

#45 November 2020

POWERteam



Change is a constant. 2020 has been a big year of change, especially with COVID-19. It is hard to believe that this has been affecting us for 9 months and it does not seem to be letting up, but we are very grateful for what

we can do. The fall colours here have been quite spectacular and Betty and I have enjoyed walking on the country trails breathing in the fresh air.



Thanksgiving has passed and now with the cooler temperatures and snow already having fallen in some parts of Canada (we realize that Calgary can have all 4 seasons in one day), we are already looking forward to Christmas and times with family. Due to COVID-19, we need to be creative as some of our loved ones are far away and with the borders closed, we need more than ever to feel connected. The focus of our Christmas may be more Christ centered than ever. With all of your creative ways of “being in tune with your times” we are sure you have some suggestions. It is comforting to note, that with all these changes, He is still the same and we who are being formed into His image after His likeness can put Him on display in our sphere of influence.

In this issue of **CONNECTOR**, we want to put on Display a few of our **POWER Team** members who have (and continue to) **PUT CHRIST ON DISPLAY** both in the body of Christ and in the market place.

Putting Christ
On Display

Corbella: Retirement for Pastor Ray Matheson means not much has changed (Calgary Herald)

Ray has been Jesus to thousands of people in this city — he really has. He's been the face and hands and feet of Jesus to thousands of people here.



Author of the article: Licia Corbella
Ray Matheson retired from his role as congregational care pastor in June 2019 at First Alliance Church.

Article content

I've met many amazing people in my more than 34 years in journalism — people who have risen to the pinnacle of their chosen fields — award-winning academics, authors, politicians, inventors, business leaders, actors, rock stars, Olympians, professional athletes, adventurers and humanitarians.

But the greatest person I know and have ever met — right up there with

Mother Teresa — is Pastor Ray Matheson. The 76-year-old doesn't have wealth or fame. Most of the clothes he wears are given to him. He lives humbly. Ray and his wife Dee often have people living in their home who have nowhere else to go. But he is the most authentically loving person I have ever known.

The month of September at First Alliance Church has been dedicated to Pastor Ray's official "retirement" from 50 years of full-time Christian ministry. The quotation marks are there because Ray actually retired from his role as congregational care pastor in June 2019 at First Alliance, where he has worked since 1988. Before that, he was a professor at Canadian Bible College/Canadian Theological Seminary and an elected school trustee and chair of the board of trustees in Regina. He is also currently the president of the Calgary Council of Christians and Jews.



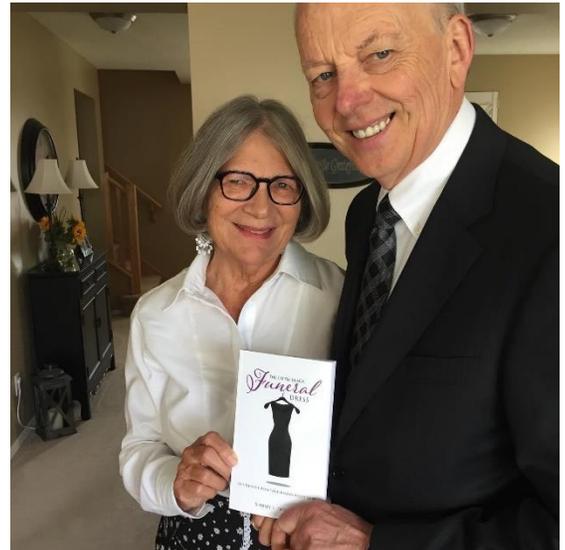
Dee says her husband is just as busy helping and serving others as ever. "The only thing that's retired is his salary," she says, chuckling. Indeed, Ray still has an office at the church's sprawling Deerfoot campus off Barlow Trail in the city's deep southeast and his phone still rings constantly from individuals and families in crisis seeking prayer and solutions.

Back in 2004, I wrote about one of those families. Marie Eshete and husband Belachew Mengistu had moved to Calgary from Ethiopia and were living in a one-bedroom basement apartment with their then eight-year-old daughter Yordanos (who is now working on her master's degree in early childhood education).



At age 30, Marie learned she was pregnant with triplets. “I cried day and night,” she recalls. The struggling family couldn’t afford three more children — certainly not all at once — and didn’t know what to do. A friend went to the Yellow Pages, found the [Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre](#) where they met with volunteer counsellor Jenny McDermid, who attends First Alliance Church. McDermid didn’t know what to do either so she called Pastor Ray and that’s “when miracles started to happen.”

