

CSC NEWS

Celebrating God At Work

Centre Street Church • Calgary, Alberta

Winter 2019

"Now to Him who is able to do
exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that works in us,"

- Ephesians 3:20 -

immeasurably more

BEYOND

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centre street church
Christ at the Centre...

INTRODUCING PEOPLE TO JESUS AND HELPING THEM
BECOME FULLY DEVOTED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.

- Senior Pastor** Dr. Henry Schorr
- Central Campus** Saturday 6:30 pm
Sunday 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 6:00 pm.
Children's Ministry provided for all services
except Sunday 6:00 pm.
- 3900-2nd Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 9C1
Tel: 403.293.3900 Fax: 403.520.2698
Lead Pastor: Pastor Kent Priebe
- North West Campus** Sunday 10:30 am.
Bearpaw Lifestyle Centre
(253220 Bearspaw Rd. NW)
Lead Pastor: Dr. Lawson Brown
- Bridgeland Campus** Sunday 10:30 am.
Gateway Church (235 - 8A Street NE)
Lead Pastor: Rev. Tim Hayes
- South Campus** Sunday 10:30 am.
St. Mary's University (14500 Bannister Road SE)
Lead Pastor: Pastor Craig Murray
- Airdrie Campus** Sunday 10:30 am.
Airdrie Koinonia Christian School
(77 Gateway Drive NE, Airdrie AB)
Lead Pastor: Pastor Travis Wilkins

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Please visit **cchurch.ca** for our current staff directory.
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CSC News welcomes comments and feedback on all editions of this newspaper. Please email: communications@cchurch.ca



Levi & Wilma Smoker on their wedding day; and celebrating their 59th Anniversary. Photos from the Smoker Family



All the Way My Saviour Leads Me

BY LEVI & WILMA SMOKER,
Contributing Writers

EARLY DAYS

Levi was born in Lancaster, PA, to Christian parents who both grew up in Amish homes. When they married, they joined the Mennonite church. He grew up on a dairy farm in a family with nine children. Church was a central part of Levi's life. He learned about and believed in Jesus from the teaching he received in Sunday school, church and the Christian school. At 12 years of age Levi accepted Jesus, was baptized and became a member of the Mennonite church.

I was also born in Lancaster, PA, to Christian parents and members of the Mennonite Church. The eldest of eight children, I had good role models from my parents as to what a life lived for Jesus should look like. Reading the Bible, memorizing Scripture and church attendance were important and expected.

As a young girl I accepted Jesus. I made the decision to follow Jesus in a revival service in which my grandpa was the evangelist. Later I was baptized and became a member of the Mennonite Church. At 12 years old, my Dad was ordained as pastor of a small mission church. I grew up as a teenager in that setting. At grade 9, I chose to stay at home and learn skills helping my mother with household chores and caring for younger siblings. At age 16, I worked outside the home for several families.

Levi's church planted a number of mission churches and had a very active youth group called "The Gospel Sowers Band," with which he became involved in his teen years. It was in this youth group that Levi and I met. We soon began dating and were married on October 9, 1957, at the age of 20.

FIRST YEARS TOGETHER

Levi served in "alternate service" on a government research dairy farm. When his service assignment was completed, he worked on a rented dairy farm and became involved in a local mission church.

The birth of our daughter Ruth launched us into the role of parenting. Levi's and my dreams were shattered when our next two babies were born prematurely and lived only a few hours. We experienced another loss through a miscarriage that followed.

This grief was extremely hard, yet through it we actually became closer to each other and the Lord. Five years after Ruth was born, we were thrilled to welcome a healthy baby boy, Richard, to the family. Our family was now complete, and we are blessed that I was able to stay home while our children were small.

THE LORD'S CALLING

Levi was asked if he would consider pastoring a mission church. Since he had no training or schooling beyond grade nine, he felt totally unqualified for such a task. After the second request, Levi and I started praying about going to Bible School. At one of our church services, the Holy Spirit convicted Levi and moved him to surrender his life to the Lord. Soon Levi and I dedicated our lives totally to the Lord and continued to pray about going to Bible School.

Because Levi had no high school diploma, options for Bible College were limited. One day, Levi knelt and told the Lord that if He wanted us to go to Bible School, He should send a representative from the school He wanted us to attend. Levi told no one, not even me, about that prayer. About a month later, a representative from Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills, Alberta, showed

...continued on page 3

up at our door! This initiated our move from Pennsylvania to Alberta in 1972.

BEGINNING TO SERVE

Moving from the familiar in Pennsylvania to Alberta was very challenging. My father died on the weekend my family was getting together to see us off. Being the eldest, I found it very difficult to leave right after my mother was widowed. My mother was very supportive of our move, however, and made it clear she did not want to stand in the way of God's call on our lives.

Upon graduation four years later, we pastored a small church for nearly ten years. The church graciously granted us a leave of absence after several years to complete a Bachelor of Theology degree. Then we pastored in another church for ten years. As a transition into our retirement years, we volunteered with Mennonite Central Committee, serving at the Ten Thousand Villages warehouse in Akron, Pennsylvania.

It has been a privilege to see people accept Jesus and choose to follow Him in their daily lives. We have also had great joy in watching those people grow and mature in their walk with Christ, knowing that our ministry has had a small part in the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth.

God was faithful in all situations whether joyful or difficult. Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us: "The Lord's loving-kindness never ceases. His compassions never fail, they are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness!"

CONTINUING TO SERVE

Levi and I moved to Calgary to be near family in our retirement years. We now have five adult grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren who all live in Calgary or in Seattle, WA.

Several months of searching led us to Centre Street Church in August of 2014. From that first service, we knew God led us here. We continue to be blessed by the worship and challenged by the teaching. We enjoy Maranatha events, life group fellowship, and volunteering with the visitation team.

We claim the verse in Psalm 92:14: "They will still bear fruit in old age; they will stay fresh and green."

We are enjoying this season of life. After more than 60 years of marriage, we continue to praise and thank the Lord for making known to us our path of life. As David said, "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11, NIV).



