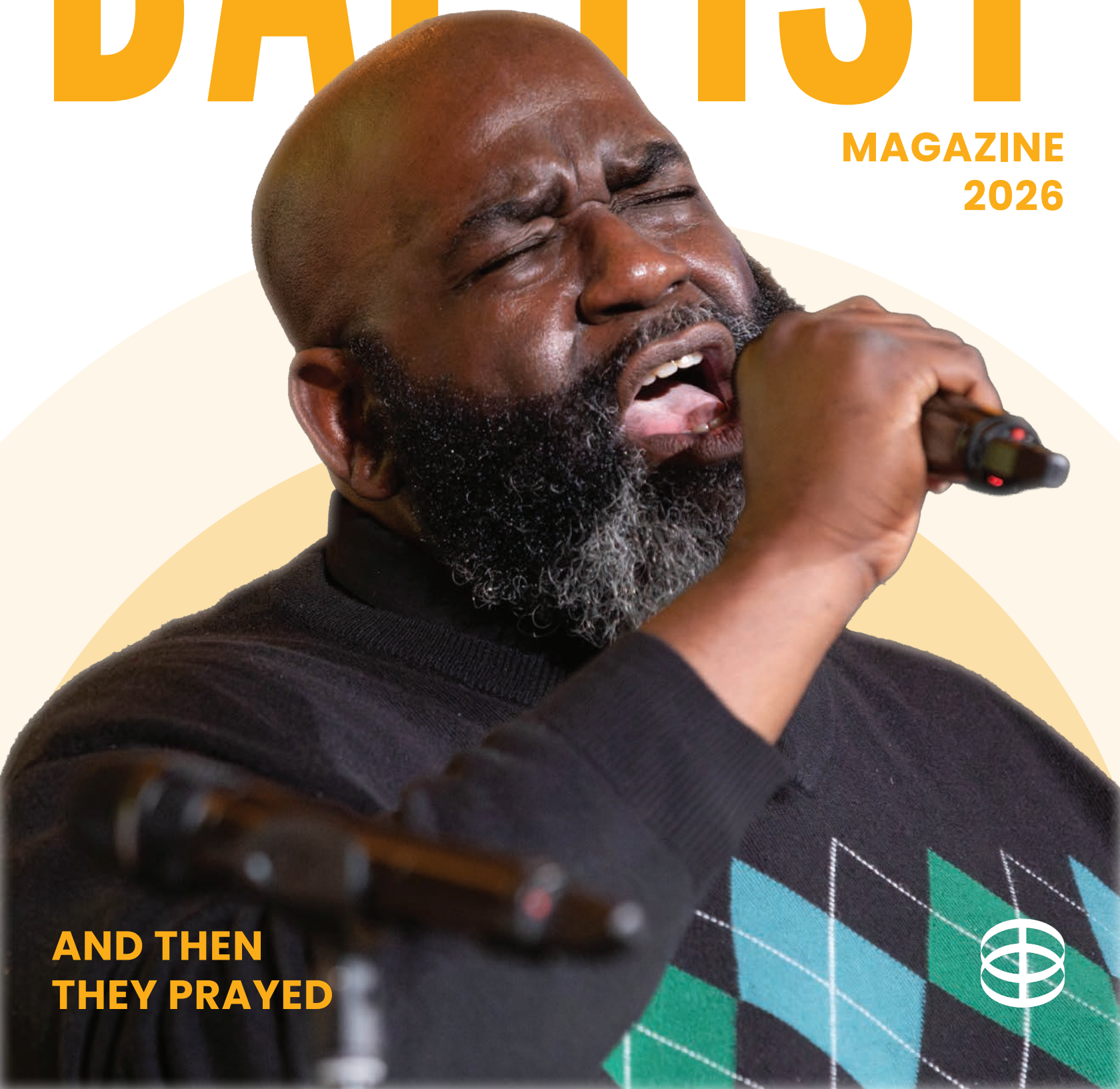


THE CANADIAN

BAPTIST

MAGAZINE
2026



AND THEN
THEY PRAYED





McMaster Divinity College

Proud partner of CBOQ since 1887

CBOQ Students Qualify For Our Highest Levels of Funding

Eligible CBOQ students can receive funding that covers up to 75% of tuition costs, meaning you pay just \$250 per course!



Stay Connected

- + Explore our programs
- + Contact Admissions for promotional materials for your church
- + Fulfill your accreditation renewal requirement with a specialized certificate
- + Attend our free afternoon conference on John Stott next March!

Learn more at mcmasterdivinity.ca



CONTENTS

A JOURNEY OF DISCERNMENT AND UNITY	04
A LONG-AWAITED ANSWER	06
BUILD YOUR OWN ELEVATOR	08
WELCOMING THE MOST VULNERABLE	10
CHURCH ON THE ROCK: STARTED AND SUSTAINED IN PRAYER	14
200 YEARS OF FAITH & PRAYER	18
WHERE'S RON? MEET NEXUS	22
MORE THAN A WORSHIP TEAM	24
FAITHFUL THROUGH THE GENERATIONS	28
SEEKING GOD HIMSELF	32
WHEN THE WORLD CAME TO CANADA	36
BAPTISM REFLECTION	41
AND THEN THEY PRAYED	42
EVENTS AND GATHERINGS	44

A JOURNEY OF DISCERNMENT AND UNITY

By: Akinbiyi Psalmuel Bibilari | Egerton Street Baptist Church

As a missionary, I believe one of my primary callings is to see the Kingdom of God expand and flourish. In March 2024, I sensed that my ministry assignment in Nova Scotia had come to an end. After a season of prayer and waiting on God, I became convinced that He was leading my family and I to relocate to London, Ontario.

After arriving in London, we continued seeking God's direction through prayer. I believed He was calling me to begin a new fellowship, so I approached Egerton Street Baptist Church to request the use of their building for Sunday afternoon worship services.

A closing chapter of Egerton Baptist Church became the beginning of something new.

"God has breathed new life into the congregation."



Following prayerful consideration, the church warmly welcomed us and graciously allowed us to begin meeting there.

The love and acceptance we experienced made a deep impression on us. My wife and I felt led to worship with the Egerton congregation during their morning service while continuing our afternoon fellowship, The Father's Love House. As we became more involved, I noticed some technical challenges during one service and offered to assist with the sound and projection systems, having previous experience in those areas. A week or two later, Rev. Stephen Jones surprised me by inviting me to preach at a Sunday morning service. That invitation was followed by another, and by the end of the year I was privileged to preach at a joint Christmas Carol service shared by Egerton and our church. From that point onward, I was included on the regular preaching roster alongside Rev. Stephen and other guest ministers.

Early the following year, the church leadership approached me about becoming the pastor. They expressed their conviction that God had brought me "for such a time as this." My hesitation was that The Father's Love House had already been established and registered, and I wanted to be certain of God's direction. After much prayer and discernment, we agreed to bring the two congregations together in July 2025 as a trial.



While the transition was not without challenges, it proved to be a positive step. In August, I accepted the role of part-time pastor, and all tithes and offerings were directed to Egerton Street Baptist Church, although both ministries continued to maintain separate identities. Throughout this journey, Rev. Cid Latty has been an invaluable source of encouragement, wisdom, and support. The church re-plant grant from CBOQ is also helping us to execute programs as God inspires us.

As the relationship between the two congregations has grown, we have increasingly functioned as one family in worship, ministry, and outreach. Differences in worship styles and prayer expressions have required grace and patience. Members of The Father's Love House generally prefer a more energetic style of worship and expressive corporate prayer, while many long-time members value a quieter and more traditional approach. Rather than allowing these differences to divide us, we have sought God's wisdom together, prayerfully navigating each challenge as it arises. Through it all, God has remained faithful.

Church leaders once believed Egerton Street Baptist Church might close because it had been in decline. Instead, God has breathed new life into the congregation. Today, the church reflects the diversity of God's Kingdom, welcoming people from African, Caribbean, Asian, and many other cultural backgrounds. We have witnessed lives transformed and heard testimonies of healing, employment opportunities, promotions, and spiritual growth. While some members have relocated because of these blessings, we trust God to continue bringing people who will encounter Christ and become part of His family.

We now believe God is leading us toward becoming one fully united church with a single name and identity. As we continue to seek His will through prayer and discernment, we remain committed to following wherever He leads. Our encouragement to other churches considering a similar journey is simple: seek God earnestly, listen carefully to His voice through discernment, and embrace His leading with humility, sincerity, and faith. When God's people faithfully discern His direction, He is able to do far more than they could have imagined.

