

## Making disciples – building communities

by Pastor Richard Daly, BUC News

The Guildhall, Portsmouth University, was the venue for the 63<sup>rd</sup> South England Conference (SEC) Session. Held from 5 to 8 September 2019, 543 delegates (401 regular and 142 delegates at large), representing more than 200 churches across the SEC, assembled together for this meeting.

Held every four years, the SEC Session is the forum where the business of the Church is discussed at Conference level and includes a variety of important agenda items including the election of administration and departmental officers, the SEC executive committee that steers the business of the Conference throughout the quadrennium, and steering committees such as the plans committee. It's also a time to review the constitution, examining any proposed amendments that are brought to the floor. Delegates get the opportunity to question and comment on administration and departmental reports, to bring forth motions,

amendments and proposals, and ultimately to vote on items and recommendations that have been discussed. This four-day session proved to contain all the above, as delegates arrived having ploughed through pages of reports and documents in preparation for their task.

### Prayer the priority

Recognising the importance of every vote and the lasting impact it will have on the way the Church functions, underpinning all the business sessions of each day was prayer. Aided by the SEC Prayer Ministries team, the session opened with a united time of spiritual reflection to ask for God's leading in all matters that would be dealt with. With a call to confession, repentance and reconciliation, SEC Bible worker Linda Mukwada reminded the delegation that God is the real Divine Director who guides His church.

With this precedent set in the opening meeting on Thursday afternoon, each delegate

was formally welcomed by Pastors Emmanuel Osei (President) and Douglas McCormac (Executive Secretary), and, having obtained a quorum, the session was declared open.

With the minutes accepted from the previous session, the first items on the agenda saw the acceptance of several newly formed churches into the sisterhood of the SEC. The next task was the formation of the recommendations committee. This large committee, which was partially completed prior to the session, was finalised and tasked with the responsibility of formulating the nominating, plans and licences and credentials committees.

### Restructuring of departments

With these formalities undertaken, the first main item for discussion was the acceptance of the proposed departmental structure that would determine the allocated budgets and directors who would fill those positions. This proposal saw some changes to the present structure: namely, the Health and Community Services departments to be led by one director under one full-time budget. The other was a restructuring of the youth entities to contain a Children's, Teens, Pathfinder and Youth director, who would be overseen by a supervising Youth and Children's director. This proposal saw much discussion, as some delegates aired their concerns of seeing this as another level of

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In prayer: re-elected South England Conference President, Pastor Emmanuel Osei (centre), with his two fellow officers, newly elected Treasurer, Mrs Candy Layson (left), and re-elected Pastor Douglas McCormac (Executive Secretary)





## Vegetarian and vegan diets: bad news and good news

For many years, the reports on the health benefits of vegetarian and vegan diets have been largely positive. However, in a recent research study, it has emerged that there could be a potential significant risk to these diets.

The headline in an *iNews* health article by Paul Gallagher published on 5 September 2019 read: 'Vegan and vegetarian diets increase risk of a stroke compared to eating meat, study finds'.<sup>1</sup> The article reported on University of Oxford research data which found 20 per cent higher rates of stroke in vegetarians and vegans compared to meat eaters. This was equivalent to three times more cases of stroke per 1,000 people over a 10-year period.

Now, just in case you are tempted to rush out and gleefully bite into a beef burger, let's pause to consider the details of the research outcomes and why these strokes were more likely to occur.

Findings from the data suggested that the higher risk of stroke could be a result of the following:

- A higher rate of haemorrhagic stroke caused by bleeding in or around the brain
- Lower levels of vitamins among the vegetarians and vegans in the study
- Lower blood levels of total cholesterol among vegetarians and vegans

However, in another report on the study outcomes, Sky News<sup>2</sup> referenced the cautionary advice of Tracy Parker, senior dietitian at the British Heart Foundation: 'While this is an interesting finding, this study is observational and doesn't provide us with enough evidence, so more

research in this area would be needed.'

This report also

highlighted the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ's) observations on the research findings and pointed to some good news.

The BMJ noted that the 48,000 individuals involved in the study, who had no history of heart disease or stroke, fell into three groups: meat-eaters, pescatarians (eating fish but no meat) and vegetarians and vegans.

The data revealed the following:

- 2,820 cases of heart disease
- 1,072 cases of stroke
- 13%-reduced risk of heart disease among pescatarians compared with meat eaters
- 22% lower risk of heart disease for individuals on plant-based diets compared with meat-eaters

The researchers concluded: 'We observed lower rates of ischaemic heart disease in fish eaters and vegetarians than in meat eaters, which appears to be at least partly due to lower body mass index and lower rates of high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol [and] diabetes associated with these diets.'

We watch with interest for future study outcomes.

**Good health!**

<sup>1</sup> <https://iNews.co.uk/news/health/vegan-vegetarian-diet-increase-stroke-risk-oxford-university-study> <sup>2</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/vegan-and-vegetarian-diet-could-increase-stroke-risk-study-says-11802511>



## 'I have a dream of a church which is a caring church ...

... whose congregation is drawn from many races, nations, ages and social backgrounds, and exhibits the unity and diversity of the family of God, whose fellowship is warm and welcoming, and never marred by anger, selfishness, jealousy or pride, whose members love one another with a pure heart fervently, forbearing one another, forgiving one another, and bearing one another's burdens, which offers friendship to the lonely, support to the weak, and acceptance to those who are despised and rejected by society, whose love spills over to the world outside, attractive, infectious, irresistible, the love of God Himself. I have a dream of a *caring church*.<sup>1</sup>

Ellen White defines 'grace' as 'unmerited favour',<sup>2</sup> helpfully unpacked by Stott.



The problem in trying to define grace is that we make it a concept, a theological idea ... and park it. That's a danger, because 'grace' is not a word only to be tossed around for good discussion in a Sabbath School class, because it is nothing less than the Person of Jesus! It is *Jesus* who graciously loves. It is *Jesus* who graciously stoops. It is *Jesus* who graciously leaves the splendour of heaven and takes on human form to become like us. It is the gracious *Jesus* who cares like no other person in the history of the universe. It is the same *Jesus* who graciously rescues me from the terrible state I'm in - sin.

Stott's dream of 'a caring church' challenges us to the core. Someone, somewhere on another continent during the 1970s, came up with the well-intentioned idea that we needed to be defined by a certain value. 'Seventh-day Adventists - people who care', the line read on some of our promotional literature. But I wonder if it was an adventure in missing the point, because, when you think about it, people who *really care* don't need to say they are people who care!

Living grace has always been a challenge for followers of Christ, from ancient times until today, not least because it is the very polar opposite to our natural human inclination. Paul describes this in Galatians as 'living in the flesh'. He has a list he puts before his church which, among other items, includes enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions and envy. 'People who live like this,' says Paul, 'will not inherit the kingdom of God.' (See Galatians 5:19-21.) In contemporary times, Philip Yancey calls such behaviour 'ungrace'.

Yet look around, and regrettably you'll see the forces of 'ungrace' popping up here and there at every level of church life, both local and institutional, from Land's End to John o' Groat's. If only such people knew the devilish hurt and distress they cause not just to individuals, but to the entire body. Such forces have been around for a long time, but distressingly they linger. Perhaps most painful is when an individual makes sure the church is run 'my way or the highway'. The issue often centres around theology and how it is applied in the life of members, usually in a quest to keep the church pure.

Sometimes we exhibit 'ungrace' when confronted with change in church life, centred around ownership. 'This is not the way my church was; it's changed, and I don't like it.' Often based on 'living in the flesh' fears and threats - it's the 'others' who are the problem, be they of a different racial/ethnic group, different generation, or different set of beliefs.

It causes me to wonder at times if we are all suffering from a form of 'institutional ungrace'. Such a condition creates a lot of hurting people, and we need to repent. Is it not an incredible disconnect, for people who've received the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be anything less than gracious towards their brothers and sisters 'in Christ'? How can this be?

At this stage you are well within your rights to wonder if Brother Editor has a giant plank in his own eye. There have been times, and continue to be times, when I can be less than gracious, with the forces of 'ungrace' controlling me. More than that: when it comes to 'living grace' we are dealing with nothing less than the daily battle of living 'in the flesh' or living 'in the Spirit'.

*'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.'* (Galatians 5:22-24, ESV-UK.)

Back in the 1960s in the United States of America, the angels of heaven rejoiced over one Adventist who shared the love of Christ in word and deed, which for me goes to the very essence of whom we should be. This side of heaven, we will probably never find out who it was who met a lady and who made such an impression not only on her, but on a professor in another world on the other side of the Atlantic. The lady's name was Mary, and the person on this side of the Atlantic was the Belfast-born Oxford scholar, C. S. Lewis. Mary asked Lewis if he knew anything about Seventh-day Adventists. It seems that Mary had been going through some personal difficulties, and, in among her letter writing to Lewis (published in the book *Letters to an American Lady*) she asked him if he had ever encountered Adventists. Lewis responded in his letter of 2 October 1962:

*'I never could find out what the VIIth Day Adventists believe, though I had a long talk with one the other day, a professor of electrical engineering from your country. I fear it is very mixed up with attempts to interpret the prophecies in the Book of Daniel - not, to my mind, a very profitable undertaking. But he was a grand young chap, sweet as a nut and absolutely sincere. No fool, either.'*

*Prayers as usual!  
Yours, Jack'*

Adventists must forgive Lewis's comment about the study of the book of Daniel. How important first impressions are! Could it be that Lewis's world - albeit Christian - just couldn't connect? In a later letter, Mary must have shared more about the Adventist she'd met. Lewis replied on 26 October 1962:

*'What you say about the VII Day Adventists interests me extremely. If they have so much charity there must be something very right about them. ...'*

*Yours, Jack'<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> John Stott - excerpted from *The Living Church* by John Stott, © 2007 John R. W. Stott (publisher: InterVarsity Press, Norton Street, Nottingham NG7 3HR)

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 331

<sup>3</sup> Clive Staples Lewis, *Letters to an American Lady* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014, pp. 113, 114)

