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Messenger

Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
in the United Kingdom and Ireland

21 February 2020 • Volume 125 • 4

WINNIVAL DREAM

The Church – cruise ship or lifeboat?



Photo: David Bell



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Rethinking the approach

by Dan Serb,
Irish Mission President



The world is in a constant state of change; people are, too. For these reasons, the Church needs to be open to new methods of ministry. This is not about doctrinal compromise – Jesus died for our righteousness, for our right to God's presence, and this truth is much too valuable to water down. Nonetheless, Jesus accomplished our salvation by changing His very nature (Philippians 2:7, 8); He became one of us, and to follow His example means, among other things, showing the same willingness to move towards those we mean to reach.

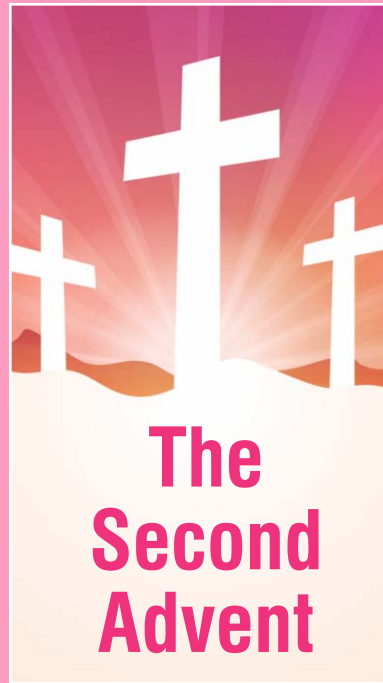
The change in the world is evident in that 'normal' has been redefined and doubt has become a virtue. In other words, 'truth' is a matter of perspective and preference (the Christian alternative remains open for consideration – Psalm 34:8). Now more than ever, truth boundaries collide with identity boundaries, and this is why I believe a shift is needed – a move away from a 'truth-focused' approach towards one where humanity's true identity is affirmed. Let me explain.

At the centre of the great cosmic conflict is, and has always been, the issue of identity – of who God is and who we are! New atheism doesn't always claim outright that God doesn't exist, but instead portrays God as repulsive, a god who is indifferent to human pain and misery – more so, one who's vindictive, capricious, and genocidal (Dawkins, 2006). Why would anyone in their right mind choose to be subservient and trust such a master? Dethroning God has always been evil's agenda (Is. 14:13, 14), and tarnishing His reputation and marring His image goes a long way to doing that. God may not be dead, like Nietzsche claimed, but He is certainly compromised: at least, in the minds of many.

The 'identity approach' flips the paradigm from doing to being. For example, Jesus did wonderful and miraculous things: but He did what He did because He was who He was, not in order to become or be someone. What if our ministry were to copy His? What if we were to shift our focus from teaching people how to behave and what to believe, to helping them discover who they are in Christ (1 Peter 2:9)?

We were created in the image and likeness of God – *imago Dei* (Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9). We are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), restored to His likeness through Christ's incarnation and sacrifice. Acts of love should be intrinsically tied to our identity and that of God – God is love (1 John 4:8). There should be nothing forced or prescriptive about us loving our neighbour; it should rather be a natural result of our association with and identity in Christ. This love in action, derived from our 'who we are' (John 15:15; John 1:12), then provides true motivation and purpose to be God's church, and thus to fulfil the great commission, which, before reaching the hereafter, seeks to resist the 'dehumanising of the world' (Campolo, 1986, p. 179).

References:
Campolo, Anthony, 1986: *A Reasonable Faith: The Case for Christianity in a Secular World* (Word Publishing, Milton Keynes, England).
Dawkins, Richard, 2006: *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press, London).
Groody, Daniel G., 2009: 'Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees', *Theological Studies*, 70 (638-667).



This is the second in our series of Adventist essentials, an imaginary conversation over a cuppa in a café with a friend who's asking questions. Why do you believe in the Second Advent?

The first reason why I believe in the Second Advent of Christ is the hope that I am not born to die – forever! What is the point of a lifespan which usually lasts between 75 and 100 years (sometimes shorter) and that's it? In a comparatively short time-frame (when compared with the context of history), through education, human beings are expected to gain both intellectual and emotional intelligence. Skills are learnt for living, working,

playing, and loving. We hope to enjoy life at its best and make the world a better place. However, given all the problems and hassle life inevitably throws at us, is our short life worth it? Whether we live in the global north or the global south, life throws serious curveballs at us, many of which we have no control over.

The second reason I believe in the Second Advent is because of the well-known First Advent story. Jesus (the Son of God), born in Bethlehem, was miraculously conceived by Mary (Matthew 1:18-23). Christians believe that He was fully God and fully human. I only believe it to be true because I trust the biblical record. In giving us the Christ-child, God was seeking to restore His relationship with humanity (John 3:16). To do so, He took on human flesh and blood and moved into our neighbourhood – as much as anything, to identify with us, something I very much like about God (John 1:14). Then He lived the most selfless and amazing life in the history of the world (as recorded in the gospels), which He invited the people of His time to copy, and He still invites us to copy it today. The people of His time decided that that was far too radical, so they murdered Him. The amazing thing is – within three days, He was alive again (resurrected).

The third reason I believe in the Second Advent is because, just before He was killed, He shared some significant last words with His followers (disciples) – not only about His future, but about the future of all of us.

'Let not your heart be troubled. You are trusting God, now trust in me. There are many homes up there where my Father lives, and I am going to prepare them for your coming. When everything is ready, then I will come and get you, so that you can always be with me where I am. If this weren't so, I would tell you plainly.' (John 14:1-3, TLB.)

The words He said to His disciples, as recorded by John, still stand, consistent with many other biblical writers who tell the same story.

Here we are, 2,000 years on. Christians call this the 'in-between time'. I hope and expect the Second Coming to take place soon. In my lifetime? I hope so! I hope that God will intervene and sort out Planet Earth's problems once and for all. As I wait during this 'in-between' time for Christ's return, I am determined to help make the world a better place for all. What do you think?

Do you think you can say it better? Or in a different way? 'Adventist Essentials' is posted on the *MESSENGER* Extra Facebook page. I'm looking forward to seeing how you share the same story.



David Neal, Editor

If there's one type of holiday that's never really excited me, it is one on a cruise ship. For years my Sunday newspaper has tried to tempt me mercilessly about the experience. On exotically named ships such as *The Aurora*, *Oriana*, *Symphony of the Seas*, *Harmony of the Seas* and *Oasis of the Seas*, I am promised nothing short of what seems like pure indulgence. For a moment my imagination runs wild as I read about the promise of endless pleasure: waking up to 'brilliant sunrises', 'shimmering seas', 'spectacular destinations', and 'stunning far-away shores'. But then, as I look up from the paper, my eyes glance out of the window. I'm back in Grantham. Outside it's cold, it's wet, it's windy – and it's February!

Today's cruise liners are becoming ever more exotic and specialised. As of 2018, 300 cruise ships were sailing the high seas. The idea of simply taking a cruise to 'watch the world go by' is over. Today's super-sized cruise liner is now an action-packed floating theme park both indoors and out. On the very top deck, there's the rollercoaster ride, the climbing wall, the mini-golf course, the go-cart circuit and the swimming pool. Next deck down, there's the theatre with comedy and cabaret, the casino, and the indoor bowling alley. Further down are restaurants with an over-abundance of food for every taste and style. How many more decks does this leviathan of the ocean have?

At this point I need to recognise many friends and family who have experienced some of their most enjoyable, joyful and precious moments on a cruise – and I recognise that. Be assured that I'm not in any way trying to disparage their experience. But stay with me, if you will, as we think a little further about the metaphor of a cruise ship in the context of the Church.

For a start, it is not open to all, and for most *Messenger* readers it's quite an expensive experience: the very reason it's often described as 'the holiday of a lifetime'. I notice that there is rising tendency for operators to encourage cruise packages for specific people groups. Purchase a holiday on the wrong cruise ship and the dream can become a nightmare. Although 'exclusive' seems to be a key marketing word, it beats me how sharing a limited space with 2,500 other holiday-makers is 'getting away from it all'!

It's also been a niggle of mine that some passengers on the ship are more equal than others. Those paying the lowest price sleep in windowless internal rooms (not for me). Then there's the middle-tier group with a porthole window in their cabin (getting better). But the really fortunate enjoy a 'stateroom' with

The Church – cruise ship or lifeboat?

Part 1

floor-to-ceiling sliding-door windows leading onto an exclusive balcony (I like the idea – but it's pricey!).

The 'cruise ship' metaphor describes everything the church should not be.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) reports in its launch statistics that from 2014 to 2018 it saved a total of 2,350 lives, and aided 42,827 people with its rescue craft and launches.¹ Its reason for existence as an organisation is none other than to rescue and save lives from the perils that can occur when on water. The rescue is without prejudice or discrimination, regardless of how irresponsible certain sea-going individuals can be. They rescue: swimmers who ignore red warning flags on beaches – and then get stranded by strong tidal currents; jet-skiers who travel far from shore and then run out of fuel; and vessels that are not seaworthy but get taken out on the water. And then there are some who get into trouble through no fault of their own. Even the most competent and prepared, with the best equipment, can, for example, experience illness and need rescuing. Whatever the case, when called, RNLI personnel (mostly volunteers) respond, ready to risk their lives in all weathers, to save a life.