A LONG-AWAITED ANSWER

By: Rev. James Odedeyi | Ambassador Baptist Church



Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24).

Ambassador Baptist Church in Windsor celebrated 97 years in January 2026. By God's divine providence, I was privileged to answer the call to serve as Pastor in February 2025. It has been a deeply meaningful and grace-filled experience, all to the glory of Jesus Christ.

At one of our Wednesday night Bible studies on our series, The Miracles of Jesus, the facilitator asked that we share a testimony about an answer to a prayer that took time and patience to manifest. One of our seniors responded when it was her turn;

"We prayed for five years and five months for a pastor, and God finally gave us James. I was overcome with gratitude."



Although there were times where it had seemed that God had forgotten our little congregation, the waiting created a close bond amongst the congregants. In retrospect, God had laid Windsor on my heart while in Ghana late in 2023, as a possible place to raise my family. But there was no indication that I would lead a church here.

What started with an application to a pastoral job posting, led to a roadblock. I was told there was no longer a need to fill this position as ongoing discussions were taking place with another candidate. Much to my surprise, in September 2024, I received a phone call asking if I was still available and if I was still interested in pursuing this opportunity. By October, the process had commenced. I started out as pulpit fill, met the Pastor Search Committee, and by November, was informed about the decision to be presented to the Church as a pastoral candidate. The vote was a unanimous, yes. The churches and pastors within and outside our Association had been praying for a pastor for Ambassador Baptist Church. What an answer to prayer it was.

My encouragement to others is never give up on God's faithfulness; wait on the Lord, and be of good courage (Psalm 27:14).

"I am humbled and honoured to have come on the wings of prayer. The experience was another reminder that God remains faithful."

BUILD YOUR OWN ELEVATOR

By: Eliézer Magalhães
President | The Task

The church is God's gift to the world. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son; Jesus so loved the world that He sent His beloved church. As Jesus is the Word's incarnation, so the Church, as the body of Christ, must be the word's embodiment.

I am the son of Brazilian missionaries. My mother nursed me in the seminary classroom, and I like to think I was learning theology before I could speak. My parents planted churches in southern Brazil, then an unreached region, and church was wherever we had room.

God called me to ministry, and after seminary, I took my vision for planting churches in Asia to a mission agency. A leader answered kindly but plainly, "This is not for you. It will not work. You are white, young, and without money. That field rejects white men, respects only the old, and demands money you do not have. Do something else."

He meant well, and about the odds, he may have been right. But I had a calling. What I learned through that leader is how easily any of us, even people of God, can resist or slow God's work by keeping our eyes on the difficulties. Sometimes our years of experience can prevent us from seeing things differently.

So, I prayed. In praying, God brought Mark 2 to my mind. Four men carrying a paralytic to Jesus, a crowd between them and the door. Just as that missionary leader stood between me and a missionary vision. The four men did not go home. They tore open a roof and built what I like to call the first "evangelistic elevator" in history, an innovative idea that broke with the status quo and created a new way to place the paralytic before Christ. I would have to build one too.

Resource limitations compelled me to be creative. Over the past 18 years, I have helped establish several "elevators" across Asia, Africa, and South America.

"During this period, I was blessed to see more than 2,700 new churches planted and 70,000 people baptized."

These churches ranged from small groups of 10 or 20 to larger ones with over 200 members. All started in homes, though not all stayed there. Most areas lacked theological seminaries; the only theological training they had was what we provided. What they truly possessed were people who listened to the Spirit's voice and followed it.

During a church-planting training in Asia, I noticed a simple man, invited solely to cook for us, who was quietly observing everything. At the end of the week, after hearing the training, he asked whether he could start a church in his home, since there weren't any nearby. I told him that if God was calling him, he should obey. Over the next four years, he established seven house churches, impacting more than 1,000 lives through baptism,

proving that a simple man who responds to a simple calling can make a significant difference.

If we depend on large budgets to pay new pastors in full, to rent, or even to build new temples to plant new churches, we will be profoundly limited. Any available house, party room in a building, office space, or even a bar would be a potential place for a church plant for the apostle Paul today. The gospel doesn't require a formal temple; we are the temple.

We need to build new “evangelistic elevators.” We need to innovate.

Canada is not South Asia, or South America, and I do not write as a Canadian. But I have spent part of this year in Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec learning from pastors and building church planting strategies. I have learned that Canada is undergoing rapid cultural change as it welcomes people from all around the world. What some may call a threat is, for the Church, a huge opportunity.

According to IRCC, between 2016 and 2026, considering only immigrants admitted for permanent residency, Ontario received just over 1,700,000 people from different nations. In Ontario alone, 500 different ethnicities live together. Some of them may enter our churches, but most of them are like that paralytic, unable to move towards Jesus. If nobody cares and pays the necessary cost of bringing them to Jesus, they may never come.

In March 2026, CBOQ welcomed Eliézer Magalhães as a consultant in the area of planting and church re-planting. In this role, Eliezer is helping CBOQ explore new opportunities, support churches and cast a renewed vision for the future of planting and re-planting across the CBOQ family.

Two-thirds of the pastors who joined CBOQ in 2025 were born outside Canada. God has already sent the missionaries. What might it look like to release them? No church is too small. A congregation of twenty cannot fund a building, but it can host a household group in a living room. A church with an aging sanctuary can share it with an immigrant congregation and watch its life return. The gospel never changes, but the vehicles carrying it must be as varied as the people we are sent to reach. Each is a roof waiting to be torn open. An elevator someone must build.

It is easy for any of us, and I must guard my own heart here, to measure faithfulness by what we maintain rather than whom we reach for Christ. So, my prayer for CBOQ is that we should rise, and that a pastor reading this would look at his neighborhood and ask what path must be opened. The paralytic rose because four friends loved him enough to carry him. Ontario and Quebec will rise when enough of us love them enough to do the same. Let's build new elevators.

- Eliézer Magalhães, PhD
President, The Task (the-task.org)
- Regional Coordinator for the Maritimes
– Union of French Baptist Churches in Canada
- Church Planting Consultant - CBOQ

The Task is a mission organization that serves and nurtures churches so they can plant churches among unreached peoples. Eliézer Magalhães studied at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and holds a PhD in theology from the South African Theological Seminary. He is the author of six books, most recently “Rise Up and Walk: Turning a Paralytic World Upside Down.”

WELCOMING THE MOST VULNERABLE

By: Kevin Long | Refugee Liaison | CBOQ

For over fifteen years, I have served as Refugee Liaison for CBOQ in a volunteer capacity. I took on this role at the urging of Anne Woolger of Matthew House Toronto, after I had retired from my teaching career. Prior to that, despite living in rural eastern Ontario, I had done some volunteer work at Matthew House. I became interested in that volunteer work one Sunday when I was in Toronto visiting Spring Garden Baptist Church.

There was a notice in the bulletin seeking volunteers to help at a weekend getaway for refugees at Camp Kwasind, with the name of a woman to talk to. At the end of the service, I asked the woman in the pew beside me where I might find the woman listed in the bulletin, and she said she could answer my questions herself since she was the founding director of Matthew House Toronto.

“So, I have always maintained that when God placed me in a pew beside Anne Woolger, it really was my calling to help with refugee ministry.”

Originally, I was asked to do two major roles as Refugee Liaison. One was to promote the work of the various Matthew Houses (MH), all of which have a Baptist connection: MH Toronto, MH Ottawa, MH Fort Erie and MH Windsor (and for a little while even Maison Mathieu Montreal). Matthew Houses serve by welcoming refugees who arrive to Canada and need a place to stay, and help getting started on their application for permanent residency.

The other role was to be a support in the CBOQ Refugee Sponsorship program. This program brings refugees who are still overseas to settle in Canada. I maintain interest and connections with the Matthew House ministries, but over the years my volunteer role has focused more on the refugee sponsorship program at CBOQ.

There is a growing need and government policies are always changing.

For the earlier years of my support to CBOQ, I had the joy of working with Carol Gouveia. CBOQ is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) with the Government of Canada, meaning that we can process refugee sponsorship on behalf of our churches. I attended many meetings in various parts of Canada, learned a great deal at those meetings and online, and became proficient at checking over applications. This helps avoid errors which slow down or cause applications to be returned for correction. I provided support as best I could to Carol, and with Carol's excellent leadership we were able to keep the program humming along, with many refugee arrivals.