**Focus** MAGAZINE  
SPECIAL EDITION  
**Voices**  
Urban Pain - Urban Promise

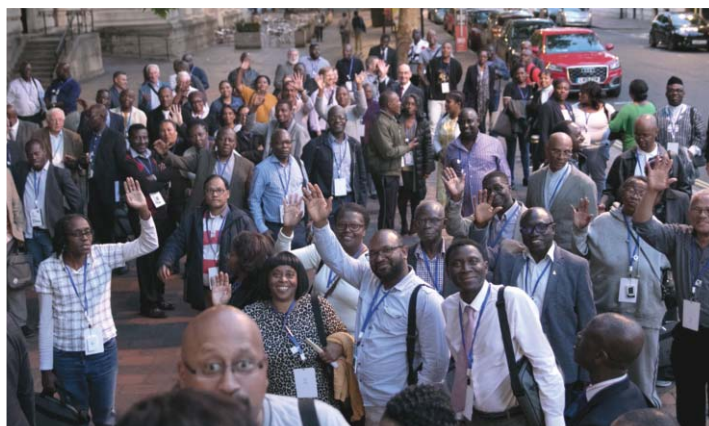
**COMING YOUR WAY SOON!**

This next edition of *Focus* coming your way soon is very different. Authored by Sharon Platt-McDonald and Catherine Anthony Boldeau, it comes as a 72-page full-size, colour-rich picture magazine. Through the pictures we are invited to 'listen' - to really listen, consider, and seek to understand the emotions and feelings of those around us in desperate life-crisis pain. Each page shares a 'voice of pain'. The adjoining page invites the reader to consider God's caring, healing and hope-filled voice as revealed through Holy Scripture.

The magazine has a contemporary feel, but the message is timeless; if you like, it serves as a timely follow-on to the Sabbath School Bible studies about 'The Least of These: ministering to those in need'. In many ways this special edition of *Focus* is trying to do two things together. It's challenging us to 'wake up' and respond, to take note of the 'voices of pain'; and it's also offering hope to our families, friends and colleagues.

Designed by Abigail Murphy, this edition of *Focus*, as ever, comes to you hoping to turn everyday conversation into Good News.

Sometimes it's necessary just for a change to think outside the box - and experiment. Traditionally *Focus* comes in a pocket-edition size and is usually formed of features and short articles aimed at connecting the issues society faces today with the teachings and values of Scripture. Our approach is usually based on solid reason, leaning on the expertise of those in our community who know what they are talking about, and of course with a biblical foundation. We are blessed by such contributors and plan to continue to use their talents and giftedness.



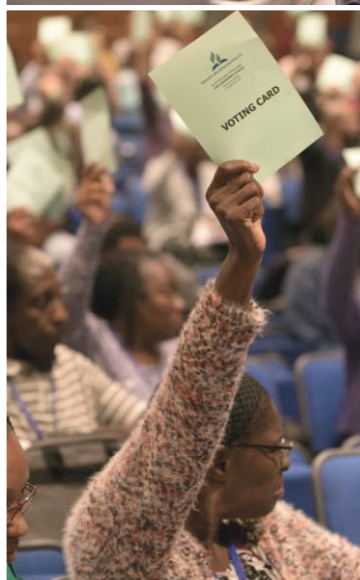
Outgoing SEC Treasurer, Fred Shone ... with grateful thanks from us all



Re-elected SEC Youth Director, Pastor Anthony Fuller

His presentation included highlights of the main accomplishments within each Conference department, and of various evangelistic and outreach activities that were held within the various areas around the Conference from Areas 1 to 8.

Reference was made to the ongoing developments with the North Runcton site, which, when completed, will provide accommodation and a camping site for Pathfinders and Adventurers. The long-term vision for the site would also involve the purchase of further land to provide a venue for evangelism and departmental training for all church members, which would avoid having to hire hotel venues. An update was also provided on the refurbishments at Chapel Porth, which would see new chalets replacing the ageing caravans.



Karnik Doukmetzian, GC General Counsel serving as parliamentarian for the session

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bureaucracy, while others welcomed the attempt towards cohesion in bringing uniformity. However, coupled with the concerns over uniting Health and Community Services, together with a passionate plea from one delegate that was embraced by others to include in the structure a role for PARL (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty), the delegation voted on an amendment to the motion to separate the Health and Community Services departments into stand-alone departments. In addition, it was voted to remove the position of the Youth and Children's coordinating director, and, with the full-time budget created from this removal, reassign half a budget to PARL and the other half to Personal Ministries, which was being presented at a half budget. With this lively debate, which ended with the amendment accepted by the delegation, the first afternoon session ended.

**The president's report**

The evening session on the first day is traditionally reserved for the president's report. Pastor Osei gave an overview of the events that have occurred during the past quadrennium through a video presentation. Looking back, Osei highlighted the evangelistic vision that was established with previous Conference president, Pastor Richard de Lisser: 'Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere'. Osei, taking this theme, spoke of the annual themes that underpinned the strategy: namely, Revival, Restoration, Reclamation and Retention.

**Friday business session**

On Friday the business session commenced with the acceptance of the recommendations committee report for names assigned to the nominating committee. This committee would be responsible for choosing names to fill all administrative (i.e., President, Executive Secretary and Treasurer) and departmental roles. They were also assigned with choosing the executive committee that would sit during the next four years, dealing with Conference-related matters and ensuring that the vision and mission of the Conference is established.

The morning session also received a report from the Executive Secretary, Pastor Douglas McCormac. His report highlighted that during the past four years, as of 31 December 2018, the membership of the Conference stood at 25,295 – that is an increase of 1,986 over the four years from 2015, which equates to almost 8% growth over the period. This church growth was a result of 1,892 baptisms and 277 professions of faith. McCormac's report also showed that, as the Conference continues to grow, there is also the movement of those who are leaving our congregations, and the statistics reveal that on average we currently have a retention rate of 62%.

The treasurer's report followed, given by Fred Shone. His report highlighted that during the past four years there has been steady growth in tithes, demonstrating the faithfulness of our members. The total for the quadrennium was £59.3m, more than 15% up on the previous four years. With the introduction of SEC Text Giving for local churches, and an upcoming app for returning tithes, the total amount, including offerings, is expected to increase.

Both administrative reports, after a period of questions from the floor, were accepted by the delegation.

**Nominating committee – partial report**

While discussions were taking place in the main auditorium, the nominating committee had been meeting to appoint names for the three administrative roles. Their report was presented to the delegation with the recommendation for the re-election of the president, Pastor Emmanuel Osei, and the executive secretary, Pastor Douglas McCormac. Both names were seconded and approved with applause by delegates. For the role of treasurer, a new name was presented: Candy Layson, who was serving as associate treasurer for the SEC. Her acceptance by the delegation marked the first time a female had been elected to become a part of the administration. British Union Conference (BUC) President Pastor Ian Sweeney, who was chair of the nominating committee, gave



Elected and re-elected SEC departmental directors, led in prayer by Pastor Emmanuel Osei

tribute to outgoing treasurer, Fred Shone, for his distinguished work, fortitude and humility in the unflinching work he had done. In response the delegates applauded his service and servitude.

With these items finalised, the second business day ended in preparation for the Sabbath.

Throughout the session, morning devotions had been led by guest speaker Pastor Royston Philbert, Ministerial and Communication Director from the North Caribbean Conference. His energetic and engaging style of preaching, with pertinent messages around the theme of 'Christ-like living', provided a constant reminder of the responsibilities of reflecting Christ to a questioning world. His Sabbath-morning sermon centred around the statement that when people question us about our faith we are to answer them with our lifestyle.

**Saturday evening and Sunday**

After Sabbath vespers, the work of church business reconvened. Reports were given for the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Departments by Pastor Michael Mbui, and on the final day, Sunday morning, further departmental reports were presented. During these presentations delegates had the opportunity to ask questions based on the reports submitted.

Reports that generated most discussion included Family Ministries, where questions were posed on areas of singles ministry and a clarification on the vision of the department, to which Pastor Augustus Lawrence was able to outline a clear plan for the department. Questions on Education centred around Adventist schools, the relationship between the SEC and Stanborough School and the challenges in legislation governing sexuality education in schools. With questions on Youth and Teens, as with most departments, statements from the floor expressed commendation towards the work done, with a call for further stability and training in leadership to prepare and equip leaders for more effective results. In Communication and Media the delegation noted the increase in relaying information across the Conference, and some delegates made suggestions to explore the effectiveness of social media, apps, webinars and the utilisation of members' media skills around the Conference.

The plans committee gave their report based on seven key proposals, which the executive committee and departmental leaders will use as a working frame to govern their missional activities for the next quadrennium. These points were accepted by the delegation, subject to a few amendments, and will be made available once the executive committee meets.

The licences and credentials committee reviews all the various ministerial and church workers' credentials. These names are usually accepted as given, together with lay preachers' credentials, which are decided at the local church board level and all approved by the delegation.

**Constitution committee**

Other debates during the session centred around the proposed amendments to the SEC constitution, which, after much discussion, was sent back by the delegation for further examination.

The General Conference has a responsibility to try to hold together the whole of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. As Missions, Conferences and Unions are all legal entities, the General Conference gives guidance on how they should be constituted. This legal document is

a 'model constitution' for the different entities to follow. Some parts of the model constitution are flexible, allowing for regional variations, but some are considered to be crucial for the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole. The model constitution is reviewed every year at the General Conference Annual Council, where representatives from all over the world give their input, and a final document is produced. When there is a local Conference or Union session, delegates are encouraged to examine the document with a view to update the constitution in line with the model produced by the General Conference.

