languages change, and the meaning of some words do metamorphose drastically as time goes by. Often, with the passage of time, the original meaning of a word tends to fall into oblivion while a new meaning takes over. This is not a modern phenomenon; it has been happening for millennia.

Lately, I have been intrigued by the way Christians use certain English terms. One that has particularly caught my attention is 'apology.' This more modern and secular concept has been progressively replacing the Biblical concept of forgiveness in the Christian vocabulary. Is the expression "I apologize" equivalent to "I ask your forgiveness" or "Please, forgive me?" In modern usage, they appear to be used interchangeably.

This word—apology—as well as the verb of the same root—apologize—both come from the Greek language. Its original meaning is "defence" when used as a noun and "to defend oneself" when used as a reflexive verb. It was mostly used in court cases when the accused presented their defence.

In Acts 22:1, we find the apostle Paul being pursued by a mob ready to stone him. Paul then presents his public defence, his apology, to the crowd. Later, when he was a prisoner in Caesarea (Acts 26), Paul again had the opportunity to defend himself or "apologize" in the presence of Roman governor, Festus, and the Jewish king, Agrippa. Indeed, the word apology is used many times throughout the New Testament, however it never expresses the notion of an excuse or a request for forgiveness.

English dictionaries and encyclopaedias also acknowledge that "defence" or "formal justification" is the primary meaning of the word 'apology.' However, they focus more on its secondary meaning—"an admission of error or discourtesy accompanied by expression of regret"—which has become part of the daily language of our time.

Springing out of the term 'apology,' we have expressions like "you owe me an apology" or "I offer an apology." But, these two additional concepts are diametrically opposed to the concept of asking forgiveness; instead of the guilty party "asking and receiving" forgiveness, he or she "offers" an apology. Generally, the one who gives something

to somebody else is usually perceived as being in a superior position. So, that element of humility and contrition that characterizes the one who asks for forgiveness may be totally alien and absent of the mind of the one who offers an apology. There is no doubt that, in spite of the secondary meaning that the word 'apology' has acquired, the original element associated to an attempt to present an explanation, justification, or defence (not necessarily pleading for pardon) continues to be present. Forgiveness and pardon are Biblical concepts that have a much deeper meaning and implication when practiced, and asking for them requires a certain level of humility and repentance that may not be present when an apology is offered.

In the world of politics and human rights, apology and forgiveness are seen as two faces of a same coin. The guilty party offers an apology, and the one wronged grants forgiveness. This makes things easy. Both are offering something. No one is asking anything. Jesus however taught us to pray by saying "forgive us our trespasses." This is not an offer but a petition that is loaded with contrition and repentance.

Just think for a moment: which is more difficult to say when you have wronged someone—"I apologize" or "I ask you to forgive me"? The first seems easier and is often the preferred option, but could it be that by offering an apology people are only excusing themselves and neither acknowledging nor regretting their wrongdoing? Is it because we feel that this is an easy way out?

If Christians really believe that offering an apology is the same as asking for forgiveness, why don't they venture to use such language with God? How do you feel about saying, "Lord I really blew it today. I offer you my apologies." How does it sound? Awkward?

We may stand to gain by going back to the original language and making an intentional shift on this matter. But this shift should go beyond the simple terminology; it should attempt to capture all the spiritual dimensions: acknowledgment of wrongdoing, true repentance, sorrow and contrition. All these are associated with the concept of forgiveness. If we capture it, we will become better Christians. ■

"...forgive us our trespasses..."

Nilton Amorim is Vice President for Administration for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.



Sex

I'm going back home for Christmas break to see my family and my boyfriend. He kinda suggested that we make love before I return to college, and I haven't said "yes" or "no" yet. We've been dating for two years and are planning to get engaged next summer. I know you are going to advise me not to have sex, but could you give me some NON-biblical reasons for why we shouldn't do it now? See, he's not a Christian.

I can't convince your boyfriend (biblically or not) to stop asking you for sex. That is something that you must do.

You're gonna have to make some tough decisions this Christmas. If, after two years of dating, he's asking you for sex, something is not right. Either he doesn't have a clear understanding of your moral values or he is consciously putting you on the spot and testing the water for his own benefit. With an engagement coming in a few months, you two have a lot of homework to do; you need to communicate clearly what your moral values are. This is especially necessary for mixed couples (faith wise), although it applies to all.

Start with yourself. Know where you stand, and then stand up for your beliefs. Make a list of your strengths, your goals, your desires. It is much easier to control your health and sexuality when you have plans and goals. A healthy self esteem will help you to not give in to the sexual advances of your boyfriend. Sex that occurs as a result of pressure from someone else is doomed to be quite a negative experience. Don't compromise your feelings and principles.

A guy who cares about you will be willing to wait. Besides, if you say the word "no" and your partner doesn't respect your decision, try these words instead: "Good-bye!"



CREATION CORNER

for Kids

“So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.” Hebrews 2:1



Walrus

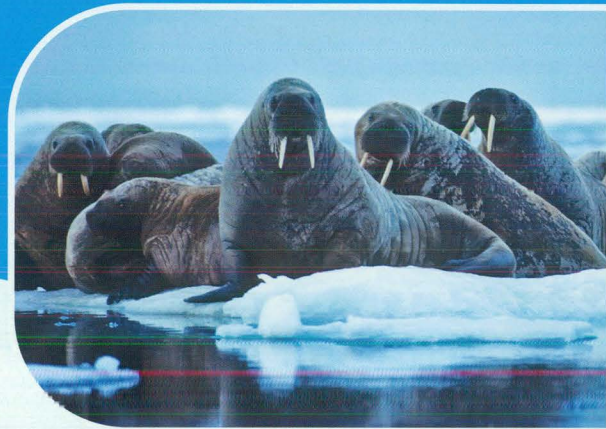
A half-hour's snowmobile drive over the rough ice of the bay took us to the polynya* where the walrus hunters had gathered. The wind had started blowing from the south the day before, bringing the sheets of ice upon which the walrus rested to the near side of the floe edge. The conditions were right for a walrus hunt.

Walrus are perfectly suited to their Arctic habitat. They are great divers, eating mollusks from the ocean floor. And, because of a thick layer of blubber, they are not bothered by the cold. But, in spite of their ability to thrive in Arctic conditions, they have one serious weakness that affects their survival: walrus like to socialize in large groups on ice floes, drifting wherever the wind may take them.

*polynya: an open area of water that doesn't freeze in the winter

Think about it.

Drifting is not safe for walrus that live in the polynya. Drifting isn't safe for Christians either. We need to know what the Bible says, believe it, and live it, or we will drift away to our destruction.



Do it.