So much has changed over the years to try to bring down a rather large backlog of cases around the world. Despite the challenges, the greatest joy comes when we see photos of a church warmly welcoming a refugee family at the airport or hear reports of a refugee successfully starting a new life and career in Canada. At CBOQ, we are privileged to have opportunities to extend God's Kingdom by doing what we can to show His love to the most vulnerable in our world. May we continue to carry out this worthy calling!



REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

If your church is interested in refugee sponsorship, please contact sponsorship@baptist.ca. Kristina Gummatova now oversees the program for CBOQ. As a small Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) with a significantly reduced sponsorship allocation, we receive only a limited number of spaces each year and maintain a waiting list of interested churches.

How CBOQ Refugee Sponsorship Works:

- Almost all refugees which CBOQ helps sponsor are 'named' refugees.
- Someone will approach a CBOQ church to ask if the church would consider sponsoring a friend or relative in dire straits in some part of the world to relocate to Canada.
- Refugee qualifications:
 - » The principal applicants must have left their country of origin.
 - » They must have suffered some sort of persecution or rejection in their home country.
 - » It must be impossible for them to return there in safety and dignity.
- The church sponsoring through CBOQ must raise the funds to support the refugee or family for the first year in Canada and must supply all the emotional support and guidance to help them adapt to life in this country.
- A financial requirement must be met in order to provide for the family for one year. This will vary based on the family's size and where they will live.
- If accepted, they are rigorously interviewed and checked overseas, to make sure there is no criminality or reason they would not make good Canadian citizens.

THEN

- No limit on sponsorship applications.
- Wait time was 5+ years for approval to travel to Canada.
- Hard-copy applications.
- Government obtained all documentation from refugee.

NOW

- Capped depending on the size of the SAH and its financial and personnel capacity to sponsor.
- Wait time is now 2-3 years for approval to travel to Canada.
- Electronic applications.
- Sponsoring Church obtains all documentation from refugee.

WAYS CHURCHES CAN HELP

PRAY

For years, Canadians have generally been open and welcoming to refugees coming to our land. But sadly, we find that attitudes are hardening. Because we are in a troubled world and tighter economic circumstances, there is a tendency to 'blame the stranger'. We forget that refugees commonly bring a strong work ethic and contribute positively to our economy and society. We need to remember that our Lord Jesus was once a refugee himself when He and his parents fled to Egypt to escape King Herod. We should pray for Canadian hearts to be fully open to refugee needs.

SPONSOR

If your church does not have contacts with any known refugees, you can still sponsor through a special program with already government approved refugees. Under this program the cost to the church is less, refugees usually arrive quickly, and we don't need to use any of the allocated spots. Urban churches are not the only ones who can sponsor. Some refugees prefer to settle in small towns or in the country. Gilmour Memorial Baptist Church, outside of Peterborough, is a good example of a church in

a rural setting that has been very successful in refugee sponsorship.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are needed in many roles, from assisting with the cooking to spending time helping newcomers adjust to life in Canada. I once took a refugee shopping for 'long johns' of all things. He came from a temperate part of the world and had heard about the cold winters in Canada. He was looking forward to wearing this article of clothing to help keep him warm!

LEARN

Educate yourself on the truths related to refugees, so you can share the true facts with others. There are many good resources, but two I would recommend are:

- evangelicalfellowship.ca - Search 'refugee' on the site, and you will be taken to links to a number of articles related to the church and refugees. I recommend a document entitled 'Welcome the Stranger'.
- ccrweb.ca - The Canadian Council for Refugees continues to do excellent work and has many resources in support of refugees.

CHURCH ON THE ROCK: STARTED AND SUSTAINED IN PRAYER

By: Quinten Shannon | CBOQ

In 1992, six Baptist churches came together around a shared concern: how could they create meaningful ministry for young people when none of them had a youth pastor? Together, they pooled what they had and hired a recent McMaster Divinity College graduate, Rev. Dr. Dave Overholt.

Soon, 20 young people were gathering for Bible studies, evangelistic outreach and regular leadership training. They encountered Jesus in new and meaningful ways, and eventually a monthly worship gathering formed. Within four years, it had grown to 700 people.

In 1996, Bill Horne asked whether there might be an opportunity to create a church focused specifically on young people. The possibility was exciting, but the answer was not an immediate yes. Instead, they prayed about it.

In January 1997, Church on the Rock (COTR) was planted and welcomed into the Baptist convention. Over the next thirty years, the church continued to grow and became a place of salvation and ministry for thousands of young people. Today, buses of local college and university students and a full nursery testify to a ministry that continues to reach the next generation.



A CHURCH TAUGHT TO PRAY

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (Ephesians 6:18, NIV)

Necessity taught dependence. For years, with no more than a dollar in its bank account, the church prayed for the resources to meet its obligations. Prayer is not reserved for crisis. It is a posture. Today, that posture is visible throughout the church: a prayer corner on Sundays, ministry prayer during worship and a monthly Prayer Summit. On the property, a prayer path and cabin provide places to withdraw and seek God.

No story demonstrates this dependence more than the story of the church’s land. For ten years, they prayed for property that could make a greater dream possible: summer camp. Seven acres became available on Upper James Street. The land was zoned institutional and included an empty school that could be used for offices and developed to include a larger worship space. After years of meeting in rented space at a local school in Hamilton, it seemed like an extraordinary opportunity. There was one problem. The asking price was \$1.2 million, and they had no money.

Nevertheless, they submitted an offer for half the asking price. Surprisingly, their bid succeeded. When the church explained its financial situation, the price was lowered to \$600,000 and additional time was provided. With no equity, the church struggled to secure financing. Pastor Dave walked

the property and prayed, asking God to provide. When he returned home, there was a message waiting. A businessman from Oakville, who had brought young people to the youth cooperative, had heard about the property. Believing it was a good piece of land, he asked whether the church needed help. With some nervousness, Pastor Dave said they did.

“How much help?”

“A lot.”

The man offered \$500,000. The seven acres were purchased outright.

The path toward a permanent worship space, however, has not been as straightforward. After thirteen years of roadblocks, studies, delays, municipal requirements and costly setbacks, the congregation still meets in rented facilities. But those challenges have not dampened their faith.

“We are enthusiasm-rich, but resource-poor,” Pastor Dave explains. “So we have to depend on prayer.”

“That is one of the answers to prayer that defined our existence,” Pastor Dave recalls. “And it has given us faith in bigger things.”

Pastor Dave explains, “One of the things that helped us was remembering the miracles of God from the past.”

CHURCH ON THE ROCK: STARTED AND SUSTAINED IN PRAYER

As plans for the property continued, another opportunity emerged. A community needs study identified affordable childcare as one of the greatest local needs. The dream of a summer camp now seemed even more meaningful, but the church needed more space.

Church on the Rock approached neighbouring landowners about purchasing a small portion of land for parking. After several years, the neighbours eventually offered COTR all 90 acres adjoining its existing property. The cost was \$1.9 million. Once again, the opportunity exceeded the church's resources. Once again, COTR prayed. When a final decision had to be made, a woman whose husband had passed away gave the church \$1.2 million toward the purchase. With some mortgaging, including a mortgage from CBOQ, seven acres became ninety-seven.

The church then started Camp Wild Rock, an outdoor adventure camp where, for five weeks each summer, 65 children participate alongside 35 teenagers who serve as leaders. The property provides space for soccer fields, a disc golf course, campfires and outdoor activities, while the cost is kept accessible. Children are cared for, teenagers are developed as leaders, relationships are formed and young people encounter the Gospel.

Paul prayed that the church might "grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" and "know this love that surpasses knowledge" (Ephesians 3:18–19, NIV). After thirty years, the desire to share the truth of this Scripture with Hamilton remains: that people would encounter Jesus, His love and the life found in Him.

One woman encountered the church through its disc golf course. During one service, she made her way to the prayer corner, where a member prayed with her as she responded to Christ. In the months that followed, she immersed herself in Scripture, read through the Bible and told others about her new peace in God. Her story brings together the larger story of Church on the Rock: land once prayed for became a means of connecting with the community; connection became an invitation to worship; a culture of prayer created a place to respond; and another person encountered Christ.



A STORY NOT FINISHED

Prayers remain: to build a gymnasium and sanctuary despite limited resources, and to expand Camp Wild Rock as a place where the community can gather, belong and encounter Jesus.