Founded in 1824 by Sir William Hillary, the RNLI formed as a result of his concern – too many lives were being lost at sea. He was determined to set up an organisation to save lives. As a result of Hillary's vision, since its inception, the RNLI has saved over 140,000 lives. The number-one priority of the institution was the preservation of human life from shipwreck.²

Examine any of the 400 RNLI vessels based around the UK and Ireland today and they will be found to be strong, stable, and versatile, divided into two categories: all-weather



lifeboats and inshore boats, covering 19,000 miles of coastline.³

Is my church more like a cruise ship or a lifeboat?

My church is in cruise-ship mode:

- If I'm overly concerned about the church meeting my needs.
- If I ever practise in word or deed the value of 'exclusivity'.
- If I and my church are inappropriately inflexible to change for the sake of mission.
- When I, along with local board members, feel little need to hold a monthly board meeting because 'there's nothing on the agenda to discuss'. When there are no lost people left in our community to save, agreed, there will be no reason to meet!
- When feelings of 'us' and 'them' arise, internally or externally.

My church is in lifeboat mode:

- When my eyes and those of my fellow members are constantly on the lookout to save lost people.
- When I know how to love lost people (and all people, for that matter) as Christ loved.
- When I give it permission to be flexible and enable it to adjust quickly for the sake of mission.
- When I open the doors to the stranger, who finds a warm welcome and quickly belongs.
- When I am ready to give all for the sake of saving lost people as Christ did . . . even my life?

Don't be mistaken in thinking that this metaphor gives the impression that the cruise ship represents a large congregation, and the lifeboat a small congregation. It is a reality that a congregation of 10 members can be in cruise-ship mode, just as a congregation of 300 can be in lifeboat mode.

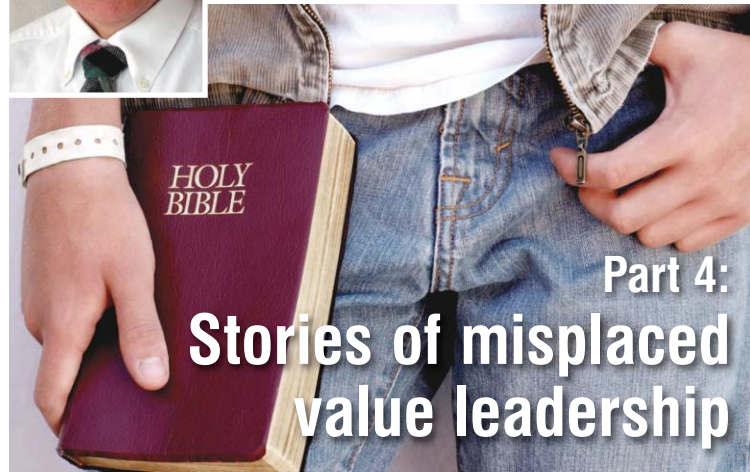
'For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.' Luke 19:10 (NLT).

To be continued.

¹https://www.google.com/search?q=RNLI+2018+Operational+statistics&rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB828GB828&aq=RNLI+2018+Operational+statistics&aqs=chrome..69i57j7243j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 ²<https://rnl.org/about-us/our-history/timeline/1824-our-foundation> ³<https://rnl.org/what-we-do/lifeboats-and-stations/our-lifeboat-fleet>



In this excerpt of Values-led Lives, Pastor Llew Edwards continues to explain what it means to live, think and act the way Jesus did. He shares how some of our well-meaning actions may inadvertently be driving visitors away.



James Coffin tells this story: 'A few years ago I was standing in the foyer of a church when a young woman walked in wearing tight blue jeans, heavy makeup, a lot of jewellery, and a leather jacket. As she stood timidly, unsure what to do next, an elderly greeter walked over to her and asked, "Are you a man or a woman?" The girl looked at the greeter and stammered, "I'm . . . I'm a woman." "Then why don't you dress like one?" the greeter asked. The girl turned and headed for the door. I never saw her again.'

A pastor and his wife have a beloved son who grows into adulthood, leaves home and, sadly, drifts away from church. The couple pray earnestly for him and do all they can to tell him he is loved. One day the pastor has a preaching appointment in the town where he knows the son is living. He sends an email telling him of the appointment and how he would love to see him if he is able. There is no reply but the pastor goes in hope. During Sabbath School he keeps looking to see if the son turns up. He doesn't. Divine Service time comes. The preacher is now sitting on the platform with the other leaders, and from his seat he is able to see through some side windows to the car park. His heart pounds with joy when he sees a car pull up, park and out steps his son – with a young lady at his side. He sees them walk

towards the church entrance, then loses sight of them. He watches the entry door to the sanctuary but then is dismayed when, through the window, he sees them walk back to the car

Here is the question that needs considering. Why did the greeter, the deacon, and those members do that? If you asked them if they intended to chase people away from Christ they would be shocked that you even thought that. 'Of course not!' they would exclaim.

and drive away.

He completes his sermon and at the end of the service hurries to the foyer. There he meets a deacon and asks if he noticed a young man and woman come and then leave church. The deacon replies, 'Oh yes, and did you see the length of her miniskirt! I told her to go home and get dressed properly before she comes to this church.'

A pastor and his wife are enjoying a holiday. On Friday they scour the neighbourhood of their hotel to see if they can find a church to worship in on Sabbath, but they are not successful. So on Sabbath they dress casually, pack a small meal, their lesson book and a Bible, and decide to find a peaceful spot to enjoy Sabbath on their own. On the way they notice well-dressed people with Bibles under their arms and conclude that if they follow them they will find an Adventist church. Sure enough, they find the church. Delighted, they walk up

the steps to the entrance when a deacon steps forward and asks them where they are going. The pastor replies that they would like to worship in the church. The deacon says, 'You cannot come to worship dressed like that.' While the pastor seeks to explain that they are on holiday and had unexpectedly found the church, another gentleman steps forward and recognises the pastor, having seen him in a training programme. The friend introduces the pastor and his

wife to the deacon, whereupon the deacon says, 'You are still not coming into church dressed like that!'

A couple visit a church. They are early and find seats fairly

close to the front of the church. Moments before Sabbath School begins, another couple come to them and tell them that they must move because these are their seats. The couple apologise and obligingly move a few rows back to some other seats. A few minutes later they are told by another couple that they must move because these are where they sit. Finally the visiting couple find themselves in a row near the back, not far from the tempting exit.

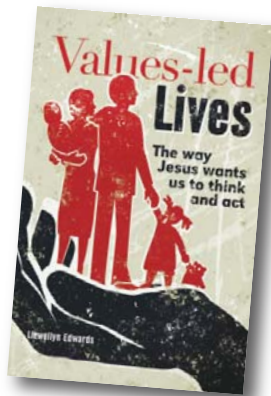
Here is the question that needs considering. Why did the greeter, the deacon, and those members do that? If you asked them if they intended to chase people away from Christ they would be shocked that you even thought that. 'Of course not!' they would exclaim.

Then why? What were the values that led them to say and do what they did? Let me hazard a suggestion. They valued dress standards and were trying to

honour and respect the interior of the church. They also valued their particular seating arrangements during worship. You could argue that they valued their church and their worship highly. Good values? Of course they are. Don't we value and want people to demonstrate respect for holy things?

We could go on to asking similar questions about the need for people to stop eating meat, listening to bad music and lyrics, or drinking alcohol, etc. These are all good values, and they have their appropriate place. Our problem is, however, that they often get emphasised at the wrong time and place. Somehow we let them displace the really important values. By doing this we create invisible hoops through which visitors must jump before they are made welcome or can have access to the Gospel of grace that we want our church service to share with them. Grace then becomes something only for those we deem to have met our valued standards. I think God might not agree with this.

Yet we do sense that some values need to be held in abeyance until an appropriate time in a person's growth. I have no accounts (yet) of any deacon greeting a visitor with the words, 'Welcome to our church – do you eat pork?' or, 'Welcome to our church – have you treated your spouse kindly this week?' These are both good values, but we recognise that to confront visitors with such greetings is both inappropriate and evidence of a misplaced order of values. It places obstacles before the visitor, preventing them from receiving the Gospel and denying them access to the primary or exceeding values of the Kingdom. In later issues of *MESSENGER* we will consider how to properly prioritise our values so as to allow those who seek Jesus to find Him.



Building and infrastructure

- Building appearance – internal & external
- Notice boards – internal & external
- Cleanliness of toilets, including soap and paper hand towels
- Internal lighting – bright or dim?
- Heating – at the right temperature?
- PA – sounds good and operated well, without technical malfunction?