If you have never completed a Bible study, do it now. Ask your parent or pastor for a set of Bible study guides. Prayerfully ask Jesus to help you to apply what you learn.



the coming economic collapse

For years, Adventists have been warning the world of the conditions that will be present just before the Lord returns. One of the signs of the end is economic calamity.

by Barry W. Bussey

Not a nice thought, but many respond with an attitude of, “Oh yeah, here we go again! The sky is falling. People are tired of hearing it!”

Well, do not take it from me, but just look around you for a moment and consider the following:

- the stock markets are becoming increasingly volatile
- commodities are skyrocketing (\$90+ for oil at the time of printing)
- loss of manufacturing jobs
- the subprime financial crisis
- the government bailouts to the stock market
- rising inflation
- the struggles in the Middle East which could eliminate any equilibrium we have left.

David Walker is no ordinary man. He happens to be the most senior financial accountant in the U.S. congress. As comptroller-general of the United States, he runs the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, which audits the government’s books and serves as the investigative arm of the U.S. Congress. He oversees a half a billion dollar budget. He is currently travelling the U.S. with one message: unless American (both the government and the people) immediately change the way they are spending money, the country will go broke. He states that “the most serious threat to the United States is not someone hiding in a cave in Afghanistan or Pakistan but our own fiscal irresponsibility.”¹

But nobody appears to be listening.

Each day we wake up, we spend money as if it grows like the grass on our lawns in the rainy season. We are the richest society known to modern man. We think we will always have it easy. We spend as if on steroids. There is no question that the fountain of funds will not flow indefinitely.

Financial commentator Peter Grandich recently wrote a damning assessment of the current financial situation faced in the U.S.²:

“We’ve gone from a nation where many of our parents and grandparents didn’t even have a credit card to where owing money has become the American way. We’ve become the world’s largest debtor nation, in part because we no longer ask ourselves “can we afford it?” but instead, “can we make the first payment?”

“Consumer spending, the jet fuel that supplies 70 per cent of economic activity, has sprung a leak thanks to mounting credit card debt and falling home prices. The subprime meltdown may have been the attention-getter recently, but a monster lurking below the surface is a credit card crisis.”

“The last life preserver of home equity loans has just been ripped away, so families are now alone in a sea of debt,” said Harvard Law School’s Elizabeth Warren, a law professor and expert on consumer debt. “Whether they drown quickly or slowly is an open question, but they will drown.” She added, “The numbers don’t lie on this; there aren’t any other options here.”

We can never predict with certainty what will happen, but one thing is sure: if we think we are going to be able to continue our current lifestyle forever, we are sadly mistaken. There is no such thing as a free lunch. Our excesses now will be balanced out—painfully, probably—in the future. It is simply the way it is.

Now is the time to get our financial house in order, but more importantly to tend to our spiritual house. The Lord in His wisdom gives us financial difficulty so that we may continue to rely on Him. ■

Barry W. Bussey is General Counsel and director of Public Affairs for the Adventist Church in Canada. bbussey@sdacc.org



by Hearly Mayr

Tajikistan

A Better Future

“I want a better future for my family,” says Mirumbek Juvoniev, gentle, smiling, white-bearded. He sits cross-legged on a rug near a large paneled window, where he can look out and see his great-granddaughter Sayora playing with other children. It is too cold here for this 81-year-old man to be anywhere but inside.

“I was born here,” he says.

This is Kul, a small mountain village in western Tajikistan whose name means “lake.” During this time of the year, the lake is a flat sheet of ice buried under fresh fallen snow.

The village itself is a loose scattering of homes—one or two rooms each—where families have lived for generations. Mirumbek has been here all his life. Born and bred in the mountains. He speaks slowly, as though the long years have caught up with him at last. His eyes are tired.

Mirumbek is the patriarch of an extended family of three children, 25 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren, of which six-year-old Sayora is third from last.

“She’s a wonderful little girl,” he says.

Every day, when her father lets the goats out of the stable by their house, Sayora runs after them until she has at least one in her arms. It is, she says, a fun game to play.

“I like to ride the big goats,” says Sayora. She speaks with the same enthusiasm that a Canadian child would about a scooter or a brand-new bicycle. Sayora’s favorite goat is a kid named Zardak. In Tajik, it means “golden.” She started chasing after Zardak a few weeks ago, when his legs were still wobbly. Now he can spring onto a large pile of hay with

no trouble at all, run with the older goats, and walk in the snow as long as it’s not too deep. Sayora plops down on the hay and holds one of the small goats close to her.

Less than a year ago, this image would have been only a dream, if even that, in the mind of Mirumbek.

“When we received goats from ADRA,” says Mirumbek, “it helped our family, because we had lived on only the earnings of my grandson, who is a teacher. We’re very happy.”

His grandson, Khieomidin, is Sayora’s father and a teacher at School 38, a short walk up a hill behind the village of Kul, where he has taught for six years. Every month, he brings home 79 somoni, or the equivalent of \$20, a salary that the family must stretch in nearly impossible ways to feed and clothe 18 of its members. Naturally, there’s little left for extras, such as medicines and visits to the doctor—the kind of emergencies that every family has from time to time. Fortunately, they have a field where they grow apples, pears, and potatoes, which they use to supplement their diet.

Just living in Kul is a challenge in itself. Although the village is nestled in the middle of a breathtaking range, where the snow-covered mountains are rugged and wild, isolation has been a long-running problem. The 15-mile muddy track that tethers Kul to the town of Gharm cuts over the treacherous topography of these mountains. In winter, buried under snowdrifts, the road becomes nearly impassable. To come down the mountain, a person must travel on horseback or in a Russian all-wheel



drive truck. And even then, the trip is rough and takes hours.

To try to bring economic stability to the isolated families that have struggled to make ends meet, ADRA Tajikistan recently started a goat project in Kul. The project works like this: ADRA provides one family five healthy, mature goats—one buck and four does. Within a year, the family must return to ADRA six healthy offspring, which, in turn, are given to another vulnerable family.

For Sayora’s dad, Khieomidin, the program has been a downright success. In just five months, the five goats his family received produced 11 offspring, including Zardak, Sayora’s favorite goat. That’s more than a 200 percent return! To keep his end of the bargain, he gave back to ADRA six baby goats and kept the rest.

Until now, the project has only been able to benefit a few families in Kul. But there are more that need help, more people who want a better future. Many residents don’t have jobs, or the jobs are only seasonal. And with the road impassable for months at a time during winter, it is almost impossible for them to find work elsewhere. That is why the ADRA network provides help to families living in rural areas. ■

With thanks to Hearly Mayr,
Assistant Director, Bureau
for Marketing and Development
at ADRA International



www.adra.ca

IT IS WRITTEN ...ON A WEBSITE!