**Other departmental directors elected**

In addition to the administration of the Conference, the nominating committee returned to the delegation to present the directors for the Conference departments. The following names were presented and accepted by the floor:

President	Emmanuel Osei
Executive Secretary	Douglas McCormac
Treasurer	Candy Layson
Communications and Media	Sam Davies
Church Growth	Wayne Erasmus
Teens	Juan Carlos Patrick
Personal Ministries	Michael Mbui
Sabbath School	Fergus Owusu-Boateng
Children's Ministries	Judy Clements
Community Services	Max McKenzie-Cook
Women's Ministries	Jacqueline Otokpa
Young Adults	Anthony Fuller
Ministerial Association	Sam Quadjo
Health	Chidi Ngwaba
Stewardship	Todd Frias
Pathfinders	Clifford Herman
Adventist-Muslim Relations	Fergus Owusu-Boateng
Radio (Adventist Radio London)	Michael Hamilton
Family Ministries	Augustus Lawrence

Other departments, such as PARL, Prayer and Property Development, will be decided at the first SEC executive committee meeting to be held later in the month.

**Final thoughts**

As the session drew near to a close Pastor Osei gave a final presidential charge, highlighting his vision for the next four years. Drawing on John 21:6, with Christ's command to His disciples to cast their nets on the right side of the boat, resulting in the capture of numerous fish, Osei encouraged the delegation to keep trying new and different methods of evangelism. With total community engagement, the focus is for all members to be involved in some form of community ministry to create a new church culture of inclusion and collaboration. His four-point charge included:

- To see all church buildings open at least one day extra each week, in addition to the usual Sabbath and prayer meeting events.
- To see every church run a Bible seminar of some sort at least twice a year.
- To see every church capitalise on a Pathfinder and Adventurer programme as a means of reaching out to young people.
- Within two years, to fulfil the three points above while the executive committee works on a strategic plan to achieve these goals.

The assurance was that exciting days lay ahead; however, there is a great work to be done, but we will be successful: 'not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD.'



Newly ordained SEC ministerial couples from left to right: Alex and Madalina Mareniuc, Otis and Marsha Lewis, Michael and Phylis Salmon, and Hezron and Mary Otieno

## Ordination service

SEC sessions also provide the opportunity for special occasions such as the ordination service. This session was no different, with four ministers presented for this landmark in ministerial service to a packed-out auditorium with many supporting church members in attendance. Candidates for ordination were Michael Salmon (Fulham and Stonebridge), Alex Mareniuc (Croydon), Otis Lewis (West Croydon and Pollards Hill) and Hezron Adingo (Dagenham and Chingford). Introduced by their senior pastoral mentors, each candidate was presented with his spouse. SEC President Pastor Osei gave an enriching and poignant message emphasising the high calling of ministry and their calling to be stewards of God's gift by ensuring that the urgent messages of the three angels in Revelation 14 are kept at the heart of their biblical preaching. Urging ministers to be God's light in a darkened world, Osei reminded the ordinands that all power to fulfil this divine calling comes 'not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD' (Zechariah 4:6, KJV).

### Michael Salmon

Michael is currently the pastor of the Fulham and Stonebridge churches, where he has served for the past four years. In February 2015 he began to serve with Pastor Kwadwo Kwarteng-Ampofo, the senior pastor of the South-East London Ghana district of churches. Michael led two outreach programmes in the London South-West Ghana and Elephant and Castle congregations, after which nine people were baptised. Prior to that he served in the Southend and Grays district, again focusing his ministry on outreach and evangelism.

His journey to ministry began in Jamaica when his mother persisted in inviting him to her newfound church. 'Just come and visit once, and if you don't like it, you don't have to go back.' Michael did like it and has never turned back.

He is married to Phylis (née Mason), and they have three adult children: Michael Jr, Michelle and Micah.

### Alex Mareniuc

In 2015, the South England Conference employed Alex Mareniuc as an intern to officially assist Dr Petrof in the Romanian church, the Harrow church, the East London Romanian company and the Watford Romanian plant. In November 2017, Alex started his new assignment as an

associate pastor in Croydon, along with Pastor Sam Ouadjo, where he has been leading a thriving youth and young adult ministry.

In 2010 Alex moved to England from Romania to pursue a Theology degree at Newbold College, continuing to study full-time for an MA in 2014, as well as working full-time at Heathrow Airport.

Alex is married to Madalina and they have a two-year-old son, Ethan.

### Otis Lewis

Otis Lewis currently serves as the pastor of the West Croydon and Pollards Hill churches, and also serves as Area Youth Sponsor.

Otis's passion for pastoral ministry dates back over his 20 years as an ordained elder. He began preaching during that time and has conducted many evangelistic campaigns, weeks of revival and weeks of prayer both nationally and internationally.

He was first employed by the South England Conference in 2015, and worked as an intern with Pastor James Phillip in the Lewisham and Downham district. He became pastor of the Sydenham and Downham congregations in January 2016.

Otis obtained a Licence in Theology and a Master's in Pastoral Studies at Newbold College of Higher Education in July 2011 after pursuing an LLB Hons. Degree in Law at the University of Wales.

He has been married for 22 years to Marsha, a nurse, and they have had six children: Rachel (now sleeping in the Lord), Hannah, Abigail, Daniela, and twins, Isabella and Gabriella.

### Hezron Otieno Adingo

Hezron Otieno Adingo currently serves as the pastor of the Dagenham and Chingford Community churches. Prior to this current appointment he worked as a lay pastor for the Plaistow church.

It was at Bugema University in Uganda that he attained a Bachelor of Theology degree. He then engaged in full-time ministry, beginning in 2007, at the Central Nyanza Conference in Kenya and continuing until 2012, during which time he led 162 people to baptism. After graduating with an MA in Biblical Studies from the Africa International University, he came to England and is currently pursuing a PhD at the same university.

Hezron is blessed with a wife, Mary Anyango Otieno, and two children, Lilian Laura and Casey Amondi.

## What the delegates said!



### Jennie Hall from Plymouth

It's my first time here, so I didn't know what to expect. I've been pleasantly surprised – and also mortified! The best thing has been hearing all the reports and seeing what's been going on. We're kind of a bit out of it in the South-West. So I'm finding out that there are events which we should probably have been told about before, but it's good to hear that they are actually happening. It's good to see people I know – catching up with friends. There are a lot of youth here who have been on programmes with me, so it's been great to reconnect with them.

I've heard several times that if it's an SEC event it should be in London. We're trying to raise awareness that things should also move out of London, or to double up on events. So holding my tongue in those situations has been very difficult. Sometimes people are talking about stuff they don't really understand as well, I'm finding. That's been one of my biggest challenges – not being able to help the people on stage.

I started off coming, saw it and went, 'I don't want to come again.' But now at the end of it I've changed my mind, having seen some of the arguments, and I wouldn't mind coming again.



### Sam Asamoah from Swindon

The session is good; the deliberations have been fine: but I think one thing we need to look at is about the delegates. I mean, there are repeated questions; there are things we don't need to drag out, and people just keep coming with the same questions that have already been asked by three people, which drags the time, and that means we don't have time to discuss other things people wanted to say. So maybe we

should educate our delegates before they come. Also I think, so far, so good. We haven't had that much of a tug-of-war!



### Phil Redman from Winchester

I'm hesitant only from the point of view that I haven't found it as uplifting as I'd desired. In the past four years, as a country, we've become more accepting – I know we've got Brexit – that we are a multicultural society; and it's affected us in all places. So I had hoped that our church would be more accommodating. But, whether sitting on the Recommendations Committee or in the main forum, it's very clear that

it has not changed at all. Particularly in the Recommendations Committee, in deciding the representative numbers of the various committees, we had: 'We've got six Africans here – we can't have that! We've got no West Indians!' – and then we're going through all the different nationalities. God looks at us as one, and I'd like to think that the people who come here, having been chosen by a church to represent it, would come and look at it with a more open view, looking for the best people for the job.

So that's why it's not been quite so uplifting as I would have liked. Also the main speaker, while his content was quite challenging and I enjoyed it – I just so dislike being yelled at. I cannot see Jesus, in any gathering, getting animated and shouting at the people He was talking to. I think He would have been very calm, very considered, very loving as a person – but that didn't come across to me at all. In contrast, Pastor Mohan Abbadasari, who spoke on Friday night, had good subject matter also, but his delivery was excellent. He spoke warmly, clearly and with humour, and one could feel he had the congregation with him.



### Pastor Jerry Smith from Chatham and Riverway

So far, it's been actually quite good. There's been a good spirit here. It's been quite orderly, and people

have been contributing on an even-handed basis. There's been an occasional time when things have gone a bit too far, but, overall, there's been a good spirit. I've been personally praying that the Spirit of God will lead us as we try to deliberate in our plan for the future.

The thing that inspired me most was actually the Filipino Choir – they were pretty amazing.



### Andrew Rock from Reading

My impression of the session at the moment is, obviously, people are making a lot of reference to its being very much like Brexit – the parliamentary stuff that's going on, the debate. This is my first time at Session, believe it or not. Although I've experienced it at the GC in terms of seeing it on the TV, it's my first time in attendance. It's not too different from what I expected. I would love to see us as a church being

more open and honest in all aspects. People keep talking about hidden agendas, power grabbing and things like that, and there are always assumptions as to what is going on in the background. We never know the ins and outs of everything, but it would be great if there were a bit more transparency and openness and more of a Christian atmosphere, so that it doesn't seem like a political kind of situation.

I loved Pastor Mohan's sermon on Friday evening with his openness and honesty as a pastor, and his experience and what he's been going through. It was really direct, very honest, very clear and very open, and I think most of us can relate to that because that is the challenge we have. The second thing I also really enjoyed was Pastor Matthew Herel talking about the Acts church – because I'm passionate about Acts chapter 2 and the early church and how they operated, simply because I believe that we talk a lot about outreach, reaching out to the community and strategies for that. If we'd have love for one another, as Jesus says, and we'd look after each other as we should . . . to share our own possessions and look out for and help one another truly, we wouldn't have to worry about spending money to reach out. That's my view.