Pastor Dave says,

**“At the heart of it all,
we want people to meet Jesus
and discover the life he brings.”**

The story is about more than answered prayers. It is also an invitation to trust God with the prayers that remain unanswered. The church’s confidence is that God hears His people as they surrender their desires to His.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” (1 John 5:14, NIV)

Perhaps this is why C.S. Lewis wrote, “The prayer preceding all prayers is ‘May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to.’” Prayer begins with coming honestly before God, not merely seeking His provision but seeking Him; not bending His will toward ours but surrendering ourselves to His.



200 YEARS OF FAITH & PRAYER

Interview with Rev. Wendell Gibbs | First Baptist Church | Toronto
By: Kristina Gummatova,
Communication and Sponsorship Coordinator | CBOQ





This year, First Baptist Church Toronto is celebrating its 200th anniversary. A historic Black church with roots in the Underground Railroad, First Baptist has been part of Toronto's Black community for two centuries. We had the privilege of sitting down with its current pastor, Rev. Wendell Gibbs, to reflect on the role prayer has played throughout the church's remarkable history.

CBOQ: What do you believe has enabled First Baptist Toronto to remain a vibrant witness through 200 years of social, cultural, and demographic change?

Pastor Gibbs: Every season and every generation that has come, has brought changes. What has united everyone who came, whether immigrants, Canadians, Nova Scotians, Africans or West Indians, was a consistent faith. It's accepting Christ as Saviour and living through that narrative amid the challenges, like that of racism, and all the other factors that plagued us in the early stages. It's about continuing to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Now, 200 years later, we understand what that means more than we did before. Rather than trying to compete or compare with others, we simply focus on Jesus—less on the culture, less on religion, and less on traditions. And because of this, we're seeing people from all different walks of life come in.

But we have kept our focus on why we were established as a church. Christ himself said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." In fact, we speak much more about the 2,000-year history of Jesus than we do about our own 200-year story.

***"We are simply
part of His story.
Our history is
about His story."***



CBOQ: How has prayer shaped First Baptist Toronto's identity, ministry, and witness across the generations?

Pastor Gibbs: Prayer is the foundation of our faith, I believe. Through all the struggles and ups and downs, prayer is what has kept us together throughout the centuries since we were established.

So, we pray. Our elders pray every other week, we pray on Zoom together as a collective for our leadership and for our ministry, on Wednesday nights every week during prayer and Bible study. We have seasons of prayer and fasting. We believe that, without prayer, we couldn't survive. We rely on God's guidance and provision for the ministry.

"Prayer shapes us more than our programs, our plans, and everything else."

I'm the 45th pastor here, but looking back, prayer has always been an essential factor in sustaining us and bringing us to where we are today.

CBOQ: Are the prayer meetings well attended by church members?

Pastor Gibbs: Yes, they are. When COVID came and we shifted to an online prayer service, our numbers almost quadrupled. About 20% show up for prayer and Bible study on Wednesday nights, which is about 40-50 people.

We have a very engaging Bible study and prayer online. We can ask questions, and we can have commentaries and responses. Prayer and Bible study have become an important part of the ministry of late because we've driven this factor: it's the Jesus modelling. We see people gravitating much more now toward learning more about who Christ is.

CBOQ: What stories, people, or defining moments from the church's history continue to inspire the congregation today?

Pastor Gibbs: I think it's just the repeated recognition that we are one of the oldest Black institutions in Ontario, and one of the oldest churches in Canada. That alone is inspiring. To be part of something unique with a rich heritage.

Then there are the stories of how we were birthed through the Underground Railroad and through 12 escapees who came from the U.S. to form a church in Toronto, despite all the challenges they faced, and how we have been sustained for 200 years to where we are today.

Our founder is the most inspiring one: Reverend Christian Washington. He was appointed pastor in 1834.

CBOQ: What lessons from First Baptist Toronto's history might encourage other churches seeking to serve faithfully in their own communities?

Pastor Gibbs: Well, the Word is faithful, remain faithful. And I always say, find a church where you can contribute. If there's a place of belonging there, then maintain your faithfulness to God first and foremost, and He will find and fit you into the space and ministry you're in, to serve to the best of your ability.



If the church and the ministry demonstrate more of that model of Jesus, that authentic gospel, people tend to gravitate toward it and are more willing to serve with their gifts and talents.

CBOQ: As you look toward the future, what hopes and prayers do you have for the next generation and the next chapter of First Baptist Toronto's ministry?

Pastor Gibbs: Well, we have a much greater focus now on the "now generation." Over the last year, we have begun utilizing our youth and young adults in this current generation much more than before. By giving them an earlier start rather than waiting for the older folks to live out their time or pass on, specifically when it comes to technology.



Where's RON?

**MEET
NEXUS**

If you've been around CBOQ, you've probably seen Ron's work, even if you don't know him.

He's our graphic designer and the youngest member of the Communications Team.

You've seen his work in our Impact Report, in animation videos and the creative work behind this year's Assembly theme, "AND THEN THEY PRAYED."

That's RON.

AT ASSEMBLY, AN UNEXPECTED CONVERSATION.



What is that?

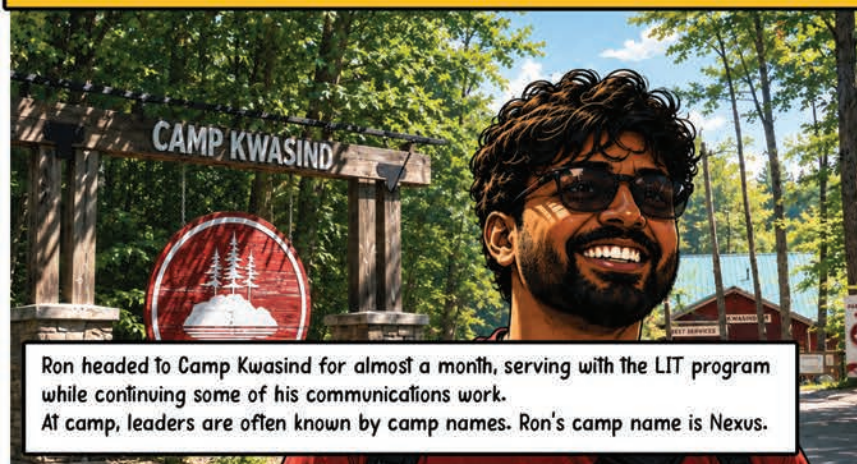
You would be great as LIT small group leader

Daisy (aka) Emily told him about Kwasind's Leadership in Training (LIT) program, walking alongside young people as they grow in their faith, discover their gifts and learn to lead and serve.

YEAP. I'M DOWN. LET'S DO IT!

.....BUT ONLY IF CATHY AGREES TO IT.

A FEW CONVERSATIONS LATER, THE PLAN CAME TOGETHER



Ron headed to Camp Kwasind for almost a month, serving with the LIT program while continuing some of his communications work.

At camp, leaders are often known by camp names. Ron's camp name is Nexus.



The purpose of camp? One Step Closer to God.

LIT takes it further. Young leaders learn, lead, and help others take that step too.

MEET NEXUS'S CREW

Seven LITs, seven very different personalities, gifts and strength and seven young leaders Nexus would come to care a lot about.

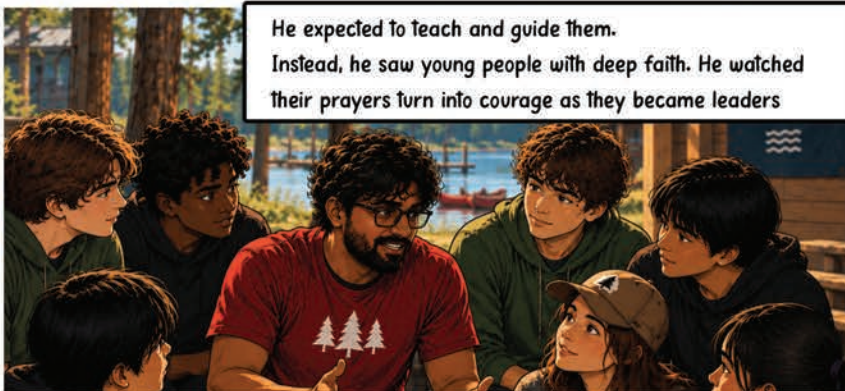


Nexus went in praying for wisdom, strength and patience to listen well. What he didn't know was how much he would learn from them, too.

COUNTLESS CONVERSATIONS.
About the Bible, life, music, filmmaking.



