

Messenger

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‘The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighbourhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes,
the one-of-a-kind glory,
like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out,
true from start to finish.’

John 1:14 (The Message, adapted)

Luke 2:8

in swaddling clothes,
in a manger.
no room for them in the inn.
8 Now there were in the same
country shepherds living out in
the fields, keeping watch over
their flock by night.
9 And *behold, an angel of the
Lord stood before them, and the
glory of the Lord shone around
them, and they were greatly
afraid.

Him, the only begotten of the Highest

concerning this Child.

18 And all those who heard it

marveled at those things which

were told them by the shepherds.

19 *But Mary kept all these things

and pondered them in her heart.

20 Then the shepherds returned

glorifying and praising God for

all the things that they had heard

and seen, as it was told them.

*And when eight days were

Simeon and Anna
to do for Him according to the b
custom of the law, Matt. 4:1
28 he took Him up in his arms
and blessed God and said:

29 "Lord, *now You are letting
Your servant depart in
peace,

According to Your word,
For my eyes *have seen
Your salvation

31 Which You have prepared
before the face of a
peoples,

*A light to bring reve
the Gentiles,
the glory of Y



Sedentary lifestyle – dangers and solutions

Recently I came across an interesting website – www.getbritainstanding.org – which highlights the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle and solutions for combating it. Reporting on the scale of the problem, the website states:

‘Sedentary Behaviour science is still emerging; however, the evidence to date is compelling. A variety of studies warn that sedentary lifestyles are likely to be causing as many deaths as smoking.’¹

From an analysis of research studies, the website lists the impact of a sedentary lifestyle, listing the following 10 top dangers:

- Cardiovascular health impact (heart disease and poor vascular function, circulation and blood pressure)
- Cancer
- Diabetes (type 2)
- Weight gain
- Metabolic syndrome
- Mental health problems
- Back pain/neck pain
- Muscle degeneration
- Osteoporosis
- Impact on mortality

These risks were more significant for individuals sitting more than 8-10 hours per day.

An NHS online report titled ‘Why we should sit less’² confirms the health dangers listed above. The report advises:

‘To reduce our risk of ill health from inactivity, we are advised to exercise regularly – at least 150 minutes a week – and reduce sitting time.’

Providing further solutions, their report segment titled ‘Move More, Sit Less’ shares the recommendation for breaking up long periods of

sitting time with ‘shorter bouts of activity for just one to two minutes’.

So how much impact does physical activity have in regard to combating ill health?

The *Chief Medical Officers’ Physical Activity Guidelines*³ published on 7 September 2019 answer this question.

‘Since 2011, the evidence to support the health benefits of regular physical activity for all groups has become more compelling. In children and young people, regular physical activity is associated with improved learning and attainment, better mental health and cardiovascular fitness, also contributing to healthy weight status. In adults, there is strong evidence to demonstrate the protective effect of physical activity on a range of many chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes, mental health problems and social isolation.’

Dr Frank Lipman’s article, ‘20 Ways to Move More Every Day’,⁴ published on the Be Well website, provides helpful and manageable suggestions for increasing daily activity. These great tips are explained over four headings:

- Put more motion into your commute (including walking more).
- Move it all over the office (increasing movement at work).
- Make your office equipment move you (standing desk/ergonomic chairs).
- Try a few off-hour moves (being active outside work).

Visit their website at <https://www.bewell.com/blog/20-ways-to-move-more-every-day/> and be sure to implement the tips!

Good health!

¹<http://www.getbritainstanding.org/health-risks.php>

²<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/why-sitting-too-much-is-bad-for-us/>

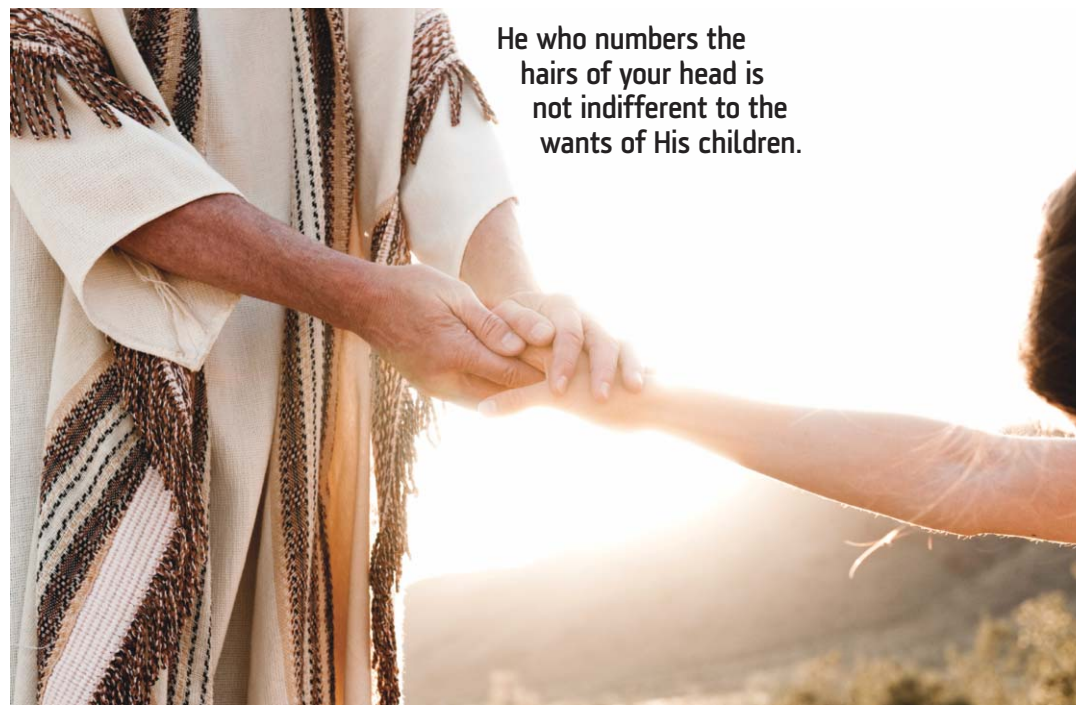
³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf

⁴<https://www.bewell.com/blog/20-ways-to-move-more-every-day/>

The neighbourhood Friend

‘Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. “The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. “He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.’

ELLEN WHITE, STEPS TO CHRIST, P. 100



He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children.

Tell me a story

What story in the Bible most inspires you? Intrigues you? Moves you? Esther? Daniel? Rahab? The woman of Samaria? Job? We want to hear you tell your favourite story on Adventist Radio London. For more details please email artellmeastory@gmail.com.

MARK GREY



‘The Word . . . moved into the neighbourhood.’

The other lot won then! If that’s so, then you’re probably not feeling all that thrilled this morning. On the other hand, if the party you voted for are about to form a new government, I imagine you’ll be feeling quite cheery. At least things are sorted now, and by common consent we can get on with doing what needs to be done. Writing during the last week in November, I trust you will understand the prophetic assumption on my part!

Holding an election in the UK in December is unusual, and quite a few didn’t like the idea. But it does have one advantage – falling right in the middle of the Advent season! Every reminder of ‘God with us’ is to be treasured, but this year in particular, after all the political angst and dross, what is more refreshing for us and our nation than immediately to turn our eyes towards Jesus?

‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us’ (John 1:14, NKJV).

As the apostle John writes his gospel, around AD 85, he remembers the Christ he encountered 55 years earlier. Did he ever wonder for a nano-second if he’d really met Jesus – or just a distant figment of the imagination? This is no speculative aside on my part, but central to the problem John faced as he wrote his gospel. His is not a breaking news account, but was written for his time, to persuade the people of his time to believe in Jesus (John 20:30, 31). His is a gospel written to counter the contemporary heresy called ‘Gnosticism’. God was ‘pure spirit’, and pure spirit could never touch matter, said Gnostics. As a result, a pure God could never have created the world, because in doing so He would be contaminated with evil. By the same measure, the idea that God could become flesh was deemed to be impossible! Sure, Christ-followers can be as passionate about Jesus as they like, but don’t try to make any claim for His divinity. ‘Oh yes I will’, I can imagine John saying; ‘this is so important, I’ll make it my starting point – and, should anybody doubt me, my memory is *not* fading!’

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’ (John 1:1-5, ESV)

Many of us have read over these lines hundreds of times. But put them into their first-century context for a few seconds, sharing the concern John has about the truth of the fully God, fully man Jesus being lost, and those words come alive again. It’s as if he’s saying to the critics, ‘Sorry folks, don’t even begin to suggest that Jesus was not God.’ As William Barclay explains, John hits the road running in this gospel by immediately sharing the big idea, the big truth:

*‘It is John’s great thought that Jesus is none other than God’s creative and life-giving and light-giving word, that Jesus is the power of God which created the world and the reason of God which sustains the world come to earth in human and bodily form. . . . John goes on to say that the word was with God. What does he mean by that? He means that there has always been the closest connection between the word and God.’*¹

If ever there was a message that John’s world needed to know, it was that God is on our side. The Israelites distorted His image with an obedience for the cause of national greatness. ‘We will obey – just give us Jerusalem, and, whatever You do, keep the gentiles out!’ In the process they created God in their own image, one caricatured as demanding, unmerciful, and, most tragic of all, remote and distant. Is it any wonder their worship became little more than a lifeless ritual?

