

When I was in my early teens, my family borrowed a boat for the day from my dad's friend. Excited for our day on the lake, we arrived at the marina with life jackets, sunscreen, and food. My dad's friend had told my father that the boat might take a while to start. We loaded our stuff, climbed aboard, and waited with great anticipation as my dad sat down, put the key into the ignition, and turned it.

What happened next was terrifying! Instantly, the motor started, and the boat aggressively lurched forward pushing the bow up onto the dock where it was moored. Our family was thrown to the back of the boat in a pile of horrified humanity. With what seemed like superhuman strength, my dad pulled himself to the front of the boat, grabbed the key and turned the motor off.

The boat settled back into the water and we looked up to discover a crowd of people gathered on the dock shocked by what they had witnessed. We later learned that all the oil had drained out of the lower unit of the motor, removing the lubricant essential to ensuring that the transmission remains in neutral at start-up. Without this lubricant, the boat was in gear the moment the engine started.

COVID-19 has impacted people everywhere, heightening levels of friction, division, and tension. It appears that the *lubricant* has been drained away and our ability to pause, idle in neutral, and calmly reflect is being removed.

People are quick to react, swift to judge, and ready to criticize others. This posture is escalating as the pandemic lingers. Whether related to issues of government lockdowns, mask or no mask, vaccine or anti-vaccine, racism, anti-Asian violence, or a myriad of other concerns, the ability to stop, listen, and pause is disappearing. Even in the church, I am seeing levels of frustration, intolerance, and impatience rising, robbing us of our joy and undermining our unity. It is time to replenish that essential lubricant—to allow God to pour His Spirit on us afresh and anoint us with His oil.

In 2 Samuel, we find King David experiencing a moment of deep reflection. King Saul and his son Jonathan are dead, both killed in battle. David has assumed his God-appointed position, reigning as King of Israel “doing what was just and right for all his people” (2 Samuel 8:15). With a multitude of reasons to be angry with the house of Saul and seek

revenge, it seems that the oil of the Holy Spirit is being poured over his soul as David asks the question, "... Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2 Samuel 9:1), and then again "...to whom I can show God's kindness?" (v.3)

Saul was David's enemy, who for over a decade had pursued David with one intent—to murder him! Yet, during this season, Saul's son Jonathan, became a gift of grace to David, extending love when David was at his most desperate. It seems that the motivation behind David's question flows from this experience of God's unmerited and unlimited grace. In effect David was asking if there was anyone still living in the family of Saul to whom he could demonstrate this same kind of grace.

David uses the Hebrew word *hesed*, a word which does not translate into English neatly. It's *kindness* but so much more; it's a steadfast love, a loyal love, a covenantal love. However, none of these terms completely summarize the whole expression of *Hesed*, because *Hesed* is not merely an emotion or feeling but involves action on behalf of someone who is in need. It occurs frequently throughout the Old Testament and refers to God's unwavering commitment of kindness and grace to humanity—the undeserved kindness of God given, not in response to our performance, good works, heritage, or status, but given because God wants to give!

Hesed teaches us that God saves us despite our sin, uses us despite our mistakes, leads us despite our rebellion, and loves us despite of our rejection. And as our understanding and comprehension of God's *hesed* towards us grows, our desire and capacity to demonstrate *hesed* towards others increases.

A man named Jason found faith at a young age but fell into drug addiction. This addiction took everything away from him, including his home. When COVID-19 hit, Jason was staying at the Mustard Seed, an organization that provides housing and assistance to some of the most vulnerable in the city of Calgary, but restrictions were put in place that severely limited capacity. First Alliance Church opened its doors to the clients of the Mustard Seed and Jason was faced with a choice—go back on the streets or stay at the church. Jason decided to try out the church. To his surprise he found a group of people who accepted him, did not judge him, loved him, and encouraged him to trust Jesus for healing and hope. He did, and last December he was baptized. It was this *hesed*—grace and love poured out without conditions—that created space for healing and restoration in Jason's life.

We need the essential oil of the Holy Spirit, God's *hesed*, to flood our churches, splash over our leaders, and saturate our congregations. Without it, just like the motor on the boat lent to our family, we can lurch into areas where we don't belong, throwing the people serving with us into chaos, and confusing the crowd of witnesses to our lives.

Is your soul dry? Has the essential lubricant drained and you find yourself having difficulty asking, like David, "Is there no one ... to whom I can show God's kindness?" I encourage you to take this moment and ask God to fill you, to give you the ability to pause, idle in neutral, and reflect. God is longing to fill us with *hesed* – to create a space for healing and restoration for us and to increase our desire and capacity to demonstrate *hesed* towards others. *Hesed* changes everything!

Global Advance Fund Update




The Global Advance Fund (GAF) covers the costs of sending and supporting international workers. Through the GAF, our workers take the Gospel to places where few or none have heard the name of Jesus.

Year to date (as of May 28, 2021)

Total 2021 Faith Goal	\$14,322,910
YTD Income	\$5,404,887*
Excess/Shortfall	(8,918,023)

*37.74% of total 2021 Faith Goal



 /TheAllianceCanada
 @thealliancecanada
 cmacan.org

2580 Matheson Blvd E, Unit 101
Mississauga, ON L4W 4J1
(416) 674-7878