Arrival at church

- Greeters – gifted and trained in greeting
- Welcome pack
- Bulletin – attractive and informative
- Guest – linked with a friend for duration of stay
- Atmosphere in sanctuary – silent, reflective, contemplative music, noisy, calm, irreverent, a sense of the presence of God?
- Balance between a warm welcome and smothering of guest

Worship Service

- Have 90% of worship elements been prepared?
- Appropriate public welcome (first-time guests do not usually wish to be noticed)
- Notices and announcements – is there a better way?
- Is guest in possession of hymnal and Bible?
- Are chosen hymns (or modern songs) familiar to the congregation?
- How can the quality of the singing be improved?
- Is the guest able to find the Scripture text (pew Bible and page numbering)?
- Return of tithe and freewill offering (explanation for guests)
- Worship – full of worn-out words or a rich expression of faith?
- The Word – does everything lead up to it?
- Prayer – bowing, kneeling, standing (an enforced or voluntary posture?) considered can also be from the heart)
- Prayer – 'off the cuff' or prepared and considered? (Prepared and considered can also be from the heart)
- Prayer – ritual or a Spirit-filled moment for the people of God together?
- Prayer – led by elder/pastor, youth, families, men, women, children, a call to the front for special intercessory prayer. . . .
- The sermon – Word-centred
- The sermon – relevant topic, dynamically delivered, reinforced with illustrations
- The sermon – Christ-centred with an expression of the advent hope?
- The sermon diet over the year – balanced?
- Response – what opportunity is there for a worshipper to respond to the Word (privately, publicly, a response sheet, standing up, walking to the front, etc.)?
- Worship – spectators or participants?
- Balanced between head and heart; experiential & cognitive
- Blended for young and old; traditional & modern
- Benediction – a summary of the sermon or an expression of God's people 'sent out' in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Making our churches visitor-friendly

Some matters to consider

Sabbath School

- A bright and attractive programme, focusing on both world and local mission
- Making the Missions Appeal so appealing that donor gives more than intended
- Sabbath School offering – an unexpected item for visitors?
- Sabbath School classes led by quality teachers, with participants aware and sensitive to the presence of guests
- A designated Visitors' Class, led by the pastor/elder
- The term 'Sabbath School' – would 'Bible Study Hour' give more meaning?

Between Sabbath School and Worship Service

- Atmosphere in this in-between time – how do you want it to be?
- Comfort break
- Mad rush in preparation for worship
- Quality time for members to mix and mingle (refreshments?)
- Break limited to only 10-15 minutes?
- Must Sabbath School always precede Worship Service?

After Worship Service

- Greeters – gifted and trained in greeting
- Elders – 'always on duty' to meet and greet
- Drinks and refreshments
- An opportunity for questions?
- Do we have gifted people willing to be 'listeners' as well as 'tellers'?
- Guest details (welcome pack)
- Follow-up request/plan
- Fellowship lunch (please ban the word 'potluck'. It originates from the United States of America in the 1970s. Imagine for a moment what a guest might think such a word means.)
- Leave heating on if there is an after-church activity on a cold day.

Litmus test questions

1. Would you personally bring a guest to your church and feel at ease?
2. If you have brought a guest on previous occasions to your church, what was the experience?
3. If you feel unable to bring a guest to your church, what factors stop you?
4. Are we being 'over-sensitive' in being concerned about making our churches 'visitor-friendly'?
5. Is there a link between being a 'visitor-friendly' church and the ability of such a church to grow?
6. Visit a church of another denomination in your area, particularly one you know to be growing. What does it feel like visiting that church for the first time? Would you feel awkward? What's it like to worship alone – many people around you – but you are a guest; you don't know anybody and you are alone?

DAVID NEAL

Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland

An interview with Pastor Maureen Rock

The Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland, formerly known as the Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School, has served as a ministry of the British Union Conference for the past 75 years. Today's ministry, now headed by Pastor Maureen Rock, continues to help people searching in all corners of the British Isles to find Christ, grow in Christ, and grow in His Word. I went on a search to find out what's new under her leadership. Before we look at that, here are some fast facts about Maureen and her story.

Starting point

- Born in Trinidad & Tobago
- Passionate about developing and delivering Bible studies
- Enjoyed completing Voice of Prophecy courses as a child

England

- Moved to England in the early 1970s, married husband Andrew in 1994 and was baptised at Milton Keynes Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1995.

Family

- Three children, four grandchildren, 'and – believe it or not – I am blessed to be a great-grandmother!'

Former career

- Self-employed management consultant
- Director of Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council
- Middle manager for a large corporation in the City of London

Call to ministry

- Studied at Newbold College (2007-2010)
- South England Conference internship at Brixton (2010-2011)
- District pastor of Reading Central, Parkside Community, Hounslow Cornerstone & Hanworth company (2011-2017)
- Area coordinator for West London (Area 6D)

Spiritual gifts

- I tend to teach more than preach.

Current studies (p/t)

- Doctor of Ministry in Multi-ethnic/Multicultural Mission and Ministry with Andrews University, considering the growth of the Adventist Church across the UK and Ireland, with particular emphasis from 1940 onwards.

David Neal: Maureen, I get the very clear impression that you are purpose-driven: there is a job to do, and let's get on with it!

Maureen Rock: Absolutely! My constant prayers are: 'What does the Lord want me to do with this work? What knowledge from my former career and background can I bring to this role?'

DN: 'Distributing cards' used to be the primary source of gaining Adventist Discovery Centre (ADC) students.

MR: And it still happens in some places today, but a big change has also taken place. For some time now, many of our students have been studying online. While we still print and post lessons, we're now fully embracing the online approach and interacting with our students via our website, Facebook and Instagram.

DN: If I visit the recently launched and upgraded website, what will I find?

MR: First of all you will find it much easier to navigate, with easy access to our curriculum of over twenty courses. Most of these courses are already available online, with the remainder being added daily. Second, the website also allows for students to study the Bible and complete health courses in over sixty different languages. Third, the ADC also keeps an updated Facebook and Instagram account where monthly themes and relevant studies are introduced. The theme for February is "Love", and the study recommended is our course, *Relationships*.

Can I take a moment to assure *MESSENGER* readers that, although many today are making use of the internet, we will continue to have courses available via the post. Additionally, our course titles and contents are tailor-made for where the contact/student/enquirer is on their spiritual journey.

DN: Let's suppose, then, that I am unchurched Harry or Mary. What courses are designed to connect with the many millions of UK people who know little or nothing about God?

MR: I would invite Harry or Mary to start with either *Start into Life* or *Ten Questions for God*. Our *Health* and *Relationships* courses also guide students into understanding and connecting with God through our lifestyle and relationship with others. Without question, for most people in our communities, these are the matters they are concerned about. The courses are an ideal way to gently guide someone who's searching into an awareness, or even an awakening, of spiritual matters and to build good life connections. I might add that they would be able to study in their own time, and in the privacy of their own home.

DN: But, like any pastor/evangelist, you do not want to leave the student there, but to invite them to take the 'Try Jesus' course or 'Discover', 26 lessons covering the basic teachings of Christianity.

MR: And if there's one thing I would like to emphasise, it is that this ministry is determined to lift up the name of Jesus; that He is the answer to the very many challenges UK and Ireland citizens face. This ministry is frontline – making connections and friendships, in most cases, long before Harry or Mary ever sets foot in a Seventh-day Adventist church.

DN: Of interest to *MESSENGER* readers is always the number of students who are currently enrolled.

MR: Over the last three years, there have been over 2,000 students studying with the ADC's curriculum of twenty courses made up of Bible and health topics. Almost the same amount have completed more than one course, and a number of them are still studying.

Additionally, since 2018, the Welsh and Scottish Missions and many churches in the Conferences have successfully encouraged local churches across the territories to make full use of our children's course, *Let's Explore*, which is designed for 7-12-year-olds.

The ADC and local pastors have distributed almost 3,000 free Bibles to homes across the UK and Ireland via contacts made on the website: www.freebible.org.uk. In addition, local pastors have been making use of this resource by handing Bibles out to visitors attending evangelistic meetings and newly baptised members.

At the start of 2019, the ADC relaunched its partnership with local churches by encouraging effective Bible Study Ministries in all churches. Many of our ministerial colleagues have embraced this approach and have commissioned Bible School coordinators* at the local churches who now lead this ministry with the aim of reaching their local communities with both Bible and health courses. The ADC is committed to making resources and training available for these Bible School coordinators and their teams so that they can be effective in this evangelistic thrust within the local church.



***Bible School coordinator** – The Bible School coordinator organises and coordinates the church's Bible School outreach ministry to the community. The coordinator should work closely with the pastor, the interest coordinator and the Personal Ministries leader' (2015 Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, p. 101).

DN: I understand that many prisoners continue to enrol.

MR: Indeed: the excellent work being undertaken by church members of the Prison Ministries Department has helped to extend the Word of God inside the prison walls, with the ADC a proud partner. In 2019, an additional 41 inmates were registered and studying the Bible with the help of the ADC resources.

DN: While the ADC does receive an annual grant from the British Union Conference, for one reason or another, members have felt a special warm association with this ministry, and have felt prompted to support it financially.