### Pastor Steve Thomas from Peckham

The session has been really calm, apart from the first process, which includes the Recommendations Committee. There was quite a lot of tension there, and I was wondering where the underlying tension was coming from. I somehow believe there is still some work to be done in terms of the national, the relational, the ethnic issues. Apart from that, once the Recommendations Committee had selected a

Nominating Committee, all the tension disappeared. On the floor the tension could be seen on many occasions, in that the delegates wanted to keep the existing president as the next president. Once that was voted, again the tension disappeared. So I really think it's been a good session for revealing where we are in terms of the relationship, and I do hope that relationship will be worked on so that when we come to another session there will be a greater level of trust within the church.



### Pastor Michael Anim from Milton Keynes

The debates were thought-provoking. As one listened it was possible to feel the passion that the delegates had about issues concerning the Conference. This was evident by the number of people who came to the microphone, and the fact that more often than not they would exceed the two-minute limit allotted for their questions and comments. I must also commend the directors because it takes a lot of tact and subject

knowledge to respond to the questions, and I think they have done a great job. I was very impressed with the presence of the prayer ministries team.



# Is the Ulceby story finished?



The Ulceby church before its new roof of black tiles was installed in 2015, the same year it was closed



Colin and Sylvia Hawken (centre), who gave sterling service to the Ulceby congregation for more than forty years, flanked by Fiona Marshall on the left and Anita Marshall on the right

The congregation in Ulceby was the result of soul-winning endeavours undertaken in the village by Pastor A. A. John. Among the earliest converts were the large Armstrong family. Their home was a double-fronted, brick-built house.

Ellen G. White visited Europe between 1885 and 1887. She stayed for two periods in the Armstrong home and was excited by the Armstrongs' accounts of conversions in the village.

Events in the village came to a head as a result of opposition from the clergy of the Sunday churches. They enlisted a speaker from the Lord's Day Observance Society (LDO) in London, and the Adventists were challenged to a public debate on 'The Sabbath Question'. The debate took place outside a pub (which shortly afterwards went out of business), and was attended by a crowd several hundred strong. Sunday was championed by local Anglican and Wesleyan clergy and the LDO man. The Sabbath was championed by Elder G. I. Butler, the president of the General Conference, in Britain for meetings in Grimsby. Butler was assisted by



Pastor Melvyn Ellis baptises Richard Coleman

John Loughborough, then leader of the work in Britain, and others.

After a lively four-hour debate the Adventists were perceived to have had a resounding win.

Adventist churches had already been set up in Southampton and Grimsby, and met in hired halls. But the Adventists had headlined in Ulceby and Ellen White was determined that they should have their own building.

Father Armstrong, the village baker, counted among his customers the local landowner, the Earl of Yarborough. Armstrong gave his lordship an enthusiastic account of the public debate in the village and the subsequent evangelistic meetings in the open air and in the Forester's Hall. He also shared the vision the converts had had of their own church building. Knowing where his baker lived, Lord Yarborough offered the Adventists a parcel of land



Pastor William Frazer with three members; Colin Hawken on the right and Sylvia Hawken in the doorway



Those who celebrated the 80th anniversary of the church congregation in 1963; Pastor Roy Graham, subsequently Provost of Andrews University, was the preacher



The interior of the church in 1944 when BUC Executive Secretary Pastor J. M. Howard baptised two German prisoners of war

at the end of his road. It was on a 99-year lease (annual ground rent: two shillings). Yarborough provided the land. Ellen White arranged for

architectural blueprints to be sent from the USA. By the time Sister White returned to the US in 1887 a red-brick church had been built with an impressive oak lining. It

## Ellen White on Ulceby

Ellen White wrote these words between the founding of the Ulceby company of believers in 1883 and the commencement of the church building in 1887.

'Because you do not see the same results in old England that you did in Australia you should not demerit that which has already been gained. There are some precious souls in Grimsby, in Ulceby, and others will be gathered in.' *Evangelism*, page 417.

was officially opened in 1888. Among the first baptisms to occur was that of a 23-year-old unmarried woman called Mary Anne Snowdon (1864-1950). Why mention her? She would become my maternal grandmother. I was 5 when she died. Hence I owe access to her memories of 'the Pioneers' to my mother, her youngest daughter, as well as the Ulceby Church Record Book.

Ellen White made a big impression on Granny. She often said that the cost of the church building was borne partly by the local believers, and partly by the General Conference. She believed that Ellen White personally had donated funding for the furnishings.

Between 1883 and the North England Conference's decision to close it in December 2015 the Ulceby congregation (like the economy of Egypt at the time of Joseph) experienced 'fat years and lean years'. The first 'lean' period occurred surprisingly soon after its inception, beginning in 1900. The first three Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Britain were Southampton, Grimsby and Ulceby. While missionaries could be called from the States, it fell to these three congregations (and those that followed them, like Kettering) to provide the next generation of church 'pioneers'. The entire Armstrong family left the village. They went to pastoral positions and provided two Conference presidents and one Union president. The youngest member of the family, A. K. Armstrong, was still pastor at Stanborough Park in the early 1960s.

Some members of the Short family also left the village to work elsewhere. Others remained but died in the 1920s. 'Home alone' were a few individuals including my grandmother. She had married

and was now Mary Anne Parks. Only four of her eight children survived. They included Anne and Mary. There was no pastor at the Adventist church, so Granny sent her daughters to Sunday School at the Primitive Methodist Church.

Records suggest that the NEC (not operational until well after 1903) became aware that Ulceby was struggling during World War One. *They did not close it.* They sent Bible worker Mrs M. E. Brooks to find out what had happened to the remaining members of the original congregation. The result was a baptism in 1917 which included Anne Parks (1900-1984) and Mary Parks (1902-1978). Farmer West rented land on the outskirts of the village and became leader of the revived congregation. He advertised for Adventist employees and appointed Norman Marshall (an Adventist from Stockton-on-Tees). Norman married Mary Parks. They had five children. The West family produced two Adventist pastors, as did the Marshall family. From circa 1935 to 1976 Norman Marshall served the congregation as elder.

When were the 'fat years'? They were associated with three distinguished pastorates:

The first was that of R. D. Vine during World War Two. Blitz regulations made it illegal to hold evening meetings in the church. Vine's 'Hitler's Doom Foretold' campaign was held in a home and attracted between 20 and 40 young people.

The second period of growth was during the pastorate of G. R. Bell, 1959-65. His vision was 'a gathered church'. People from neighbouring villages had always supported the Ulceby congregation. Hence it scheduled its services in the afternoon to give them travel time. Bell took

advantage of the afternoon services and the increased popularity of motor transport to attract members from places as distant as Louth (and its neighbouring villages), Alford, Caister, Scotter, Barton-on-Humber and elsewhere. The congregation grew to an extent that made it necessary to organise it as a church. It was as a growing church that it celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1963.

My membership at Ulceby was limited to the period between 1946 and 1965 when I left home for university. The third outstanding pastor was John Freeman in the early '70s. John and Ethel Freeman were responsible for the accession to the church of, among others, the large Williams family. They came from Barrow-upon-Humber. Graham Williams was a chartered accountant.

Other ministers who added stature as well as growth to the church included Pastors R. V. Edwards, Melvyn Ellis and Paul Howarth. For many years Ulceby also benefited from the excellent contribution of outstanding Grimsby elder Leslie Anderson,

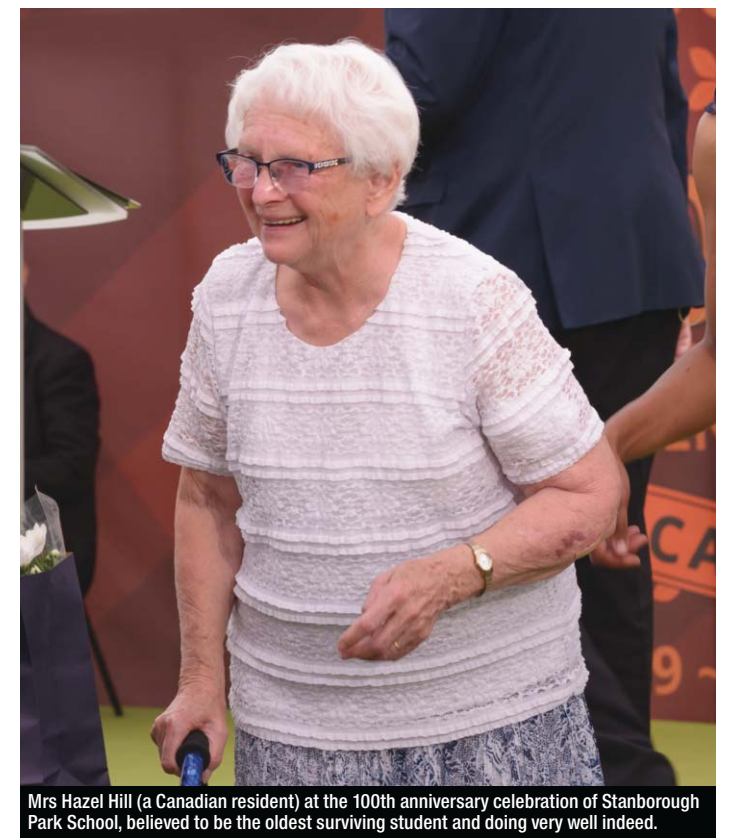
father of Pastor Philip Anderson. Between 1976 and 2014 former literature evangelist Colin Hawken was faithful elder of the church. Sylvia, his wife and the elder daughter of the Marshall family, was treasurer (she left a balance of £27,000 in the church account at the bank). Colin, now 90, and Sylvia, 87, live in Grantham.

At the point when the NEC closed the doors of the church it had only six regular attendees. This was a result of the abandonment of the concept of a 'gathered church' by moving services to the morning.

Is that the end of the Ulceby story? I hope not. Within three miles of the Ulceby church (left empty to deteriorate for four years) is the Port of Immingham. It was only a village on the Humber when Ellen White visited Ulceby. It is now the largest deep-water port in England and has a rapidly growing population. Immingham has never been evangelised.

Who can revive the Ulceby church? The Holy Spirit can. But He will need help from those who share the spirit and vision of the pioneers.

## Not forgotten



Mrs Hazel Hill (a Canadian resident) at the 100th anniversary celebration of Stanborough Park School, believed to be the oldest surviving student and doing very well indeed.