As John surges into his gospel, he uses metaphors to tell the story; for example, light vs. darkness (John 1:4, 5), and grace and truth (John 1:14): great pictures in and of themselves about who God is. But there’s something incredibly warm about Eugene Peterson’s translation of John 1:14 in the Message paraphrase:

‘The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. . . .’

These words speak volumes on so many levels.

First, the Christ-child entering this world as flesh and blood demolishes the myth of the remote and distant God. He took on flesh and blood! Contemplate those words over and over. Go on a deep theological journey into that if you like (and John did). But, when all is said and done, it is sufficient to say and believe that He was fully God and fully man, with the result that He identifies with who I am – yes! The result is

access and victory (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

Second, even though the incarnate Christ was with us for just a specific time and purpose, He left His Spirit, who will be with us always (John 14:16, 17). I begin to imagine where I live, and where you live, up and down this land, and in these isles. Some areas are comfortable; others are not. Big cities, small towns and country villages – some in distress, others in peace. Friends, He is with us – in our neighbourhood – and watching over our nation.

On a third level, He’s here in the neighbourhood of our concerns, our finances, our relationships, our jobs, our church, our hopes, our children and grandchildren, the tumour and the fatigue – yes, the Holy Spirit, the all-powerful, all-knowing, hovering, watching, guiding, embracing.

And then, finally, **on a fourth level** there’s the ‘full of grace and truth’ challenge (John 1:14). For sure, John is keen to connect Son to Father – ‘like Father, like Son’ – no question about that; but it is the description of the character he wants us not to miss: ‘full of grace and truth’. And, sure enough, it is in our neighbourhood that the Spirit prompts us to be grace and truth, or, as Peterson puts it, *‘Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.’*

Even with a new government promising a new start full of hope and expectation, there will still be people we know who all but exist rather than live. Few seem to live life with a capital ‘L’ as we do. The election has provided a new government. ‘Generous inside and out, true from start to finish’? *‘If only they knew, along with the citizens they serve, that He’s moved into the neighbourhood.’*

¹William Barclay’s Study Bible: John 1 (volume 1, pp. 37, 38)



Thanks and seasonal greetings

Emmanuel Osei, SEC President

The end of a year is often filled with excitement, great anticipation and high expectations as we make plans for the year ahead. These plans may be personal – maybe we want to improve our physical, emotional or spiritual health. Perhaps the plans are to improve our financial or academic status. Other times these plans might be collective – to see an increase in local church membership, a certain percentage growth in tithes and offerings, and so on. These are noble plans, for it is said that if we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

However, despite our best efforts and meticulous planning, none of us can be certain of making it through the year in its entirety. Tomorrow simply isn't promised. It is for this reason that I want you to join me in giving God thanks for allowing us to see the year end. Many things have happened throughout 2019 that could have had fatal effects or caused irreparable damage to our lives.

While I'm certain you each have your own stories to tell, we are united by the fact that, in spite of all the challenges of 2019, God has brought us through – praise His holy name.

As a church family here in the South England Conference, my fellow officers and directors and I are grateful to God to be invited to lead this great conference. We have met and prayed together for God's leading and directions for 2020. I

must be honest and say to you that the Lord has impressed upon me clearly where He wants His church to go. How we get there, the challenges we will face together, and the obstacles we will need to overcome are questions I do not have all the answers to, and therefore I am soliciting your prayers.

The mandate Jesus gave to His church can be found in Matthew 28:18-20: *'Go and make disciples . . . baptising them . . . and teaching them'* (NIV). The Lord has placed this heavily upon my heart. When I read the theme of our world church for the next quinquennium, 'I Will Go', I am impressed to share with you the theme for the South England Conference for the next quadrennium: 'Making Disciples; Impacting Communities'.

I am humbled but grateful to God to be alive and in good health as we enter the close of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. Indeed, these are exciting days as we daily behold Jesus and seek to be transformed by His Spirit into His likeness. As we are disciplined, it is our intention to impact and disciple those within our local communities, thus winning them for Jesus Christ. I wish you compliments for the season and every blessing for 2020!



Christmas is coming

Paul Tompkins, SM President

I recently read the following quotation: 'There are two great days in a person's life – the day we are born and the day we discover why' (William Barclay). The Bible is not clear when Jesus was born, but it is certainly crystal clear as to why He was born – to be the Saviour of the world (Luke 2:11).

As we approach the Christmas season, we have an opportunity to lift up Jesus in very practical ways. Ellen White once said, 'Christmas is coming. May you all have wisdom to make it a precious season.' It can and will be a precious season if we 'glorify God, not man'. The challenge is, how best to practically do this today?

One way is by focusing on

helping others while sharing the Gospel message.

Christmas shelters, toy services, giving parcels and monetary gifts to those less fortunate – perhaps through collections at services of carols and lessons – are all effective ways of showing the love of God in action.

A notable recent survey in Scotland (Barna, 'Transforming Scotland') showed that the public welcome a church that makes a difference in the community. More than eight in ten of those surveyed believe a church is a very (24%) or fairly (59%) favourable thing for a community.



From the King; about the King

Ian Sweeney, BUC President

One of the Christmas Day traditions followed by many households in the UK is to spend approximately 10 minutes of quiet reflection in watching and/or listening to the Queen's speech.

This tradition was started in 1932 when the Queen's grandfather, King George V, used the wireless (radio) to transmit a message to the countries of what is now the Commonwealth with the words, 'I speak now from my home and from my heart to you all; to men and women so cut off by the snows, the desert, or the sea, that only voices out of the air can reach them' (<https://www.royal.uk/history-christmas-broadcast>). Since that initial Christmas Day message, the voice of the British monarchs has been heard across the globe as they reflect upon the current issues, concerns and personal reflections of Christmas in hope of bringing greater unity and hope to their diverse audience.

The importance of the Queen's Christmas Day message is now measured by viewing figures. In 2018 it is reported that 6.3 million UK viewers watched the speech; however, this was 1.2 million down on those who watched in 2017 (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/12/26/tv-ratings-forqueens-christmas-speech-drop-one-million-amid/>). Part of the blame for



To the end

Emanuel Bran, WM President

Captain Robert Scott dreamed to be the first man to reach the South Pole, and he had all the reasons to be confident. As an officer in the Royal Navy he was trained to navigate the most perilous waters and endure extreme conditions. On his first expedition of 1901-1904, he set a new southern record by marching to latitude 82 degrees south and discovered the Antarctic Plateau, on which the South Pole is located.

With passion and determination, on 15 June he sailed from England on the ill-fated Terra Nova expedition of 1910-1913. As he reached the Antarctic, a tragedy hard to comprehend began. For the first month, he and his team were only able to advance when the temperature dropped, hardening the soft snow. Along the way, food was deposited for the journey back, but when hit by a storm they were forced to camp for days and eat out of the reserves. The ponies pulling the sleighs died, and the five men had to pull the heavy loads in deep snow. Despite this ordeal, they were adamant to reach the South Pole, even if it meant giving their lives.

About 20 miles from the Pole, they could see dog pawprints. What could this be in such a desolated place? Soon, they glimpsed the Norwegian flag and Amundsen's South Pole camp, which had been set up there less than five weeks before.

The Guardian writes about a photograph taken of the team after they reached the South Pole: 'Captain Robert Falcon Scott, surrounded by four colleagues, poses at the South Pole, a Union Jack hanging limply in the background, on 17 January 1912. He and his men look haunted. Their

Interestingly, this is not just among the older generation. A surprising finding of this same study showed what was working among millennials. The top three areas were: 1) meaningful and authentic relationships; 2) deep understanding of faith; and 3) opportunities to serve others. I would say that a church, our church, is uniquely positioned to meet these aspirations throughout all the year. We need to be out there making a difference – we have a voice that needs to be heard.

It is said that church only enters some secular people's consciousness on three occasions – Christmas, Easter and for a funeral.

If that is the case, we need to be there for them with doors open and arms outstretched. **Wouldn't it be nice if the Seventh-day Adventist Church were known as the most loving place in town – on these and at other important times in people's lives!**

May God's blessing be with all our members as we seek to share the love of Jesus both within and without our faith community. May we have opportunities to be able to share the reason for the season, both in word and by deed.

¹Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 9 December 1884, par. 8

the lower viewing figures was attributed to Netflix!

Is this another tradition that is slowly being eroded because it is just not relevant today?