He expected to teach and guide them.
Instead, he saw young people with deep faith. He watched
their prayers turn into courage as they became leaders



THE CANOE TRIP !



BEAVER DAM: 01



This is cool!

I guess
there is only
one more dam.



God kept us safe
during the flood!

One LIT was scared. They prayed together.
Nexus shared a story from his own life, his family's
experience of flooding in Kerala when he was 13.
That story gave hope in a moment of fear.



BEAVER DAM: 17

NOT
ANOTHER
ONEEEE....

Shallow waters, leeches, tornado warning.
And beaver dams. SO MANY BEAVER DAMS!!



AND SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY
NEXUS WAS GROWING TOO.

He thought about his time, his gifts and what he keeps
putting off. At camp, his perspective changed.



"We shouldn't underestimate
them because of their age.
They have so much potential,
strong faith and they can make a
real impact in this generation if
we give them the opportunity."

WHAT DO YOUNG LEADER NEED
THE MOST FROM CHURCH?

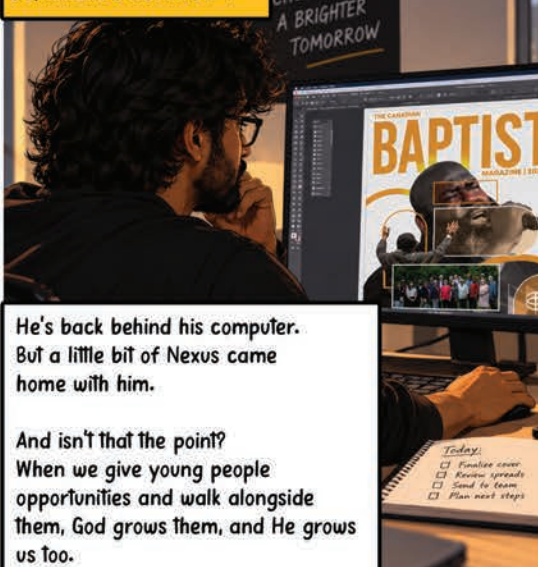
"OPPORTUNITIES
AND SUPPORT"
- NEXUS

WHY LIT MATTERS ?

LIT gives young people:

- Real opportunities to lead.
 - People who support them.
 - Space to ask questions.
 - Room to make mistakes (and learn).
 - A chance to discover their gifts and grow in their faith.
- Because of LIT, the next generation doesn't wait to make an impact.
They get to start today.

SO, WHERE'S RON NOW ?



He's back behind his computer.
But a little bit of Nexus came
home with him.

And isn't that the point?
When we give young people
opportunities and walk alongside
them, God grows them, and He grows
us too.

Nexus would
go back
tomorrow.

And he might just
be ready for
even more
beaver dams.

MORE THAN A WORSHIP TEAM: FAITH, COMMUNITY AND WORSHIP IN MONTREAL



For many who attended CBOQ Assembly this year, one of the memorable moments of our time together was worship led by a group of young musicians from New Canadian Baptist Church (NCBC) in Montreal. They travelled from Montreal to serve our CBOQ family throughout Assembly. But behind the music is a much bigger story. It is a story of young leaders using their gifts to serve God, a church that welcomes newcomers to Canada, families separated by war, and a community learning what it means to worship God

in every circumstance. We wanted to share more of their story with the CBOQ family and learn how we can continue supporting them in prayer.

New Canadian Baptist Church is primarily a Slavic community, with services offered in Russian and Ukrainian. Its ministry has become particularly important as Ukrainians have arrived in Canada following the beginning of the war in Ukraine. The church has worked intentionally to create a place where newcomers can find community, practical



support and an introduction to Jesus and the Christian faith. When the war began, the church became actively involved in helping refugees find housing, employment and providing financial assistance. As more newcomers arrived, an information portal was developed to help connect people with the resources and support they needed to begin rebuilding their lives in Canada. Many of those newcomers have since made NCBC their church home.

While welcoming people is only part of the church's ministry, NCBC is deeply committed to raising a generation that seeks after God's heart. One of its outreach ministries is Coffee House, an event designed to welcome people who may have little or no connection with a church. Tropinka, the church's camp ministry for teens and young people, welcomes many children who do not come from Christian families. In recent years, it has also provided Ukrainian children with an opportunity to experience summer camp, build relationships and learn about God. The church is

now developing monthly worship nights that will invite the wider community to gather and worship together.

For the worship team, what happens on a stage is only one expression of worship.

“Worship is a life lived fully surrendered to God.”

They are intentionally challenging the idea that gathering as Christians is something reserved for Sundays. Throughout the week, members of the community meet in small groups, discuss theology, pray, and remember God together. That understanding of worship made this year's Assembly theme, “And Then They Prayed,” particularly meaningful.



“The theme reminded me that worship is not just about the songs we sing but about turning our hearts towards God in every situation. As we led worship throughout the weekend, I was reminded that prayer is where we bring hopes, struggles, questions and gratitude to God.”

- Anna Negodiuk

For Anna, seeing people from churches and backgrounds across CBOQ worshipping and praying together was particularly meaningful. Her Ukrainian heritage has also shaped the way she understands worship. “Music and singing have always been a big part of our culture, so for me, worship through music feels very natural and personal,” she said. “Ukrainian history has also taught me about faith, perseverance and hope in difficult circumstances.” That connection between worship, prayer and perseverance is deeply personal for many members of the team.

Yeva Boichenko, one of the team’s vocalists, came to Canada from Ukraine three years ago but her family remains there. Experiencing the war from its first days, her parents encouraged her

to come to Canada and begin building a new life. She was 20 years old. Today, Yeva continues to serve God through music while learning English to serve beyond her Slavic church community at other churches, conferences and gatherings such as CBOQ Assembly. Her father is a pastor in Ukraine and continues to lead his church. Despite the ongoing danger, he believes his calling is to remain and serve the people in his community. Yeva’s mother and five sisters are also actively involved in ministry. Their church continues to gather for worship and prayer, hold children’s camps, help people who have lost homes and possessions, provide practical assistance within their community and continue sharing the hope of the Gospel. “The church continues to grow every year,” Yeva shared. Her experience is not unique within the worship team, but their response continues to be prayer, worship and service.

“Despite everything we have been through, we continue to trust God, serve Him, and believe that He has a purpose even in the midst of such difficult circumstances.”

- Yeva Boichenko

For Anna Kuznetsovaya, leading worship while carrying these realities has given the words they sing even greater significance. “When you lead worship, you realize that you’re singing exactly what you and the people need right now,” she reflected. Worship becomes an act of remembering that circumstances do not change who God is. Perhaps that is one of the gifts this young worship team brought to Assembly. They didn’t simply bring music from Montreal. They brought their stories. Their families. Their culture. Their prayers. Their experiences of beginning again in Canada. Their concern for those still in Ukraine. And their conviction that worship belongs not only to the easy moments of life, but also to the difficult ones.

When we asked the team how CBOQ churches could continue to support them, their first response was prayer. They asked us to pray:

- That their hearts remain humble and centred on God as they use their musical gifts.
- That God would work through them and keep their ministry focused on Him rather than themselves.
- For strong relationships, unity and love within the worship team.
- For the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a clear vision for where God is leading them.
- That God would raise up additional musicians to serve alongside them.
- For the ministry and outreach of New Canadian Baptist Church.
- For financial support and resources for instruments and worship equipment.
- For their families and churches in Ukraine.
- For those continuing to live and minister in the midst of war.
- For the Ukrainian newcomers who are building new lives and finding community in Canada.

Their final message to the CBOQ family was simple:

“Thank you so much for your support.

May God bless you, and we hope to see you again soon!”

As a Baptist family, we had the privilege of receiving their ministry at Assembly. Now we have another opportunity: to remember their names, know more of their story and continue to hold them, their church and their families in prayer.

UKRAINIAN TRANSLATION



FRENCH TRANSLATION



FAITHFUL THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

CHINESE TRANSLATION



MANDARIN TRANSLATION



By: Cathy Millar | Associate Director of Communications | CBOQ

Some stories cannot be told beginning with the person who holds the title today. You must go back, to the people who came before, the decisions they made, and the years of prayer, sacrifice and faithful ministry that created a foundation to build upon. For Reverend George Mah, our President of CBOQ and the first Chinese person to serve in this role, that story begins with his father, Reverend Peter Mah.