"I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS, AND I HAVE COME TO GIVE YOU GOOD NEWS ABOUT DADDY. HE LEFT THE HOSPITAL LAST SATURDAY."



THE IT IS WRITTEN TEAM WISHES YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The doctors were unsure of Sebastian's diagnosis, and, though they did their best, they notified his family that he would most likely not leave the hospital alive. Luzia was distressed because her father was becoming more ill each day. It was in this moment of desperation that Luzia found a message of comfort in an episode of "It Is Written."

Interestingly, Luzia was not watching television but rather saw the program on the internet via our website. If it was not for this powerful evangelistic tool, Luzia would not have had the opportunity to watch the program because, in the country where she lives, there is no television transmission of our Canadian "It Is Written" program. Thankfully, the internet knows no geographic barriers. When the program finished, Luzia felt the desire to send a prayer request across the Web asking for divine intervention for her father.

All the prayer requests sent to It Is Written Canada—whether by letter, email or telephone—receive special attention, and Luzia's petition was no different. We prayed for her father and for the entire family, then sent an email informing her that we had brought her father before God in prayer and asked for His divine intervention.

Fewer than 48 hours after we prayed for Sebastian, we received a second email from Luzia informing us that the doctors could offer no medical explanation for what had happened to her father: he had completely recovered and was no longer in the hospital. Luzia believed that it was a miracle and attributed it to our prayers.

This is just one of the many stories that occur each day through It Is Written Canada's internet ministry. We have two websites: one in English (www.iiw.ca) and one in Portuguese (www.estaescrito.ca). These websites are a practical and versatile tool, allowing users to check the program schedule and research the various materials we offer such as DVDs, CDs and books. We also are able to display news and a calendar of upcoming events. But, certainly the most popular feature of our websites is the availability of previously aired programs. These may be downloaded to your computer as an audio or video file and then transferred to your iPod or other mp3 player.

It Is Written Canada is truly trying to use as many resources as possible to reach people and bring hope to their lives. You can be part of this ministry. Visit our website today and tell people you know about them, too. Show them how simple it is to view the program online. May God bless you and use you today! ■

Rebeca Pereira is responsible for communications at It Is Written Canada.

Earth Talk



Dreaming of a Green Christmas

With Christmas just around the corner, we're all looking to add a little touch of green to our homes. Christmas trees have become a necessity for most North American families' holiday season. We all admire the beauty that the color green brings to our Christmas, but how environmentally friendly are we being with our choice of tree?

There are two main options for the Christmas tree—artificial or real—and both have pros and cons.

Artificial trees are easy to assemble, don't require water, may come pre-lit, tend to be a bit safer, are more affordable, and are also reusable. On the other hand, fossil fuels are required for their production, and they cannot be recycled after their typical lifespan of 7-10 years and inevitably end up in either a landfill or an incinerator—both of which are harmful to the environment.

The other option is to buy a real tree. Real trees are beneficial to the environment in their growing stages as they produce oxygen, provide a natural habitat for animals, filter the air, and stabilize soil. When you bring them into the house, however, they can be a fire hazard, especially if they are not kept

properly watered. There are also concerns about improper fertilization which some growers often use to speed tree growth and produce a richer colour. However, by purchasing an organic Christmas tree, you can avoid that issue. Afterwards, you should always be sure to recycle the tree so that it can be used to benefit the environment in another way.

You can celebrate the Christmas holidays in an environmentally friendly way with either style of tree, artificial or fake. For artificial trees, you're doing a great job if you can limit damage and maintain the lifespan of ten years. For real trees, you need to take the extra steps to ensure that you're purchasing an organic tree and doing a good job of recycling it afterwards.

'Tis the season of decisions, and there are many more things that you might have to consider when purchasing your tree—but don't forget to be environmentally responsible at the same time. Have a very Merry Christmas! ■

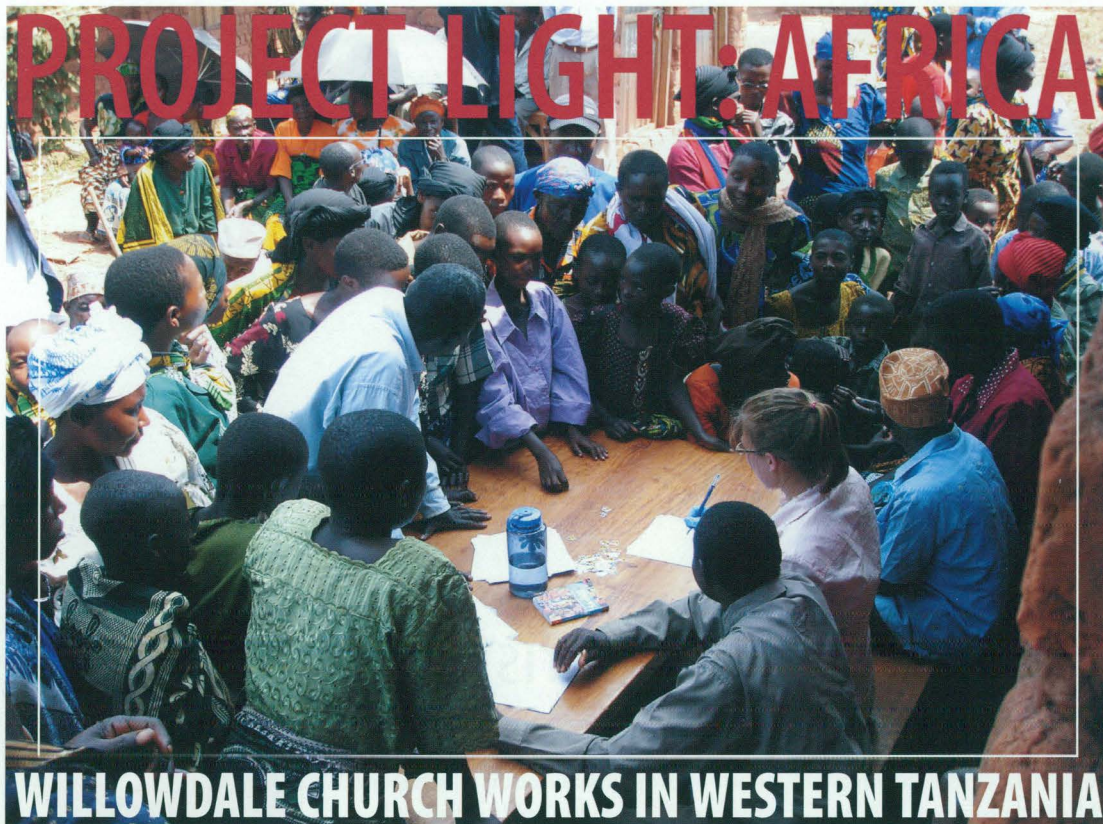
Chad Kettner is a freelance writer who busily writes about a wide variety of topics from his home in Kelowna, BC. He can be reached at kettner@thewritechoice.ca.