It certainly has not escaped my attention that many more children knock on my door on the night of 31 October for 'trick or treat?' than knock to sing Christmas carols, notwithstanding that Halloween is one evening versus the entire Christmas season. And, on the odd occasion when carollers do knock at my door, their repertoire does not go beyond 'We wish you a merry Christmas'.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are to continue the tradition of delivering a message from the King about the King. Ours is a message not only for Christmas Day, but for every day of 2020 and beyond. It is a message that extends further than the British Commonwealth, for it is a message for all peoples. Ours is a message that is able to unite the diverse peoples of our neighbourhoods and communities, and it is a message that brings hope to the hopeless.

That first Christmas message, delivered by the angels to the shepherds, finds relevance every day (Luke 2:10, 11, NIV): *'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'*

Ours is a message that the King has come, and that the King is coming again.

expressions suggest weariness and defeat – as well they might.

'Henry Bowers, Edward Wilson, Edgar Evans and Lawrence Oates, along with their leader, had just tramped 850 miles over glaciers and ice fields in an attempt to become the first men to reach the South Pole, only to find they had been beaten by the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen. "It is a terrible disappointment," Scott recalled in his journal, shortly after posing for the photograph.'

Discouraged and weary, they now had to return before the polar winter settled. Great misfortunes – fatal falls, the death of the strongest of them, the sacrifice of another who left the tent to be lost in the storm because little food was left to reach the next deposit, and ultimately a great storm which pinned them 150 miles from their base camp. One by one the last three conquerors perished, so close to achieving their dream.

Recent studies assessed that temperatures dropped below -40°C in the winter of 1912, but, despite facing incredible obstacles, Captain Scott never gave up reaching his dream, although he could have done so at any time. He had to finish what he started!

In Psalm 138:8 (NIV) we read: *'The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures for ever – do not abandon the works of your hands.'* Jesus has begun in us His work of salvation, which has already demanded His life. Do you think there is anything that will make Him give up on you? As we embrace a new year and plan our adventures, remember His plans and desires for you!



To here and beyond!

Dan Serb, IM President

I was sitting in a meeting the other day, and my attention was grabbed by a box – a video-projector box – lying in the corner of the room. What actually intrigued me were the words on the box: 'EPSON. Exceed your vision.' That made me think of our vision for the church, and that, with every effort, we seek to fulfil it the best we can; it had never occurred to me that we could aim to exceed it, to go beyond that which we deem doable. This may be because we think of vision in terms of programmes and events, and often disregard the eternal

dimension of mission, that which seeks to reach beyond the here and now, beyond the grave, beyond the sun, beyond the comprehensible.¹

At this time of the year, it is good to revisit some of the lessons learned; I'll mention two. (1) *Suffering and frustration don't come out beautiful* – when we 'risk' to give people a voice, what they have to say may not always be pretty and affirming; but how else are we to learn of what people, especially



No matter how we finish, we must finish

Richard Jackson, NEC President

As we look forward to 2020 and beyond I cannot help but look back at one of the most inspirational stories of the twentieth century.

In the 1992 Olympic Games, an athlete, having trained, prepared and done all that he could, lined up alongside his competitors and comrades, each determined to secure a place in the 400-metres final. Each athlete had trained over the winter; they had all made the necessary preparations, and many were cheered on by friends, family, training partners and indeed their entire country.

However, a situation arose that he could not have prepared for: as he eagerly awaited the sound of the starter's gun he could not have known that his hamstring would tear, moments into the race. Given this lack of insight into the future he responded to the sound of the starter's gun like all the others lined up alongside him, and shot out of the blocks, aiming for a place in the final. For Derek Redmond, however, this was not going to be the year he reached the final, but it was going to be the year he went into the history books. With the help of his father he completed the 400m semi-final, cheered on by the entire stadium. That moment in time placed him in the history books as an example of courage in the face of adversity.

For each of us 2019 has been a

year of challenge, growth, development and change. 2020 may well be no different. The race that we have run will be different to the races run around us, yet there is one thing we must all do – reach the end of the race! We may need help along the way, but, no matter how we finish, we must finish!

We will all face situations that we have not prepared for. No matter what comes our way in the weeks, months and years ahead, remember these things:

'To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven' (Ecclesiastes 3:1, KJV).

Therefore, no matter what your race looks like, keep running it, and keep striving, because you will be rewarded!

My prayer is that each of you will one day be able to be victorious and proclaim:

'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing' (2 Timothy 4:7, 8, NIV).



young people in our churches, think and believe about the church they, sometimes desperately, want to hang on to? (2) *We need to move at the speed of trust* – a plan and a vision cannot be carried out by oneself, and unless there is trust, mediated by communication, the best of ideas and intentions wither and die unfulfilled.

This year has been a year full of activity in the Irish Mission. We've been busy. We've grown; I'd like to believe that we've grown in compassion and grace as much as we've grown in numbers and knowledge. But the question is, *Have we exceeded our vision? Have we gone beyond that which we envisaged at the start of the year? Have others been awed by the awesomeness of God at work in us? Has the busyness made us more intense and tense, or has it helped us find new ways of freedom and*

repose in Him? These may very well be my own questions, but you may want to appropriate them to your own spiritual inventory.

Christmas time is a time of cheer and goodwill; the end of the year is often marked by optimism for an unknown wished to be better than the past. I invite you all to tap into this positivity, but not just for a season; rather, to release faith so that it shapes a vision which exceeds expectations and which goes beyond the here-and-now's realities, as joyful or as painful as they may be, pulling us through to that which God has already set before us: *'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

¹1 Corinthians 2:9



Photo quality as supplied

A day to remember – 5 October 2019

It is happening before our eyes; God is calling His people in various ways. I am now very convinced that we are in the end times. We used to see very few people respond to the call of Christ, but now we are seeing this happen more often in Darlington.

It was early this year when Darlington reported the baptism of two men. On 5 October, we witnessed yet another baptism. Michael James Surrey once attended church when he was young, and then left the church for a while. Feeling a need to return to church, he started Bible classes; but, at the same time, his mother never gave up studying with him at home, helping him answer the many challenging questions he faced. At his baptism he shared that it was his mother's prayers that brought him back.

In Matthew 9:1-8 we hear of friends carrying a paralysed man to Jesus. One Darlington member began studying the Bible with a friend. To see Marta bring Marzena Krancewicz to Jesus for spiritual healing was a beautiful experience. Marzena was baptised on 5 October.

It is true that God uses each one of us in different ways to reach our friends. Darlington members are continuing to pray for friends they have who do not know Christ.

ESTERY MWANJOKA



Dundee baptism

'I am nervous, but I'll go first!' This was the sentiment of Steve Kane, who was baptised first on the day. The oldest of the five who were baptised, he lives in Dundee and found the church a few months prior to this baptism date. 'I would like to be involved with the Pathfinders; what they do is already in my blood, and my granddaughter will benefit greatly from this,' he continued enthusiastically. The two sisters, Charity and Laura Kanyongo, took special care to make it a high day for their family, as their other sister and parents were well involved with their experience. Gillian Dlakama and Melville Mitchell also had their close family and friends present as they stood in the water, listening to song, poem and music. The congregation in Dundee sang and praised God for the high day.

At the end of 2018, the Dundee church leadership discussed a plan to help individuals who might want to be baptised. Geoffrey Aori became part of this drive and organised the baptismal class, which is still ongoing. This initiative is growing, with Geoffrey and other leaders in the church sharing in teaching and managing the group. Two dates were set for 2019 baptisms, and the planning for 2020 is also to have two dates ready.

Members are involved too, by praying for the Holy Spirit to lead others to commit to following Christ. The church is excitedly awaiting 2020, and there is a high spirit in the congregation.

In the Scottish Mission, the contribution by the Dundee congregation in 2019 was highest for church growth. It is the prayer and plan for the members of this church to keep working hard at holding this church in a place for changing the layout of the membership in Scotland.

JIMMY BOTHA



Overflowing joy

On Sabbath 9 November the members of the Great Brickkiln St (Wolverhampton) congregation experienced 'overflowing joy' as four friends were baptised.

The morning sermon, given by the British Union Youth Director, Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, was a powerful treatise on the cost of following Jesus.

Gathering together with friends and family, the friends were baptised in the afternoon with a full church to support them. Daniel Sudworth (from Wednesfield Church), along with Richard Wright, Cortney Cummings and Chivu Ionut Cosmin, were baptised by Pastors Herbert and Stojkovic respectively.

Please join us in praying for these precious 'newborns in Christ', that as they join their new family we will guide and nurture them with help from the Lord as they grow in the faith and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

HELDERBERG JACKSON

In loving remembrance of Anneli Helga

2019 will be remembered by me for many special reasons: not so much because, during this year, our country has 'chosen' a new prime minister 'sharing' my good name; nor because he has managed to persuade Parliament to go for another general election on my wife Anneli's birthday, 12 December; but, most of all, it is because my dear wife Anneli passed away earlier this year, after over seven years living away from home because of her diabetes and dementia.

She passed away peacefully on Monday 3 June at the Lancaster Care Home, where she was a resident during the past year, after being at Greenbanks Care Home and The Chase over the previous six-plus years.