# University president announces new edition of Andrews Study Bible:

## Bible students will now be able to review study notes in the New International Version

by Andrews University News

The Adventist Church's most comprehensive one-volume Bible-study resource has just extended its reach in a big way, according to an announcement by Andrea Luxton, president of Andrews University.

On 5 September 2019, the university released for sale the long-awaited New International Version (NIV) Andrews Study Bible. In addition, nearly 700 new students at Andrews will receive a complimentary copy from the university, continuing a tradition that began in 2011 but this time will feature the NIV.

'We've been planning on this for many years,' Luxton said. 'The Andrews Study Bible was first published by Andrews University Press just before the General Conference of 2010 in the New King James Version [NKJV]. It's been a huge blessing to the church in its regular retail, evangelism, prison ministry, and electronic formats, all in the NKJV. But we also knew right from the beginning that a large segment of the church finds value in a more contemporary English translation.'

The Andrews Study Bible was partially funded by a grant from the General Conference in 2008, as arranged by then-Andrews president Niels-Erik Andreasen, according to Ronald Knott, director of Andrews University Press. Knott said that a formal project committee of GC leaders and Andrews administrators oversaw the project and delegated development to Jon Dybdahl, former president of Walla Walla University, who served as general editor. Dybdahl put together a team of more than a dozen scholars, approved by the Project Committee, who wrote the study notes and general articles. Since publication in 2010, nearly 150,000 copies of the NKJV Andrews Study Bible have been sold.

Knott said that, in addition to the thousands of study notes, the most important feature of the Bible, generally not found in other study Bibles published by evangelicals, is the linked theme reference system that connects, in a systematic way, many of the key teachings of the Bible.

'This is the core of the value of the Andrews Study Bible,' Knott said. 'You can trace any of nearly 30 key themes or teachings of the Bible, starting almost anywhere, to get a broad understanding of how the Bible addresses these important topics. That system is supported by a rich theme index in the back, along with other study notes.'

The process of adapting the content of the study notes from the NKJV to the New International Version was a long and sometimes tedious task, according to Scottie Baker, editorial and marketing coordinator of Andrews University Press. 'Each note had to be evaluated for its continuing relevance and rewritten to correlate with the translation of the passage. That meant that some notes could be dropped because the NIV translation made the matter obvious,' Baker said. 'Other times, new notes had to be written to address issues raised by the new translation. All the book introductions, articles, and front matter had

to be adjusted carefully. And, of course, we used this as an opportunity to strengthen existing content. All of these matters were referred to Dybdahl for his oversight.'

'Back in 2008, Dr Andreasen said that the ultimate purpose of the Andrews Study Bible was to produce a work that is academically credible, theologically sound and practically useful for the individual lay reader, and wide distribution in Adventist evangelism,' Luxton said. 'That purpose has been lavishly fulfilled in the years since and will be even more so now with the new edition in the NIV.'

The NIV edition of the Andrews Study Bible is the second major product in the University Press's Bible study line, according to Knott. He said a third major product is deep into production right now. The Andrews Bible Commentary, also funded in part by the General Conference, is a concise yet comprehensive passage-by-passage one-volume Bible commentary authored by a team of more than 40 scholars under the general editorship of Angel Rodriguez, former director of the General Conference Biblical Research Institute (BRI). The Andrews Bible Commentary is scheduled for release in 2020.

Andreasen, and now Luxton, in their broadly influential roles for the world church, as presidents of the university, have a dream that, no matter how small a member's theological library may be, the Andrews Study Bible, in either the NKJV or the NIV, and the Andrews Bible Commentary, which is designed for either, can give that member the basics for understanding the message and mission of this movement,' Knott said.

Publisher Thomas Nelson controls the New King James Version of the Bible, and the New International Version is controlled by Biblica (formerly the International Bible Society), which licenses the NIV in North America through Zondervan. Thomas Nelson and Zondervan are both owned by HarperCollins, which has licensed Andrews University to publish both translations for the Andrews Study Bible.

The Andrews Study Bible appearing in the NIV is the first time the same language (English) has had the study Bible in two different versions. The resource is also available in Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian.

Andrews University Press, formally organised in 1971, is the primary academic publishing house to serve the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. It publishes major works in theology, biblical studies, educational philosophy, archaeology and faith, and science.

Founded in 1874, Andrews University is the flagship institution of higher education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and offers more than 200 areas of study, including advanced degrees. Its main campus is in Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States, but the university also provides instruction at colleges and universities in more than 25 countries around the world.

Reprinted with permission from the online edition of the *Adventist Review*. The NIV Study Bible will be available from The Stanborough Press by early 2020.



### Baptism at Carmarthen Church

On Sabbath 10 August Carmarthen Church members and friends witnessed the baptism of the miraculously transformed Lee Ricketts, supported by his mother and two daughters.

Lee's journey to the baptismal pool has been full of challenges. However, the Lord had been working on his heart for quite some time before he contacted the local church and asked for Bible studies.

After three years of searching, in December 2018 Lee spoke to Pastor Adriana Fodor (the local minister), saying, 'I believe the Holy Spirit is leading me to the Seventh-day Adventist Church' and expressing his desire to become part of it. Soon after, Lee started regular Bible studies, and continued for the following eight months. During that period it was wonderful to see the work of transformation God was performing in his life. From a person so heavily burdened by a past life with its guilt and sorrow, he became a totally different person – one who gradually regained his smile, who had peace and joy in his heart.

Though his journey of learning about God's Word was challenging at times, he was determined not to let go of the Lord's hand. Then one day he said, 'Now I am ready to get baptised.'

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we are reminded what the power of God can accomplish in the lives of those who seek Him: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new' (NKJV). By the grace of Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Lee has become a new person in Christ.

We look forward to witnessing many more of God's mysterious but wonderful works in many more souls.

ADRIANA FODOR

### A summer baptism

On 24 August Erdington was blessed with its second baptism of the year (this time led by Erdington's new leader, Pastor Alexandru Gutu).

Leonie Cameron and Tawnya Richardson publicly demonstrated their new life in Christ.

Leonie Cameron was introduced by Elder Aubyn Eccles, who gave a moving prayer and shared Leonie's testimony: 'Since October 2018, my husband and I were renting a house in Sutton and I looked online for a nearby church. My non-Christian husband suggested Erdington Church. I went along and the church had a great Christian atmosphere where God was truly worshipped, so I kept coming back.' Leonie's favourite scripture readings were Psalm 42:8 and Jeremiah 29:11, and the congregation sang her favourite hymn, 'I've Found a Friend, Oh, Such a Friend': Jesus Christ our Lord.

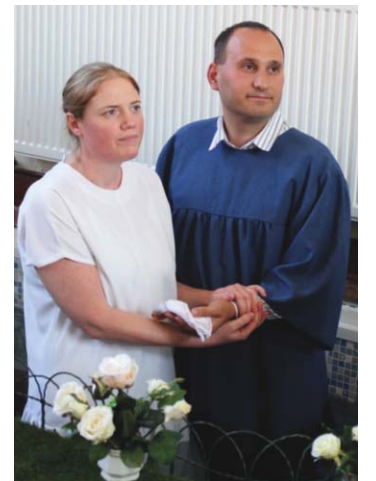
Tawnya was introduced by Elder Steven Kazembe, who highlighted her growing love for God and her desire to help out in the local community.



Tawnya's favourite Scripture reading was Romans 8:38, 39, and 'There Is a Fountain' was sung by the congregation as it is her favourite hymn. O'Keefe Wellington, a close friend, spoke of Tawnya's resilience and strong will to overcome obstacles and do the work of God, before singing 'Lamb of God', reminding the congregation of Jesus' remarkable sacrifice to atone for the world's sin.

Pastor Cyril Sweeney stated how wonderful it was to witness a beautiful baptism and to be present for Pastor Gutu's first baptism. We pray that God will be with Leonie and Tawnya as they begin their journey with Christ.

REBEKAH ECCLES



### 'Hold the service; I want to get baptised!'

After months of preparation Balham Church held its annual campaign under the theme: 'Now Is the Time.'

The guest preacher, Pastor Sherwin White, took us through a number of challenging messages and engaged the congregation with the Word.

A singing evangelist from Clapton Church, Bertrum Partrice, sang well throughout the fortnight. He testified that he had had voice problems for the last two years, but you would have never realised it as he ministered at Balham each night! He was complemented by other artistes from Balham and other London Adventist churches.

Even though not actually present, we shared video health talks from Dr Chidi Ngwaba (the South England Conference Health Director), who presented simple messages on healthy living.

On the day of the baptism the evangelist delivered his last message as three children waited to be immersed – and then something dramatic happened. During his message a word came to me that there was another person who wanted to get baptised, and she was 10 minutes away from church. It was as if she were saying, 'Hold the service; I want to get baptised!' We extended the service while we waited for her to arrive, informing the congregation that God still worked in miraculous ways and there was one other candidate, to the sound of resounding amens. When she arrived, got changed and walked up the aisle ready for baptism, one of the child candidates (a relative of the final candidate) opened his mouth wide in surprise, while the church was buzzing in excitement.

When she was about to be immersed, her husband (an Adventist member) explained that after the sermon appeal that Sabbath morning she was sure that God was calling her; she had to respond, and decided at lunchtime to make a commitment to Christ in baptism.

Throughout the campaign, some had responded to appeals and asked for studies, visits and prayer, so we still have work to do. Some visitors who attended the campaign promised to visit in the future. It is definitely God's time, and we look forward to more of His workings through us.

ERROL ANDERSON (HEAD ELDER, BALHAM CHURCH)



Area 1 pauses for power

Plymouth Church hosted Area 1's first Women's Ministry event on Sabbath, 24 August. Ladies from around Devon gathered in the school loft, above the church, which was decorated with flowers, candles and bunting, creating a relaxing atmosphere.

Ophelia Herman, event organiser, welcomed everyone before Gemma and Jackie Hall led the group in song. As the theme for the day was 'Pause for Power', naturally, the theme song was 'Pause at His Feet'.