Levi & Wilma in Glacier National Park. Photo from the Smoker Family

With God's Hand Guiding The Lodoen Family

BY MATTHEW GORMAN,
Contributing Writer

Dalton and Dianne Lodoen first felt God's call to attend a summer CSC Family on Mission trip to Vancouver during a chance encounter with a friend.

"We hadn't seen Kim De Kluyver in a few years," Dalton remembers. "Dianne ran into Kim, they invited us, and we started attending the Family on Mission training sessions."

The trip to Vancouver consisted of time spent ministering to that city's less fortunate population. As part of their ministry they went to Oppenheimer Park where they handed out ice cream and lunch, served at Union Gospel Mission, renovated a local church, and spent a day at Jericho Beach.

Even though the family of six had to sleep on the church floor for the duration of the time, the mission trip left a mark on the kids. "Our kids had never experienced anything like that before," Dianne says. "They were very impacted."

The Lodoens have been attending CSC since the mid 1990s and were married in the West Campus building. These days, Dalton, a firefighter, and Dianne, who works at a chiropractic office, live in Airdrie with their children Reese (16), Everett (14), Sophia (12) and Isabella (12) and attend the North West Campus of CSC.

In their early days with CSC both Dalton and Dianne participated in mission trips to Tijuana, Mexico, but hadn't returned to the mission field. Though the family had no prior plans to serve, God provided a way before they even knew about the trip. As a firefighter, Dalton isn't always guaranteed first choice of vacation time amongst his co-workers. But God made a way, surprising the family with first choice even before they had heard about the trip.

Dalton recalls choosing a particular block of time thinking, "We'll figure out later what we're going to do with it." It turned out that the time they had chosen was exactly when the trip to Vancouver was happening. "It's one of those things, when God lines everything up. It's almost like you can't say 'no.'"

On the trip, the Lodoens were impacted by the plight of the people living in poverty in Vancouver. There were some chances for deeper connection with the community too. All the fathers in the group were given the opportunity to preach, and after Dalton's turn he had a long talk with one of the attendees.

"He came and found me and we talked and talked. He was a very interesting gentleman. He looked sort of like David Suzuki! We talked about who he was, what he believed in and where I was going with my faith."

In addition to the effect of serving and ministering to the poor, the Lodoens were deeply moved by the sense of community they found with the other families on the trip.

"The big impact that it had on our family when we were all together was being a family on mission and serving God with other families," Dianne says.

The family found a great deal of peace and comfort in the closeness to God and other believers. "Our kids made the comment, 'This is what church should be like,'" Dalton says.

The impact was so significant that the family made a deeper commitment to God when Dalton and the children were all baptized while on the trip. During their day on Jericho Beach, Pastor Wayne asked if anyone was interested in being baptized.

"It was something I thought about for a bit," says Dalton, "and I was the first one to say, 'I'll do it.'"

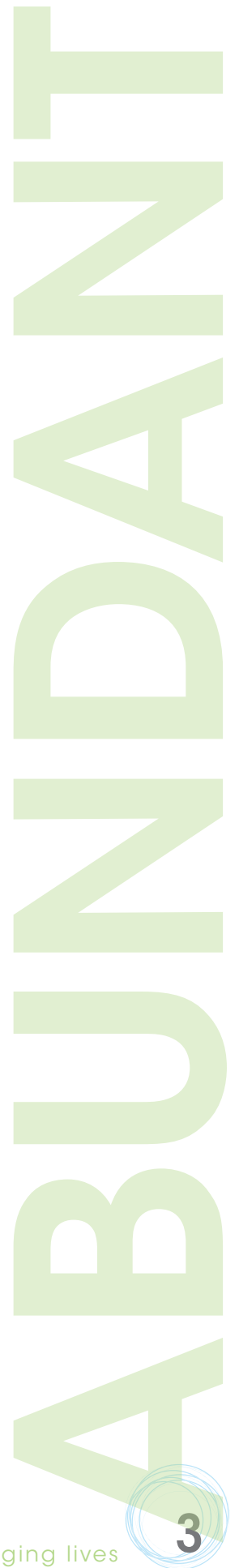
And one by one his children followed. There in the waters of the Pacific Ocean, the family took an important step in their walk with Christ. Despite Dianne nearly dropping Dalton, it was an experience of deeper commitment and communion with God.

The lasting sense of community isn't the only thing that has stuck with the Lodoens. Their walk with Christ deepened, and their youngest son, Everett, has grown in his relationship with God, getting up at 6:30 am every day to have his devotions.

With God's hand guiding them to be a family on mission, the Lodoens were able to make the steps and decisions necessary toward becoming more fully devoted followers of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.



The Lodoen Family spent the summer of 2018 on mission. Photo from the Lodoen Family



BAPTISM

October 20 & 21, 2018 - Central Campus



MICHAEL CHARLES SPATARI - I entered this Church for the first time in September 2017. I was raised Mormon until my twenties, when I eventually lost faith. I spent over two decades as an atheist before I found my way here. Last year I was in the midst of the darkest days of my life. I became gripped with the idea that even though I wasn't a believer maybe being part of a church could be good for me. Perhaps it could give me the structure and the support I was sorely missing. Last September I walked into a meetinghouse of the church of my youth. Within minutes it was clear that it was not the place for me. I left but went home 'driven' by the urge to go to another church that day. Google 'led' me to Centre Street. It was September 3, 2017 – Night of Worship. I walked in and right away the setting, the music, the people – all of it felt right. The first song I remember hearing in the service was "What a Beautiful Name." The thought came that Jesus had been there all along, but I had been too afraid to acknowledge His name. I had been afraid, scared, bitter, pessimistic and angry. During that song I felt all the darkness seemingly drain out of me. Tears flowed freely. What a powerful name it is! I haven't looked back from that evening. I've had many ups and downs this past year and have been to many different churches. But I haven't doubted Jesus. He saved me. He saved me from tangible despair and defeat. He shined His light where I had only seen darkness. I couldn't be happier to be at Centre Street today in front of all of you to take a step I've wanted to do for a long time. I want to thank all the kind, loving and supportive people I've met here at Centre Street Church – particularly Randy Allen whom

I first met as a facilitator at Alpha. He has been an unfailing friend and guide. I have turned my life over to Jesus and am so very grateful that He has taken the burden of my sins. I pledge my life to Christ and pledge to follow Him and turn from sin the rest of my days.