Ray mobilized the church. Volunteers found the family a three-bedroom townhouse, fixed it up and furnished it. Woodridge Ford Lincoln provided the family with a reliable, gently used van. When the three boys were born on Thanksgiving Day, Oct. 11, 2004, volunteers from the church made a schedule to bring over home-cooked meals and take turns sleeping over to feed Natneal, Eyob and Kerubale, so the parents could get some sleep. “Pastor Ray is an angel,” says Marie, who was reached Friday before heading off to her job as a health-care aide. “We felt desperate and then we met Ray and he told us our babies were gifts from God and that God would provide and he was right. Our boys are 16 now and we are so grateful.”



Mengistu says Ray is like a grandfather to his kids.



“There’s no words to describe Pastor Ray. He is the embodiment of Jesus. He not only helped us materially but in every way — mentally, spiritually. He covered us with love.” Rev. James Paton, lead pastor at First Alliance, says even though he was technically Ray’s boss for the last five years, he viewed Ray as his pastor. “He’s definitely the most Jesus-like person I know,” said Paton on Friday. “Ray has been Jesus to thousands of people in this city — he really has. He’s been the face and hands and feet of Jesus to thousands of people here.

“Whether someone was a believer or not, his impact on the lives of people in our city has been unparalleled,” adds Paton. My family has numerous Pastor Ray stories — many touching, if not tear-inducing — and others marvellous or funny or a mixture of all of

those things.



Back in the summer of 2004, our then seven-year-old twin sons were away from home for the first time at Camp Chamisall. Until then, they had shared a bedroom and we decided it was time for each boy to have his own room.

That meant getting rid of everything in the very girly guest room and transforming it into a hockey-themed boy's room. As a result, we had a double bed and other furniture we no longer needed.

Stephen and I showed up at church that Saturday night after a full day of painting and moving furniture and Ray approached us. After his typical warm

greeting of hugs, he said: "There's this wonderful Iranian refugee family I just met who need a bed. They're sleeping on the floor. You wouldn't happen to have a bed you don't need, do you?" Stephen and I looked at each other in amazement. We not only had a double bed we no longer needed but all of the bedding, side tables and drapes that matched the comforter and shams. How did Ray know? Had he been asking everyone he greeted at church that night, I asked? No, he answered, he only asked us. Somehow he knew. Ray's like that.

Later that evening, our doorbell rang and a strapping young man was at the door. "I'm here to pick up the bed," he said.

Stephen asked: "Oh, are you part of our church's Tool Team Ministry?"

"No," answered the man. "I'm part of the ministry called, 'Ray Matheson knows I have a truck.'" We all laughed at that.

Ray admits that his retirement doesn't look much different than his working life, but he and Dee have more flexibility now to visit the families of their two sons Jonathan, a philosophy professor in Florida, and Daniel, a pastor in Vancouver, who have given them seven grandchildren.

Dee says Ray doesn't have the word "boundary" in his vocabulary.

"I have yet to hear him say no to anyone at any time of the day or night," adds Dee, which is astonishing since they've been married for 46 years.

"If the phone rings at 2 a.m., he jumps out of bed and answers it like he was waiting for that person to call. It's usually a crisis. The phone's forever ringing. Just this morning, there were three calls by 9:30."

Ray treats everyone the same, adds Dee. "He's been involved with street people, police, judges, politicians, neighbours, relatives, folks in jail, and even a stranger who we found sleeping in our garage one night just recently. All are considered a divine encounter and made in the image of God, and therefore important, and another opportunity to share Jesus and offer hope."

Ray Matheson will never retire from that. That's what makes him so great.

Licia Corbella is a Postmedia columnist in Calgary.



Two other **POWER Team** members have done something special in letting us know how Christ has been put on display in and through many who are now **POWER Team** members.

Charlie Cook who fits into the First Step of **POWER Team**, =**Preparing Our Workers Entering Retirement**, is one in the 900+ Alliance Family IWs or pastors & spouses who are 55+ and may retire in the next decade. **Ron Brown**, who is now into the 8th decade of the University of Life, has finally “retired” but has not quit.



Ron & Charlie have been on this six-year journey of putting together a trilogy of

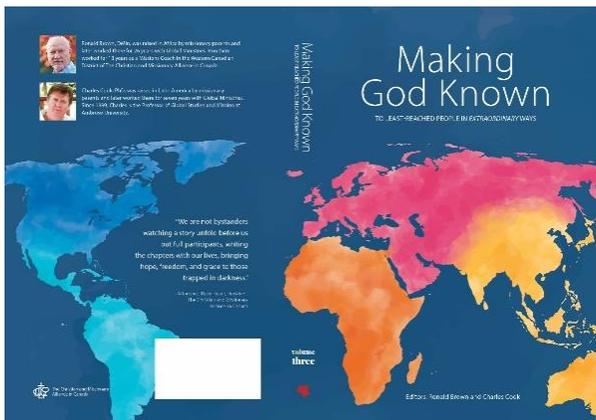


Canadian Alliance missions. They said; “here's our report for your communication to the

advanced in age readers!”