Geraldene Farmer (former NEC Women's Ministries director) was our speaker for the day, and all the ladies felt her enthusiasm as they listened intently to her message.

She noted that in our busy lives we don't allow ourselves time to breathe, to pause, reflect and restore. Often we feel that if we are not busy then we are wasting time. A pause, however, is not a full stop: it's a pause for power, to recharge, re-evaluate and carry on. It's a time to speak to God, allowing Him to reveal to us His mercy and allowing us to trust Him.

In groups we looked at the stories of Jairus's daughter and the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:40-56; Matthew 9:18-25; Mark 5:21-43). In both instances pauses were necessary for Jesus to reveal His character as well as the character of a true follower. Patience, faith and trust all were key traits of each character. Even our feeblest efforts to reach out to God are enough.

After a lovely lunch everybody gathered again for prayer and praise before going through a series of nine stations all designed to help us pause and reflect.

The final section focused on Christ's sacrifice at the cross, 'The Most Magnificent Pause' of all time.

Everyone received a tote bag with the verse 'Be Still and Know' printed



on the outside, filled with handmade goodies. Finally we prayed together, holding out tea lights to remind us to shine for God, before enjoying a delicious afternoon tea. JENNIE HALL

Camp Hill worship God in Women's Ministries Emphasis Day

Camp Hill's internationally themed Women's Ministries Emphasis Day, organised by the Women's Ministries leader, Betty Clarke, advisory elder Vivian Salcedo and their committee, was intended to include women of all ages and abilities in worship and thanksgiving.

Visitors that Sabbath from Atlanta, New York, Canada and Bradford were welcomed and an inspiring Sabbath School was led by cousins Dionne and Hayley on the topic, 'Little times of trouble',

enabling thoughtful consideration of conflict and anger in marriages and how they can be resolved.

During the sermon, 'A Call to Arise and Shine', Collette Woodburn examined Isaiah 60:1, 2, focusing on our identity as Christian women; our mission and ministry; and our unity and purpose.

She also suggested that younger women look to older women for support, and that the Holy Spirit, if invited through prayer, could bring about the unity



Photo quality as supplied for both pictures

From around 4.30pm the women gathered at Aneesa's restaurant for a buffet meal following grace. The ladies then walked by the river and continued to talk, laugh and take pictures. By 8pm the sun was setting, and the women prayed together and left for home.

The culturally diverse Women's Ministries Department has more activities planned for the women in the coming months, wishing to build sisterly relationships; have a forum where they can address issues that affect women; bond and have fun together; bring about healing, forgiveness, growth and development; and support each other where they are hurting.

Their second meeting, a banquet, is planned for November.

LYNNE SESINYE SAMWINGA



Newcastle women eat out to nurture relationships

Nineteen women from Newcastle Church went out for a meal and a walk along the Tyne river on Sunday 1 September. This outing had been planned for weeks by the Women's Ministries team, led by Pamela Matsvimbo.

'Body and Soul Fit'

In June and July, the Southampton Church Health Ministries team hosted an eight-week fitness series, 'Body and Soul Fit'. Each session began with a twenty-minute devotion and prayer. The short devotions and prayers drew us closer together as we shared testimonies of how God had led us over the week and as we presented our requests to Him.

Following the devotion, participants engaged in a thirty-minute, low-impact beginner workout (which could be modified for fitter individuals by adding weights or doing faster repetitions). We encouraged attendees to complete the exercises at their own pace. There was a friendly vibe in the hall at the end of the sessions as participants lingered to chat and mingle.

A table of free literature was placed at the registration area. We were more than happy to share a copy of the Gospel of Mark with a young girl who nervously asked for one.

For the final two sessions we held our devotion outdoors in the Southampton Common, then completed a three-kilometre walk around a section of the Common. Our walkers bumped into lapsed attendees of our church, and we pray we provided a positive witness to them.

We look forward to hosting another series of 'Body and Soul Fit' in the autumn, and hope more people can join us for the fellowship and exercise.

'For in Him we live and move and have our being.' Acts 17:28, NKJV.

NOMSA MAPHANGO, HEALTH MINISTRIES LEADER



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that would take our work to another level.

After an excellent lunch and inspiring youth service the women met and prayed for the Holy Spirit to lead their future work. The

positive start on Sabbath was followed by a prayer breakfast on Sunday when many of the women further enjoyed fellowship and a delicious meal.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL

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# News & articles for *MESSENGER*

Thank you to every person who has submitted a news article for *MESSENGER* so far this year. The majority of articles have made it to print, while some have not. Here's what we're looking for when it comes to news:

## Baptisms

Whenever a baptism takes place – we want to share in your celebration. Every time someone says, 'Yes, Lord, I will follow You', and is saved for His kingdom by His amazing grace, *MESSENGER* will share the good news from your church. When it comes to baptisms, there is no such thing as 'another baptism'. The event in and of itself is far less important than the story that has led to Joe or Mary taking that step. Because it is the result of the supernatural and extraordinary promptings of the Holy Spirit, their story is something to write home about! So please share with *MESSENGER* readers 'their story'. Their testimony should not be more than 250 words per person to accompany each photo:

- What was Joe or Mary's life like before Christ?
- What was the process that led them to full surrender?
- What are their hopes and dreams for their new life in Christ?

## News

Take the litmus test on what you think is an interesting news story and grade it 1-5 from the following headlines.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

- Everytown church conducts health expo
- Doncaster music Sabbath involves top brass
- Fred Smith – on a journey of hope
- Sligo group keeps going against all the odds
- Tewksbury holds vegetarian cookery seminar

The key question to ask when preparing a report for *MESSENGER* is: what news value does this story have beyond the local church? Don't think I'm picking on health expo stories – I'm not, as this is one of our most effective forms of outreach. But what *MESSENGER* readers would really like to hear are the stories of the people we've connected with – as a result of the health expo.

## Articles

Feature-length articles for *MESSENGER* are most welcome. As an agency for helping members grow in their faith, I am working towards producing a magazine with 60% feature articles and 40% news. In particular, we're looking for articles on the following:

- Growing in Christ
- Our church, unity, and growing together
- His story and my story – and how they converge
- Being salt and light in my everyday world
- Grace-notes, stories of grace, grace, and more grace

## Photos

The five golden rules:

- A phone with a camera is not ideal for producing the best photos for print.
- Email pictures attached in JPEG format, not embedded in a Word file.
- A picture can say a thousand words. Think creatively.
- If at all possible, take action shots, avoiding the 'firing squad' format.
- Include a list of captions if you'd like those photographed to be identified.

A full explanation of these matters can be found on the BUC website at: <https://adventist.uk/fileadmin/shared-data/resources/messenger/guidelines-for-messenger-reporting-and-photography.pdf>.

DAVID NEAL, EDITOR



# MESSENGER 2020 and beyond

What needs to be done to ensure that *MESSENGER* continues to serve British Union members with relevance and excellence? At its core it provides and needs to strengthen its:

- pastoral role
- educational role
- informative role
- prophetic role (speak truth to power)

Grounded in a balanced but passionate Adventism, expectant, grace-centred, and joy-filled, the aim and purpose is to help members grow in their daily life and witness for the Lord.

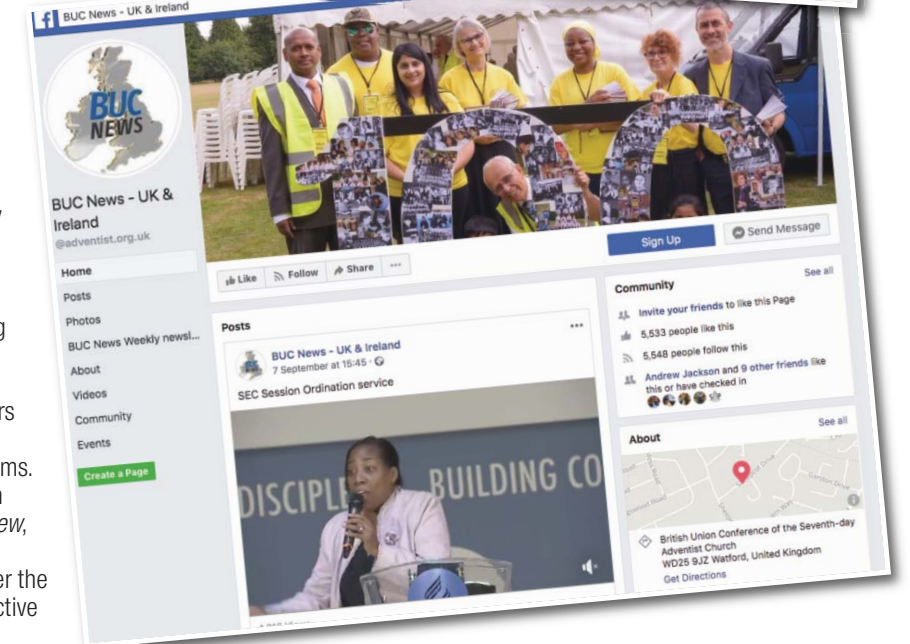
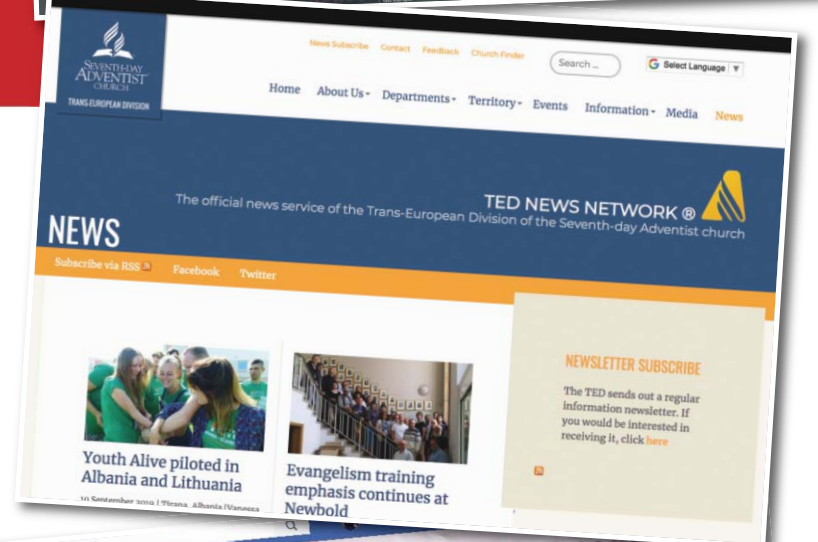
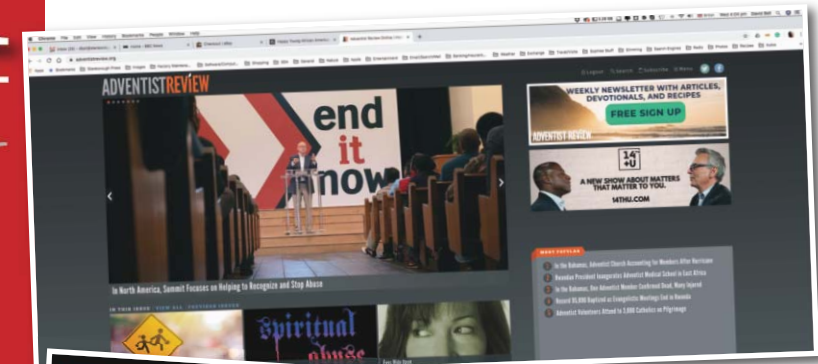
*MESSENGER* is currently rooted in the print world. Recently it has begun to take some small steps into the digital world, and staff know that this will inevitably be the direction of travel over the next decade. This process will not be revolutionary, but with careful, thought-through steps, taking the readers we serve with us.