I had the privilege recently of sitting down with both. I went in to talk about his new role and what this moment means for CBOQ. I could not really tell his story without first talking more about Rev. Peter Mah: a young man who came to Canada in 1972 to reunite with his parents and help care for them, with no way of knowing where God would eventually lead or the impact his ministry would have on the generations that followed.

Rev. Peter Mah's early ministry took him across campuses with Ambassadors for Christ in Canada, sharing the gospel with students, leading evangelistic meetings and discipling young people. The needs of his growing family and the



illness of his father caused him to reconsider what ministry might look like in a way that would allow him to continue serving God while also being present for the family God had entrusted to his care. That decision led him back to pastoral ministry. An opportunity arose to join Swatow Chinese Baptist Church, which he accepted. This was his first pastoral position in Canada. Shortly after, he went on to start the Logos family of churches.

His vision wasn't to establish a church for Chinese Christians. He wanted Logos to be a church that looked outward and shared the gospel with the community around it. He described the people of the church as "local missionaries," sent by God into their workplaces, neighbourhoods and communities to make Christ known. More than four decades later, it has grown to include several generations and distinct Cantonese, Mandarin, English and next-generation ministries, and the growth of six Logos churches.

What I appreciated was how comfortable he seemed with how his own role had changed. He had spent many years leading the church, but didn't need to continue being the person at the front. Since retiring, he has continued preaching, teaching and mentoring pastors and ministry leaders, making himself available to people who seek his wisdom. But at Logos, he has deliberately made room for those who came after him.

A Son Watching

Reverend George Mah will tell you quite plainly that becoming a pastor was not his childhood ambition. When asked, his answer was immediate. "A hundred percent no," he told me, laughing. He remembered his father travelling from campus to campus, working long hours and constantly responding to the needs of others. He saw the

sacrifices, and what that sometimes meant for their family. As a child he wondered why anyone would choose that kind of life.

However, he saw something else in his father: joy. Despite the demands of ministry, his father genuinely loved serving people. He had a "front row seat" to his father's life and ministry that made a lasting impression. With no intention to follow his dad's footsteps, somewhere along the way, things began to change. Through his experience at the Baptist Leadership Educational Centre, he began to recognize and accept God's call on his own life. His brother would also become a pastor. Another generation of the Mah family was entering ministry, although his own calling would not just be a continuation of his father's.

When his father retired, he did not simply inherit his father's church. Two pastors served between their tenures. At the time, he had been faithfully serving an English congregation. When the senior leadership position became available, he went through the church's process and applied for the role. He told me that some within the congregation were looking for "Peter Mah 2.0." After so many years under Rev. Peter Mah's leadership, some expected the next leader to lead in the same way, but that was not who God had called him to be.

Instead, Rev. George Mah understood his role as something of a bridge: honour the people and traditions that had shaped Logos, while bringing generations together to talk about where God might lead the church next. That is a careful balance in a culture where honouring elders and respecting those who have gone before carries such importance. He spoke openly about learning how to respect and honour the older generation,

while finding his own voice and making sure that he offers that same opportunity to the generations to come. Making room for a new generation doesn't require pushing another one aside.

“We're able to honour the older generation, but at the same time dream of what things can be and do it as a collective. It's about us forging the future together.”

- Rev. George Mah

As we talked, I learned about what he brings to his role as President of CBOQ. The relationship between Logos and CBOQ goes back almost to the church's beginning. Rev. Peter Mah remembers the generosity of Bethany Baptist Church (Toronto), allowing the young congregation to use its building in the afternoons. Joining CBOQ became a natural next step, with the support and assistance it provided to a new church being built largely by young people.

Both men were also very candid about the fact that the relationship between Chinese churches and the wider CBOQ family has not always been as strong as it could have been. In the Chinese context, people often learn to work hard, rely upon one another and find solutions within their community. Those are significant strengths, but that self-sufficiency can also mean that communities become accustomed to doing things on their own. If communities do not reach out, it becomes very easy for all of us to stay within our known circles.

I found this interesting. The President of CBOQ isn't interested in talking about diversity for the

sake of saying CBOQ is diverse. He wants us to know one another. He talked about pastors visiting churches different from their own, or seeing firsthand what ministry looks like in other cultural communities. He has experienced this himself and believes there is tremendous value in it. “Reading it is one thing,” he said, and he is right. “Walking through the doors of another church, meeting the people and seeing how God is at work gives us an understanding that we simply cannot get from a distance.”

I know we need to recognize the significance of Rev. George Mah becoming the first Chinese President in CBOQ's history. We absolutely should celebrate that. But being “the first” is only one part of the story. He is more interested in what his appointment might say about the CBOQ family we are continuing to become. He wants people across CBOQ to see themselves as part of this family and to know one another beyond our own churches and cultural communities. Now is the time to do this.

Near the end, he spoke for his hope as President: make better use of the diversity God has given us and not put limits around what God might do next. When the CBOQ family gathers, he hopes we hear what God is doing in our churches, learn from one another and begin to imagine together what God might still have in store.

“God is not finished with us. His story's not done, and the best days are yet to come.”

- Rev. George Mah

There was something meaningful about hearing him say that while sitting beside his father. Another generation carrying the work forward, not by trying to become the generation before it, but by building on what was there and responding to the people God has placed before them.

I am so grateful that I had been able to hear these two stories together. There is much to give thanks for in the ministry of Reverend Peter Mah and in the generations of Chinese pastors and churches that have served faithfully within CBOQ, sometimes without the wider CBOQ family fully knowing their stories. I ask that we pray for them, for Logos, our Chinese churches, and ourselves as a CBOQ family, that we continue to know one another better, honour those who came before us and make room for those God is calling to lead next.

How can the CBOQ family pray?

Pray for Rev. George Mah

- For Logos, as the culture around the church continues to change.
- To remain bold in presenting the Gospel.
- For the wisdom to recognize necessary changes to reach people effectively.
- For leadership development, succession.
- Balance and discernment.
- How to faithfully steward the opportunities given.
- As a husband and father, that those closest to him would see Christ reflected in his life.

Pray for Rev. Peter Mah

- For his physical health.
- For his spiritual life as ministry takes on a different pace.
- To be available to study Scripture, prepare sermons, mentor, and be available to those who need his counsel.



cbwoq



Scan
to
learn
more!

cbwoq.ca



GATHER WITH US



EXPLORE
RESOURCES



GET INVOLVED



Nurture a woman. Strengthen a church. Transform a community.

“SEEKING GOD HIMSELF”

By: Cathy Millar | Associate Director of Communications | CBOQ

I recently had the privilege of speaking with Reverend Bob McCarty from New Liskeard Baptist Church. At first, I assumed I knew what the story would be. Here was a congregation that had experienced several difficult years of leadership changes, was searching once again for a pastor, and had called Rev. McCarty out of retirement to guide the church through another season of uncertainty. Perseverance, realities of ministry in Northern Ontario and the challenges of a small congregation were certainly part of our conversation, but they were not what stayed with me long after we had finished our chat. There was a moment when Rev. McCarty

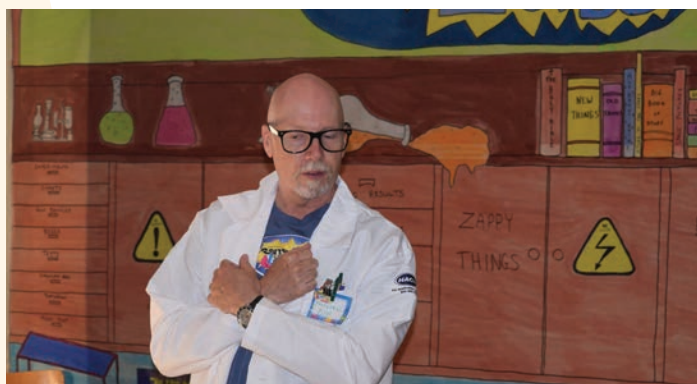
said something that made me underline it in my notes, “We’re not just seeking things from God. We’re seeking God Himself.”

In many ways, that one sentence captures the journey New Liskeard Baptist Church has been on over the past year. What began as a church praying for its next pastor became something much deeper. It became a congregation discovering that prayer is not simply where we bring our requests before God. It is where He quietly shapes the hearts of His people.

Rev. McCarty has faithfully served New Liskeard Baptist Church for more than thirty-three years. Like many pastors, he has celebrated seasons of growth and walked the congregation through seasons of loss.



Families have moved away, key leaders have relocated, attendance rises and falls as employment opportunities have drawn people to other communities. When he first accepted the call to New Liskeard, more than three decades ago, he was told the church would probably close within two years. Instead, this year the congregation is celebrating its 125th Anniversary, a testimony to God's sustaining faithfulness through many generations.