RAMESH BISWA - Ramesh was born into conflict that resulted in being ousted from his country of birth, Bhutan, and living as a refugee with his family for almost 20 years in south Nepal. His family lost two sons to disease in that camp, but in the midst of constant grief and hardship, his young sister (Sumitra) was born as a sign of hope as a result of prayer to Jesus. Ramesh's eldest brother turned to Jesus, followed by his parents; and gradually the rest of the siblings, including Ramesh, decided to become Christ followers. Ramesh's mother tearfully recalls the events of those years with gratitude to Jesus for saving them and bringing them to Canada. She lost two of her children, but God gave Sumitra as a gift of new life. Ramesh does remember the past but is guided by the strong faith of his parents. He loves Jesus and wants to follow Him always. His faith is simple but sure. About two years ago he said "Yes" to Jesus, and now he is ready to follow in obedience through baptism. To him it signifies leaving the past and reaching for the new. He has memorized John 3:16 as he prepares for the baptism this weekend. -- Submitted by Pastor David Benjamin

ENCOUNTER GOD'S PRESENCE

November 2-4, 2018

Encounter God's Presence Weekend is held three times per year for followers of Jesus to learn to Walk with God and experience a fresh and renewed sense of intimacy with Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit. They experience anointed worship, learn about spiritual warfare and the battle we all face. Participants experience the council of Holy Spirit and practice hearing God's Voice. Through the counsel of Holy Spirit, they identify and break free of bondages in their lives in the areas of occult influence, sexual impurity, negative attitudes and behaviours, unforgiveness and generational curses and sins. Throughout the entire weekend participants receive the deep restorative healing of Jesus as He heals wounds and pains in their life.

On Sunday participants encounter Jesus at the Cross-to experience the magnitude of what Jesus did on our behalf. All weekend long, participants share with like-minded companions and through it all receive encouragement and sup-



Painting by Deanna Oelke

port from a team of trustworthy leaders, teachers and group leaders.

Encounter God's Presence Weekend has now taken over 1000 people through the journey of healing and restoration that God has prepared in advance. At the Encounter God's Presence Weekend in November 2018 we had 60 participants attend and here is what participants testified about:

“EGPW has helped me step into intimacy with God as my Father.

God really opened my heart, took out bitterness and put in joy, peace, hope, love and forgiveness. He reminded of His love for me.

Jesus removed great sadness in me and reminded me

that I am strong in Him.

God reinforced my true identity in Jesus. I have replaced lies, and God has cleared the confusion. I walk in freedom and truth, releasing unforgiveness and replacing it with joy.

I came feeling very weak, overwhelmed, filled with anxiety. I now feel freedom and peace.

EGPW reminded me that I am a child of God. I have authority from Jesus to fight against Satan.

I have been liberated this weekend by the blood of Jesus Christ.

I was paralyzed with anger. This weekend I was reminded that God is with me.

It is freeing to leave behind all of the bonds and struggles I have had over the years and declare that through Christ they no longer have a hold over me.

God healed me in many different ways.

This was an amazing time to get closer to God and meet others.

EGPW opened my eyes to many things I didn't consider sin. It has confirmed that I can be victorious against the enemy. This weekend has better equipped me to stand firm in my faith. I really look forward to growing deeper in God's wisdom and Biblical truths.

EGPW has allowed me to see past hurts, and to have courage to share them.

My Struggle

He puts broken things back together. He restores what's damaged,
heals what's wounded, touches what's untouchable.

BY GRAEME LAUBER,
Contributing Writer

Disclaimer: Graeme uses the term "Gay identity" in this story. CSC acknowledges the term "gay identity" can mean many different things to many different people, and there is no single experience of gay identity. We encourage all our readers to seek understanding of every person's journey by listening with compassion. In this story, Graeme frames gay identity as something that was foundational to his understanding of himself as a person - one of the primary places he turned for an answer to the question "Who am I?"

The letter I wrote in June of 2012 was an urgent plea. Each sentence was carefully constructed, but that didn't hide the desperation I felt.

"I am struggling with a long-standing pornography addiction," I wrote. It wasn't only porn, but drugs and alcohol, too.

"I don't feel I can be honest with my church friends," I added.

It got worse. "For as long as I can remember, I have had an attraction to other men."

And worst of all, "God seems impossibly distant and largely irrelevant."

When I hit the send button, the email went off to a generic address at an organization I'd never heard of. All I knew from their website was that they were willing to tackle issues like mine - loneliness, addiction, sexuality - from a Christian perspective.

I'd realized that I was attracted to men when I was a teenager, and I promised myself that these feelings would remain a secret forever. However, as an adult I found I could tell a few people - some friends and family and, eventually, a particular woman.

I told the woman who is now my wife about my sexuality early in our relationship. It took some time to work up

the courage, but after a few dates I fearfully told Susan the truth. She was surprised, but she was kind, and she went away and prayed and sought advice. A day or two later she came back and said, "yes" to continuing our relationship.

Eventually she said "yes" again, and we've now been married for 18 years. It wasn't long before we had a son and then a daughter and then another son. The kids were healthy, I got a good job, Susan homeschooled the kids. We were happy.

However, I still didn't have a solid sense of myself, and I kept looking to other people, especially people at work, to tell me I was good enough. I spent hours agonizing over whether or not I had performed well enough at the office. I reviewed every conversation, considered every comment, and promised myself I would do better the next day. Often I felt an overwhelming sense of failure. On those days I took refuge in pornography.

Eventually the happy family life began to disintegrate. Because I didn't have a good sense of who I was, I had begun to try to build up a gay identity. I looked to this identity to try to tell me how to dress, how to act, and how to think. However, I was still married to a woman, I was still a father, and I was still active in my church.

I didn't know how to integrate my new identity with these responsibilities, so I began to split apart as a person. On one side of the split there was a husband and father, and on the other side there was a gay man, struggling to understand himself. The split was very painful, and I began to medicate myself with drugs and alcohol and even more pornography. My life continued to disintegrate.

This was how I found myself sending a desperate plea for help to an anonymous email box run by a ministry I had never heard of. Within a day or two, I got a

response.