Ron continued: “When Eugene Kelly died in Regina, it hit me that there may not be a record for the Canadian Alliance family to understand all the amazing things that God did in the Lima Encounter program during Eugene's years there. That prompted Charlie and I six years ago to start gathering our CMA-Canada mission stories while Canadian workers were still around; three books have emerged.

1. The first book **THE GOD YOU MAY NOT KNOW** described the growth and development of early fields to which AB Simpson sent workers: Viet Nam, Congo, Indonesia etc. Canadian missionaries who had spent a decade working in each of these places wrote the stories - Ray Downey, Richard Reichert, Reg Reimer, Doug Woon, Craig Bundy, John Healey and more. The book was dedicated to Dr Arnold Cook and was distributed at General Assembly 2016.



2. **THE GOD MADE KNOWN** carried on with younger Alliance fields including chapters by Dan Ibsen, Tim Tjosvold, Eric Persson, Laurie McLean, Pat Worsley, Ilana Lobbezoo, Marilyn Klassen, Don Dirks and others.

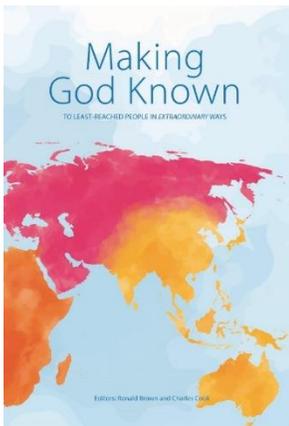
This book was dedicated to Miss Ruby Johnston and distributed at GA 2018.

3. **MAKING GOD KNOWN** has now been completed and will be available as an e-book from the NMC website for free. A few print copies are to be found at district offices. This volume #3 is dedicated to Dr Mel Sylvester and includes his auto-biography which describes how Mel negotiated with Dr L. L. King for CMA-Canada to become independent from CMA-US in 1980. Then Dr Wally Albrecht describes the birth of Global Ministries in 1998 providing the reasons why that came about. Four Global Ministries Vice-Presidents then describe what issues each faced during their tenure: Wall Albrecht, Ray Downey, Jim Foster, Brem Frenz.



Charlie Cook Mel Sylvester
Brent Trask Ron Brown

The 38 chapters include insights from today's GM workers, many of them in CACs where God is at work drawing people to himself. Five of those chapters are set in the Sea to Sea region with chapters by TV Thomas, Joanne Beach, Aaron Tang, Jacky Lau, Joy Tira, Thanh Le. There are five auto-biographies, one from each "S" - Jim and Dawn Sawatsky, Ralph and Ruth Shareski, Bob and Louella Gould, Joseph and Helen Lee, Harold and Maureen Klassen.



Gladys Thompson who was the project coordinator for all three books says #3 is the



best! May God receive much glory as the Canadian Alliance family further understands what God has been doing in reaching least reached peoples through the international workers they sent out from their churches; as they receive accountability for the millions of dollars given to the GAF and see the answers to their many prayers of "Thy Kingdom Come".

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Joy Tira: Not retired from life, but re-assigned to new ministry.

On October 6, 2020 Joy wrote: "Hello from the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta. I am entering my fourth week here, after being transferred from the University of Alberta Hospital. I was there for 80 days.



The day before my stroke on July 3, I had started working on our Summer prayer update. I spent the summer in the hospital and now it is Fall in 'Canada. October is Canadian Thanksgiving and we have so many reasons to thank God. Lulu and I thank God for the gift of extended life. We are so thankful for many opportunities that God gave us to get connected with international people in all the hospital units where I was placed.



My entire medical team was and continues to consist of diaspora people. Praise the Lord, I passed the selective criteria and assessment for admission to the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital. In all of this, Lulu has remained healthy despite all the trips to visit me at the hospital. We are sure that you also have many reasons to thank God. **"Once it was the blessing, Now it is the Lord; Once it was the feeling, Now it is His Word; Once His gift I wanted, Now, the Giver own; Once I sought for healing, Now Himself alone"**. -A.B. Simpson, Founder of the Christian & Missionary Alliance (learn more about him at: <http://www.cmalliance.org/about/history/simpson> . Also check out Google with "EnRoute with Joy & Lulu Tira".

(picture: Joy learning to speak and walk again.)

While I am still at the hospital, I am revisiting the foundational hymns of our denomination, the Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA). I thank God for the rich spiritual legacy of Albert Benjamin Simpson, founder of a mission's movement, the C&MA.