After retiring, Rev. McCarty believed it was time for someone else to lead the church into the next chapter. Instead, a series of unexpected pastoral transitions followed, then the Covid

pandemic hit, and then another transition. Despite facing health challenges, including surgeries and ongoing medical concerns of his own, Rev. McCarty stepped back into ministry to fill the gap. He spoke with confidence about God's faithfulness for the people he has shepherded for so many years.

As the church entered another season of uncertainty, Rev. McCarty sensed that what the congregation needed most was to pray. He developed a sixty-day devotional called Pray Without Ceasing, inviting the entire church to journey through the same Scriptures and prayers together. It was an idea that began changing the rhythm of everyday life. When the sixty days came to an end, the church didn't return to business as usual. The people wanted to continue. Every Tuesday afternoon they gather to share and encourage one another in prayer. Over time, the congregation was no longer simply praying for God to solve their problems or provide the next pastor. They were learning to desire something deeper. They were learning to seek God Himself.

It is so easy for us to approach God with a list of requests, asking Him to fix what is broken, open closed doors or answer difficult questions. Those prayers do matter because Scripture tell us to bring every concern to Him in prayer, but the people of New Liskeard Baptist began discovering that God's greatest work was not simply preparing answers to prayer. He was preparing them.

As Rev. McCarty continued the conversation, he shared that members of the church have been challenged to learn the names of six households closest to their homes and begin praying for each one.

Relationships with Rev. McCarty's neighbours have become an opportunity to share Christmas baking, delivering fruit from his backyard and simply being present. One neighbour had been deeply hurt by her past experiences with the church. Rather than trying to convince her with words, Rev. McCarty has chosen the slower work of friendship. Another young family has become the focus of intentional prayer, simply because someone took the time to notice them.



This same spirit is evident in the church itself. Although many members are seniors, everyone contributes what they can. Some rotate through leading worship; others teach children when families are present. Rev. McCarty described a congregation where everyone is welcomed and people are received simply as they are. Recently, a woman from Trinidad began attending the church and quickly found friendship and belonging. All this paints the picture of a congregation living faithfulness in small acts of kindness. It would be easy to measure New Liskeard Baptist Church by what it lacks. It is a small congregation. Many of its members are seniors. It is still searching

for a pastor. Yet after spending time with Rev. McCarty, those didn't seem like the defining characteristics of the church. What stood out instead was a congregation growing in trust, learning to love their neighbours intentionally and choosing hope over discouragement. Those things are much harder to measure, but perhaps they are the things that matter most.

This year's Assembly invited us to reflect on the theme, *And Then They Prayed*. We heard many stories of our CBOQ churches seeking God's wisdom, guidance and direction. But these days, I will remind myself of one sentence that Rev. McCarty said that has remained with me as I reflect on that conversation, "We're not just seeking things from God. We're seeking God Himself."

The church is still praying for its next pastor. We continue to pray for Rev. McCarty as he navigates ongoing health challenges while faithfully serving the congregation he loves. There are still unanswered questions about the future, but perhaps that is the point.

New Liskeard Baptist Church reminds us that prayer is not only about waiting for God to answer our requests. Sometimes, while we are waiting, God is quietly doing His greatest work within us. As our conversation came to an end, I thanked Rev. McCarty for sharing his story. Even now, I find myself returning to his words one last time.

**"We're not just seeking things from God.
We're seeking God Himself."**



A
GLOBAL
CHRISTMAS

JOY
to
– *and from* –
the
WORLD

This Christmas,
celebrate alongside the global Church.

Pray · Learn · Give

Pray for and with Christians around the world.

Learn from the stories and witness of the global Church.

Give meaningful gifts that support locally led ministry.



CBM

Discover A Global Christmas
cbmin.org/globalchristmas



WHEN THE WORLD CAME TO CANADA

Reflections from the 2026 Baptist World Alliance Annual Gathering
By: Cathy Millar | Associate Director of Communications | CBOQ



There is something very different about hearing about the global Church and sitting in a room with it. This summer, more than 500 Baptist leaders from 65 countries came to Toronto for the 2026 Baptist World Alliance Annual Gathering at Tyndale University. The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) is a global network of Baptist conventions, unions and churches, connecting Baptists around the world for worship, fellowship, mission, advocacy and shared ministry. The annual gathering brings Baptist leaders from different regions together to build relationships, learn from one another and consider the opportunities and challenges facing Baptists globally.

For one week, Canada had the privilege of welcoming Baptists from around the world to worship, pray, learn, share stories and spend time together. The theme, “The Table of Christ: One Gospel, Many People,” was one that became more meaningful as the week continued. Everywhere you looked there were different languages and cultures, but a very clear sense of what brought everyone together: our shared love for Jesus.

For Canadian Baptists, hosting the gathering was wonderful. It gave us the opportunity to welcome the world into our province, to share some of our own stories and leadership, and to listen. The gathering opened with Rev. Leanne Friesen, Jennifer Lau, Rev. Renée MacVicar and Rev. Clint Mix welcoming delegates together and offering a glimpse into Baptist life and ministry across Canada. Rev. Daniel Zacharias helped place the gathering within the Canadian context through a land acknowledgement and recognition of our continuing journey of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Canadian Baptist churches also helped lead the gathering in worship throughout the week. Mississauga City Baptist Church led worship on Monday and Thursday, First Baptist Church Toronto led on Tuesday, and Chad Pilon of Mount Hamilton Baptist Church led acoustic worship on Wednesday. Together, they helped create space for Baptists from around the world to worship as one global family.



WHEN THE WORLD CAME TO CANADA

For CBOQ, one of the most significant moments came early in the week when our Executive Minister, Rev. Leanne Friesen, brought the opening message. Preaching from Matthew 26 and the Last Supper, Leanne reflected on the disciples' response when Jesus told them that one of them would betray him. Their immediate reaction was to ask, "Surely not I?" She used that moment to talk about the ways we can distance ourselves from difficult truths, especially when they involve our own history. Speaking honestly about Canada's history, including Residential Schools, Leanne challenged us to move beyond the instinct of saying "not us" and instead be willing to acknowledge "yes, us." It was a challenging message, but an important one. The table of Christ is not a place we come to because we have everything right. We come because we need grace, and we come willing to be honest about where we have failed and where God may be calling us to change.



That same theme continued throughout the week. Another important Canadian moment came when Rev. Daniel Zacharias received the Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award for his work in truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Later in the gathering, Danny spoke about what it really means to belong at the table of Christ, challenging the assumption that unity means becoming the same. Instead, he reminded those gathered that every person comes to the table carrying their culture, history, experiences and way of seeing the world, and that Christian unity does not require those things to be erased or changed.

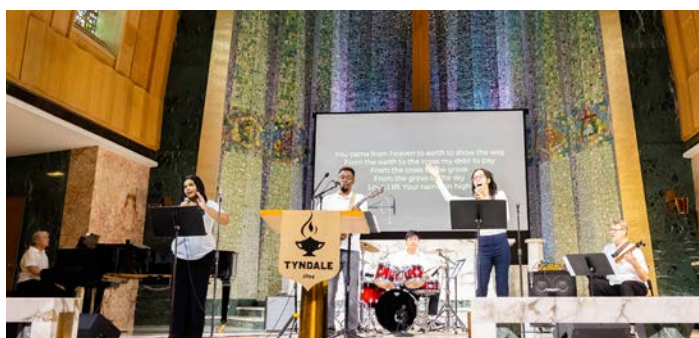


In a room filled with people from 65 countries, that message felt so relevant. One of the moments that stayed with me was hearing John 3:16 spoken throughout the room in many different languages. It was a verse I have known since childhood, but hearing it spoken that way gave it a different feel. The words were very familiar, but the voices were new. It captured the theme of the week better than almost anything else: one Gospel, many people.

Throughout the gathering, we heard stories from places where ministry looks very different than it does for many of us in Canada. We heard from Ukrainian Baptists whose churches are caring for people living through war and displacement.

Many of you will remember the worship team from Assembly who spoke from their heart about their loved ones who still live in Ukraine. We heard from leaders in the Middle East serving churches and communities through conflict and uncertainty. We heard about humanitarian relief, vulnerable children, people with disabilities, violence against women and girls, natural disasters and communities facing poverty.