▶ Creative ways to reuse/recycle your real Christmas tree:

- Many municipalities provide a Christmas tree recycling program (either pick-up or drop-off).
- Tree trunks and branches can be used as mulch for gardens or animal stalls.
- Branches can be removed and placed over flowerbeds to protect the soil.
- Trunks can be used as firewood.
- Old trees can be used as effective barriers against sand and soil erosion.
- Old trees can be placed into ponds and provide an excellent aquatic habitat by providing a refuge and feeding area for fish.

—taken from www.cdnrs.com/fake-real.pdf



The congregation at Willowdale church in Toronto established Project Light as a mission outreach initiative in 2001. After a trip to India in December 2001 during which members helped to erect a church building and won many souls for the Lord, Pastor Ken Schander and the Project Light committee began searching for another mission experience that would allow the “light” to shine again. They approached Dr. Valerie Krym, a physician with experience in overseas work.

While working with the World Health Organization in Tanzania, Dr. Krym had visited Heri Adventist Hospital (“Heri”), a Church owned health care institution established in Western Tanzania in 1948. Heri has cared for thousands of people, and helped establish many large and small Adventist churches and companies. Today, there are more than 26,000 baptized members in some 500 churches and companies in the West Tanzania field territory where Heri is located.

Dr. Krym proposed Heri as a long-term mission project to Willowdale’s Project Light committee. The need in this part of the world was great, and Willowdale’s role to help our African brothers and sisters do the Lord’s work was clear. In 2 short years, the congregation at Willowdale has embraced the new mission project and morphed their earlier outreach program into Project Light Africa. This exciting new work is a long-term partnership between Willowdale and Heri. The staff at Heri is committed to doing God’s work in a remote part of Africa, and Willowdale shares their long-term mission.

Willowdale’s first step was to address the hospital’s need for growth to better serve the region’s health care and spiritual needs. In order to grow, the hospital needed to buy land, but at \$50 per acre, the land was more than the hospital could afford. What to do? Willowdale member had the answer! In less than 6 months, the congregation raised over \$20,000—enough to purchase 400 acres of land. The purchase secured land on either side of the river, a blessing that provided Heri with hydroelectric power, fields to grow crops, trees for timber, as well as land on which to build. After many months of negotiations and government red tape, Heri secured the deeds to the new land in early 2006.

Pictured above: Patient registration and triage at village free clinic.

With the land purchased, a second priority became very clear: Heri's existing buildings were in a state of disrepair, and building materials were expensive. The best solution seemed to be for Willowdale to purchase a block-making machine for Heri. The machine would use local soil, water, and cement to produce blocks to construct new buildings. The blocks would endure the blistering heat and humidity in equatorial Africa.

By mid-2006, the congregation at Willowdale raised over \$50,000 to purchase the block-making machine and help build a block-making plant. The plant would make blocks to build new buildings, and also generate income by selling the blocks locally. In Tanzania, the congregation at Heri expressed their joy for Willowdale's generosity and commitment.

Dr. Alvin Rocero, Heri's chief of staff, spent a weekend in Toronto during his annual leave in September 2006. Using pictures and stories, he made it abundantly clear that Willowdale's partnership with Heri was a blessing and an answer to prayer for those working hard in the West Tanzania mission field. Dr. Rocero accepted the congregation's cheque for \$50,000 to buy a block-making machine and build the block-making plant. But, most important of all, Dr. Rocero brought a proposal to share with Willowdale. After many years of worshipping in a run-down temporary building, hospital workers and the community longed to have a permanent place of worship. It was their wish to build a new church with additional assistance from Willowdale and with blocks from the block-making machine.

The proposal was ambitious, but Willowdale accepted the challenge. In 4 months, the congregation raised an additional \$50,000 to help build a 400-seat church for Heri. The church would include a baptistery and offices for pastors and deacons, and everything would be built by hand with local labour. In addition, Heri invited Willowdale to send a mission team to help build the church.

As Heri prepared to receive the block making machine and build a church, plans were underway to send the Willowdale mission team to Tanzania. Dr. Russell

MacDonald was chosen as the project leader in late 2006, and the 17-member team was selected in February 2007. The team would travel to Tanzania in August to help build the church, run a free clinic in a local village, conduct Bible studies, and much more.

The block-making machine arrived at Heri in June 2007, and the hospital hired new staff to start producing blocks. As fast as bricks could be made, staff used them to build a permanent building to house the machine. Within weeks, the block-making plant was built and producing over a thousand beautiful blocks each day. The hospital also hired a local builder and started preparing the site for the new church. By early July, the site of the church was cleared and the foundation dug—entirely by hand.

Willowdale's mission team arrived in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania on August 6 and arrived at Heri on August 8. The team visited the church construction site and the block making plant the following morning. The visit to the block making plant was a moving experience for everyone. As the team entered the plant, everyone stopped working and moved toward the team. Without hesitation, the staff began hugging the team. Within minutes, the staff demonstrated how the block making machine turns out beautiful blocks in less than a minute. What the team saw with their own eyes amazed them. For the first time, they witnessed how Willowdale's generosity will help Heri build and become self-sufficient.

The following day, the mission team settled into a routine. The evangelical team helped at the construction site each morning, did village visits or special prayer services after lunch, and conducted an evangelical outreach each afternoon. The outreach typically reached over 600 people each afternoon and over 2000 each Sabbath. The result was a baptism of over 80 new church members.

The medical team spent their mornings in the hospital helping the local health care staff. In the afternoon, they conducted a free medical clinic in a nearby village. Medical supplies and equipment for the clinic were donated or purchased from funds raised back home in Canada. People would walk for hours and even

days to attend the clinic—some even come from as far as Burundi, the country to the north. Working alongside local healthcare staff, the team saw as many as 80 patients each day. Those who need hospital care or surgery were transported to Heri after the clinic. The team was also committed to helping people from the clinic receive treatment at the hospital, so they established a fund at Heri to care for those too poor to pay for care. In all, the medical team referred 24 people to hospital and also raised enough money to provide free hospital care for these people.

The construction team worked alongside local labourers to build the church and produce blocks. In the two weeks spent at Heri, the foundation was completed, concrete floor poured, and pillars to support the roof set and poured. There were also enough blocks produced for the church's walls. Although the church was not finished by the time the team left, the mission team held a stone-laying ceremony to celebrate the progress made. When the church is complete (scheduled for late 2007), the hospital staff, pastor, and local village will have a magnificent house of worship only steps from the hospital.