Please pray for Joy's continued rehabilitation, and for wisdom and provision for next steps in his journey, post-stroke. Also, please keep in prayer, the completion of Lulu's writing project on her life's faith journey.

-Please thank God with us for the completed revision of Scattered to Gather: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology - [https:// langhamliterature.org/scattered-and-gathered](https://langhamliterature.org/scattered-and-gathered) and the publication of the new edited volume, Hybrid World: Diaspora, Hybridity, and Missio Dei - <https://missionbooks.org/products/a-hybrid-world> .

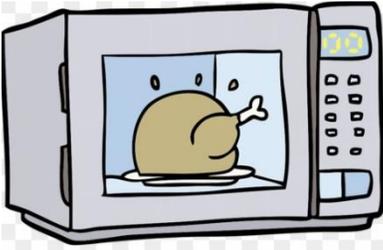


We are delighted to CONNECT with you and put on display what Christ has been at work doing in and through **POWER Team** members over the decades. These are representatives of all of our **POWER Team** members whether having served as an IW or a pastor in the local church and community. Joy represents many who are struggling with physical challenges in this season of life.

Wayne & Betty Kerr -**CONNECTOR** distributors and National POWER Team Volunteer Coordinators along with Gerald & Dorothy Hogenbirk
NOW turn the page for a wee bit of humor.

Humor

Everyone PLEASE be careful because people are going crazy from being locked down at home! I was just talking about this with the microwave and the toaster while drinking my coffee, and we all agreed that things are getting bad.



I didn't mention any of this to the washing machine, because she puts a different spin on EVERYTHING!! Certainly, couldn't share with the fridge, cause he's been acting cold and distant!

In the end, the iron straightened me out! She said the situation isn't all that pressing and all the wrinkles will soon get ironed out! The vacuum, however, was very unsympathetic...told me to just suck it up! But the fan was VERY optimistic and gave me hope that it will all blow over soon!



The toilet looked a bit flushed but didn't say anything when I asked its opinion, but the front door said I was becoming unhinged and the doorknob told me to get a grip!! You can just about guess what the curtains told me: they told me to "pull myself together!"

We will survive!!



As a kid, did you ever knock on people's doors and run away before they could answer? Well, guess what...we are hiring





Pronunciation Poem

I take it you already know
of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble, but not you,
on hiccough, thorough, laugh and through.
Well done! And now you wish, perhaps,
to learn of less familiar traps?

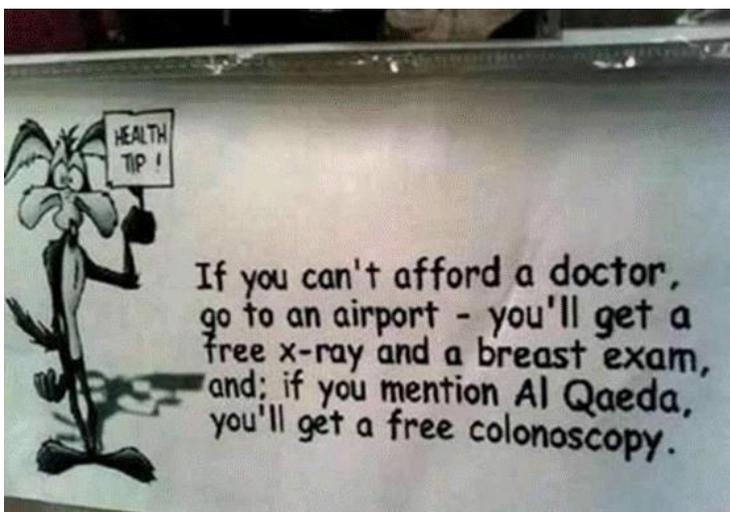
Beware of heard, a dreadful word,
that looks like beard and sounds like bird.
And dead -- it's said like bed not bead --
and for goodness' sake don't call it deed!
Watch out for meat and great and threat
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt)

A moth is not the moth in mother,
nor both in bother, broth in brother.
And here is not a match for there,
nor dear and fear for bear and pear.
And then there's dose and rose and lose --
just look them up -- and goose and choose,
and cork and work and card and ward,
and font and front and word and sword,
and do and go and thwart and cart --
come, come I've hardly made a start.
A dreadful language? Man alive.
I'd mastered it when I was five.

**Make sure you
test positive for
Faith. Keep your
distance from
doubt, and isolate
yourself from
fear. Trust in God
through it all.**

Amen

Positivity in Life



**Just as the graveside
service finished, there
was a distant lightning
bolt accompanied by a
tremendous burst of
rumbling thunder. The
little old man looked at
the pastor and calmly
said, "Well, she's there
and it's His problem
now."**