MR: That's right, and we are especially thankful to our longstanding and newly acquired friends of the ADC, many of whom have benefited from its resources and want to see its continuation. We are blessed that they show their appreciation by making financial donations either via post, online payments, offering envelopes or bequests. Such contributions are allocated towards the improvement of our resources, which will help to carry the message even further afield, both online and via post.

DN: What if I am a young person who's been raised an Adventist, and I have questions? Can the ADC help me? Or what if I've been a churchgoer for quite a while and am feeling a bit indifferent towards the Bible and spiritual things? Am I permitted to take a course?

MR: Absolutely! Our mission is to help all people not just grow in their faith, but come alive! The studies we provide are solidly grounded in the Word of God. As we teach from the Bible, our courses are often shaped to help the student understand what Seventh-day Adventists believe.

Particularly for young people, we have courses such as *Start into Life*, *10 Questions for God* and *Try Jesus*, which will give the basics, before moving on to courses based on our fundamental beliefs, prophecies and special interests, such as the archaeology of the Bible.

DN: Why does the British Union need its own Adventist Discovery Centre? Why can't members simply be directed to Amazing Facts, or the Voice of Prophecy, It is Written, and a whole host of similar ministries around the world?

MR: It's important to me that the

members we serve have confidence in the product coming out of this office. Sure, members have the choice to import – but will we really connect with 'Workington Man'? Our material is culturally and age-range sensitive, up to date, and quality! Often, material from the USA starts from a position where neighbours and friends have a groundwork knowledge and interest in God. In the UK and Ireland, in most cases we are connecting with people who have zero interest in God.

My prayer is that the new-look ADC, with courses available both online and via the post, would encourage both members and the general public to seek out and improve their knowledge of God in this time. We are committed to partner with local churches throughout the UK and Ireland to share God's Word, wherever we are.

DN: Pastor Rock, thanks ever so much for sharing a positive and determined vision to help lost people in the UK and Ireland know Christ.

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Christmas outreach in Chard, Somerset

On 21 December, the small group of members from the Chard church plant, Somerset, under the leadership of Nicodemus Neves, organised a

Christmas dinner for the community. More than 90 people, including children, were present. The programme comprised three small (video) presentations about the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the world, with a marvellous dinner. Some asked not only for seconds, but also for thirds. At the end of the meal, several commented that they had never thought that vegetarian food could taste so good. I responded that it was all made from fresh products and prepared with lots of love.

To end, Elvira Pearson talked about the meaning of Christmas and the significance of why Christ was born, and an appeal was made to all, including the organisers, to look up to Jesus as the only hope for the problems of this world. The whole place resounded with amens.

The evening ended at 10pm with a prayer and a video of a choir singing Christmas songs.

Our aim in organising this event was to try and demonstrate, in word and deed, that at the heart of the season it is all about Jesus.

ELVIRA PEARSON

New-Year marriage retreat in romantic Stratford-upon-Avon

'I am very thankful that this well-organised retreat is taking place,' said Pastor Richard Jackson, commenting on the recent North England Conference (NEC) Endless Love Marriage Retreat that took place from 10 to 12 January 2020.

'Educational, practical, thought-provoking and spiritual are just the right ingredients for marriage enrichment,' continued Pastor Jackson.

Hosting the weekend was NEC Family Life Director, Pastor Paul Liburd. With 36 couples attending, their combined marital experience totalled 642 years. In 2018, 26 couples attended and the combined marriage experience totalled 377 years.

Pastor Liburd's focus area was on conflict and communication. With lots of exercises requiring couples to work together, time was also provided for reflection.

Further presentations and activities included:

- Lovemore and Thembi Masiane on forgiveness and reconciliation
- Andrew and Andrea Rashford-Hewitt on sexual intimacy – within marriage it is as holy as God intended it to be
- Andrew Hazel treating the couples to an evening of laughter over a romantic evening banquet
- Dr Victor and Lynne Samwanga on money, debt and budgeting (research statistics show that financial mismanagement is the lead cause of stress and divorce among couples; many couples left hopeful they could turn their lives around and live a debt-free life)
- Counselling provided by Leeber and Vinette Hughes

Reflecting on the retreat, Phumulani and Zodwa Mloyi said, 'The retreat was therapeutic as it allowed couples to deal with difficult issues in a safe place. It was spiritual, informative, challenging, fun and very enriching indeed.'

Charles and Brenda Chikasha agreed, but added, 'The financial part of the retreat was the most important session for us as a couple. It's a raw spot for us. The presentation was well done and very practical; it gave us hope and ideas about how to climb out of debt.'

We cannot end this

report without noting the venue – Stratford-upon-Avon, home of William Shakespeare. Does he have any wisdom for today's couples resolving to grow in love for each other?

Sonnet 116

*Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.*

LYNNE SESINYE-SAMWINGA



Photos: Donald McKenzie



Ending the ten days of prayer with half a night of prayer

The ten days of prayer have proved a success in the past number of years, creating more passion for evangelism, prayer, fasting, better relationships, spiritual growth and revival, and causing more people to give their lives to Christ. This is why the year 2020 began on a high note with a vast number of churches across the globe taking part in the ten days of prayer, focusing on seeking the Holy Spirit. Similarly, multitudes came together in prayer via conference calls as many phone lines were open, including the SEC prayer line, which will remain open throughout the year and beyond.

Besides daily prayers and fasting, a half-night of prayer took place on Saturday 18 January 2020 to end the series. Organised by South England Conference Prayer Ministries Leader, Pastor Linda Mukwada Nyamhunga, it was hosted at Hyland House School, Tottenham, London. Three main speakers shared the Word:

- Pastor Simba Muhau gave a sermonette derived from 2 Kings 2:8-15, emphasising the importance of experiencing the moving of the Holy Spirit for ourselves. He urged us that, in order to receive a double portion of the anointing, we must pursue the Holy Spirit relentlessly, despite the difficulties we go through; ask for the Holy Spirit, and be specific; and receive the Holy Spirit so we become witnesses of the Lord.
- Clarence Jackson presented a sermonette from Acts 16:25, 26, reminding us to make sure we are so filled with the Holy Spirit that if we end up in prison we will be able to hold on, praying and praising God. He also reinforced the fact that we don't have power until we have the Holy Spirit and are connected to God.
- Pastor Linda Mukwada Nyamhunga encouraged us with a scripture from Isaiah 59:19, reiterating that 'when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him' (NKJV), and we have no reason to be afraid as long as the Spirit of God is with us.

In addition to sermonettes, the night lit up with praises in songs, testimonies and a variety of prayers said by Pastor Ray Patrick, Pastor Humphrey Walters, Dr Gloria Mosha, Dr Seth Asare, Pastor Jude Jeanville, Sister Edwards and a senior Bible worker, Brenda Rutherford. As appropriate for such an event, Pastor Ray Patrick conducted an anointing service, with many individuals anointed.

The half-night of prayer ended in fellowship over light refreshments. Praise God for such a powerful, Spirit-filled ten days and half-night of prayer.

SEC PRAYER MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT



Ten days of prayer at Willesden

The ten days of Holy Spirit emphasis kicked off on Wednesday 8 January at 7pm with about 90 members and visitors. It was the best attendance for a Wednesday meeting in a long time, which we believe demonstrated a great felt need and a hunger for the Holy Spirit.

On Sabbath 11 January Pastor Mario Philip introduced the all-day prayer and fasting session from 6am to 6pm. The church was full. No food was provided. The day was divided into seven sections. In each section, members interceded and prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit, offered prayers of thanksgiving, offered prayers for homes and broken families, claimed Bible promises, gave testimonies, and sang songs of praise and worship. When the day ended at 6pm, members continued to linger in the church, socialising and sharing together about their Spirit-filled day. Pastor Mario has great insights, and is a visionary pastor who promises great things under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

If you want a life-changing experience, Willesden is the place to be. You are all invited. Something is happening at Willesden. . . . We believe it is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It can happen at your church too.

EULALEE MARSHALL-WIGGAN, WILLESDEN CHURCH



Mario Philip

BUC HEALTH MINISTRIES CONFERENCE

SURVIVING AND THRIVING THROUGH TRAUMATIC LIFE EVENTS

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Malaina Joseph
Trauma Intervention Specialist, Art and Counselling Psychotherapist

Thembi Mapingire
Cornerstone Counselling Co-Ordinator

Sharon Platt - McDonald
BUC Director for Health, Women's Ministries and Adventist Community Services

CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT: Wednesday 1st April 2020
CONTACT RENATELA IUNAC AT THE BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE
TEL 01923 672251 EMAIL: renatela@adventist.uk

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Letters to the editor

Sleep competition

Dear Editor

After reading the article from Adam about sleeping, which I have

trouble with, the most innovative tip I can recommend is listening to positive visualisation tracks when you turn your lights off. I certainly don't remember them apart from the very start, so they work for me!

They are widely available on the internet. I also wanted to say how impressed I was with the latest *MESSENGER*; I think it's the best one I've ever read.