It has already been our privilege to bless our brothers and sisters at Heri Mission Hospital, and our commitment remains strong and clear. The Willowdale church continues the Lord's work and supports our Tanzanian brothers and sisters. The Project Light Africa committee is exploring the possibility of another mission trip to Heri in early 2009. Though plans are still tentative, there is an abundance of work to be done; future projects may include construction of new staff housing, an orphanage, or perhaps a school. The partnership with Heri has rekindled the mission spirit at Willowdale, allowing the "light" to shine brightly once again. ■

Russell MacDonald is an assistant professor in the University of Toronto's Department of Medicine and a member of the Willowdale church. He was privileged to serve as team leader for the Project Light Africa trip.



It was a solemn yet electrifying moment. Gathered in the centre of campus, students, faculty, and staff all joined hands and took a few minutes out of their busy day to pray together—a statement of community and faith. Some prayed silently while others shared openly their burdens and praises to God. As the minutes passed, life at the University College campus carried on. Yet, even as teachers and students hurried to their classes, individuals and small groups carried on, heads bowed, not quite ready to end their conversation and relinquish the calmness of the moment.

Dubbed “See You At The Sun Dial,” Friday afternoon prayer provides the campus community time to share with each other. It began with a burden that became a passion and began again as a campus ministry.

the Mission



"I have a deep passion for making prayer a bigger part of campus," shares Sandra Koch, a first-year elementary education major and worship coordinator for Campus Ministries.

"It's an easy way to get closer to God and to show our faith." Prayer is so important . . . we need to give students every opportunity to pray," continues Sandra. "See You At The Sun Dial" is one of the many programs run by Campus Ministries. Led by Paul Antunes, CUC chaplain, and Rob Zama, fourth-year religious studies major and Campus Ministries director, the Campus Ministries team is a group of students that carry a burden and passion for God. Discipleship, evangelism, missions, service, and worship are the five branches of Campus Ministries, each with their own student coordinator and countless student leaders. Their ability to lead and influence change is connected to their own desire to improve not only the lives of those around them but their own as well.

The reach of Campus Ministries travels well past the CUC campus. Landon Sayler, a fourth-year secondary education major, leads the missions branch of Campus Ministries. Mission trips in the past have focused on either evangelism or building construction, but as a University College with different schools and departments, a diversified missions program was a natural fit. "I'm going to be a professional (teacher)," shares Landon, ". . . and we need our professionals to be missionaries." Both faculty and students have welcomed the move to more discipline-specific trips. Plans are underway for the education, English,

psychology, and science departments, with others to follow, to be involved in mission trips that will benefit and enhance what the students are learning in class. "We need to give everyone on campus a chance to go on a mission trip," says Landon.

While the Missions aspect of Campus Ministries works in a more global stage, the evangelism and service branches serve the more immediate community of Canadian University College. The community programs range from sunshine bands, soup kitchen, and food drives to prison ministries, and kids' church. "I love to work with kids and to be able to share the gospel in the community," shares Eric Anderson, a second-year adventure-based counseling major, and evangelism coordinator for Campus Ministries. "This gets students excited to help and we get more help than we thought we could."

Students are excited to get involved, and Campus Ministries, with all its programs, gives them an avenue to share their time. "There are a lot of students doing things for God on this campus," states Zama, "the more involved I get the more I see people wanting to be involved."

Students at CUC are encouraged to participate and develop as leaders. Every student has the option to be involved in all these ministries. "We have a responsibility to reach out and feed others," shares Antunes, "We need to push them in how they think as leaders. We can't wait for someone to spiritually charge us, we have to go and charge ourselves through scripture, service and prayer." Students are getting involved. They are connecting their education with the needs of their local and global communities. They are not just staring at the big picture but being a part of it. Students are discovering God's calling for their lives and they're excited. ■



(L-R) Landon Sayler, Missions Coordinator; Sandra Koch, Worship Coordinator; Rob Zama, Campus Ministries Director; Konstantine Neikours, Discipleship Coordinator; Paul Antunes, Campus Chaplain; Eric Anderson, Evangelism Coordinator. Missing: Marcus Heisler, Service Coordinator.

JR Ferrar is the director of Communications for Canadian University College in Lacombe, Alta.



Maritimes

Maritime Conference Welcome New Administrators



Mogens Sorensen

We are happy to welcome Carl Koester to the Maritime conference. Carl has taken up his duties as treasurer, replacing Richard Novlesky who accepted a call to the Middle East Union Mission in Beirut, Lebanon.

Prior to coming to the Maritimes, Carl and his wife, Beverly, and their daughter Hannah were in Arua, Uganda where Carl worked as treasurer for the South Sudan field. We are so pleased that they have joined us, and we look

forward to many years of working together for the glory of God and the people of the Maritime conference.

We also want to welcome Mogens Sorensen as secretary for the conference. Mogens has already been serving as the education superintendent for the Maritimes, and he will continue in that capacity as he adds the duties of his new position. ■

—Jullie Bannister, conference secretary

< Carl Koester and his wife, Beverly, and their daughter Hannah.

Pastors Ordination

Three pastors were ordained to the gospel ministry on July 28 at Camp Pugwash. We recognize Stéphane Beaulieu (of the Moncton district), now at Andrews University completing the Masters in



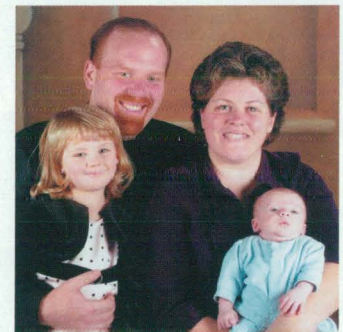
Pastor Stéphane Beaulieu and family.

Divinity program; Pastor Jared Browne of the Fredericton and area district; and



Pastor Jared Browne and family.

Pastor Dan Wilson of the Halifax/Fox Point district. Special guests who assisted in the ordination service included Don Schneider, NAD president, and his wife Marti; Angel Rodriguez, director of the



Pastor Dan Wilson and family.