These stories were about churches continuing to serve, under difficult circumstances, and finding ways to remain faithful in the communities where God has placed them. Spending a week with Baptists from around the world changes your perspective. You are reminded that the Church is serving in places of war, responding to disasters, caring for people who have nowhere else to



turn, and proclaiming the hope of Jesus in places where doing that comes with a real cost.

Canadian Baptists also had a strong presence throughout the gathering. Canadian churches and musicians helped lead worship and Canadian leaders facilitated sessions and contributed to conversations throughout the week.

Rev. Leanne Friesen also participated in a workshop on lament with Tom Tillman and Dana Podrianbinkina-Kaliytiene. Rather than focusing on programs or strategy, it focused on prayer and the importance of making room for grief, questions, disappointment and pain. Each of the leaders had their own experiences with grief and pain and shared raw feelings in the room that was truly a safe space to do so. The take-away from that session was that faith does not mean pretending everything is fine. Lament can be one of the ways we remain connected to God when answers do not come easily.



That honesty was one of the things I appreciated most about the week. There was much to celebrate, but there was also room for difficult conversations about reconciliation, war, injustice, suffering and the places where the Church has not always lived up to what we proclaim. There was no attempt to hide those difficult conversations. But each day we sat with people we didn't know, we met new friends from around the world and some reconnected with those they hadn't seen since the last BWA gathering.

WHEN THE WORLD CAME TO CANADA

One regional gathering I attended had leaders discussing disaster response, ministry development and how different Baptist organizations could support one another more effectively. There were many practical ideas, but what stayed with me most was the recognition that no one should have to do ministry alone. We belong to one another.

I think that is a message worth bringing home to CBOQ as well. Our churches across Ontario and Quebec are incredibly different. Some are large and some are small. Some are urban and others are rural. Some are growing, while others are in seasons of transition. The ministry needs are different, and the communities are different as well. We do not need to all look the same to belong to the same family, because our strength comes from being willing to learn from one another and to support our entire Baptist family.

During the final session, Rev. Dr. Raphaël Anzenberger asked what happens when staying at the table becomes difficult. It is easy to talk about unity when everyone agrees. It is much harder when cultures, ministry approaches, theological perspectives and experiences are different. That is when the table becomes real. The question is not whether we are willing to



come to the table, but whether we are willing to remain there when doing that becomes hard. As the week came to an end and people began returning home, I kept thinking about what it meant for Canada to host this gathering. More than 500 Baptist leaders from 65 countries came here. That is impressive! For one week, we were reminded that our Baptist family is much bigger than we may realize. We were reminded that God is at work in places we may never see and that we have so much we can learn from each other. Unity does not mean sameness. The table of Christ has room for people whose stories, experiences and cultures are different from our own.

Canada had the privilege of hosting the world this summer. I hope we continue to listen to what the world taught us while it was here. Now, we ask that you remember our Baptist family around the world in prayer.



BAPTISM REFLECTION

Christie Scobie | Mount Hamilton Baptist Church

At the beginning of the year, I was baptized at Mount Hamilton Baptist Church along with my daughter and granddaughter. This meaningful step in my journey of faith provided me the opportunity to renew my relationship with Christ and publicly declare Him to be my Lord and Saviour. At first, I wasn't sure I was ready for baptism. I didn't, and still don't, understand everything, but through prayer, God spoke to my heart. I can now see that God also spoke through my daughter and granddaughter in moving me along His path.

Since my baptism, I have strongly felt the presence of Jesus and an increase in my faith, and I want to live a life that resembles more of what He wants me to do. I have witnessed all the great things God has done for me and the prayers He has answered. I now look up to the Holy Spirit in prayer for His continued guidance and trust that the new relationship with my church family will ensure I won't be walking this journey on my own.



AND THEN THEY PRAYED

Assembly 2026 brought the CBOQ family together at Brock University under the theme And Then They Prayed. Over three days, we explored how prayer shapes the life of our churches and guides the way we listen, discern and respond to God. Through worship, teaching, conversation and time spent together, we were challenged to consider what could happen when prayer shapes everything we do next.

Throughout Assembly, something powerful unfolded as people prayed together and came alongside one another. These photographs capture only a glimpse of what happened in the room, but they tell a larger story of a family turning toward God together. We arrived carrying different hopes, questions and experiences. And then we prayed.





EVENTS & GATHERINGS

OCT
19-21
2026

CBOQ Pastors' Retreat

Best Western Cobourg Inn &
Convention Centre |

Take time to step away from the demands of ministry and invest in your own spiritual health and renewal.

baptist.ca/event

OCT
19-21
2026

Next Gen Pastor's Retreat

Camp Kwasind Muskoka Lakes, ON |

We have a special pastor's gathering alongside our pastor's retreat for our NextGen leaders, set in the beautiful surroundings of Camp Kwasind.

baptist.ca/event

NOV
07
2026

Toronto Children's Ministry Conference

Join children's and family ministry leaders from across Ontario and beyond for a day of inspiration, encouragement, and practical ministry training.

OneChurch.to

NOV
27
2026

Treasurer's Workshop

This Online Workshop provides practical information and support for those serving in church financial leadership.

JAN
15-16
2027

ECHO

Hearing God's Call:
A special opportunity in 2027

baptist.ca/echo

FEB
27
2027

Today's Teens Conference

An annual one-day conference for youth workers and student leaders.

APR
5-7
2027

NCPO | Jacksons Point Conference and Convention Centre | New to CBOQ Pastors' Orientation (NCPO) is a two-part orientation for new and new-to-CBOQ pastors.

baptist.ca/NCPO

APR
to
MAY
2027

Ascent Regional Retreats

Gatherings across Ontario for youth (grades 6-12) to engage with Jesus in a different way than back home.

cboqyouth.ca/ascent

JUN
3-5
2027

CBOQ ASSEMBLY 2027

We are returning to Brock University in St. Catharines for one more year!

baptist.ca/assembly

STAY CONNECTED: baptist.ca/events



SEASON 3 IS HERE.

Stories. Conversations.
Voices from across the CBOQ family.

Baptist Bridges brings you conversations that connect our churches, leaders and communities, sharing what God is doing across CBOQ and exploring the ideas shaping ministry today.

**ALREADY
LISTENING?**
Keep going.
**HAVEN'T
STARTED YET?**
This is a great
time to jump in.



LISTEN TO SEASON 3 OF BAPTIST BRIDGES.

Find Baptist Bridges wherever you listen to podcasts.

ASSEMBLY TAKES A VILLAGE.

And we'd love you to be part of ours.



ASSEMBLY 2027
June 3-5, 2027
Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

Assembly is returning to Brock University in 2027, and an event like this simply doesn't happen without an incredible team of volunteers behind it.

We're looking for people who are willing to lend a hand and be assigned to a specific volunteer role for the duration of Assembly. From welcoming and wayfinding to helping things run smoothly behind the scenes, there are a variety of ways to serve.

If you have some time to spare and would like to be part of the team that helps make Assembly happen, we'd love to hear from you.

Reach out and we'll share more about the volunteer roles we're looking to fill.



INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

communications@baptist.ca



Who will you Invite?

eCHO

Someone you know is
sensing God's call

Walk with them
as they explore it

What is ECHO?

ECHO is a 24 hour retreat designed for people who are exploring a call to ministry or wondering if God may be leading them into vocational Christian leadership.

Rather than providing all the answers, ECHO creates space to listen. Through worship, teaching, conversation, prayer, and mentorship, participants are invited to discern God's voice alongside others who are asking similar questions.

Whether you're a pastor encouraging someone in your church, a parent, mentor, or friend, your invitation could be the first step in someone's journey.

January 15–16, 2027

Jackson's Point Retreat & Conference Centre

Learn more at baptist.ca/echo



CBOQ IS *Moving*

OUR MAILING ADDRESS HAS CHANGED

Please send all CBOQ mail, including church contributions and donations, to:

Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec

**PO Box 13507
RPO Best Buy
Mississauga, ON L5N 8G5**

Please begin using this address now.

OUR NEW OFFICE

Beginning December 10, 2026,
CBOQ will operate from:

**7185 Millcreek Dr.
Mississauga ON L5N 5R4**

Please use our physical address for
couriers and scheduled deliveries only.

Regular mail and donations
should be sent to our PO Box.

PLANNING TO VISIT US?

Please contact the CBOQ staff member you are
meeting with in advance to arrange your visit.



**CANADIAN
BAPTISTS**
of Ontario
and Quebec

BAPTIST.CA | 416.662.2308