Born into an Adventist family in a small town near Kerava, in South Finland, Anneli attended the Finnish Adventist College in Toivonniemi. True to her independent character, she spent a short time in Sweden before coming to do nursing in England.

Some say that 'marriage is made in heaven', while others told me it was 'love at first sight'. Whichever we choose, Anneli and I met in 1964, soon after my arrival from Malaysia; and we were married on 19 June 1965, which means we would otherwise be celebrating our 54th wedding anniversary this year. We first lived in Wanstead, East London, then Harlow in Essex; and, after spending two years at Newbold College, we arrived at Watford in 1971. We have been blessed with two sons, Paul and David, and all the credit must go to Anneli for bringing up these two young men. I believe they received their first Christian education with the faithful reading of Uncle Arthur's stories.

All through her life, Anneli was a good daughter to her parents, a faithful wife to me, a loving mother to her sons and grandmother to her three grandchildren, and a kind person to her friends. We all miss her dearly!

During the early years of her residence at the care homes, she became known as a very kind and gentle person, and even helpful, to all the other residents and staff. They all loved her!

Anneli was cremated on Monday 17 June, just two days before our 54th wedding anniversary, at the West Herts. Crematorium. Our eldest son Paul and I had prepared and organised the funeral. **We wanted to ensure that it would be a simple, but solemn, and, above all, dignified occasion.** Paul came with his wife Victoria, together with the two girls Leia & Leivi from Cardiff; and our younger son David came from Christchurch with young Ethen. We were very moved and touched with a full attendance of well-wishers at the chapel. The service, conducted by Pastor Llew Edwards (with whom we spent two happy years at Newbold), focused around kind and beautiful life sketches by our good friend Paul Bellamy and a moving tribute by our granddaughter, Leia. It was fitting that Pastor Cecil Perry offered a closing prayer. He has been a lifelong friend, and some of his children were at Stanborough School with our two sons. Both Pastor Perry and his wife were two of the regular visitors to Anneli over the past six years!

A personal letter of condolence from our elected mayor, Peter Taylor of Watford, was read during the service. After the service there was a reception at the Burston Garden Centre. Apart from many of our dear friends attending, we were particularly glad to see the three managers from the three care homes where Anneli stayed: Florence Gamino from Greenbanks, Ruth Kigga from The Chase, and Ann Hill from Lancaster Court; and Penny Butler and John Ellis, the Chair & Vice Chair of Age UK, Herts., where I served as a trustee for two years; together with Ken Emmons & Pat Gascoyne from our KRA Residents' Association.

Life has been hard for me personally over the past few months, and it will probably become even harder in the coming month and years. But, as with life, I must, by the grace of God, try and learn to soldier on. However great the challenges may be, I shall *remember* her with deep emotion and love!

This article was specially prepared on 2019 Remembrance Sunday by Johnson Wong. Those who wish to make contact are welcome to do so on ajaws@hotmail.co.uk



As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

From all of us at Newbold



Leuchars hosts a gospel concert

On 2 November, the small new church group in Leuchars (near St Andrews) made their mark by hosting a gospel concert in one of the army base halls in the town. The Leuchars church group are a small group, but they have impacted the community with a world-class collection of artists in a two-hour concert. The hall was full of members of the community before the concert started. 'I have not been to one for a while, and am excited to hear praises to the Lord,' were the words of Amy, a member of the community, minutes before the concert started. 'I have a houseful, and getting out to a concert like this is such a blessing,' said Lisa, another member of the community.

When Pastor Gabriel Perea started the concert, all eyes focused on the stage area and the music started. As one can imagine from these kinds of concerts, the variety was well balanced, with something for every taste. During the interval the whole audience made their way to the cafeteria area to enjoy a large spread of good food, just right for a Saturday evening. With a group of youth from the nearby Dundee church helping, the process looked professional and well planned.

For the second half the music continued to inspire. 'I wish you would come again next year!' said Fred, another member of the community. 'We didn't mind missing *Strictly*,' he continued. 'We will definitely come again,' was echoed by a handful of seniors leaving the hall at the same time. We are grateful to Charles Lethbridge for doing a splendid job creating good sound and lighting of the stage to set a mood for the beautiful music. Jeanie McKerrow and her family are responsible for organising and doing most of the work in preparation for the concert, assisted by GG and Mac Macawai and their family in this project.

The artists, Hellevi Walker, the Dundee Youth Choir, Victor Igwe, Testify, Kieron Daniel, Daniel Eugene, and Gillian Mataka, are just a small representation of the Scottish Mission musical talent. When the next concert is planned, you are all invited.

COMMUNICATION DEPT



Making a difference through mediation

Conflict is an unavoidable part of life. Some people thrive on it; others try to avoid it at all costs.

From 9 to 11 and from 13 to 14 October a group of 23 people met in Dublin to learn more about conflict, alternative dispute resolution and mediation. At the end of the programme they knew more about their own response to conflict and had developed the skills to help others find a resolution through mediation.

Arranged by the Irish Mission and provided by the Centre for Conflict Resolution at La Sierra Centre University, the Basic Professional Mediation Course taught participants to facilitate a restorative mediation process in which both sides of a conflict are given the opportunity to share and listen to each other before hopefully coming to a settlement.

Before attending the five-day practical training in Dublin, the participants completed a rigorous six-module online course that included theory, online group discussion and the development of a portfolio. The course covered the basics of the professional mediation process, conflict resolution, active listening, and other skills needed before the intensive face-to-face sessions held at the CityNorth Hotel.

Over four days of seminars, exercises and trial mediations, course instructors Tony Belak and John Robert Curtin (from The 4Civility Institute in the USA) brought their years of expertise and wide-ranging life experience together as they helped the participants discover more about themselves and gain valuable listening and negotiating tools to equip them to manage the complexity of mediation. They were joined by Gerry Rooney, a former president of the Mediators' Institute of Ireland, who provided an Irish context to the training and facilitated the assessments that were held on the fifth day. Rochelle Webster, from California, USA, presented on the levels of conflict and some of the strategies we use to defuse and resolve them.

The long days were filled with self-assessments, group exercises, trial mediations, feedback and discussion, and the evenings with portfolio work and preparing for the Mediators' Institute of Ireland certification.

After the concentrated training, on the final day, the majority of the participants took part in an hour-long, video-recorded assessment. Those that reached the required standard were able to complete the process of certification and will go on to register as mediators in Ireland.

As the course finished, Dan Serb, Irish Mission President, shared with the new mediators his vision for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland and Northern Ireland to be known as a place of mediators and

peacemakers, where people can find help dealing with conflict. A network of Adventist mediators is being planned, and it is hoped that a Centre for Conflict Resolution will be developed locally.

Attendees came from across the Irish Mission and beyond, and included both ministers and lay members. Some saw mediation as a future career or part-time role; others were looking to gain new skills to use in their churches, families, communities and workplaces.

Samuel Ngui, a minister from the SEC, felt that the training had 'enhanced my ministry, especially in dealing with conflict in a healthy manner'. Betty O'Rourke from the west of Ireland also commented how the skills learnt 'may be used in the church but also for life, and are applicable in lots of situations'. Heather Keough, from the Church's *Cuisle* Centre, felt that the tools she gained would 'totally revolutionise how I deal with contact in the future, but also how to help others resolve their conflicts'.

Like many of the participants, Anna Boisko wasn't sure at first how useful the course would be, but, once it started, 'I grew to absolutely love it. I enjoyed every minute of helping people to resolve their conflicts, to come to conclusions and win-win situations. The information and practical exercises, alongside real-life experience stories, sucked me into the whole process.' Her final comment, 'Now I know that this is something I definitely want to do', is a feeling shared by all those who took part.

