



CONNECTOR

#81 April 2026

General Assembly

June 8-12, 2026

First Alliance Church Calgary



POWER Team Gathering

Wednesday June 10th 3:30 p.m.

First Alliance Church Calgary

I really liked a statement in an obituary for Dr. Helen Huston, who served as a missionary doctor in the Himalayan mountains of Nepal for 4 decades:

“Her service was decades in length, but her love of Jesus and her desire to serve Him in the lives of all she met was lifelong.”

We have all served in various positions with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (The Alliance), and we continue to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. As someone has said, “Real impact outlasts position; titles fade—relationships endure.”

General Assembly is an excellent opportunity for **POWER team** members to nurture those precious relationships. This will be a wonderful time to connect, to share what God has been doing in our lives, and a time to encourage each other to press on for Christ.

A light supper will be provided.

If you are able, we can enjoy the evening service together.

PLEASE BE KIND ENOUGH TO SEND A NOTE TO EITHER

GERALD HOGENBIRK hogenbirkgd@gmail.com or
WAYNE KERR waynebettyk@rogers.com so we know how many to prepare for in terms of room size and food.

God bless you,

Gerald and Dorothy Hogenbirk
Volunteer **POWER Team** coordinators



POWER Team members connecting 2024

“What some of our POWER Team members are now doing in their retirement”

By Brian Thom

Brian & Judy Thom are **POWER Team** Coordinators of the Canadian Pacific District. Brian wrote to the **CONNECTOR** and said: “I’ve been thinking, that it would be good to discover what some of our **POWER Team** members in the CPD are now doing in their retirement. So here is a start.”



“Dean and Maureen Cooper have served well over a number of years in various ministries in the CPD. But what is unique, is that a part of Dean's final ministry at Peace Portal Alliance continued into retirement, even up to this year. Here is the story:”

TAX CLINIC STORY

It was 2015, and Dean Cooper was the Pastor of Administration for Peace Portal Church in South Surrey, BC. One of his responsibilities was the church Benevolent Fund. In that role, his team was noting that many seeking help from the church had not completed their tax returns and therefore had lost access to benefits they needed to live on.

The Benevolent Committee working with Dean decided that they needed to complete tax returns for these people, if possible. After a bit of research, and a visit to the very successful Tax Clinic being conducted at Surrey Alliance Church through CVITP (Canada Volunteer Income Tax Program) and under the capable leadership of Les Friesen, a bold decision was made. Peace Portal would open its own CVITP Tax Clinic the next year.



Under Dean's leadership, a team of a dozen people opened a Tax Clinic in 2016. A small number of returns were completed, but the sense that the church was really helping people was clear. Not to mention that there were many opportunities to introduce the church to people coming for the service.

Fast forward to 2026 – Dean is still leading although he retired from Peace Portal in 2021, after almost 14 years of service. The Leadership Team has grown to seven, and the team of hosts and preparers now number 40. In 2025, 874 returns were completed with a goal of over 1,000 this year.

As mentioned above, it is not just about tax returns being completed and filed, it is also about connecting with people. Over the years, many people have begun attending Peace Portal, some have become believers, and others have been baptized.

Helping, loving, and providing hope – over a tax return. Who would have thought it? Dean Cooper did, and he is thankful for the continuing support from Peace Portal and those who commit to the project every year, over the past 10+ years.

CONNECTOR response:

We thank Brian for his “This is a start.” In future **CONNECTOR** issues, we hope to have #2,3,4,etc stories from Brian, but also from YOU. The gifts of God, and His abilities given to each one of us are not determined by your T4 slips, but our “Presenting your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service of worship” (Romans 12:1).

Looking forward to your presenting “His” Story for the rest of us to rejoice in.

Lois Belsey -Papua New Guinea IW

A word from Lois:

This is most significant for those who have followed my ministry, and it brings closure to everything I worked on.

It is with great joy that I share with you my final video. I left Papua Indonesia in June, 2019, having served 45 years there. This is really just sharing the culmination of my time, and a little of what I left with the people.