MARIA LEWIS

Dear Editor

With reference to *MESSENGER*, 10 January, Volume 125:1, page 12, I would like to give the following advice for someone trying to sleep. I hope this helps someone, even if it doesn't win the prize of a book.

To help me sleep I find that having a warm shower and then praying and giving God all my cares and

worries helps to relax my body and mind. I would follow this with a Bible reading such as Psalm 23, or Matthew 11 verses 28 to 30. Finally I would switch off the light and play some beautiful music – my favourite at the moment is Cavatina by John Williams. This puts me in a perfect mood for sleeping.

JOHN MCGOLDRICK

Dear Editor

My suggestion is to try to get out in the sunlight or natural daylight for at least twenty minutes during the morning and do twenty minutes of exercise in the fresh air. This will help to aid sleep during the night. Also aim to have a regular sleep and bedtime so that one does not feel jet-lagged.

LORRAINE WARD

In consultation with Pastor Adam Keough, the winner of the competition is Maria Lewis. Congratulations, Maria! Copies of Matthew Walker's book *Why we sleep* are on their way to Maria, Lorraine and John, the only 3 competition entrants. (Perhaps everyone else missed the competition because they were asleep!)

New stewardship resource for worship

For the first time ever, Tithes and Offerings readings are also now available on video – there's one 2-minute video per 2020 Sabbath, best presented before the offering is collected. There are stories, testimonies, and also education in stewardship. They are being translated into various languages such as Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic (more versions are coming and will be uploaded gradually). The English version can be viewed at: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/2020-tithe-and-offerings-readings-videos> (the videos are on the fourth column of the table).

MARCU BOMFIN (STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR, GENERAL CONFERENCE)



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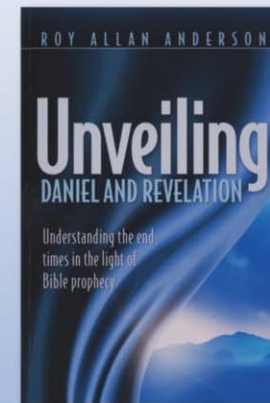
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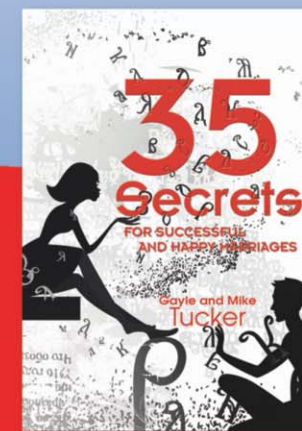
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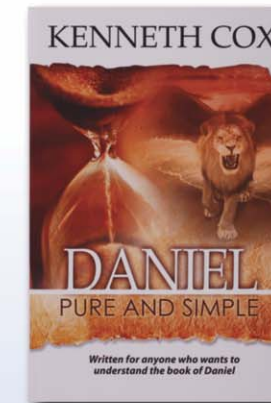
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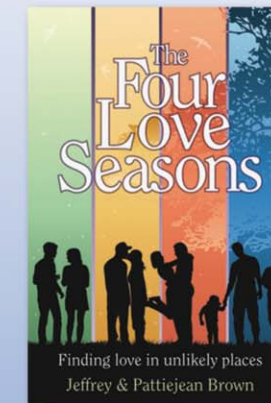
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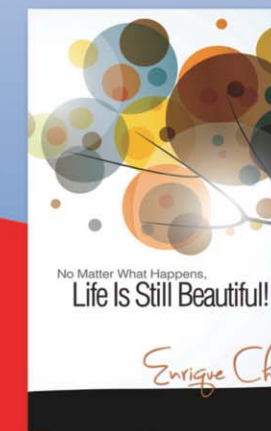
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- Enjoy being part of a learning and faith community;
- Have experience of working with pupils with a range of abilities . . .

. . . we would love to hear from you.

The successful applicant will be:

- A fully trained and qualified teacher (NQTs are welcome);
- Expected to show commitment to the vision of the governors;
- Willing to uphold the Christian Seventh-day Adventist ethos of the school.

A visit to the school is warmly welcomed and highly recommended. To arrange a visit, please contact Mrs Jessica Lemonius at Hyland House School on: 020 8520 4186.

Hyland House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

The successful applicant:

- Must have the right to work within the United Kingdom;
- Will be required to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and all other necessary checks before appointment.

For an Application Form, Job Description and Person Specification, please email: j.lemonius@hylandhouseschool.org.

The application deadline for this position will be midnight, 22 March 2020.

Hyland House School is highly regarded in the local community and by Ofsted inspectors for its Christian ethos and high academic standards. Our aim is to provide a holistic education and develop the talents and abilities of every child.



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For further details please call or email Steve Okelo:
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Missionaries from Lowestoft to the Philippines

by Michael I. Walker



It takes courage, faith, commitment and determination to do what Errol and Beth Victorio did on the other side of the world. My heart was truly warmed and encouraged by their inspiring story. I hope you will be too.

Errol and Beth Victorio of the Lowestoft church went on a self-supporting missionary journey with their three beautiful children to the Philippines last year. Errol works for Scotland Yard in London, where he was brought up as a boy. During his teenage years, he was a 'teddy boy' in a street gang. However, his mum used to pray for him; and, after a serious illness wrought by taking drugs and alcohol, Errol surrendered his life to Christ and married Beth, a young Christian lady. They have devoted their lives to Christ. Errol's work in London does not deter him from helping people everywhere. Together they run a health-improvement programme from their home in Suffolk, where people come to stay and improve their health.

Their busy life did not deter them, however, from travelling to proclaim the Gospel in the Philippines, and they testified of how God had blessed their mission after offering a family song, entitled 'Nothing Is

Impossible with God'. Through the Holy Spirit, 1,000 individuals were baptised in the South Philippines as a result of their 'hope and healing' ministry and the Gospel of Christ.

The whole mission programme was carefully planned beforehand. It was an itinerant programme in which they worked before moving on to the next place. They offered health presentations, including health screening, over a seven-day period. Most people in the Philippines are Roman Catholics who believe in God but do not know what the Bible contains. In following Jesus' example by ministering to their physical needs, doors opened for them to talk about God and His Word. The mayor in one town offered use of the gymnasium for free in order for them to hold a health expo and to proclaim the message of Jesus. Some 2,000 attended the event, during which many people were introduced to their Saviour and rejoiced in the hope He offers to everyone.

Our missionary family worked closely with the district pastors and the local Adventist church members as they pursued their missionary journey. Their first baptism was of 38 people in the sea. Every weekend after that, the Lord gave more baptisms as




ease! In another city jail, all the prisoners who attended the Gospel meetings were baptised.

During their ministry several couples who had been co-habiting decided to get married, resulting in counselling, a mass wedding, and baptism. Errol and Beth were invited to run family seminars on *Hope Radio*, and they were involved in feeding the poor on the streets, clothing them, and a host of other philanthropic projects. Their youngest boy, 5-year-old Seth, preached through a translator, and that resulted in several people deciding for Christ and asking for baptism. There is no limit to what the Holy Spirit can and will achieve through the life of anyone who is surrendered to Him. That family song that Beth and the children sang, 'Nothing Is Impossible with God', was no doubt based on their experience. It reminds me of what the famous missionary to India, William Carey, once said: 'Attempt great things for God and expect great things from God!' That is very true.

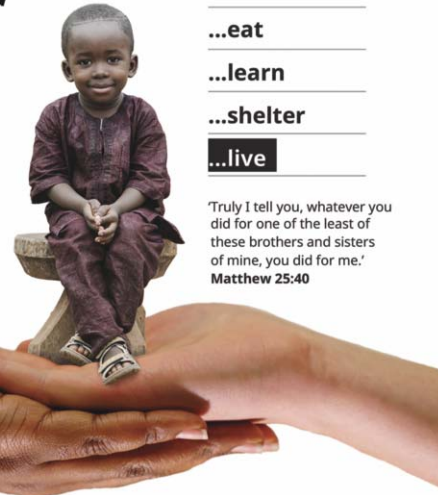
people committed themselves to their new life in Christ.

Their ministry was also taken into prisons packed with inmates, many of whom heard the Gospel of Christ for the first time. There were many young people incarcerated for their crimes; but, as a result of Errol and Beth's ministry, many prisoners gave their lives to Christ and were baptised. Since one particular prison was unable to provide a suitable baptistry, the prisoners were immersed in oil drums filled with water. Errol watched in amazement as a rather large prisoner stepped into the oil drum – he looked too large to duck down into the water! Yet, as the baptismal formula was pronounced by the pastor, he somehow went down and came up again with the greatest of



Help Someone...