ANDREW WILLIS



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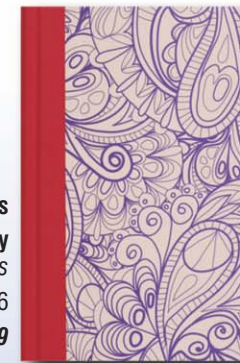


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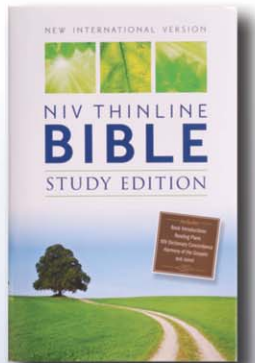


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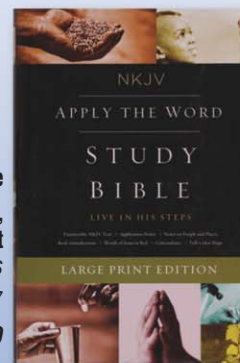


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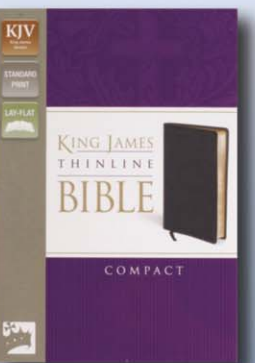


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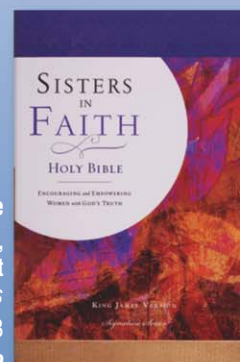


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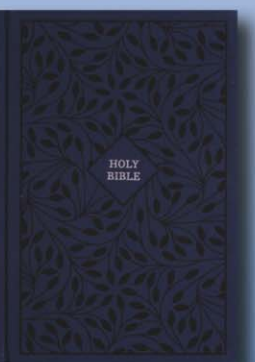


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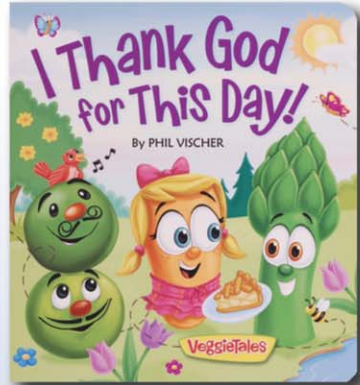
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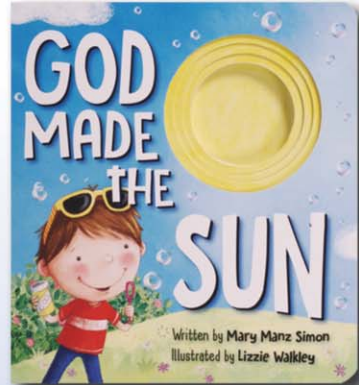
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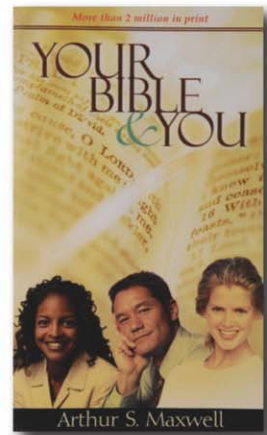
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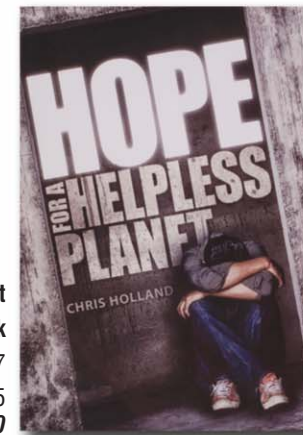
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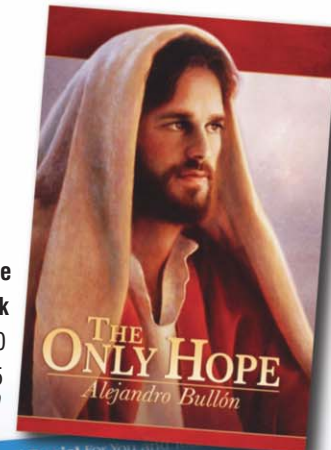
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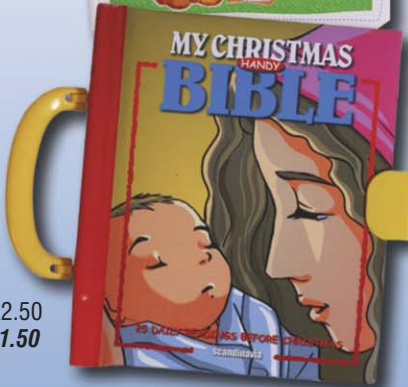
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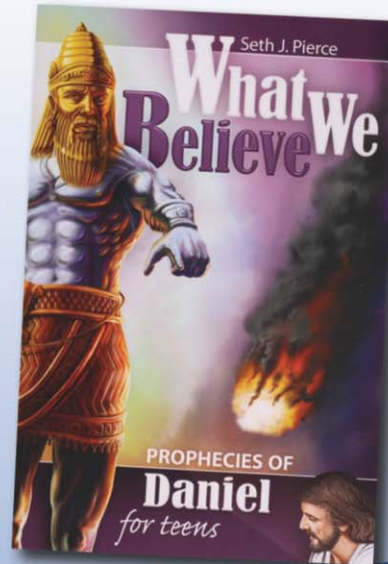
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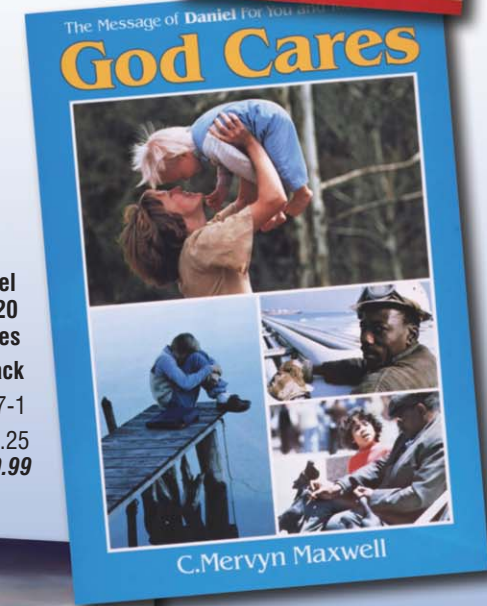
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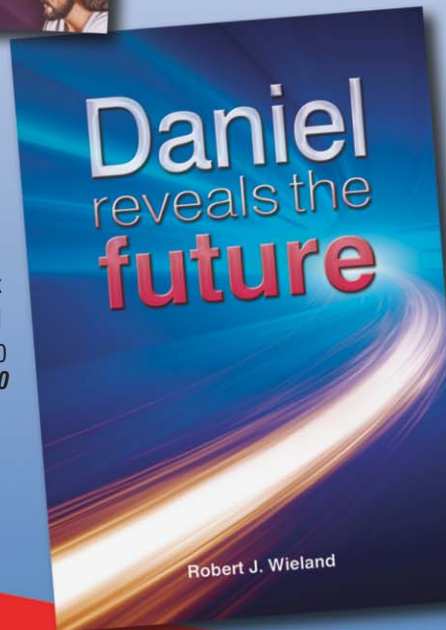
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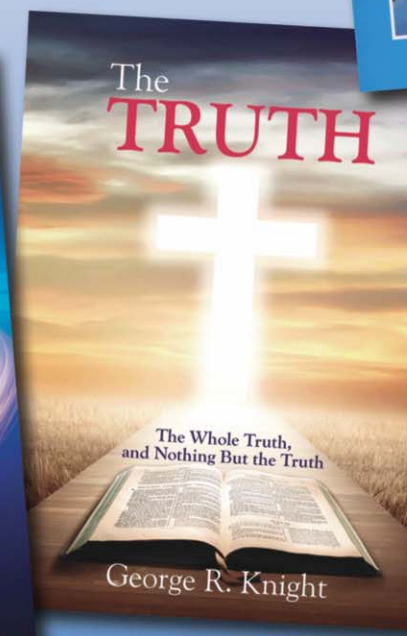
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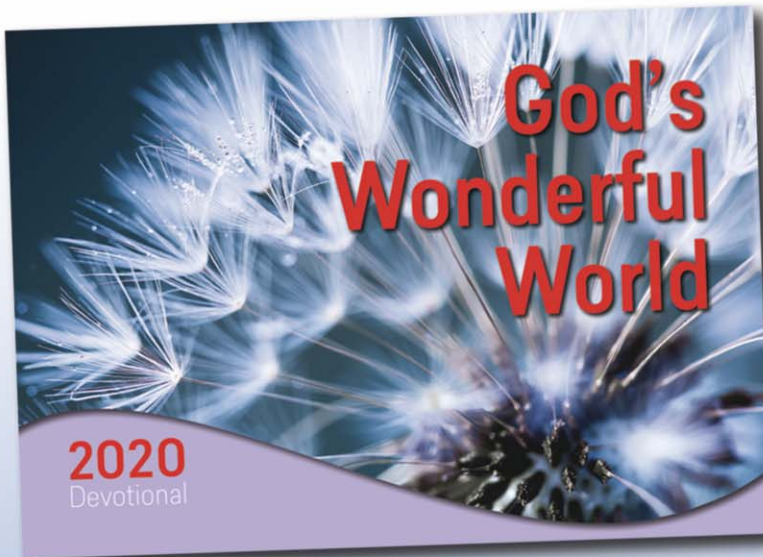
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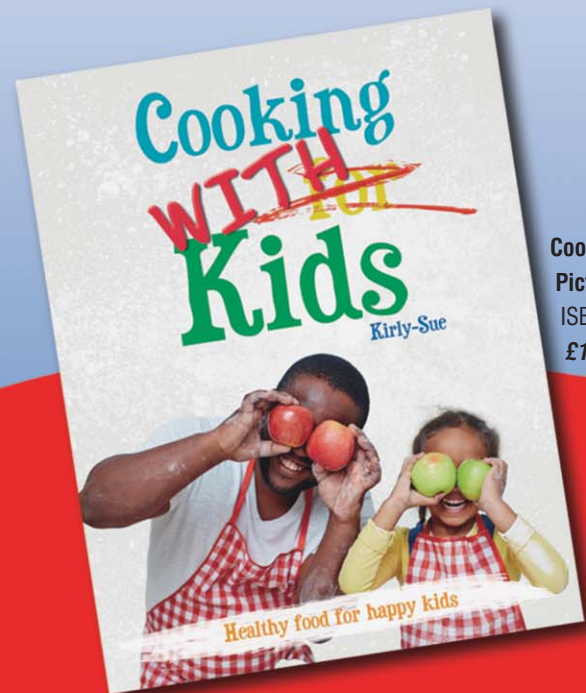


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ELSOM and the community 'Building Bridges' peace project

Just recently Doreen Ione Fray and Fiona D. Pacquette* shared the 2019 ELSOM (East London School of Music) highlights. In conversation together, Doreen (Secretary) takes the lead on behalf of *MESSENGER* readers to find out from Fiona (Manager) what's been going on.