"I'm happy to let you know our ministry is active in Calgary," said the reply, "and that we focus on bringing healing and wholeness to people who are broken. Would you be interested to learn more about our program? Or would it help if you met with me to learn more about who we are and what we do?"

Yes and yes.

Who they were was Journey Canada. What they did was meet together to be honest with one another - to talk about the areas of their lives where they experienced shame and hurt - and to seek Jesus in prayer. At Journey I felt safe talking about my darkest secrets and my innermost thoughts. No one judged, everyone prayed - and, to my surprise, Jesus showed up.

One night, as I was praying in small group at the Journey program, I sensed that Jesus was asking me to give up my gay identity. I didn't want to do it. Didn't think that I could do it.

But Jesus was asking because it was the thing in my life that was competing with Him for my love and loyalty. I didn't know who I was without this identity. It gave me a sense of structure and even meaning. To give it up would be like ripping out my own heart. Like a death. But with Jesus "no" is not a serious option. So I took a deep breath and said, "Yes."

In that moment my relationship with Jesus changed, which is the same as saying that everything changed. Jesus brings the dead back to life. He puts broken things back together. He restores what's damaged, heals what's wounded, touches what's untouchable. He takes a man who is splitting in two and begins to put him back together. He begins to show that man a way out of his bondage to addiction. He sets the captives free.

I had been a Christian most of my life, but my relationship with Jesus began on that day. I was not instantly healed of all the wounds in my life, but I saw the way forward with Jesus. Compared with that, nothing else mattered.

I still struggle, but I struggle alongside Jesus. My sexual orientation hasn't changed, but that doesn't matter like it used to. What matters is that even though there are times when I want to push Him out of my life, I regularly welcome Him back. What matters are the things He has asked me to do, including taking care of my wife and kids, which I now do with joy.

What matters is Jesus.



Graeme & Susan Lauber; speaking to CSC Staff;
on a radio interview from his office.

Photos from the Lauber Family



Youth Trinidad Missions Trip - All Campuses - August 16 - 26, 2018



BY AVERY WEENINK,
Contributing Writer

On Thursday morning, August 16, I was excited as we met with team members at the airport for our flight to Trinidad. Flying into Trinidad at night, we could see the city lights and their reflection on the ocean. After a short bus ride and a long day, we were all eager to hop into our beds at Trinidad and Tobago Urban Ministries (TTUM).

Friday morning we went through orientation and prepared for the Vacation Bible School (VBS) program that would run from Monday to Thursday the following week. That night, we were invited to a Christian concert at which we praised the Lord in a Trinidadian style.

On the second day of our trip, we had the opportunity to serve at one of two locations. One group went to a church to help clear the tall grass. The second group went to a couple of our VBS locations.

The other group, of which I was part, created posters and invited people to send their children to VBS the following week. Walking around the neighbourhood, I noticed a stark difference in our cultures. Trinidadians are very open and neighbourly. When we approached the gates of their homes to talk, they were unafraid to come out and converse with us even if they were in their pyjamas. Others offered us gifts of sugar cane and star fruit from their gardens and were eager to hear what we were up to.

On Sunday at our first Trinidadian church service three of us shared our testimonies while another team member gave a talk he had prepared in advance. The people inspired me by the passion of their worship. People were not afraid to dance and sing. The pastor preached from the Word of God.

Each evening we gathered to worship and to hear each other's testimonies. It was powerful to hear what God had been up to in each other's lives. It encouraged my faith.

The VBS program was held in four locations throughout the island. One team drove four hours a day to travel to their destination.

It was great to build relationships with the kids and share God's love. Malachi, a little boy in our group, stands out to me. He and his four siblings were often hungry and neglected. Every time we held him, Malachi hugged us with what we called "the death grip." Malachi's older siblings took the care of their youngest baby sister so seriously that they would forfeit time participating in VBS to tend to her. They couldn't have been any older than 7 or 8. The church was so impressed that they committed to providing for this family with breakfast each morning. The program has also inspired them to start up a Sunday school ministry.

My responsibility was telling stories. Others managed the crafts, games, songs, drama and teaching memory verses, each of which was conducted in creative and expressive ways. It was incredible to see the kids grow and get excited about hearing things from God's word. I also learned more about the stories than I had known initially. On the last day we invited the kids into a relationship with Jesus and had the thrill and honour of seeing a handful of children accept Jesus into their lives.

After 1 pm each day we went to places which included a drug and alcohol rehab centre, nursing homes, and a home for girls.

At one nursing home the lady in charge was uninviting and not particularly pleased that we had come. We prayed and talked with some of the residents, then invited the residents to a dance party. We placed a cell phone in a bucket to amplify the sound and played catchy tunes. Some of the elderly ladies joined us and showed us a few of their dance moves. On our way out, the lady in charge of the home thanked us for coming and was all smiles.

Tuesday evening God quite literally rocked our world when we experienced an earthquake. Southern Trinidad and Venezuela experienced magnitudes between 6.8 and 7.3, but thankfully the earthquake did not cause damage in our area. After hearing about the damage in Venezuela and other earthquakes of similar magnitudes we were so grateful for God's protection and care.

The reaction to the earthquake was diverse. One of our leaders

...continued on page 7

IMMENSELY SURPASSABLE



Photos from Trinidad Youth Mission Team

slept through it. Others continued to play in the pool. For some it was an amazing new experience. For others it was a God-ordained moment to overcome fear.

Seven inmates of a youth prison dedicated their lives to Christ. Later one of the boys who had accepted Christ was released from prison.

After our last VBS session our teams delivered Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes. Our team needed a police escort on the bus. We drove up the side of a mountain, past run-down housing and were directed to a building that reminded me of a small stadium. The kids' faces were filled with confusion as we arrived. Then they found out that kids 14 and under were going to receive gifts. The kids were called up by age categories. Once they received a gift, they were instructed to return to their seats until all the gifts were distributed. Then the leader counted down, "Three, two, one and 3/4, one and a half, one and a quarter, one, and GO!!!!"

Cheers and screaming filled the air as the children opened their respective boxes. All of the children's faces lit up as they opened their boxes. Their gifts meant the world to them.