- ...eat
- ...learn
- ...shelter
- ...live



'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
Matthew 25:40

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From Camp to Cayman: facing the challenges, relishing the opportunities

by Alex Nsimbi



The UK team with the Cayman Islands Seventh-day Adventist Conference administration, departmental directors, and some ministerial workers after a meeting at the Conference headquarters

In James 1:22 (KJV) the Bible says, 'But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.' A 'doer of the word' is probably the most apt way I could describe one Elder Lancelot Scott – a

Caymanian resident who attended the SEC camp meeting of 2019 and heard the PARL (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty) presentations by Pastor Brighton Kavaloh (PARL SEC Departmental Director) and Gina Abbequaye

(the BUC Education Director).

Elder Scott realised that the PARL challenges that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is facing today in the UK are the challenges that the Adventist Church in the Cayman Islands is to face tomorrow. Unlike most, though, Elder Scott did not just think and do nothing. He spoke to the Cayman Islands Conference, and not only did they invite Pastor Kavaloh, but they also included Gina Abbequaye, Sonia Munroe, and Alex Nsimbi to provide some much-needed insight into PARL and education challenges faced by the church.

On arrival in Grand Cayman's capital, George Town, the team from the UK was involved in a range of presentations, with topics ranging from the redefinition of marriage (with specific court cases cited) and Relationships and Sex Education to the clash between two of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (religion/belief, and sexual orientation), discrimination in the workplace, and the necessity of wisdom when representing God. It turned out that these were hot topics, as the islands were right in the middle of a same-sex legal case.

Along with the above-mentioned presentations at different venues, Pastor Kavaloh, Gina Abbequaye, Sonia Munroe and Alex Nsimbi were invited for two interviews on the Cayman Islands Adventist radio station – Praise 87.9FM – spending over one and a half hours delving deep into religious liberties issues, and emphasising the fact that amid the challenges ahead of the church were great opportunities available to represent God.

The trip climaxed with a courtesy call arranged by the PARL Departmental Director and Attorney-at-Law Mr Dennis Brady for an hour-long meeting with the Attorney General of the Cayman Islands Government, the Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, JP, QC, on the final day of the trip – 7 November 2019.

Pastor Kavaloh, Gina Abbequaye, Sonia Munroe and Alex Nsimbi could only thank God for allowing them the opportunity to travel to the Cayman Islands to assist not only the church, but all Caymanians, in standing up for their religious liberty during such a time when their liberty of conscience is under an unprecedented threat. The message was clear – rely on Christ's direction to exercise the 'wisdom of a serpent, but harmlessness of a dove'. That's when the prevailing challenges will become opportunities to speak for God, and also to draw others to Him.



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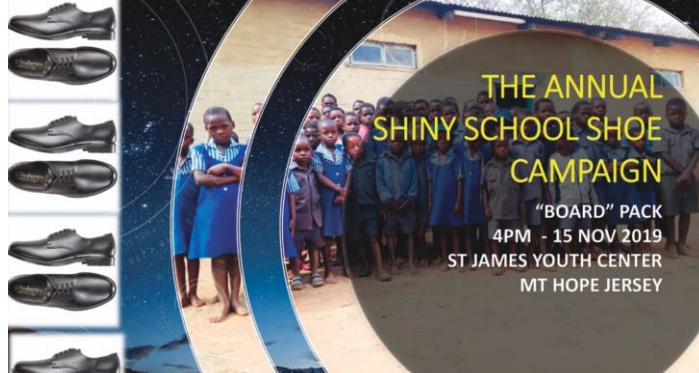
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THE ANNUAL SHINY SCHOOL SHOE CAMPAIGN

"BOARD" PACK
4PM - 15 NOV 2019
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Jersey members fundraise for shoes

Members of the Mount Hope church located on the island of Jersey have been working hard to raise funds to purchase 63 pairs of shoes that will be sent to a farm school in Goromonzi, Zimbabwe. Working with local islanders, the Zimbabwean Adventists have conducted bake sales, auctioned a painting, and one volunteer ran 1,000 kilometres to support this cause. To discover more about the 'Shiny School Shoe Campaign', contact Tapiwa at the Mount Hope church – mthopejersey@outlook.com.

EDITOR

A lifetime of blessings

On 27 September 2019 Palmers Green Church members Walford and Bernadine Brandy celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Walford and Bernadine were married in London in 1959 at the Holloway church. They are both originally from the Caribbean island of Nevis and were



Leslie Wood's 80th birthday

January 2020 was a special month for Leslie Wood of the Ystrad Mynach church, South Wales. This was the month when he attained 80 years of age. He began celebrating his birthday by attending an orchestral concert at the beginning of the month, then a four-hour Beethoven concert later in January. The latter musical event was an exact repeat of a unique concert performed by Beethoven in 1808. Fortunately for Leslie and Miriam, the packed St David's Hall in Cardiff was pleasantly warm, in contrast to the freezing venue in Bonn, Germany, when the concert was first performed so long ago.

On 25 January Leslie preached at Ystrad Mynach. As a young man he had become a lay preacher after gaining a Diploma in Public Speaking from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and then completing a preaching course.

Leslie has a reputation for meeting and making friends with people whenever he goes into Cardiff. He recently met two music students from the Royal Welsh College of Music when they were busking in the city centre and invited them to come to play for his birthday. Jess played the flute and Roxanne the clarinet. The congregation were delighted to listen to them playing Bach's 'Little Prelude' during Sabbath School. During the morning service they played 'Winter' from the 'Four Seasons' by Vivaldi and 'Nimrod Variations' by Sir Edward Elgar. Chris Leach, Ystrad's 'Poet in Residence', recited the humorous poem she had written especially for Leslie about his life and interests.

Leslie's family – wife Miriam, daughter Tanya, grandchildren Lauren and Gareth, and great-grandson Nico (aged 9 months) – were present to share the day.

A fellowship lunch followed, with tables groaning with delicious food and a huge cake iced with a bar of music and his name decorating it, as Leslie is also the church organist.

On 27 January, the actual date of his birth, Leslie was surprised by a phone call from Australia, with three members of the Fielding family singing to him. They are local members who were 'Down Under' for two months, visiting family and friends.

On Leslie's bucket list for this year is a holiday on the West Wales coast in a cottage on the rocks, well situated for bird watching; a whale and dolphin cruise to Northern Spain; and a visit to the Scilly Isles. He plans to continue studying the organ with the organist from Llandaff Cathedral, and taking language lessons in Chinese and Arabic from students at Cardiff University, whom he met while walking through Cardiff. He believes in multicultural friendship evangelism, as well as making music to praise God.

MIRIAM WOOD

Met at the New Gallery and still going strong!

On 21 December 2019 John and Joan Rich of Winchmore Hill, London, celebrated an amazing milestone – their diamond (60th) wedding anniversary. John and Joan met at the New Gallery during a campaign by George Vandeman in the mid 1950s, and love soon blossomed. John, a Cornish lad, and Joan, a city girl, made their home in Enfield,

brought up as Adventists with a strong faith in God.

Bernadine came from a family of 10 (three now deceased) and Walford also came from a family of 10 (one now deceased), working for many years as a project manager before taking early retirement. Bernadine worked as a senior nurse before also taking early retirement.

They are blessed with two daughters, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

When asked for advice on building a strong, long and happy marriage, Bernadine commented that 'a strong belief in God, patience and plenty of laughter are vital ingredients!'

To celebrate their anniversary Walford and Bernadine went on a cruise, which included a visit to the Panama Canal, organised by Joan Reid from the Hackney church.

We pray that God continues to bless them with good health and happiness for many years to come.

PALMERS GREEN CHURCH, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

raised a family and had an active church life. Their lives have touched many, which was shown by the number of cards they received sending love and good wishes. A small celebration with church friends and immediate family was held in their honour to mark the special event. Even a message from the Queen was received. We wish John and Joan much happiness and many more years to come.

CHERYL MOSELEY



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Mayor visits Plumstead Community Church on Pathfinder Day

One beautiful Sabbath morning on 30 November 2019, the Mayor of Greenwich, Mick Hayes, came to visit our local church; but, before we get there, let's spend a few moments to give you some context. . . .

Our Health Ministries leader, Aldreana Somerville, has forged strong links with Greenwich Health over many years, so they were more than happy to run the Level II Health Check Course over two consecutive Sundays for the Plumstead members. It is a nationally recognised qualification to gain a better understanding of the social and health needs of our local community and to be able to refer local residents to services that can best support them. Twenty-one of us completed the course, and we were greatly relieved to have passed the examination at the end!

The result is that we are in a better position to connect with the community when visitors come to our church. The trainers from Greenwich Health (Abu and Grace) and their manager (Paul) were invited to worship with us at any time, but they made an extra effort to attend on the day that the mayor came to present the awards to us.

Mayor Hayes greeted the congregation with a resounding 'Happy Sabbath!' He spoke of the influence that the local church can have on the local community by setting examples for others to follow. He also emphasised that good health is vital, that our bodies are a temple of God, and that the church can be a beacon for others in its community. In the coming months Aldreana is planning open days within the church building, and our outreach will be



aided because of the relationships that we have built up with our health colleagues. We pray that God will guide us to use this training to love even more friends for His eternal kingdom.