I lived and worked among the Moni people, in the Western Highlands of West Papua, in the village of Hitadipa. That was always my base. As time went on, I spent more time working with evangelists among 7 different tribes, in the Northern Foothills and Lowlands. For that ministry I used the Indonesian language, and often translators. While in Hitadipa, I used the Moni tribal language. For that reason, I translated all of my medical books into Moni, Dani and Indonesian. And of course, we had primers and readers, as well as Sunday School material in Moni and Dani. We also had Bibles in Moni, Dani and Indonesian.

Although I left many workers in place, it has not been possible to keep in touch with many of them. Around the time I left, the political situation became quite unstable, and there has not been a lot of contact with those I worked with. It has been a very difficult time for the Interior church, especially in the area where Mary McElhone & I worked. I have had contact with the children of workers, and some workers in the cities, but they are not free to share much that I want to hear. So, much prayer is still needed for them.

I myself have had a wonderful transition to my home town and country. I am happily settled in the condo my parents owned in Midland, Ontario, and in my home church, Midland Alliance Church, where I have been an elder for the last 6 years. Most of my family is in Ontario, so I keep in pretty close contact with them. I began an Inner Healing & Deliverance Ministry for women at MAC in the early 2000's, which has continued and which I lead. It brings me great joy to see women move into the freedom and spiritual health that God intended for them.



I got a puppy during Covid, a great personal counselor, besides, he has introduced me to many of my neighbours. Even with the challenges of body parts that are showing "expiry dates" pending, God has been good to me and I am so grateful to Him for all the years He gave me in Papua, and for the way He continues to lead and satisfy, as the years pass by.

Here is a video for you to view.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1FfXeLqLZL/>



Lois Belsey

A Blast from the Past by Wayne Kerr

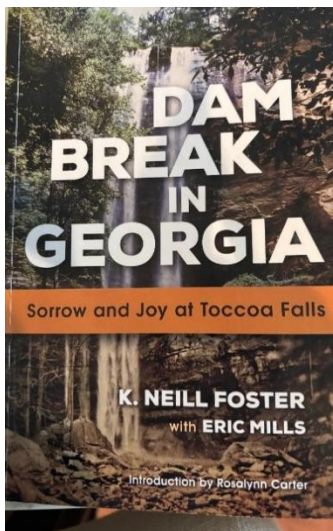
The latter part of January, our daughter invited me to her place in Cincinnati, Ohio to celebrate my birthday. I leveraged that to continue a southerly journey. I left my home in southern Ontario with snow and -19 degrees, to arrive in Cincinnati (4 hours straight south) at -19 degrees and more snow.

Following birthday celebrations, I flew to California to spend a week with a friend and his wife who heard God's call for missions along with me during mission's conferences at the Owen Sound Alliance Church in Ontario. They started out overseeing MAF (Missionary Aviation Fellowship) in Irian Jaya. They flew Alliance Missionaries like Harold and Mary Catto, Don & Glenna Anderson, the Maxeys, etc, for years before becoming the Vice President of MAF.

Returning to freezing cold in Cincinnati, I drove south to Florida and Georgia connecting with former pastoral staff, elders, and mission trip persons God had blessed Betty and I with. It turned out, that I had the privilege of blessing each one with Hebrews 13:17 that first informs us that as spiritual leaders, we are going to give an account for the ministry we had, and then it says ***"make their ministry a joy and not a burden"***. What a blessing for me to bless them for making Betty and my ministry a joy and not a burden. Ones you might know are; Len & Diane Warden who completed 35 years as IWs in Brazil after completing home service with us at Glencairn AC in Regina (brother to Gaileen & Judy Warden CPD & Joy [Bob] Brougher, all IWs); and Merle Strangway who was one of my elders in Regina and was the pastor of the Athens Ga Alliance Church (brother to Rick Stangway -Ambrose). The sad part of this trip, was that Betty was not with me to hear and enjoy seeing the fruits of her partnering with me in ministry.