It is amazing that the kids were happy to receive things that we take for granted or would not consider valuable.

That night, we were blessed to experience a Trinidadian festival that was set up for us. The night was full of laughing, singing and dancing, and we all had a blast.

We had an amazing day experiencing God's beautiful creation at Maracas Bay. Originally four of our team had planned to be baptized, but eleven were baptized. By this time we were all one big happy family.

At Saint Benedict's, a beautiful monastery looking over Trinidad, we washed each others feet and prayed for each other. What a great way to end our day!

Our red-eye flight to Houston brought us back to Calgary by 11:00 the next morning. Its amazing to think that we had been in three different countries and two different continents before eleven o'clock in the morning. Because of this I noticed how quickly our trip and its experiences had come to an end. Our team dispersed, and we were quickly immersed in our routines again, which made it hard to believe our trip had even happened, but I am so thankful that it did.

Looking back, I feel as if we were all one big family taking a leap of faith. God had orchestrated so many things. Not only we were impacting others, but He had used others to impact us.



EXCEEDING



Photos from Trinidad Youth Mission Team



PURPOSE:

For all of CSC to gather together under one roof to praise and worship Jesus and celebrate what He is doing among us.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT N.O.W.?

"I love what God does in people's hearts at the NOW services. I get the opportunity to work with the baptism team. Many nights we do not have any baptisms planned, but we end up with around 10 people taking the bold step of obedience of following Jesus through getting baptized."

"We see people start coming up to the baptism corner from the beginning of the service right until the end. We have a team of people who talk with people in the hallway to see where they are at with Jesus, and ask why they would like to get baptized. People come from various backgrounds, ages, and come for different purposes."



Above: Worship team; Chloe and Tim Sonnenberg are baptised during the N.O.W. service. Photos by Pam Hawkes

Above Clockwise from top left: Pastor Henry; testimony from Jason Aarons, volunteers, Larry & Marg McAvoy; the congregation and worship team.

cs family life

Birth Announcements

NAME	DATE	PARENTS
Jude Avery Rokos	September 9, 2018	Trevor & Naomi Rokos
Taya Brynn Munton	November 1, 2018	Bryant & Jillian Munton
Joshua Reyn Doner	November 2, 2018	Peter & Maryse Doner
Oakleigh Melissa Harrison	December 2, 2018	Jason & Meagan Harrison



Baptism

*child **youth

Freda Okoma	Min Yuan (Oliver)	Sarah Tetlock	Albert Connon
Christopher Clement	Tim Sonnenberg**	Stephanie McNorland	Karlynn Peltier
Kayln Leung	Chloe Sonnenberg*	John Miles	Geri Jansen
Arisa Basabica	Josel Castronuevo	Evan Wilson	Isaac Schoenthaler*
Amanda Ryman**	Mohamed Zeineldin**	Solenia Fox	Togay Ertan
	Alan Weller	Ifeoma Anekwe	Tanya Mark
	Johnathan Mackenzie*	Ramesh Biswa	Mark Del Casale
	Yang Liu	Michael Spatari	Daniel Ogunfowora**



Dedications

Maximus Patrick Prins	November 10, 2018
Joanna Bergen	November 10, 2018
Joshua Firew Philipos	November 10, 2018
John Martin James Acuna Tarroja	November 10, 2018
Ariella Chinazaekpere Nwaobasi	November 11, 2018

New Members

Tsegay Berhe	Timothy Kraft
Vanessa Bissonnette	Joy Zheng Li
Albert Connon	Kristy Moore
Carol de Wit	Linda Read
Kyla Harms	

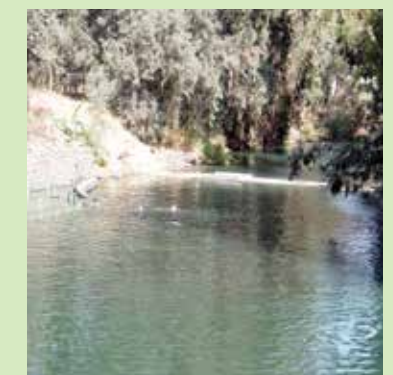


In Remembrance

Sean Henderson	September 1, 2018
Tanya Livingstone	September 2, 2018
Ernie Damkar	September 12, 2018
Ruby Goodman	October 11, 2018
Martin Bloem	October 22, 2018
Terry Borisenko	November 5, 2018
Dolores Bretecher	November 10, 2018
Sharron Vandale	November 22, 2018
Gerrick Winston	December 10, 2018

Weddings

Charles Arthur & Claire Jones	Sept. 1, 2018
Doug Dueck & Sabine Vantoooren	Sept. 1, 2018
Joshua Sissons & Michelle Bailey	Sept. 1, 2018
Geoffrey Davis & Ana Retuta	Sept. 8, 2018
Art Brown & Lorraine Schmidt	Sept. 29, 2018
Clinton Wolfe & Meghan Mahe	Oct. 6, 2018
Jonathan Dauaire & Krysta Bisson	Oct. 19, 2018
Brian Kitchen & Ellicia Carmen	Dec. 1, 2018





Special Needs MINISTRY Camp

AUGUST 19-24, 2018

BY ROXANNE FERNER,
Contributing Writer

Sometimes we think that people with special needs will get into Heaven simply by virtue of "suffer the little children" (Matthew 19:14). We think if they love Jesus, He will welcome them with open arms. And He will.

But Pastor Corinne Thomas has a far higher vision for these individuals. She believes people with special needs are capable of a much deeper and meaningful relationship with Christ than most of us give them credit for. And she would like to give them every

opportunity for spiritual growth and discipleship.

To that end, Pastor Corinne and her team prayed for a venue that could be used for a week-long Special Needs Ministry Family Camp. They envisioned a camp where anyone impacted by special needs could come. God showed them Camp Rehoboth—a fully accessible, faith-based camp, which "just happened" to have one week in August available!

The mission of Camp Rehoboth is to convey God's love to people with disabilities and their families by making room for them and enabling them to flourish.

Thirty people with special needs attended our Family Camp, which ran from August 19-24. Family members and support staff brought the total to 61.