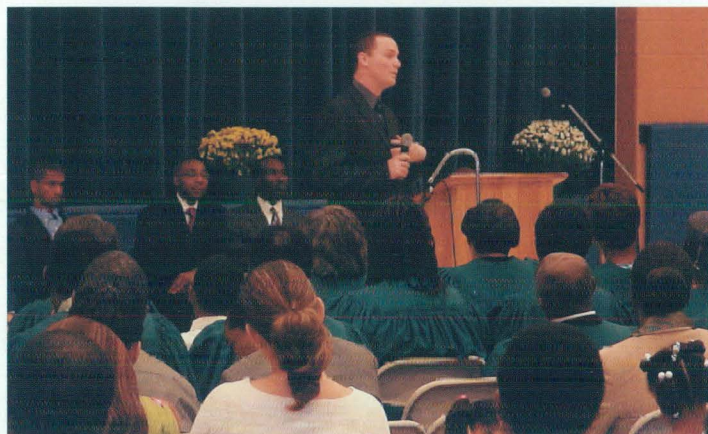
Biblical Research Institute; and Lincoln Steed, former editor of Liberty.

We pray that God will continue to bless each pastor and their families as they minister to the people of their districts. ■

—Jullie Bannister, conference secretary

Ontario

Evangelism in Brampton



(Left) Feeley delivering the message to a full congregation.

(Top) Feeley with baptismal candidates.

Some new seeds were sown and some others were harvested as the Brampton Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Northwest Brampton Company held an evangelistic series from September 21 to October 13, 2007. For a period of four weekends, evangelist Mathew Feeley presented "God's Answers for an Anxious World" at the Cheyne Middle School in the northwest area of Brampton. For the Northwest Brampton Company, established about one year ago, this was the first big evangelism effort, and no one could argue its success: 10 attendees have asked for baptism as soon as possible, and others continue to study toward baptism. ■

—Teresa Jordan, communication secretary

Bowmanville Prepares for Bird Flu Pandemic

What Ontario-based event could have the potential to claim 5000-12000 lives? No, it is not terrorism uppermost in the minds of Bowmanville church members, but rather a bird flu pandemic, something viewed by many health authorities to be a sure thing. The question is not, they insist, 'if,' but 'when.'

ADRA Canada's field specialist Nick Trent conducted a training seminar at the Bowmanville church on July 21 to address the issues that could arise in the case of a global bird flu pandemic. He shared with the audience important information about who is most vulnerable (the very young and the very old) and how the flu is spread (by direct contact through nose, mouth, eyes, and hands).

What measures should be taken to prevent the spread of the virus? Good hand hygiene is important. Keep a waterless hand sanitizer at work, home, and in the car. Cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief when coughing or sneezing. Stay home when you are ill. Clean doorknobs, taps, and other common surfaces with a 10% bleach solution to kill viruses. A flu shot will not protect you.

Pandemic flu of any sort only happens two or three times in a century, but that is two or three times too often. ■

—Bob Russell, member



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British Columbia

VOAR Now Re-broadcasting in Nakusp



VOAR Christian Family Radio is now on the air and blessing people in the Nakusp area after 6 months of cooperative effort.

The initiative began with the Nakusp Seventh Day Adventist Church praying for an effective way to reach out to their community. When the VOAR idea was presented, members readily threw their hats into the ring. The circle was enlarged when the Arrow Lakes Alliance Church agreed to host the site. The Nakusp community, both Christians and non-Christians alike, donated much of the services and materials needed to “raise a tower.”

About 50 people, including members from both churches, the public, the mayor and a local newspaper reporter attended the ribbon cutting ceremony on October 21. The mayor noted that in our world where churches are often found fighting each other, what an example it was to see them working together to help the community.

The Nakusp Seventh Day Adventist Church praises God for this opportunity to share His love. ■

< The completed tower with antenna.

SDA Church in Canada

Pastor Roland Gerhard Christiansen Dies at Age 79



Roland Gerhard Christenson

Pastor Gerhard Christiansen, a frontline worker for Christ, died on Sunday, July 1, 2007, after suffering a massive brain haemorrhage, resulting from a burst aneurism. He was 79 years old. Just one day earlier, on Sabbath, he had preached his last sermon at his local church, the South River Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Gerhard Christiansen was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, on July 28, 1927, to Arnold Roberts Christiansen and Love Parks. He graduated from Oshawa Missionary College (Kingsway College) in 1945 before going to Atlantic Union College, MA, where he completed his BTh (Major in Bible and Minor in History) in 1949. He completed his postgraduate studies at Andrews University in 1963.

Pastor Christiansen commenced his service to God through the Seventh-day Church on June 1, 1949 in the Maritime

conference. Two months later, on August 16, 1949, he married Grace Fawcett, who lovingly remained his wife and bore him two children, Linda (Flowers) and Fred. The family remained in the Maritime conference for seven years.

In 1957, Pastor Christiansen and his family left the shores of Canada and travelled to the Southern Asia Division where he served as pastor/evangelist in Bangalore, Madras, and Calcutta. He returned to Canada ten years later and began working with the Ontario-Quebec conference in 1967. In 1979, he was appointed as chaplain of the Branson Hospital where he served until his retirement in 1989.

The funeral service took place on Thursday, July 5, 2007, at Moore's Funeral Chapel in Sundridge, Ont., near South River, where he lived. Pastors Derrick Nichols, Antonio Bueno, and Errol Lawrence, president, executive secretary, and ministerial director, respectively, of the Ontario conference of Seventh-day Adventists, were among the nearly 100 attendees who gathered with the family to support them in their time of grief. The service was officiated by Pastor Antonio Bueno.

A memorial service was later held on Sabbath, July 7, at Immanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto, where he attended for over 20 years. ■

■ **Announcements**

The Victoria S.D.A. Church is looking for current information on the following members: Norman Benjamin, John Brown, Tara Culbert, Richard Drear, Whitney Gleason, Richard Griffith, David Harlos, Erika Hill, Jeff Letkeman, Debi McMurchy, Joshua Neufeld, Mike Pavlic, Rhonda VanDale, Robert VanDale, Tamilyn VanDale. If you have contact information for any of these individuals, please forward to the church clerk, Holli Rockerbie. Email admin@victoriaadventist.ca, or phone 250/383-1510.

The Harmony S.D.A. Church is looking for the following missing members: Ively Araujo, Michael Ball, Jane Carol Ball, Heather Balogh, Lynn Binette, Janice Coverly, Raymond Hansen, Beth Oliphant, Yves Rebetez, Susan Roberts, Ryan Singh, Maria Tavares, Iris Zentil. If you have contact information for anyone on the above list, please forward this information to the church clerk, Bev Matiko, email bev.mat@sympatico.ca.

Do you know where the following missing members are? Richard and Sally Williams, Jesse Yardley, Robert Weich, John Walton, Darl Walker, Jason Park, Kim Maxwell. If you know where any of these members are, please contact Calgary Central Church. Email centralchurch@shaw.ca, phone 403/289-0196, or fax 403/282-6955. Thank you.