But our visitors weren't in any rush to leave after the certificates were awarded: no way! Mayor Hayes, Abu, Grace and Paul were so blessed by Sabbath worship that they tarried for a while for the Plumstead Pathfinder Day.

For our Pathfinder Day focus, the Pathfinders gave a history of Pathfinding in Plumstead, in the context of a global movement that was founded almost fifty years ago. Although the Adventurers and Pathfinders emphasise Christian character – attentiveness to God's direction, loving and respecting others, obedience to parents and looking for ways to help others – the Pathfinder club is open to everyone who wishes to join.

The Adventurers achieved gold at the camporee earlier in the year for timeliness, completing their tasks efficiently, wearing correct uniforms and keeping their tent site in an orderly way (we trust that their bedrooms are equally ordered, but we shall not digress!). They also enjoyed inspiring stories and uplifting songs.

Trevor Harewood, a South England Conference Pathfinder area coordinator, addressed both the congregation and our Pathfinders, encouraging them to continue to strive for more awards in the future. He emphasised that Pathfinders need to never lose sight of the need for missionary work, which is part of the curriculum. To that end, he encouraged every one of the members to bring at least one community friend to the club – which most definitely is not exclusively for Adventists.

Paul (Greenwich Health) was so moved by the Pathfinder pledges and their mission that he asked to say a few words. He shared that he was extremely impressed by the young Pathfinders' discipline and commitment, but more so by the way in which they promote health and wellbeing.

Pastor Israel Williams acknowledged the tremendous hard work of our Pathfinders and their leaders, who work so tirelessly to keep our children and young people focused on their Christian walk.

We truly experienced the richness of God's blessings as we welcomed our visitors who worshipped with us. It is our prayer that the time we spent together was influenced and encouraged by the Holy Spirit.

ANGELA LEWIS



Children raise nearly £400 for cancer research

Eighteen children from the Crieff church, aged five to thirteen, raised almost £400 for cancer research at their art exhibition, held in the afternoon of Sabbath 25 January. Six months ago, Moyra Rodd, who is very much involved with the children, decided to start an art club once a month for them. Moyra is also a talented artist and a retired teacher. The children were taught all sorts of techniques, including finger painting, and they produced some wonderful pictures of seascapes, landscapes, still life, castles and abstract art. After six months they had produced 75 paintings, which were then framed or mounted. The art club thought it would be good to have an art exhibition in the Adventist church hall and invite their parents and friends to attend. To make the event even more attractive, they decided to serve cream teas. A really good crowd of parents, friends and visitors attended and were very impressed with what the children had done. Monies raised for cancer research from the sale of the artwork and the cream teas amounted to almost £400 in just over two hours! It was also very encouraging to see how many visitors came from just a few personal invitations. Certainly, this was one successful way of getting them to come to the church!

BOB RODD

Dagenham Eagles lead the way in 2020 70th Pathfinder anniversary celebrations

Compiled by Dionne Corrodus-Weekes



To mark the beginning of the 70th Pathfinder anniversary celebrations worldwide, Dagenham Eagles led the way in 2020.



Sponsored by the Dagenham Seventh-day Adventist church and other donors, Dagenham Eagles were among the first three drum corps in the SEC to pass the newly introduced drum certification, introduced in 2019.



Dagenham Eagles' lead multi-toms player is an exemplary aspiring management professional completing her secondary studies in a local school in Barking and Dagenham. She began a four-year teen leadership trainee (TLT) programme shortly after accepting Jesus Christ.



Forty Pathfinders from the South England Conference (SEC) represented Pathfinders and Adventist youth (AY) around the world on an international, national and local stage at the 34th London New Year's Day Parade (LNYDP).



Some of our most iconic streets in central London turned into a sea of joy and colour as more than 10,000 performers from more than 20 nationalities stood side by side in celebration.



In 2019, Dagenham Eagles led the way as the first SEC-certified drum corps in East London's Area 6C to lead in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham's international, national and local civic events.



Today, Dagenham Eagles have a visible presence not only in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and the city of London, but also on the world stage as participants in the world's largest international street parade, which markets the UK and generates funding for mayoral charities.



Director Weekes asserts that our Pathfinders served with accountability, 'for the love of Christ constrains us' to continue to reach more than 500,000 spectators, with millions more watching on TV, according to the parade's website.



Dagenham Eagles have adopted and seek to model the seven Nolan principles of public life – selflessness, objectivity, integrity, accountability, honesty, openness and leadership – to be messengers of hope and inspiration, through teamwork, commitment, resilience and discipline, to positively impact culturally diverse communities.



Left to right: Dagenham Eagles Master Guide In Training (MIT) Lydia Ndyabahika – AY flag bearer; Dagenham Eagles Director/Cymbalist – Dionne Corrodus-Weekes; Pathfinder Area 7 Coordinator, Vernon Noel – Master Guide flag bearer; one of Dagenham Eagles' drum majors/Brixton Pathfinder leader – Adam Greaves; Pathfinder Area 8 Coordinator/Dagenham Eagles cymbalist – Susan Preston Miller; Lewisham Pathfinder, Titanna Gentles – Pathfinder flag bearer

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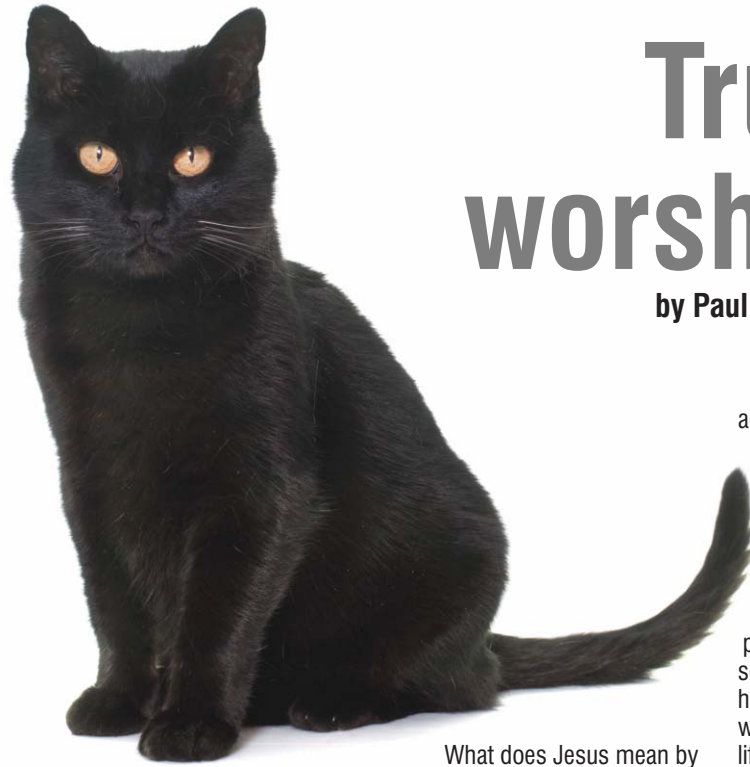
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True worship

by Paul Haworth



activities, it ultimately is more than activity: it is a state of being. Though prayer is an activity, Paul says, in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV), 'Pray without ceasing.' By this he does not intend us to spend every waking moment in prayer; rather, because prayer is so much a part of our lives, we have made it a state of being wherein at the drop of a hat we lift our eyes heavenward in prayer of praise or petition to our God.

'Worship the LORD your God,' the Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex. 23:25, NIV). The word for 'worship' here can also be translated as 'serve'. To worship God as a lifelong occupation (part of being) is to be devoted to serving Him.

As Moses approached the burning bush, he worshipped God (activity), but he then served God – ministered – by leading the Israelites from Egypt.

In a similar way, Isaiah (see chapter 6:3-8), after seeing the seraphs worshipping God, cried out that he would go in response to God's call. Worship preceded ministry. So too were the disciples given the commission to make disciples of all nations, following their worship of Jesus (see Matt. 28:17).

Your Father in heaven will seek you when you worship Him with your whole life – serving Him daily.

Now, the activity of worship needs two elements to make it fully meaningful: celebration and reflection.

Some churches only have one or the other, but we need both. As we praise God and we feel Him come near, we reflect on our relationship with Him and feel remorse for our sins. 'Woe to me!' Isaiah cried out; 'I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips . . .' (Isaiah 6:5, NIV). Celebrate as you worship, but leave room to reflect.

In fact, when worshipping God and sensing His presence, have you ever felt like falling on your knees/face? Jumping for joy? Crying out, 'Alleluia'? Have you? Well, why didn't you? Our form of worship often stifles the needed response of the moment (consider David in 1 Chronicles 15:16, 28, 29); but Scripture reveals these elements in worship:

- Angels fell on their faces.
- John fell to his knees.
- The people lifted up their hands.
- They sang (Miriam in Ex. 15:21; Mary in Luke 1:46-55): sometimes while weeping (Psalm 6:6-8).
- Psalm 46:10 (NIV) says that people are to 'be still, and know that I am God'.

Our worship activity needs to include joy as well as reflection when we see ourselves in front of a holy God.