Doreen: Can you share with *MESSENGER* readers the highlights at ELSOM in 2019?

Fiona: I would say there were several. Students performed at their school concert/recital event in February; they then supported the 'Young N Gifted Choir' and performed alongside musicians from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the 'Under the Stars' event in August. Finally, they composed their own song of peace as part of the 'Building Bridges' peace project. It was then performed by the students at the 'Sing 4 Peace' event in September.

DF: How did ELSOM students and tutors become involved with the London Borough of Newham 'Building Bridges' peace project?

FP: The Chairman of the Advent Community Association approached me after attending a Handel's *Messiah* concert organised by ELSOM (27 April). He expressed interest in the school and wanted to know a bit more about ELSOM. I gave him a brief background, and then we exchanged contact details and arranged a convenient time for us to speak about the 'Building Bridges' project.

DF: What is the 'Building Bridges' peace project?

FP: 'Building Bridges' is a community project which brings people of all ages and backgrounds from across three London boroughs together to discuss and share messages of peace through performing music, poetry, painting and dance. It designates core 'Peace One Day' values to explore non-violence, respect of others, friendship, interdependence, social justice, moral responsibility to others and equality.

DF: Why was it launched, and what target group was it aimed for?

FP: The medium of the arts (music, poetry, dance, painting and so on) was used to help individuals and groups express what peace means to them; discover the causes of violence and conflict; explore different values; find what they could do individually and collectively to help promote peace; nurture ethical awareness and empathy towards others; and identify where to access help and support – and to challenge the rise in violent crime, in memory of victims of gun and knife crimes. The target group for this project was primarily children and young people from ages 5 to 25 years.

DF: What were the criteria that ELSOM had to meet in order to participate in these outreach programmes?

FP: At least 25 under-18s were expected to attend four workshops at the East London School of Music in order to prepare for these two major events. Four members of staff, including myself, delivered the workshops.

DF: What were the community venues where ELSOM under-18s performed for the 'Building Bridges' peace project?

FP: There were two main venues: the 'Under the Stars' open-air concert stage in East Ham's Central Park (Newham Council), and the Tereza Joanne Boat at the King George V Royal Docks.

DF: Were the preparatory stages a lengthy process, especially having the opportunity to rehearse with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO)?

FP: The preparatory stages for the performance of the 'Peace Song' consisted of six workshop/rehearsal sessions lasting one and a half hours between the months of July and September 2019.

The RPO workshop was a one-day session (Friday 9 August) supporting the 'Young N Gifted Choir' – a group of young people from Newham aged 6 to 17 – joined by four members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. During the workshop, the Young N Gifted Choir and ELSOM split into groups to compose a

brand-new song accompanied by ELSOM strings & woodwind and RPO musicians. On the day of the RPO 'Under the Stars' event, the two groups rehearsed for one hour on stage before the event (Sunday 11 August). Performing on stage in front of hundreds of people alongside one of the UK's most famous orchestras was quite an exciting opportunity for the ELSOM students, and their parents felt very proud.

DF: How did these students show their musicianship and ability to perform to the public?

FP: The students had received expert musical training from their tutors (both practical & theory), who prepared them for the two major events. They faithfully attended all the workshops and practised their scores during weekdays. At the end of the workshops the students were quite confident performing to the public, and they followed the instructions of the conductor(s).

DF: What impact has this outreach exposure had on ELSOM growth?

FP: Since this exposure, the growth of ELSOM has increased from 50 students to nearly 75. We now have a waiting list, awaiting allocation of teachers. The interest to enrol with ELSOM is increasing rapidly.

DF: Finally, what are the outcomes for the student body at ELSOM, as well as the staff and parents?

FP: The Chairman of the Advent Community Association has invited ELSOM to take part in another similar project, to compose and perform another original song highlighting social issues. The parents/guardians have been very supportive of their children taking part in such events – showcasing skills they have learned as students of ELSOM.

*Fiona D. Pacquette is the manager and piano, pipe organ and music theory tutor at ELSOM.



Falling in love with Jesus



The Nottingham Central women's retreat has become an annual event, and in mid-September we relaxed at Kenwick Lodges in Lincolnshire, where 'Falling in love with Jesus' was the theme of the weekend. Focusing on our relationship with God, four women shared 'the Word': Pearl Griffiths,

Andrene Lewis-Longwe, Sharon Wallace and Jean Gregory. The WM Department is vibrant, and over the last 4-5 years it has tried to build and strengthen relationships between the women in church by improving communication. Running two WhatsApp groups (one for prayer

and the other for general discussion), we receive many prayer requests from members and the local community.

The retreats are an opportunity for us to get to know each other in a relaxed environment and explore issues of particular concern to us as women of the church, seeking to do God's will: not to mention it being great fun! Not least, we are thrilled that friends from the community join us.

The jewel in our crown is the women's praise team, 'Espérance', which leads out in praise and worship once a quarter. Outreach is a very important aspect of the department. We have established a visitation programme, during which we visit shut-in members at home or in hospital, singing and praying and sharing the word of God with residents. We have used some of our funds to support a local domestic violence charity, and we were recently accepted by Boots the chemist to receive free products to be shared with those in need. We asked some of the women how they would describe the department, so the final word should go to them.

'Innovative!'

'A caring community of women devoted to Christ (Titus 2).'

'Introducing new ideas; original and creative in thinking.'

JEAN GREGORY, WM LEADER

to those who may be lonely or bereaved. In particular, the aim is to create a sense of community and belonging for those who may not

have family here in the UK.

While UKZAF is organised by Zambians, it is not only for Zambians, which was truly reflected at this year's women's retreat.

Delegates travelled from all parts of the UK, as far as Scotland and Wales, with a representation from East, Central and Southern Africa, as well as the Caribbean.

In addition, the doors were open to community friends, and as a result of this fellowship one of our new friends is considering joining the Adventist faith. Praise be to God!

The women came expectant of a spiritual revival, but first we had to 'unmask the real me', which was the running theme of the retreat, prayerfully chosen to encourage the women to remove or hand over anything that was preventing them from 'being real' with God.

It was truly a Spirit-filled weekend, led by a powerful team of speakers: Pastors Linda Nyamhunga and Sindi Mabena, who brought out issues that many women would not ordinarily speak so openly about. Without doubt, we saw the Holy Spirit move in the lives of those attending before the retreat was even over.

The retreat ended on Sunday with a powerful prayer session as participants laid their problems 'at the feet of Jesus' and expressed to God the desires of their hearts. They came away expectant of a miracle, which will be shared at the next Zambian women's retreat in 2020.

If there are any Zambians reading this who were not able to attend this year, make sure you save the date for next year and invite a friend, and you will surely be blessed.



Gatwick Women of Virtue retreat 2019

Fifty-seven women had the opportunity to enrich their lives spiritually at the Gatwick Women of Virtue retreat, which was held at Horsley Park Hotel over 13-15 September 2019. The theme was 'He Knows My Name', based on Isaiah 43:1-3.

The retreat included sermons, prayer sessions, testimonies, and a prayer walk. We were blessed to have young women who had their own sessions and joined the adults during sermons and prayer sessions.

On Sabbath evening we had a special banquet treat. Women were dressed in their best, and the programme included gospel music, games and an educational session. One lady brought us a special cake with Isaiah 43:1-3 written on it.

The weekend was Spirit-filled and we were all blessed. The speakers were Sindi Mabena and Dr Gloria Mocha-Onchiri, and God used them in a mighty way.

The women came from different parts of the country, including



Reading, Bristol, Stevenage, Wolverhampton, Gatwick and so on. The aim of the retreat was spiritual enrichment, reclamation and evangelism. With us were ten special friends from other denominations, who expressed tremendous blessing as a result of spending the weekend with us.