Three highlights of my visitation/tour were:

1. Connecting with the Steve Saint ITEC ministry in Florida. Steve is one of the sons of Nate Saint, the pilot who was killed with his team reaching the Aucas in Ecuador in 1956 when my California friend and I were 12 years of age. I remember when this was announced in our church and we committed our lives to serve God.



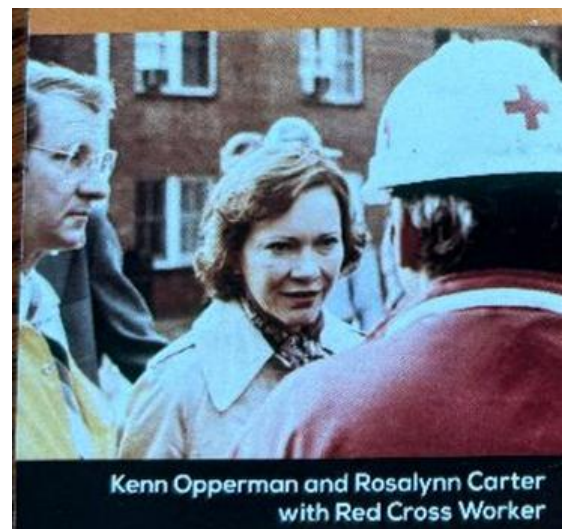
2. Visiting Toccoa Falls (Alliance) College, the Dam Break in Georgia where 39 people lost their lives, mostly students, in 1977.

This was also significant since Kenn Opperman (former pastor at Avenue Rd Church, now Bayview Glen Church in Toronto) was the president of the College at that time. Kenn & Joyce's children, Melodie Ralph

(Dan) and Bob Opperman are **POWER Team**

members. Kenn was Dorothy Hogenbirks pastor in her young life. Joyce was her SS leader.

You see that Neill Foster, former pastor and evangelist with the Alliance, as well as brother to Joan (Foster) Sylvester, is one of the authors.



3. Attending the Athens Alliance Church on Sunday, which was the start of their Week of Missionary Conference. This reminded me of God's calling to my friend and I during our youth. There was the flag parade of nations by the children and youth throughout the sanctuary as the congregation sang. There were missions' emphasis throughout the week for different age levels and the closing off with a "Mission's Faith Pledge". (Remember that?)

The missionary couple that morning was Seby & Jeanna deVroom, serving in Senegal. After the service we connected and they informed me that Gary and Sharon Howell (IW's in Senegal from the CCD and my home church in Owen Sound Ont.) are their greatest mentors in being missionaries. They are also their children's Canadian grandparents. Sharon Howell is the daughter of IW's Laurie & Nancy McLean (ECD). The Howell's son and wife, Mike & Nickkie Howell also serve along side of the deVrooms. Also Seby mentioned above Seby (Sebastian deVroom) was schoolmates of Gerald and Dorothy Hogenbirks children at ICA (International Christian Academy or Ivory Coast Academy) as his parents were Dutch missionaries in West Africa. Amazing to see our Canadian Alliance IW's serving in multiple generations and serving well with our American Alliance IW's.

Having returned from the warm south, I picked up this info:



CANADA - MAY 14: A dream that died: Rev. Kenn Opperman happily showed a model of a proposed \$18 million community centre for senior citizens in 1967. But City Council declined to back it and project died. Opperman preaches farewell sermon at Avenue Road Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance tomorrow.

Kenn also had two private meetings with the Pope as he was heavily involved with Encounter with God in South America along with R.G. LeTourneau and Eugene Kelly.

What a blast from the past for me in this new season of my life. Truly we have been blessed.

Hebrews 6 V19, ***"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain"*** Here is a quote from Pastor Voddie Baucham, *"Hope is like an anchor, the anchor does not prevent the storm from coming. It prevents the ship from "drifting". Hope keeps Faith grounded during the storm. Hope obeys because God is worthy!"*

Looking forward to seeing many of you, especially at General Assembly, Wednesday gathering of POWER Team.



Send your contribution to
waynebettyk@rogers.com 647-408-4204