Confused by all the talk on diet? Attend the two conferences on vegetarian nutrition on Mar. 4-8, 2008 at Loma Linda University in California. For more information on speakers, topics and costs, contact Stoy Proctor at 301/680-6718 or email sanchezl@gc.adventist.org.

■ **Baptisms**

ONTARIO
Michael Hynes, sr. and Michael Hynes, jr. were baptized in Brampton, Ont. on Apr. 21, 2007 by Pastor Reynold Hazelwood after studying with Annette Ferguson. They are now members of the Ruth Seventh-day Adventist Church.

QUEBEC
Maylin Villanueva, Elena Higuera, Gabriel Alvarenga, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Mendoza, Evaristo and Angelina Rincon, Gerardo and Maritza Olarte, and Freddy and Lenkha Gonzalez, were baptized in Montreal, Québec on July 28, 2007. They are now members of the Montreal Spanish Church.

ALBERTA
Malika Griffith, Florentia Williamson, Sherdon Seaforth, Euwen Ndhlovu, and Chantel Hategekimana were baptized in Edmonton, Alta. on May 26, 2007 by Pastor Terrence Horrell. They are now members of the West Edmonton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

■ **Weddings**

Ella Paul and Ken Carley were married July 5, 2007 in Olds, Alta. and are making their home in Battleford, Sask.

■ **Anniversaries**

Levern and Ruth Krenzler of Lacombe, Alta. celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on



Aug. 3, 2007. The Krenzlers have served the Lord and their church across Canada. The Krenzlers have three daughters: Gaylene (Dan) Border and Donna Lee of Portland, Ore., and Janice of Calgary, Alta. They have four grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren.

Alymer and Madella (Gimbel) Toop of Carleton Place, Ont. celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on



Aug. 19, 2007. The Toops have two children: Charles (Loralee) of Winnipeg, Man., and Jo-Ann (George) Gref of Martintown, Ont. They have four grandchildren.

■ **Obituaries**

Davina (Warner) Allen was born Jan. 24, 1933 in Chilliwack, B.C. and died Sept. 13, 2007 in Kelowna, B.C. Davina faithfully sent greeting cards, phoned, and wrote letters of encouragement to family and church

members. Surviving: brothers David (Ida) Warner of Red Deer, Alta., and Art (Marilyn) Warner of Adams Lake, B.C.; sisters Christina (Clinton) Johnson of Christmas Valley, Ore., and Virginia Gonthier of College Place, Wash.

Lauren Terence Bechthold was born Mar. 22, 1950 in Vernon, B.C. and died Mar. 6, 2007 in Calgary, Alta. Lauren will be remembered as a loving, kind, gentle soul with a wonderful sense of humour. He was predeceased by his son, Brandon. Surviving: wife Debbie (Smith); daughter Brittany; parents Delmer and Stella Bechthold; sisters Lorraine Hall of White Rock, B.C., and Jackie Gordon of Estacada, Ore.

Violeta Tio Bondoc was born Nov. 19, 1942 in Capas, Tarlac, Philippines and died Sept. 24, 2007 in Calgary, Alta. She was predeceased by her son Enrique Bondoc, jr., her parents Benito Tio and Baldomera Guinto, and her sister Rosita Tio. Surviving: husband Enrique Bondoc; son Elmer (Cecerie) Bondoc; daughters Nympha Bondoc, Gloria (Rodel) Diwa, Elite Bondoc, and Dianne Bondoc; and four grandchildren.

Peter Ivan Hamley was born Nov. 21, 1932 in Watford, U.K. and died Sept. 18, 2007 in Torquay, U.K. Peter served as the physiotherapy manager at the North York General Hospital for 34 years. Surviving: wife Stephanie of Devon U.K.; sons Graham, Russ, Bob, and Erwin; daughter Beth Snow; and nine grandchildren.

Ada (Biedler) Honce was born July 21, 1920 in Steinbach, Man. and died Sept. 15, 2007. Surviving: husband Walter; sons George (Dina) Honke of Calgary, Alta., and Myles (Lilli) Honce of Kelowna, B.C.; daughter Barbara (Finn) Hestdalen of Kelowna, B.C.; eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Olga (Kneller) Kuhn was born June 7, 1910 in Whitemouth, Man. and died Oct. 18, 2007 in Kelowna, B.C. Olga was a quiet, unassuming person who served her church as a deaconess. For many years she volunteered for the church's community services program. Her specialty was making quilts, and she created hundreds of them. Surviving: husband Julius Kuhn; sons Lloyd (Ida) Kulin, and Levi (Rosemarie) Kuhn; daughter Dorothy (Mel) Holm; eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Sadie (Berg) Look was born Mar. 12, 1914 in Rabbit Lake, Sask. and died June 16, 2007 in Williams Lake,

B.C. Sadie shared her love and home with step-children and an extended family. Surviving: sons Elmer (Lynn) Peterson, and Gerald Peterson; daughters Dorothy Daley, Lorraine Murray, Bev (Mel) Basaraba; 11 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

Katie (Yuros) Mandzuik was born May 24, 1921 in Bortiatyno, Poland and died Sept. 30, 2007 in White Rock, B.C. Katie was a deeply committed Adventist and served her church as a deaconess. Surviving: husband Fred Mandzuik; sons Sam of Langley, B.C., Al of Victoria, B.C., and George (Lou Ann) of Custer, Wash.; stepdaughters Darlene Day of Boise, Idaho, and Colleen Erickson of Creston, B.C.; brothers John (Ruth) of Lincoln City, Ore., Harry (Rita) of Lacombe, Alta., and Bill (Jean) of Kelowna, B.C.; sister Rose Holdal of Calgary, Alta.; and two grandchildren.

Gladys Elizabeth Marsh was born Mar. 9, 1929 in Bredenbury, Sask. and died Sept. 23, 2007 in Stettler, Alta. She was predeceased by her daughter Lana, and her granddaughter Brandi Tym. Surviving: husband Everett; son Glyn; daughters Lauri (Gerry) Larson, Vivian (Sherif) Elguindy, Debra (Raymond) Anderson, and Valera (Dale) Tym; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Ruby Joyce Patterson died suddenly at her home on Aug. 31, 2007 at the age of 76. Ruby began her work for the church as a teacher in a one-room school in Newfoundland. She was a librarian at Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ont., served in the public relations office at Canadian University College, and as secretary to the president of the East Africa Division. At the time of her retirement she was working in the treasury department of the Ontario Conference. She was predeceased by her son, Lyndon Wayne Patterson. Surviving: husband Cliff; daughters Judy-Ann (Paul), Cathleen (Larry), and Cassandra; brother David (Gladys); sister Hazel; seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Richard Edward Guy Robson was born Dec. 27, 1925 and died Oct. 6, 2007 in Toronto, Ont. Surviving: wife Georgina; son Guy; daughter Candy; stepchildren Cheryl, Michael and Bruce; and ten grandchildren.