We are planning to repeat the treat next year, because, as one participant commented, 'I was blessed and will not miss the next one. The retreat was Spirit-filled and I plan to bring my friends next year.'

SIBUSISIWE MUTAMBARA

Health screening in Peterborough

During the summer the Peterborough Portuguese group made a difference in the yearly Portuguese Festival. In this event, lusophiles from all over the UK get together with their families to enjoy traditional food and music. With a very engaged team of volunteers, our health-screening service point was able to attend to more than 100 people. 'Even one of the artists on stage was given first aid assistance by us,' comments Susana, the health professional responsible for the project. Reading materials in Portuguese were also distributed, and links were established or strengthened with the community. 'We could see in their faces the trust and appreciation for the work done,' highlights the local pastor, Stanley Teixeira.

STANLEY TEIXEIRA



'Unmasked, Unveiled, Revived!'

The weekend of 27-29 September 2019 saw the first ever UK Zambian Adventist Fellowship (UKZAF) women's retreat, with 62 guest participants ranging from 4 years old right the way to 60+ years.

It was held in the lovely De Vere Horwood Estate, Milton Keynes.

The UKZAF fellowship is an association of Zambians living in the UK who are Seventh-day Adventists. Founded in 2010, the association has organised days of fellowship to bring the Zambian community in the diaspora together and lend ways of support

Elephant and Castle Youth Choir inauguration and robe dedication

On 26 October 2019, at the Ark Walworth Academy auditorium, the Elephant and Castle Community Youth Choir was inaugurated to the glory of God. It was total praise, joy, and thanksgiving on this historic day.

Pastor George Boakye Asiamah, pastor of London Ghana Church, spoke on the theme, 'No Weapon Shall Prosper'. He challenged the youth that, though we live in a world that is chaotic and polarised, a world where heinous and despicable crimes are committed on our streets by the day, a world in which the news headlines are full of frightening, atrocious reports, taking God and His word seriously will be a strong defence against the darts that the evil one throws at them.

He assured the youth that God



is going to use them to finish His work, and for this reason He is raising the youth choir for that purpose. Their songs will be used by the Holy Spirit to bring healing and salvation.

Musicians are like pastors, Pastor Asiamah went on to say, called in a special way to spread the good news through their songs.

Mr Ofori, the Youth Choir leader for the South-west London Ghana

church, had this to say when he was asked about how he saw the programme: 'I believe the programme was well organised and coordinated, except for some few known challenges which can be avoided in the future; but on the whole it was a successful event, and I am hoping to see more such events at the local and district level. I believe this will help the youth to channel their energies and abilities in spreading the

Gospel through music.'

In giving all glory and honour to God for what He has done for the church, and especially the youth, the church pastor, Lewis Quaye, was happy that once again the youth have risen to the challenge. Going forward, he prays that through their ministry the everlasting Gospel will be shared with all, in and beyond the Elephant and Castle community.

THEOPHILUS ASARE



Youth Empowerment Day!

On Sunday 27 October Pendeford Church hosted Wolverhampton's first ever Youth Empowerment Day, organised and coordinated by members of the Wolverhampton Youth Initiative. The purpose of the event was to awaken youth and young adults to hobbies and interests that could lead to new career opportunities or even ministry.

The event consisted of a number of workshops, such as a vegan cooking class presented by Adrian Roberts and Lenox Lowe, who demonstrated healthy yet delicious delicacies, including Kiev

balls, kiwi and apple juice, wraps, and even fried ice cream! Other workshops included advice on starting and running a business, presented by three successful entrepreneurs, and a workshop on the ways in which social media can be used as a platform for youth evangelism.

In the Social Media workshop Zhane Simpson offered constructive tips on producing engaging and informative content which could then be shared on various social media platforms. During the workshop, Zhane encouraged attendees to be both

consistent and regular with their media posts. Those in attendance were then given the opportunity to plan and create original content for the Youth Empowerment Day's official Instagram page.

The Business Entrepreneurship workshop was presented by business entrepreneurs, Arthur Fiefield, Derek Thorpe and Elizabeth Cornwall. After some discussion as to the aims and aspirations of the attendees present, practical as well as insider information was shared as to the day-to-day running, as well as how to grow a successful business. During the course of one of the workshops an attendee shared plans for her own online business,

to which businesswoman Elizabeth Cornwall responded by donating not only relevant stock, but also free business training.

Following a hearty vegan lunch the Radio Broadcasting workshop took place, in which attendees were interviewed live on air and given an overview as to the skills needed to present and to work behind the scenes. Hope FM, the BUC's official radio broadcasting outlet, is managed by Pastor Michael Simpson and Shalomi Cole. Opportunities for youth and young adults to volunteer at one of the several Hope FM radio broadcasting offices were identified, as well as an aim to develop a children's programme for the under-13s.

Several of the attendees showed a keen interest in working in ministry for Hope FM, so they left their contact details with the view of being contacted when the Hope FM radio broadcasting training programme arrives in Wolverhampton. At the end of the workshop, many of the attendees left with their very own Hope FM T-shirt as a memento for the day.

The event received much positive feedback from those in attendance, with many asking for the event to become an annual fixture of the Wolverhampton youth calendar.

JAMES SUDWORTH



District Youth Day of Fellowship at Highbridge

The Taunton district of Adventist churches consists of Taunton, Yeovil, Dorchester, Chard and Highbridge. Pastor Deyvid Batista with his able spiritual leadership

has energised this area during the last three years. Pastor Robis da Silva has recently joined him to support the church development in this area. Highbridge, a five-

Culture Day

Our society! A fusion of cultures, ethnicities, foods, languages and traditions, all mixed together in the melting pot we call London. How wonderful it is to experience a smorgasbord of differences without travelling thousands of miles!

Well! One such place to see this blend in action regularly is at Clapton Community Church, where Pastor Nerine Barrett serves. In true Clapton fashion, no expense was spared to showcase the various assortments of identities on Sabbath 26 October 2019. On this particular Sabbath, Clapton members exhibited an array of vibrant traditional clothing, regional dialects, national languages, history, music, food and much more for their culture day. The event was organised by Judy Francis and Beautine Okiya, and facilitated by Clapton church members, with a helping hand from visiting sister churches.

The church was lovingly decorated by Karen Gordon and her team, who used flags representing nations of past, present and hopefully future members. This illuminated the already magnificent atmosphere of the church and spread a warm, homely feeling throughout.

The day's proceedings started with a drum march by the Pathfinder drum corps, who were decked out in their full regalia. The children also carried flags down the aisle in order to enhance the multiculturalism of the day.

Dignitaries such as the Labour and Co-Operative Candidate for Hackney and South Shoreditch, Meg Hillier, and her secretary were in attendance to celebrate the coming together of a cross-section of the community under one roof.

The auspicious service incorporated hymns and choruses delivered by Clapton Praise, who sang in Swahili, French, Spanish, a Nigerian dialect and, of course, English.

Prayers and readings were said in various languages, and the congregation was welcomed in several mother tongues. This event could be likened to the 'Day of Pentecost', when the disciples, having received the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and everyone understood in their own language.

After the Divine Service, church members served samples of their



month-old church plant, had the privilege of hosting the District Youth Day of Fellowship on Saturday 12 October 2019.

It was a memorable day for our district when all the churches came together to celebrate and support our children and the young people. We also used this day to officially inaugurate the Adventurer and Pathfinder club at Highbridge to reach out to the young people in the community.

The Highbridge and Burnham Deputy Mayor, Councillor Nick Tolley, spoke to an overflowing Highbridge community centre with more than 200 people attending. He was very happy that our church has started a youth development programme such as a Pathfinder club in Highbridge. He assured us that we have full support from the local council for our activities at Highbridge.

In a whole-day programme the main service was attended by BUC Youth Director, Pastor Dejan Stojkovic; the Deputy Mayor & Mayoress; the Burnham & Highbridge Brass Band; and the Pathfinder Area Coordinator, Pam Catchpole. The SEC Drum Corps was led by Natalie Bryan, with young Adventist musicians from the south-west, Adventurers and Pathfinders from the district, and members of the local community. The whole day was blessed by beautiful and uplifting music, sung and played by young Adventist musicians and the Burnham & Highbridge Brass Band.

We thank God for a very successful District Youth Day of Fellowship at Highbridge. Please keep the Highbridge church plant and its future community outreach programmes in your prayers.

DR VIOLA & JOJI MATHIEW

national and traditional foods for lunch. The dining area was decorated with authentic cultural paraphernalia from their respective countries, and there was an abundance of culinary delights such as string hoppers, macaroni cheese, saltfish & blue draws, Bajaj fishcakes, roti, mauby and sorrell juice, pylori, green banana, chicken rendang, goat water, lemong (steamed sticky rice wrapped in banana leaf) and more.

The afternoon programme, compered by Daniel Okiya, was full of national pride. Church members and visiting friends sang their anthems; engaged in praise and worship; gave talks on historical facts about their homelands; and participated in a quiz.