As a print magazine, it is becoming increasingly difficult for *MESSENGER* to be 'first with the news'. By the time members read a story, they may have already seen it many times previously on one of the many digital Adventist news platforms. This is both a blessing and a burden, and can be resolved in this way. The digital news platforms, such as *Adventist Review*, *TED News*, and *BUC News*, provide a news service which is almost immediate. Through their ministry we'll often discover the big church news within minutes of the event via their respective

Facebook pages. I call that 'gospel of Mark' news, fast and furious! We need that, and what a blessing it is. In its current format, *MESSENGER* could never provide that service, and isn't currently seeking to do so. Rather, the news service is what I'd describe as 'gospel of John'. The apostle John mused over his encounter with Jesus for many years, decades before he wrote his gospel. I think *MESSENGER* has a similar role: to take the news, digest, reflect, consider the implications of a story, provide a context and, in doing so, fulfil its core purpose as described above.

But, over and above these noble aims, the editorial team work tirelessly, as much as anything, to ensure that what is placed in your hands continues to be a thoroughly good read!

DAVID NEAL, EDITOR







## 2 more 4 Jesus

On a beautiful warm and sunny day with clear blue skies (3 August 2019) the Winchester church family celebrated two more garden baptisms.

Guy Whitworth has been worshipping with us for almost four years now and was part of our family before he made a total commitment to the Lord. Guy was born in Malaysia and is well travelled, having lived in, worked in and visited many places around the world, including Europe, India, Nepal and Australia, where his nephew now lives.

When Guy was a lad living in Yorkshire with his parents he went to school and life was good, but he describes his religious education as being 'served up on a cold plate'.

While talking with his nephew in Australia, Guy was given a good piece of advice: 'Find yourself a good Adventist church' – and he did just that and shyly arrived one Sabbath morning in Winchester Church, where he

## 'He has the heart of a pastor' – Ian Lorek retires

Pastor Lorek has been the minister of Exeter and Torquay Churches for the last eight years. On 21 July he attended his last Area 1 lay advisory committee and he and his wife, Romola, were presented with an Amazon voucher and a plant for their new conservatory as a thank-you for their work in the area. A lunch had been prepared by Ophelia Herman and Jennie Hall for everyone to enjoy.

August 31 was the last Sabbath in Exeter Church when Pastor Lorek led out in a praise service. A farewell fellowship lunch followed the morning service. Stella Jeffery presented Pastor Ian and Romola with a cheque to purchase a joint membership of the

National Trust and a beautiful photo album containing pictures of special church events and photos of members and friends of the church, taken by our talented resident photographer, Florin Orășanu. Stella said that Pastor Lorek had pastored Exeter Church for six years after his internship as a young pastor; so, in total, he had given fourteen years of service to Exeter. In fact, he met his wife at Exeter when she was teaching at Crediton. Stella thanked Pastor Lorek for his



found the family his heart desired and needed.

A couple of years ago he finished university as a mature student with a degree in photography, and, as he was already a qualified landscape gardener, he found both these subjects helped him realise just how wonderful and diverse our God really is.

Guy loves chatting about God – his wonderful Saviour – and all the things that have touched him over the past years. He also realises that coincidences are not always what they seem.

Krisztian Acs-Farkas came to Winchester Church on the recommendation of our minister, Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt. Both are Hungarian. Although Krisztian was brought up in a Christian home he never really got the God connection – Jesus and us – and no one explained to him how to get a relationship with God.

At the age of 14 he decided that the Bible was a good book teaching about how to live a good life, to be kind to others and to love others. But that was it: nothing touched his heart, not even God.

However, all that changed when, 16 years later, he met Fanni! Krisztian found a lot of things he liked about her, but one thing shone more than anything else – her nature. She was kind and loving, and all her friends were the same. Fanni, an Adventist, gently taught him about God's love for us all. Every Sabbath Krisztian attended her church, and he liked the way they loved God and each other.

After the baptism, witnessed by his mother and Fanni and the whole of Winchester Church, the couple returned to Hungary for their wedding later in August.

Guy and Krisztian found a church in Winchester that cares and shares, a church that nurtures young Christians of any age and any background. Our doors are always open, and Jesus is very much alive and greets all newcomers.

May our God bless Guy and Krisztian richly; may they find His love in everything they do and say, and may they continue to learn all about God's love and His wonderful grace and glory.

WENDY BRADLEY, WINCHESTER COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

dedicated ministry over the years. She said that he has the heart of a pastor and gave practical and spiritual sermons to encourage his congregation. Romola had always enjoyed working with the children, but ill health had prevented that in the last year. However, she was keen to take the children's Sabbath School that morning for just one more time. Felicia Heard presented her with a bouquet on behalf of the children.

We wish Pastor Ian and Romola the blessings of a happy retirement. Fortunately, they are staying in Devon and we hope that we shall see them from time to time.

STELLA JEFFERY

## Salford Family Ministries Day

Sabbath 24 August 2019 was our Family Ministries Day at Salford Church, with the theme of how we can make an impact on our own families and friends.

The Sabbath School lesson on ministering to 'the least of these' was fitting, and the much-enjoyed children's story about Jacob and his brothers was delivered by Ben Hubbins. After a powerful meditational by Zena Taylor, Elder Donald McKenzie delivered our 'afternoon manna' in a sermon based on Genesis 4:9. Elder McKenzie reminded the congregation that we are all sinners saved by grace, and that we must share that same message with our families and friends. We need to love and support each other as a family in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is more loneliness than ever before, and we need to look out for those who may walk through our doors.

Jesus want us to become co-workers with Him by reaching out to others and sharing His love.

After a mouth-watering lunch the day was ended by a thought-provoking afternoon programme led by our youth team, which reminded us of the importance of men in the family and in the church, and of what it means to be a man after God's own heart. The day was a blessing from start to finish; to God be the glory!

PAULINE HYATT



## Wood Green Education Emphasis Day

On Sabbath 20 July the Family Life ministry of Wood Green Community Church conducted its Education Emphasis Day programme. Pastor Cecil Perry was the guest speaker for Divine Service, and his sermon set the Spirit-filled tone for the day.

On Sabbath evening members of ten families from the church staged a magnificent drama production entitled 'A Tale of Two Gardens', which focused on Eden, Gethsemane, the crucifixion and the resurrection.

BARBARA SOMMERS



## London Ghana health expo

On 14 July 2019 London Ghana Church conducted their seventh annual community health expo.

The medical team of more than 30 health professionals offered all kinds of medical check-ups, including blood pressure, full body scan, heart health, dental check-up, blood cholesterol and many more. There was also face painting and a bouncy castle for the children.

Every year we do the event in the parks within the community, but this year we decided to come and do it in the church compound, to which the community responded very well.

The event was attended by Councillor Jane Lofthouse from Newham Council.

Between 150 and 190 people came from the community, and the church benefited from the exercise.

London Ghana Church members believe strongly in reaching the community through this kind of event, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we will win their confidence.

PRINCE OSEI-BOAKYE

## Hope Community blessed with health professionals

On Sabbath, 29 June 2019 the ministry of Hope Community Church in High Wycombe was not the traditional Sabbath School and Family Worship services. Our ministry on the day was in the form of a health fair. We believe that the Church of Christ is organised for service. As a community church we intentionally organise programmes and events for



locals to attend, as it is our mission to serve our local community.

Among the many blessings we celebrate at Hope Community Church is the blessing of health professionals in our membership. On the day we offered the following health screenings free of charge to members of the community: blood pressure, cholesterol, prostate PSA testing, BMI/weight, body fat distribution and body pH, which were conducted by our health professionals. Health presentations by experts were also given on the following topics: dementia, prostate cancer, depression, and tips to improve your health. As we are also blessed by members who cook delicious vegetarian and vegan food, we had cooking demonstrations too.

The members of our community were very impressed by the quality of the event. We had comments such as, 'The information presented today was very good, and patiently explained.' One person responded by saying, 'The information presented today was brilliant!' Yet another said, 'Everyone was so friendly and I would like to come again.'

We give God all the honour, praise and glory for the success of our ministry on the day.