Volunteering at this summer's Special Needs Ministry camp was a huge step of faith for me. Until then, I'd only volunteered with the Special Needs Ministry handbells choir, and a few half day respite events. But from the very first day of camp, I felt comfortable and accepted by the individuals with special needs, their caregivers and their families.

As the week progressed, I was overwhelmed by the capacity the participants had for love, happiness and joy. It was incredibly uplifting to see all the participants engaging in praise and worship according to their abilities. I could feel the joy and love in our fireside worship services. Jesus was with us during those worship times. He was rejoicing with us as we made a joyful noise.

No matter what activities we did, the participants jumped right in to the best of their abilities and enjoyed it to the fullest. It challenged me to work to the best of my abilities and to have joy in whatever I do.

The theme of camp was "God takes care of us," based on Numbers 6:24: "May the Lord bless you and take care of you."

Our guest speakers for the week were Kervin Raugust and Wes Moreland, parents of participants at camp, as well as hard working volunteers. We learned that God forgives us and takes care of us even when we do wrong. He cares for us when we are alone and afraid. He cares for us, and in return we can help Him care for others.

At the end of the week it was so encouraging to see how many had memorized the Bible verse—a promise from God that they could take with them after the camp was over.

Our time at camp was very busy with activities inside and outside—morning chores, chapel, skits, sports, crafts, a hike, and a trip to a corn maze. At the evening fireside times we worshiped, supported each other, and shared our "God sightings." As we shared our experiences and supported each other, our relationships grew.

One volunteer said, "The best part of the week was the campers' enthusiasm for all the activities, even the chores! I was inspired by their passion and love for the Lord. God's presence was felt in all the fun and laughter."

The participants loved the skits and worship times the best. They felt God speak through our chapel and worship times. They were reminded that Jesus loves them very much. They also were reminded to be kind to others and to be a good friend.

One participant gathered rocks and wrote "God loves



Photos from Special Needs Ministry Team

you" on them, one for every person at camp. She also personalized many of them by writing "God loves (name)." I was so touched that she took the time to talk to each of us and find out our names.

Everyone grasped the message that Pastor Corinne taught on the last morning of camp. She stood on a carton of eggs (yes, raw eggs) and explained that God protects us, just as the eggshell protects the egg inside. Who knew that you could stand on a dozen eggs and they would not break?!

The father of a girl with special needs as well as a guest speaker, was really struck by the sense of community that developed through the week of camp. Many family members felt that camp gave their loved ones room to grow spiritually. They were blessed to watch their loved ones functioning more independently and using their gifts.

One mom said, "It was humbling to realize my own inadequacy and the importance of relying on God. He knows our every need and has provided us with all we need even though we don't realize we need it. God is in control, and we don't need to worry."

We could not have managed the week of camp without our volunteers! One in particular was recruited because we were lacking male volunteers. He had never worked with anyone with special needs before. Many of the volunteers felt that God was encouraging them to step outside their comfort zone.

The volunteers were amazed at how easy it was for people with special needs to express their love to God and joy in God – through worship. I think we all were amazed at how easily people with special needs give all their concerns to God. That is something that most Christians struggle with continuously. The teaching was at an appropriate level for the participants with special needs and yet was applicable to the rest of us as well.

It was very humbling to see how many volunteers had little experience working with people with special needs. They just felt God calling them to help out. Many took vacation time from their jobs to help out. They worked together toward a common goal with very little complaining. One participant even listed cleaning the men's room as his highlight!

A huge shout out to the hard working kitchen volunteers who spent many hours planning, buying, prepping, cooking and cleaning in the kitchen. The food was amazing!

Spending whole days together gave us the time to build deeper relationships. Watching other people on their journey gave us better perspective for our own circumstances.

The big highlight of our week was when one of our participants became a Christian! There was rejoicing in Heaven, and much rejoicing and cheering and hugging at camp! We all loved to hug! She knew that Jesus thought she was special and that He loved her and wanted the best for her.

I am so grateful for the opportunity I had to go to camp. All my worries about being unprepared or inadequate were banished. I was enveloped by love and acceptance. I was able to build some deep friendships. We celebrated the glory of nature. We basked in the presence of God's love. And I was able to share what talents I have to bring glory to God.

Please pray with us that special needs ministry camp will be an ongoing experience. And watch for the opportunity to help next year. P.S. We can always use more male volunteers!



Photos from Special Needs Ministry Team



NEW CANADIAN
FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

5th Anniversary

MAY 10, 2018

BY KATHERINE MILUM,
Contributing Writer

"Come and see what God has done." These words from Psalm 66:5 were the theme of the fifth anniversary celebration of the New Canadian Friendship Centre (NCFC) on May 10, 2018. What God had done these past five years is pretty amazing!

NCFC began with an idea from Police Inspector David Kotowski, a CSC attendee who worked in the area and saw the need for the church to serve immigrants in NE Calgary. When Pastor Ashwin Ramani came on staff at Centre Street Church, the vision became reality through his leadership.

Thus, on May 11, 2013 the doors of NCFC opened at Temple Crossing. Soon many people were coming for ESL classes, free clothing, youth and children's programs, employment, settlement assistance, and more.

While our mission was to provide practical support to help new immigrants succeed in their new life in Canada, one thing was clear: NCFC needed to be more than a social agency. It had to offer connection and community to those who were often far from family and friends. Furthermore, it had to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and express unconditional love through friendship and service. Thus people would experience the transformational love of Jesus.

As people came for programs and services, they made comments such as, "This place is different," or "I had a really bad morning, so I had to come to NCFC."

An elderly gentleman from India came for coffee several times a day, five days a week, bringing his mending with him - for us to do! We were the place where people knew his name, his story, his grandkids, and would take the time to talk with him, no matter how frequently he came.

Jan Wilkinson, one of our first volunteer ESL teachers, exemplifies this type of friendship. She is not just a teacher but also a friend. She invites students to her house for tea, or on a trip to Banff, or to Pick Your Part to get parts for their vehicles.

It was this generosity that led a Chinese visitor, Xian, to ask, "Why do NCFC volunteers give and love like this?" Xian gave her life to Jesus and is now a key volunteer. She has led many Chinese friends and family to follow Jesus with her.