The day was a delightful display of faith intertwined with culture, unity and joyous thanksgiving to God.

ISHA ALBERT



Grantham harvest celebrations

October 5 was a big day in the Grantham Church calendar, as it was not only the start of a new quarter, but also the annual harvest festival and the quarterly communion service.

The harvest display had been arranged by members of the Community Services Department and featured the usual fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as tinned food and flowers.

This was followed on Saturday evening with a harvest supper. Donations were given for the charity which the Community Services Department had adopted on behalf of the church. As reported in an earlier issue of MESSENGER, 'GROW' (Gardens Restore Our Well-being) is a charity established locally to restore the neglected corners of Lincolnshire hospitals' grounds, improving the view from the windows for patients while in hospital. Over £214 was collected.

MIKE COWEN

Bristol hospital and church 'helping hands'

For the past four years, the Rosa Burden Centre at Bristol's Southmead Hospital has joined hands with the Bristol Central church in several charitable projects, starting in 2016 when church member Mary Philip's colleagues at the centre decided to support the ADRA Shoe Box Appeal. The Shoe Box Appeal was well received and was sponsored for two years. It is much talked about and remains at the heart of the Rosa Burden Centre staff.

This year one of the centre's domestic staff, Christine Glanville, told Mary that one of her supervisors, Omar Bah, has a school in The Gambia which is self-funded. Christine informed Mary that she has been supporting Omar's school for some time now by giving him school items to take back to the children whenever he goes on a visit. Mary immediately felt compelled to help. She soon had the idea of 'Adopt a Child/Sponsor a Child in The Gambia'.

Omar came to tell Mary more. He had been the only child of 11 in his family to gain an education. As a result, he vowed to educate children in his village. Purchasing a piece of land, he built a nursery school. The school, which he named after the village, 'Nema Misirah', started three years ago with just twelve children, but soon grew to thirty. To date the school accommodates 130 children in three classrooms, and is now a nursery and primary school. The school is already too small, and Omar is planning to add another classroom very soon. The children in the school are 4 to 12 years old. Omar says that he would like to build a secondary school to further the education of these same children, but to date it is only a dream.

Some furniture has been donated by Southmead Hospital, where he works. Mary asked Omar if there was a way that she could help, and ward manager Penny offered to join forces with Mary to help him too. Penny informed all the staff on the ward of the idea to fill 30 wrap sacks with school items and a soft toy. She would purchase the bags, and the staff would fill them.

To cut a long story short, Bristol Central have caught the vision. Over the last weekend of October, £700 was raised to support the project: and, as a church, they plan to do more.

They have donated several bags of clothes, shoes and other school items. Some church members have given financial donations to pay for uniforms, and they are still donating items of clothing towards the project. As a result of the two organisations' financial contribution, one less fortunate child will be sponsored and will be able to have a uniform and meals for the entire year.

A young 18-year-old from Bristol Central, Laisha Dowe, was willing to pay the £250 yearly sponsorship fee for 7-year-old Adama, and her mum was fully supportive. Both Laisha's mother and father, Lanolin and Errol Dowe, are themselves sponsoring an orphan child, Ousaintou.

As a result of Mary's initiative, so far three children at Nema Misirah will be sponsored for the 2019-2020 school year, and many others will receive much-needed school items, clothing and shoes. In total, 34 bags and three boxes of items have been sent to The Gambia. Omar is hoping to go on a visit in January next year to make the presentation. He has never seen so much generosity since he started the school. He is overwhelmed with the gifts and financial aid.

The appeal to 'Sponsor a Child' is not exclusive to the Rosa Burden Centre or to Bristol Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. One member of the church, Beverley Thompson-Taylor, plans to contact other people that she knows to see how they can support the school. Omar said that he is happy to be contacted on 07944281036 if anyone wants to donate.

MARY PHILIP, BRISTOL CENTRAL COMMUNITY MINISTRIES LEADER



Pastor Weiers Coetser

Go slower – see more

One of the exciting bits of moving to a new area is that there is always so much to explore. Some of the exploration comes from necessity: for example, trying to find the most reliable route to follow to get to church on time on a Sabbath morning. I'm not sure I've cracked that one. Google Maps sometimes sends me down Alphington Road and sometimes down Heavtree Road. Either way the answer seems to be, 'Expect the journey to be a slow one.' Perhaps it is not so much an issue of finding the right road, but an issue of getting up just a little bit earlier in the morning.

I discovered an interesting fact this week: that Exeter has become known as the slowest city in the UK. At peak times, traffic flows through the city at an average speed of 4.6 miles per hour. With a church that is situated in the centre of the city, our lives will all be shaped by this statistical detail. While the city planners are working hard to improve the situation by creating more park-and-ride facilities and active transport options (cycle lanes), this is our reality for now.

I've been pondering what this means for us as a community of



Photo: Florin Oresanu

Adventists living in Exeter. To what extent are we open to the idea that the life of this city will have a real impact on our lives? Are we willing to let the day-to-day realities of life in Exeter shape how we live out our faith and bear witness about God?

There is a danger that we simply import our faith into our church building on a Sabbath morning and then take it with us again when we travel back home, trying as much as possible to avoid being impacted by the reality

of the city that we worship in. What would happen if we were to slow down, both literally and figuratively, and look around for ways in which we can become part of the city; to really get to know the rhythm of life where our church is situated, and to intentionally try to shape our lives to make an impact in this part of the world? I'd be interested to hear your thoughts about life in and around Exeter as we ask ourselves how we can best respond to God's call in our lives, here where we live.

Messenger

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Sunset

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Dec 13	3.52	4.04	3.48	3.38	3.58
20	3.53	4.05	3.49	3.39	3.59
27	3.57	4.09	3.54	3.44	4.03
Jan 3	4.04	4.16	4.01	3.51	4.10



The editorial team, left to right: Andrew Puckering, David Neal, David Bell, Sarah Jarvis and Abigail Murphy

Season's greetings from the editorial team of the Stanborough Press

A privilege and a joy to serve you.

SEC Youth Ministries Brazil summer mission trip

The journey begins

On Tuesday 16 July 2019, a group of twenty-five youth and young adults from the South England Conference embarked on a journey which, unknown to them, would change their lives. Filled with a mixture of nervousness and excited energy, when the assorted UK mission team boarded the 10pm flight from Heathrow to Brazil, they accepted a challenge to participate in both a communal spiritual resurgence and an individual development through the humbling act of serving others.

Acts of service

This mission trip gave the attendees the opportunity to be Christ's ambassadors through the act of service. The Brasilia Central Church 'CALEBE' campaign arranged duties in poor local communities that would make a difference in the lives of the residents. The UK mission team redecorated a community church, repainted an outdated children's nursery, renovated playgrounds, assisted in house building and evangelised through music, song and literature distribution, as well as befriending many of the locals they met.

Power of service

Despite the cultural and language barriers, a language that transcended human limitations was the universal language of Christ's love. This experience demonstrated in a profound way that life is full of contradictions; that, although we are flawed and broken in different ways, through the powerful glue of Jesus Christ we can be made whole. Members of the UK mission team came from different walks of life with varying relationships with God, but each one learned on this mission trip more about themselves, the untold rewards of soldiering for Jesus, and ultimately that God is able, even when we are not.

Team bond

The love of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a power within each Christian that brings them not just closer to God, but also to each other. This was truly felt by each individual on the Brazil mission trip. Each person came from a completely different walk of life and with different backgrounds, cultures and experiences: however, being one in Spirit and faith, the group attending this trip didn't just become a team,



but also a family – a family that was able to love, encourage and grow together, a family that was united in mission. This was true of all attendees from the UK, but also of everyone whom they met along this journey, especially the CALEBEs they met in Brasilia.

Future

As a result of many special and powerful moments felt by each participant in the Brazil mission trip, and through the guiding and the power of the Holy Spirit, the end of this trip is now a new beginning. The team born through this mission has formed a strong union, and, despite all the challenges, its members have come to a common understanding that mission is not a trip, but a lifestyle. As a result of this, they have agreed to form a team after the model set by the CALEBE: to be the hands and mouthpieces of God within the South England Conference.

ARIAN GHANBARI

Rugby Pathfinders

Rugby Church Pathfinders Club, led by Serene Barrett and team, held an investiture on Sabbath 2 November in which more than 20 children (Pathfinders and Adventurers) were involved and received their awards after a year of hard work on their tasks.

We'd like to recognise our Pathfinders' achievements.

Those invested as Friends included Rejoice, Nicole, Tabettha, Darius, Tidings, Silvio and Thomas, who was our first member to complete the Friends class and the Advance requirements in one year, earning 12 honours also.

The Adventurers receiving awards included Esta, Altea, Savannah, Cayetana, Giuliana, Leilani, Thabani and Aiicha, who also earned 15 awards and is moving on to be a Pathfinder.

Well done, Rugby Pathfinder Club!

ROBERTO DA SILVA