Worship, conducted right, also has an amazing result (1 Cor. 14:24, 25, NIV): 'But if an unbeliever or an enquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"' If our worship is true, then it convicts unbelievers that God is alive and active in the lives of His people. What if your worship is dull, boring and meaningless? Does the unbeliever get the idea that God is not present?

In another way, when they see how we relate towards each other as we worship, unbelievers will be convinced of the truth of God – see John 13:34, 35.

So if you fall out with someone, but you love God and you want to obey His teaching and forgive, do something about your hatred and anger. Go to that person next Sabbath! Here is worship – you are serving God; you are serving your brother.

When unbelievers see that, the result is powerful.

True worship is worship of God in the Spirit and in truth. We all need to bring our spirit into communion with God's Spirit as we worship our Great Creator, our Great Redeemer, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The place of worship doesn't matter. Worship is about who we are with God.



Pastor Malcolm Watson

(1953-2019) d. 29 November.

born in Watford into an Adventist home and brought up at Stanborough Park. His mother, Kathleen Joyce Watson, was an internationally renowned singer, so music was always a part of his life. He studied for the ministry at Newbold College in the late 1970s, and his colleagues remember his wonderful bass voice as he sang in the choir or accompanied himself on the guitar.

Malcolm began ministry in the North England Conference in 1981, interning with Pastor Masih in Wolverhampton, the start of a lifelong friendship between the two pastors. An early assignment took him to Scunthorpe, where he met Naomi Anjali Sable, who was studying there. Pastor Ron Surridge, then NEC president,

warned him not to fall in love with 'the lovely Indian student' as she would not be staying in England; but they were in fact married on 20 February 1986, and had two sons, James and Ben.

Malcolm spent his entire ministry in the West and East Midlands, becoming very much part of the life of the church throughout Birmingham and further afield. His contribution to the summer Tent Crusade ministry was significant; even after his redundancy in 2010 he continued to work tirelessly for the Church, specifically regarding the purchase and setting up of the current Chelmsley Wood building.

Over the last few years of his life, Malcolm and Naomi spent time in India during the winters, and worked with the Adventist Church in providing health teaching and connecting with locals, also working with the charity they had set up many years earlier, 'Health Education Literacy Programme' (HELP). Latterly, Malcolm was particularly excited with the direction his ministry was going in as he networked between students and the local churches in Goa and Pune, India.

Living in their son Ben's home during their months in England over the last few years, and with James nearby, Malcolm loved being close to his sons and helping them work things out in their lives. They were both sources of great love and joy to him.

Perhaps Malcolm's greatest gift was his ability to make friends – he saw every person as of equal value, and he enjoyed meeting new people, networking and bringing people together, and introducing people to the love of God whenever and however he could. The culture of love, hospitality and acceptance which he and Naomi created made their home a place of welcome for friends and family alike, something their sons' friends particularly commented about.

Malcolm's enthusiasm and commitment to his ministry was undiminished throughout all his life's experiences, and he faced

sudden illness and his terminal diagnosis with peace and equilibrium. Naomi's comment that 'we would have expected nothing less' is a tribute to the demonstration of faith and trust in God's goodness which Malcolm displayed throughout his life.

'God loves us. God loves us.' May Malcolm's words of comfort to his family, and all his friends, bring strength and consolation through the days and years ahead.

ISOBEL WEBSTER AND NAOMI WATSON

Messenger

Volume 125 • 04 – 21 February 2020

Editor: David Neal
Design: David Bell

COPY FOR No. 06 – 27 February 2020

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Send high-resolution pictures to: dbell@stanboroughpress.org.uk
ABC Sales line: (01476) 591700
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The Editor may alter, clarify, précis or expand articles sent to him if he thinks it necessary. Published fortnightly on Fridays by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For general enquiries, email: info@stanboroughpress.org.uk

Printed in the UK.

Visit the BUC website at:
www.adventist.org.uk
ISSN 0309-3654

Sunset

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	Lon	Card	Nolt	Edin	Belf
Feb 21	5.26	5.38	5.27	5.29	5.43
28	5.38	5.50	5.40	5.44	5.57
Mar 6	5.50	6.03	5.53	5.59	6.11
13	6.03	6.15	6.06	6.13	6.24

A few days before he died, Malcolm celebrated his 66th birthday with more than 200 friends at Leamington Spa Church. Not finding speech easy, he took the microphone only to say to the group, 'God loves us. God loves us.'

An only child, Malcolm was

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Pathfinder like you've never Pathfindered before

The church was overflowing! Why? Aston-Newtown's Pathfinder Day last November was an event that just could not be missed. Under the directorship of Karma and Felix, and assistants Okeeffe, Michael, Thuba and Nikki, it was a celebration at length. 'Here I am! Send me (Isaiah 6:8)' was the theme, and speakers Christal and Jayden spoke ably and were later surprised at being named Pathfinders of the Year along with Juju. Larrissa and Joshua, along with Javon and Ahkeel, provided music on the day, with Wandi, Candace, Tenaj and Juju singing out during Pathfinder Choir renditions.

Here are key highlights from Aston-Newtown's Pathfinder year:

- Candace, Christal, Juju, Lauren, Modou, Nahom, and Nathan came second place at the Area-level Pathfinder Bible Experience in January 2019.
- In February 2019, Counsellor Lavina's car was totalled, yet she walked out alive. Praise God.
- Fundraising events included a banquet, car washes, and tabletop, food and stationery sales. There was a sponsored walk that pushed walkers beyond their limits. Thanks to Counsellors Leonore and Joy for your tenacity, along with parents Joan and Kay, as well as Daniel for his great ADRA donation.
- In April 2019, Pathfinder Club Camp was a super-hot holiday with drilling & marching, structure building, and identifying edible plants as new learning points.
- June /July 2019 Adventurer Camporee saw the club remain Gold Champions, and at TED Camporee eight campers from France were hosted. One Pathfinder suffered a broken wrist, but her recovery, along with eight Pathfinders indicating that they wanted to be baptised, made this an unforgettable experience.
- In September 2019, at NEC Pathfinder Rally Day, Marquez and Thuba were invested as Master Guides, and the club participated in the community impact march against knife crime.
- In October/November 2019, Counsellors Michael, Nikki, Ahkeel, Joella and Armani completed requirements for the AYS Silver Award.

Drummers Darminque, Ahkeel, Kymar, Nahom and Jamar led the club

Cheltenham's musical year

One of the things that defines Cheltenham Church is its passion for music. 2019 has been full of musical highlights which have helped to make it a very notable year.

Prior to 2019, a new church choir was starting to develop under the enthusiastic leadership of Lovely Thomas. A surprising opportunity for witness presented itself when our pastor, James Shepley, was contacted by the Community Champion at the local Morrisons store to ask if we had a choir that could sing at the supermarket on Mothering Sunday to raise funds for the family of an employee who had been killed in a road accident just before the previous Christmas. So we were able to sing some meaningful hymns with gusto, raise money for the family, and meet the father and two young children. It turned out that the father had previous connections with the Adventist Church when he was younger.

Every other year, the town of Cheltenham hosts a Christian arts festival for a few weeks during April and May. During April, we staged an evening concert of music and dramatic Bible presentations. The musical presentations ranged in style, with opportunity for congregational participation.

In June we received another invitation to sing at Morrisons, this time for Father's Day, and to raise funds for men's sexual health issues. Again we were very well received, including one store customer who asked us to sing her favourite song, 'In Christ Alone'.

October was a very busy and rewarding musical month with the opportunity to stage a concert for the Cuban violinist, Jaime Jorge. As well as Jaime's astonishing musical gift, we heard his amazing life



march around the Aston-Newtown community with chaperones Symon and Joy, while church members and parents distributed tracts that encouraged Pathfinding. Aston-Newtown Pathfinder Drum Corps also supported the Sutton Coldfield and Erdington Pathfinder Club investitures.

The ice skating social was a fitting end to our Pathfinder year: so much so that we encourage you to:

- Live like you've never lived
- Give like you've never given
- Sing like you've never sung
- Tell the whole world about the Lord!

Keti, Meliyah, Caleb, AJ, Supreme, Mya, Degario and the rest of the whole Pathfinder club believe that with God all things are possible, and they hope to see you as part of the Pathfinder movement in 2020!

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, ASTON-NEWTOWN



story. But most exciting of all was an opportunity for the church choir to perform again (including our string players), accompanied by Jaime.

The following week it was the turn of the young people to take centre stage. Under the coordination of Robin Beamish, a group of 18 instrumentalists and singers, mainly from across the south-west, presented music on the theme of 'Let there be light', deliberately timed to provide a positive alternative to the celebration of Hallowe'en. As a result of this very exciting evening, these young people have been invited to take their music to a few other places, which is a great endorsement of their talent and their commitment to share their faith through their music.

Finally, on Sabbath 7 December, a group of members had the opportunity to share the story of the first advent in songs and readings at a local nursing home where one of our members works.

We thank God for the gift of music and for what we have been able to share with others this year. We look forward to more in 2020!

MIKE BEAMISH