We celebrated our fifth anniversary with around 60 cur-



There was an excellent attendance at the New Canadian Friendship Centre's Anniversary celebration. Photos by Colin Brown.

rent and former students joining us for cake and refreshments. Pastor Ashwin opened the celebration with a brief message and prayer.

Nada from Lebanon shared that the first time she came to NCFC she was invited to a spa experience the very next day—where a volunteer washed her feet! Her friend Hazar said staff and volunteers have become like family to her. Milagros, from Peru, found NCFC to be a place where she could make friends from around the world and receive help and advice.

Cayley, who has volunteered in different capacities over our five years, is blessed to see God's work continuing and to be a part of it. Xian concluded the celebration sharing how NCFC introduced her to Jesus. His love has changed her life and given her the ability to create beautiful things.

Currently the NCFC offers free ESL classes (at our NE location and at CSC West Campus) for approximately 85 students each semester, and an exercise class for women. NCFC also offers classes in baking, knitting, sewing and citizenship preparation. A pre-school children's

program is provided for parents attending morning classes. The NCFC Artist Collective provides immigrant women in sewing and knitting programs with skills and support to market their products. NCFC also works together with other churches to provide children's day camps in spring and summer.

Celebrations and food are important to the people who call NCFC home, which means we have a lot of parties! From impromptu celebrations (singing Happy Birthday in four different languages to a volunteer with an imaginary candle) to end-of-semester and Thanksgiving potlucks, we have fun together!

Twice a year we bring a busload of excited adults and children of all faiths to the CSC Easter and Christmas productions (with a meal first of course!). Last summer we were able to bring 50 people to Kananaskis - some of whom had never been to the mountains before - and the children learned to fish.

As many of our people come two or three times a week, we are able to deepen friendships and conversations with

...continued on page 13



Above: Pastor Ashwin speaks to guests at the NCFC Anniversary; Right-top: Some of the items handmade by participants at the NCFC.

Photos by Colin Brown.

them, and provide further support and resources for those in difficult life situations.

None of this could be possible without our volunteers! What joy to watch our volunteers interact with and serve our visitors, as love flows abundantly and beautifully out of hearts aligned in worship to Jesus!

I look back on NCFC's five years with a deep sense of gratitude for what God has done. What God created at

of those who shared at our fifth anniversary celebration. As Nada and Hazar, Milagros and many others have expressed, NCFC isn't just about classes. It's a place where they feel that they have family, where they are known, where they belong, and where they are welcome no matter how many times they come in a week.

And through that, we pray that it will also be a place where they will find and follow Jesus.

'WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT THE NEW CANADIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRE?'

"I enjoy meeting people from around the world, also talking to everyone and sharing experiences about life. All the classes and events are very funny and teachers so special and friendly."
- Student from Colombia

"You just feel like you are home. The teachers, supervisors all people here are so kind and gentle. They do their best to help us. I am thankful for everything here."
- Student from Lebanon

"We can say 'New Canadian Friendship Centre' is not only for teaching English but you find all the assistance and good friends you need. Special thanks to all the volunteers."
- Student from Lebanon

"I am taking ESL classes here. I have tried exercise class and sewing classes. Those are awesome too. First of all teachers are well educated and very generous. I really enjoy coming to NCFC."
- Student from India

"The cordial treatment of your staff, are entertaining classes that really leave you a knowledge not only of English but of culture and life in Canada."
- Student from Venezuela

"The kindness of the people. Very good facilities. Excellent teachers."
- Student from Venezuela

"I had negative feelings about people in the west. But after meeting Pauline, Katherine and Karyn all my apprehensions went away. It is a great lesson learnt."
- Student from India

"NCFC staff listen to me and help me. Moreover, staff, volunteers and other NCF clients become my friends and part of my family. My child is growing up in NCFC where he gets great care and love of aunties and grandmas."
- Student from Vietnam

"NCFC has changed my beliefs. I now know what's true, what's real and what's right, and that's following God."
- Student from Fiji

"I love coming to NCFC to meet people, learn, release stress, learn more English. NCFC helped me in many ways - resources, listen to my problem and support me. They are patient and experts. NCFC made a difference to my life. When I was alone, they treated me as family. I am blessed and thankful that we have NCFC in our city and so thankful for great staff and volunteers at NCFC."
- Student from Lebanon

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IMMENSE



NEW CANADIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

5th Anniversary

MAY 10, 2018

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE STORIES OF THREE AMAZING WOMEN AT NCFC.

NADA Nada was born in Lebanon during a war, and spent the first seven years of her life in sanctuary there as a devout Muslim. She moved to Canada to join her husband 16 years ago, and has four sons. Nada discovered NCFC when she was walking by, and went in to ask for information. It was a "Spa" day and Nada was surprised to be offered a foot-massage and facial. She has become a familiar face at NCFC, taken sewing and cooking lessons and ESL classes. Two years ago, Nada was in a car accident, which resulted in debilitating hip pain. After a year of constant pain, when NCFC staff prayed for her, Nada experienced immediate miraculous healing. She has benefited from true friendship she has received from staff and volunteers, and feels they are family. "They helped me with my children – by the programs they provide for kids. They also helped me with my personal problems by praying and listening to me."



HAZAR Hazar was born in Lebanon, and came to Canada with her family when she was 11. Her father immigrated first. Two years later he was able to sponsor the rest of the family to join him. Hazar has lived in Canada for 25 years and is married with one daughter. She enjoys cooking, threading and fixing things. She started attending NCFC a year ago, with her friend Nada. She is fluent in English and cheerfully serves regularly, caring for children, cleaning, assisting with special events and Arabic translation. Her daughter enjoys activities provided through the NCFC. Hazar says that the atmosphere at NCFC is contagious, as staff and volunteers have inspired her and shown her that she has much to give. Being a part of NCFC has given her joy and confidence in giving and receiving.