JEROME LANGENHOVEN



## Welling Church health expo – Danson Park Community Fair

This year's health expo was led by Liz Forde and her assistant Jackie Crawford, who put on a remarkable event in the park. The Sabbath was spent witnessing to the community; sharing information about the gospel; providing literature; and praying for members of the community who asked for personal prayer. Sunday allowed the community and other stall holders to experience the health aspect of the ministry through a series of health checks.

Perhaps the best part of the event was the interest shown by the community and stall holders and their willingness to ask and accept our literature freely, with a view to visiting Welling Church.

Well done to Liz Forde, Jackie Crawford and the rest of the volunteers for all their efforts and support.

Special thanks to Elder Kevin MacDonald for ensuring the tent was erected, and Dionne Weekes for her team of nurses and volunteers, who delivered a professional service to the community.

Next year's health expo promises to be on a grander scale, offering beauty treatments, vegan food and a whole lot more!

ELIZABETH PICART

## A theologian, an angel and the metallic man: Stanborough Press Open Day 2019

Eager customers arriving at this year's Stanborough Press Open Day – greeted smilingly this year (as last year) by 10-year-old Tommy and his mum, Judit – probably didn't realise the immense amount of work that went into preparing for them (see <https://www.facebook.com/stanboroughpress>). This involved, among other things, returning Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue to its plinth to raise awareness of Bible prophecy.

The eschatological theme was continued in the main marquee as Dr Ranko Stefanovic, one of our church's most highly regarded experts on the book of Revelation, unlocked the topic for our guests. They were also well catered for by Sharon Platt-McDonald, a British Union Conference director and highly accomplished author, who, together with Pastor David Neal – the new editor at the Stanborough Press – read aloud from a special edition of *Focus* magazine called *Urban Voices*. Complementing these two speakers were some fine melodies from the Golden Chords, while the children once again enjoyed the bouncy castle and the kids' corner.

*Urban Voices* was not the only new publication available on the day, however: Open Day also saw the launch of a new vegan cookbook produced by Susanne Kirlew (Kirly-Sue) especially for young families – *Cooking*

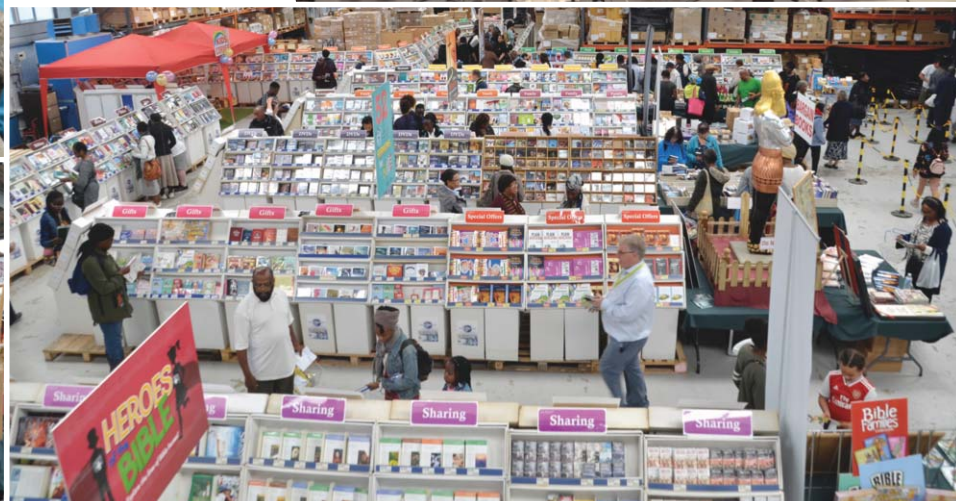
*With Kids* – as well as the debut of Dr Reinder Bruinsma's handy treatise on Christ's resurrection and our own – *I Have a Future*.

One customer, amazed at the sheer wealth of literature on display, eagerly asked for a sales catalogue. Another customer called one of our staff, Johann Kyriacou, an angel for helping her access funds for her bus fare home. Johann had arranged the displays for the first time this year, following his predecessor Philip Anderson's move to the Exports Department.

As sales advisor Ian Clutton noted a week after the event, there are many positives to Open Day, not least the opportunity for members to meet and connect with Press staff. Our staff may not get medals for their work, but they count it a special honour to serve as partners with the Lord in this ministry.

We hope that you will enjoy the truly life-changing literature that you bought this year. It's our joy and privilege to support your literature distribution; to help your children learn more about the love of Jesus; to help you gain fresh insight in your Bible study; and to keep you well supplied with healthy foodstuffs and your soul refreshed with praise music. It makes everything we do worthwhile. May God be praised.

ANDREW PUCKERING  
PHOTOS: DAVID BELL



## Downham Investiture Day

On Sabbath 13 April Downham Pathfinder Club celebrated its second investiture day, having started two years ago in April 2017. Guest speaker, Pastor Johns, the SEC Pathfinder Director, invested 21 Adventurers and Pathfinders.

The Adventurers and Pathfinders came out in full force, neatly presented in their uniforms. During Sabbath School they recited memory verses, gave a temperance presentation and offered musical items.



The drum corps led the procession into church for Divine Service, the Adventurer and Pathfinder pledge and law were recited, and the song 'Oh, We Are the Pathfinders Strong' rang out, showing that we are to serve God and others.

'Can they see Jesus in me?' was the topic delivered by Pastor Johns. The sermon encouraged the listeners to have the character of Christ and represent Him in their daily lives.

Adventurers and Pathfinders received their awards with joy as they came to the platform and shook hands with Pastor Johns, Jennifer Anti, the Downham Pathfinder Director, and leaders from supporting churches.

The Adventurer of the Year was Arefah Costa-Ekum, and the Pathfinder of the Year was Daniella Ebireri (who is also the first Pathfinder to start the TLT programme).

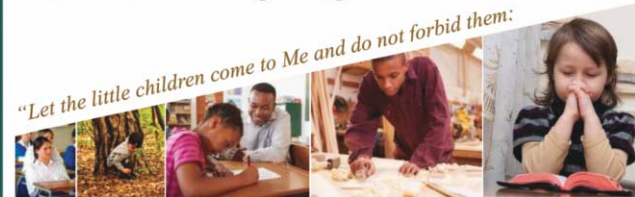
Well done to all the Adventurers and Pathfinders who were successfully invested, and thank you to the parents and guardians, Downham members and all the clubs from other churches for supporting our children.

May others see Jesus in us as we live for Him daily.

LEONIE JOHNSON  
Photo: Dale McLaren

Editor's note: Downham is located in Bromley, South-East London.

## ADVENTIST EDUCATION Teacher Training Programme



"Let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Jesus)

**What?** Training in the principles and practice of Adventist education from the Bible and Writings of Ellen White with a view to implementation

**Who for?** Teachers, Parents, Interested persons

**When?** Monthly sessions starting in late Autumn 2019

**Where?** Alternating face to face sessions in church venues and online sessions via Zoom

**Why?** \* Supporting the church in widening the provision of Adventist education \* Need to make Adventist education more available to our children and youth \* Preparing teachers and other supporting persons who can help make this a reality \* Growing concerns amongst Adventist families about issues in and the direction of state school education.

### For more information

Contact: Neal Lawrence  
Details: T: 01686 651067 M: 07413143983 E: teacher-training@ces-edu.org

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Carlone - 07717846677

Hulmes Vale Farm  
Cottages  
SK17 8JD

6-9 December 2019  
Cost - £50

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## Messenger

Volume 124 • 19 – 27 September 2019

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Design: David Bell  
Proof reading: Andrew Puckering

COPY FOR No. 21 – 3 October 2019

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Sunset

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	Lon	Card	Nolt	Edin	Belf
Sept 27	6.48	7.01	6.52	7.00	7.11
Oct 4	6.32	6.45	6.35	6.41	6.53
11	6.17	6.29	6.19	6.23	6.36
18	6.02	6.14	6.03	6.06	6.19

## Prayer matters

September has seen the number of violent killings in London pass 100.

Continue to pray:

- for families bereaved
- for youth to draw away from violence
- for community leaders to work together to resolve violence
- for the violence to stop



The Bournemouth 'A' team gathering together after Sabbath lunch. What they were discussing the editor was not quite sure, but with clipboard present it must have been something significant. What great mentors Joe and David have to help in their Christian walk.

## More Camporee baptisms – this time in Bournemouth

David Ikhuoria (10), a smart and dedicated young man who loves Jesus, worships at Bournemouth Church and is a member of Bournemouth Pathfinders Club, was baptised during the TED Camporee this summer. David says the experience of baptism was wonderful, and he is happy to be received as the youngest member in the church.

His 10-year-old Pathfinder friend Joe, who also worships at Bournemouth Church, has impressive talents in PowerPoint presentations, video editing, video animation and quiz writing. He also loves Jesus and was baptised at the same event by Pastor Dejan Stojkovic.

We rejoice with these two young men and their families, and wish them every blessing in Christ.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

## New mum Michele – 'Never give up on God'

On 31 August at Nottingham Central, Pastor George Kumi dedicated a gift from God, Braxton-Lee Sentos Rukuckzo Bazari, born on 13 May in Scotland. During the service his mum, Michelle, gave a powerful testimony of the birth. Michelle had experienced pain in the head; paramedics were called, and Michelle had an emergency caesarean section. Complications occurred, with pain in the right leg; further tests showed fluid on the left side of the brain. Michelle found it difficult to walk and talk, but, with physiotherapy and speech and language therapy, she is able to say, 'Never give up on God, as He will not give up on you.'

DENNIS TAYLOR, STEWARDSHIP LEADER



## Bible story murals for our church hall

The Southampton Church children's department coordinated a church-wide effort to transform the walls of our church hall during the week before the summer holidays. Over five days teams of children, youth and adults rearranged the hall furniture to create more space for hall users and painted the walls. Four artists from our church traced Bible characters and scenes onto the walls, and the other members were guided to add colour. Each day the teams came in early and worked as late as 10pm in order to complete the task before the coming Sabbath.

As well as making the hall look more inviting for our children, we also hope these attractive Bible scenes will cause our hall's users to learn more about the characters by searching for them in the Word of God.

NOMSA MAPHANGO