Herb Tall was born Sept. 2, 1914 in Birch River, Man. and died Oct. 16, 2007 in Fort Langley, B.C. Surviving: wife Jean; son Alfred (Sharon) of Woodinville, Wash.; daughters Margaret (Ben) Foster of Richland,

Wash., and Linda (Kevin) McMahon of Barriere, B.C.; sister Elsie Dinsmore of Mission, B.C.; six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Nick George Tarangle was born Feb. 15, 1916 in Slava, Alta. and died Aug. 3, 2007 in Hope, B.C. He was predeceased by his wife, Pearl. Nick was a caring person who was always ready to lend a helping hand. He lived true to his convictions and readily shared his faith. Surviving: son Harold; daughters Lynda (Mike) Weber, and Brenda Kotanko; brothers Steven (Esther), and Tim (Myrna); sisters Anna (Duke) Singbeil, and Dolly (Nicholas) Revega; eight grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Gordon Van Scheik was born Mar. 30, 1928 in Edmonton, Alta. and died Oct. 7, 2007 in Ponoka, Alta. He was predeceased by his wife, Doris. Surviving: son Gordon; daughters Karen Van Scheik-Leoni, Betty Van Scheik, Joyce Van Scheik, and Colleen Palalunga of Mission, B.C.; brother William; sisters Thelma Pfeifer, Thora Van Damme, and Kay Johnson; seven grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

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Discounts — 10 percent discount for three or more consecutive insertions without copy changes.

Deadlines

February issue: **Dec. 3**
 March issue: **Jan. 2**
 April issue: **Feb. 4**

Tributes

Lauren Bechthold (Calgary, Alberta) passed away unexpectedly on March 6, 2007. Friends are asked to send stories and pictures of their memories of Lauren over the years to his sister, Lorraine Hall (lorrahm@shaw.ca). These stories and pictures will be put together and given to Lauren's daughter Brittany and to his mother, Stella Bechthold in honor of his memory. (2/08)

Advertisements

Canadian University College is developing an interdisciplinary program in International Studies which would include emphasis in the areas of history, political science, international business, development studies, languages, philosophy, anthropology and/or sociology. Responsibilities include instructing students, engaging in research and participating in the life of the institution. If you have an earned PhD in one of the above-listed disciplines and are interested in helping develop this program, please contact Dr. Loren Agrey, Vice President for Academic Administration, Canadian University College, 5415 College Ave., Lacombe, AB T4L 2E5. Phone 403/782-3381, fax 403/782-3170, email lagrey@cauc.ca. Further information at www.cauc.ca. (2/08)

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Adventist bricklayers needed in the spring of 2008 to help with the completion of renovations. Please contact Calgary Central Seventh-day Adventist Church via email at centralchurch@shaw.ca, phone 403/289-0196, or fax 403/282-6955. Thank you. (1/08)

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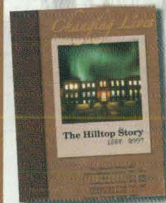
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Karen Ritchey releases new gospel album called: "Going Home." If you enjoyed her first two albums, "I'll Meet You in the Morning" and "Because He Promised," You will want to order her brand new CD, "Going Home." This is a lovely compilation of music designed to soothe the soul. Her songs are beautifully arranged in three part harmony. You can order her songs of comfort, hope and peace by email at karenritchey@shaw.ca or call 403/782-2415. To know more about Karen's ministry or to book for concerts: www.karenritcheyministries.com. (1/08)

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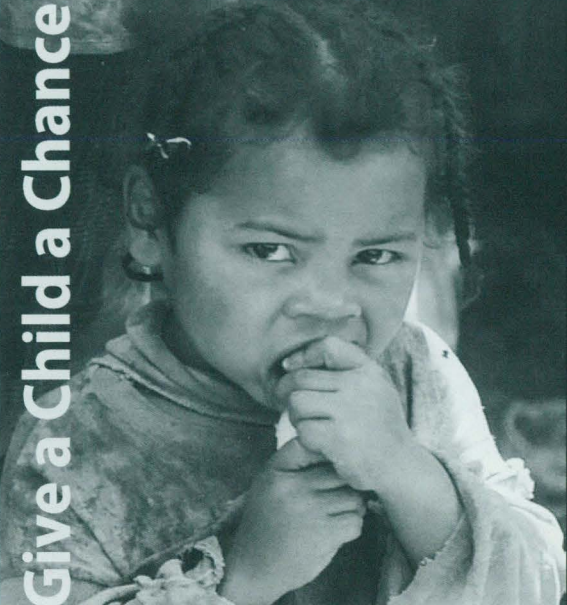
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■ BY JOHN FISCHER

Priceless Gift



Gift of service—warm a cold heart with a blanket. Price: \$35.00.

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Gift of leadership—throw a Christmas party for your small group. Price: \$100.

Gift of Christ to your next-door neighbor: Priceless.

Christmas is all about gift giving—making lists of gifts, purchasing gifts, wrapping gifts, giving gifts and opening gifts (and probably returning some, too). All of this is because of one priceless gift given to the human race two thousand years ago: the gift of God's Son. And this gift came about as the result of God's unfathomable mercy and grace. He did not have to do this. Nothing in us required it. He decided to be merciful to His own creation made in His image—all of us having turned our backs on Him and gone our own way.

Somehow we got fortunate. It's definitely not because we're cute. There is no merit here, nothing we deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve; mercy is not getting what you do deserve. We have been given both. We don't deserve anything from God except punishment for our sins, and what did He do? His mercy up and cancelled the punishment so His grace could give us life.

Two priceless gifts; one awesome God.

What can we do except be filled with gratitude and mimic His gift-giving to the extent of our creativity and our resources?

And while we're at it, let's think of a spiritual gift we can give, based on what has been given to us. Regardless of our material resources, we are all rich in spiritual gifts. Give this some thought. Think of your spiritual gift (encouragement, wisdom, administration, mercy, service, teaching, etc.) and how you might turn it into a real present for someone this Christmas season. Make it something you can plan and accomplish as a deliberate act. Put a bow around it, if it's appropriate.

Christmas is spiritual, full of gifts and gift giving. Let's not forget to give the gift of Christ this Christmas. It's the one gift among all the others that is truly priceless. ■

John Fischer is a well-known Christian writer who has shared his work in many venues, including as senior writer for purposedrivenlife.com for many years. His current work is shared mostly via his website at [www.fishtank.com](http://www.fischtank.com).