MILAGROS Milagros was born in Peru and came to Canada in 2004 when she was 26 years old, to work as a nanny. The most difficult part of her experience was not being able to read or write in English. The winters are hard, but she appreciates the laws, kind people, and orderly habits here. Milagros discovered NCFC five years ago, and has enjoyed participating in ESL classes, cooking, sewing, Bible Study and other classes, in addition to activities for her children. She loves to give back to the community with Spanish translation, and providing resources and help to others. An avid reader and learner, Milagros also loves to dance! She volunteers with the Peruvian Rhythms Society, and invited them to perform for NCFC's Volunteer Appreciation dinner last May. She says NCFC has taught her to "give and receive without judging," and "love and help your neighbour despite cultural and personal differences we have as people and immigrants in particular." She appreciates that NCFC has helped her learn about Jesus and Christianity.

youthministries

In December 2019, Grade 7's from our CSC Youth Ministry came together to pack shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. For some of the youth that came, it was their first time coming into a church. Events like these are intentionally providing opportunities for students to grow in their faith, and invite friends from their school and community to our church family.





PURPOSE:

For all of CSC to gather together under one roof to praise and worship Jesus and celebrate what He is doing among us.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT N.O.W. ?

"The overflowing sanctuary and the fact that people now spill out of the front and into the aisles gives proof to the hunger for more and more and more of God."



A full worship center; testimony from Mikayla Colyn; Evan Wilson was baptized; the Altar Ministry team; Some of our children leading at the N.O.W. service. Photos by Shelly Sylvester and Moses Yu



ENDLESS

I am a child of God
 I am a servant of the Lord
 I am a believer of God
 I am amazing
 I am a follower of the Risen King
 I am a follower of Christ
 I am a believer
 I am fulfilled
 I am a co-heir with Christ
 I am grateful for what You have done for my family
 I am willingly obedient
 I am forgiven
 I am a child of the Lord to promise Him
 I am a disciple of Jesus
 I am a child of Christ and God
 I am a son of the King
 I am diverse

I am a prince of the Ruler
 I am loved
 I am forgiven of my sins
 I am cherished by God
 I am loved by God
 I am welcomed
 I am favoured by God
 I am God's princess
 I am a believer of the faith
 I am someone for God and Christ
 I am Jesus' child
 I am unique
 I am God's friend
 I am a child of the Heavenly Father
 I am precious and loved by God
 I am a leader
 I am valued by God



5&6 ministry



June 1-3, 2018, our Grade 5/6 ministry had a 3-day retreat at Pioneer Lodge Camp. There were 102 students and 18 leaders who engaged in this time of fun, exciting activities and most importantly, an encounter with God our Creator. As the theme suggests, the goal of this retreat was for each student to identify themselves in Christ. All the games, activities and lessons were focused around this goal. At the end of the retreat, students wrote about their discovered identity in Christ and we took pictures. It was a weekend we will never forget. All Glory to God!

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS:

"I had a really good time at the retreat. I learned more things about God and how to obey Him, and be a better child of God. God loves me no matter what and He wants me to show His love to those who do not know Him."

FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS:

"At first my son was hesitant to go on the retreat. But when I picked him up afterwards, the first thing he said was, "Thank you for letting me go! It was very good!" The retreat and the ministry in general have made my son an even better person. He is kinder, more respectful of his sisters, and he is even cautious of what he watches on TV and the kind of games he plays. God is using the Ministry to touch and mould our children's lives. Thank you to the Grade 5/6 Ministry. What you do matters and is appreciated!"

"The retreat was both of my kids' first time away from us. My husband and I were worried about them, but they had a blast! My son was having so much fun, that he forgot most of his belongings. Their relationships with God have really grown. My husband and I are thankful for this ministry and the time they invest in our kids."

"My daughter enjoyed the weekend so much. It was the first time she was ever away from us, but we knew that retreats like this are an opportunity for her to grow in her faith. She came to understand more of her identity in Christ. She gained friends who accept her as she is and she has become more aware of what God designed her to be. We can see that she has gained a better understanding of her relationship with the Lord."

FEEDBACK FROM LEADERS:

"It was a privilege to serve God by making an impact in children's lives. It was powerful to intentionally listen to the kids and reassure them of their worth as children loved by God."

"It was nice to see kids having fun and interacting. It was wonderful to see how much fun the kids had out there. They were all happy and receiving spiritual nourishment from the classes. They were developing friendships with each other as well."

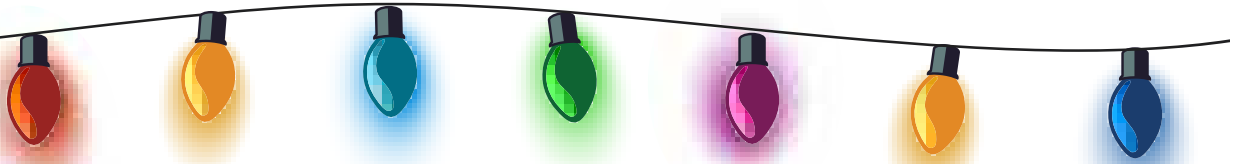


Photos on pages 16 & 17 by Jigs Gonzalez

children's ministries

CHRISTMAS FEST

DECEMBER 1, 2018

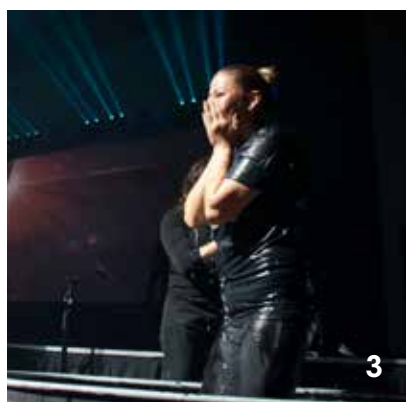


Our Children's Ministries staff from all campuses came together to host Christmas Fest at Central Campus early in December. It was a beautiful white, softly-snowing morning. Families came for indoor ice-skating, cookie and gingerbread house decorating, carolling, and horse-drawn sleigh rides in the snow. Many CSC families invited their neighbours to come to the church for the event. Two such families, who came to Christmas Fest, later informed us that they had never been to a church before, but had such a good time that they decided to come back for the Christmas productions that weekend.



INFINITE





1. Nathan Betts teaching; 2. Testimony by Jared Harrison 3. Tanya Mark's baptism
4. Interview with Ravi Zacharias' Ministry Team (L-R) Abdu Murray, Basil McLaren, Nathan Betts, and Pastor Ashwin. Photos by Colin Brown and Tracey LaCroix