

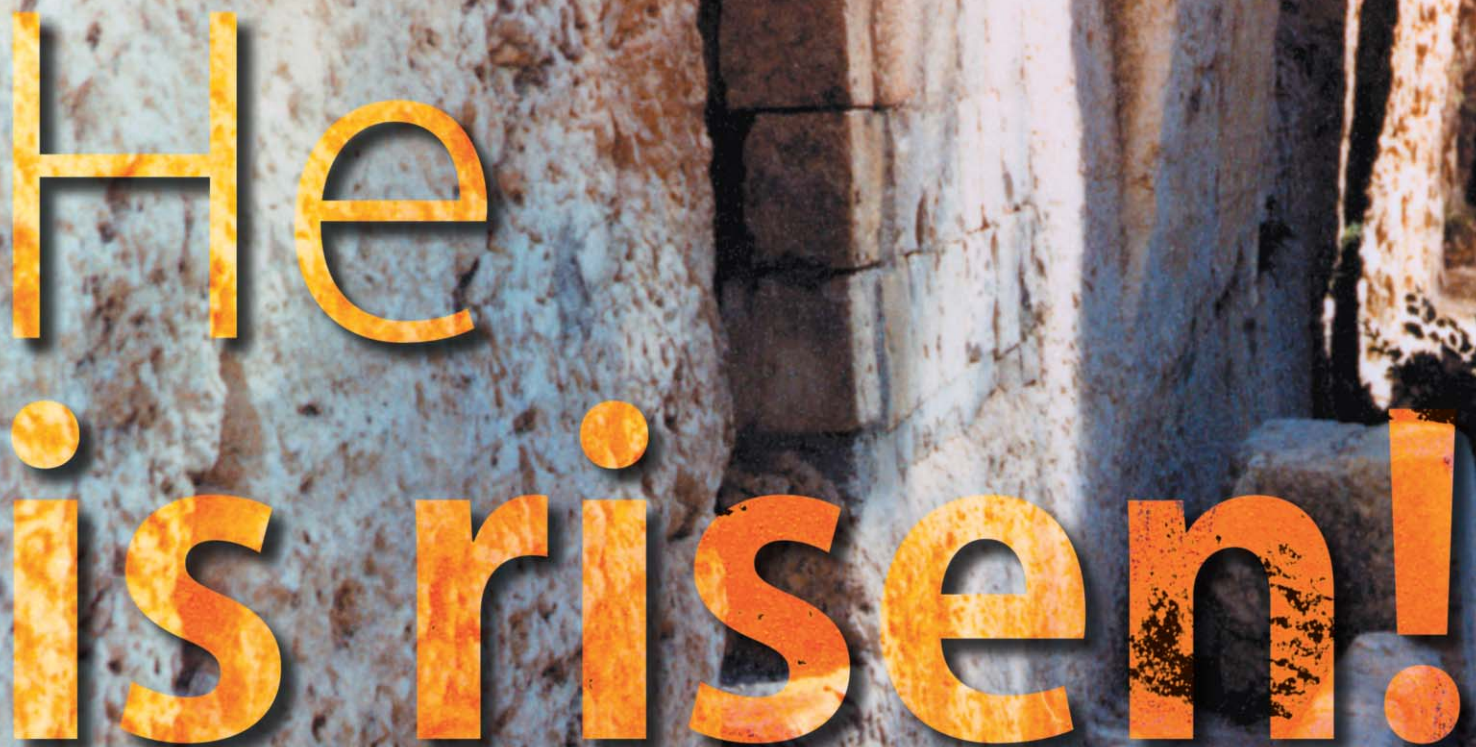
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Photo: Anita Marshall



He is risen!



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How to power ADRA

by Bert Smit,
CEO, ADRA-UK



It was a spur-of-the-moment impulse purchase on eBay. As a proud granddad of three grandsons, I wanted to pass on forgotten skills to the young generation. When I was 8, I delighted in taking apart and re-assembling my dad's small Grundig reel-to-reel tape machine. It probably led to my interest in anything studio-sound related, which was rather helpful in my previous work appointment with Adventist World Radio. So, on this occasion, I purchased a German-built Uher Report Monitor 4000, dating

back to 1980.

I've always loved these little machines – even repaired them for the local radio station when I was at Andrews University – but was never able to afford one.

It looked good, and according to the description it was in 'working condition'. Soon I could teach my grandsons how to spool a tape, make real 'cuts and edits', and see the innards of a proper machine – not a digital app on an iPhone.

When it arrived I unpacked the Uher and plugged the machine into the mains: and, lo and behold, the lights came on! I found that the machine would wind and rewind; but, alas, it would not play. When I opened up the back, I discovered that the previous user, some decades ago, had left the big C zinc-carbon batteries in place, which by now had extremely corroded the interior of the poor machine. It could not survive without an in-depth rebuild.

When batteries go, everything stops: but when they corrode, things are more desperate. Leaking batteries can destroy good equipment, rendering perfect-looking apparatus useless.

We need power to use modern-day equipment. Batteries are the source that powers nearly everything: from phones to radios to flashlights and cameras; and today even more: the source that powers electric cars.

Batteries work behind the scenes. You don't see them and hardly notice them. Only when the power stops do we check and replace or discard.

In many ways, ADRA's supporters are the power that drives the agency. We take your involvement in our work seriously, because without your help, your regular financial support, and your donations, there would be no ADRA. Each year we refresh our batteries to prevent corrosion: we call it 'Ingathering' or the ADRA Appeal. However, this year, the door-to-door collecting campaign has been cancelled due to the outbreak of the coronavirus. As you can imagine, this is a significant amount of income

ADRA-UK will lose in 2020. Even though there is no door-to-door collection, please, please help us to impact people's lives: bring change where needed; bring hope where there is despair; feed where there is hunger; shelter where there is no roof; heal where there is pain.

Thank you for being the power that fires ADRA.

(Regarding the Uher, luckily the seller accepted a return for a full refund.)



It's not one or the other

by Ian Sweeney (Pastor & President)

On 26 December 2004, a large earthquake off the coast of Indonesia triggered a tsunami that killed 228,000 people across eight countries. Sri Lanka was one of the countries impacted by the tsunami, with over 35,000 deaths as a result of the giant waves that slammed into her coastline.¹

Efforts to bring aid and relief to the stricken communities were soon put in place, and the *New York Times* focused upon one story of a group of Christians who went from the USA to Sri Lanka to assist in relief efforts.² It was reported that members from an evangelical church, the Waco Antioch Community Church, sent a team of volunteers to assist in the response. However, their relief efforts caused deep concern among Sri Lankan Christians and non-Christians alike because of their alleged aggressive proselytising of the country's Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. The church's website at the time stated that a total of 75 people were dispatched to Sri Lanka and Indonesia, and that these volunteers had been successful in persuading dozens of people to 'come to Christ'.

In offering humanitarian aid, there has always been a tension when faith-based organisations engage in evangelism. The problem that was highlighted in the Sri Lanka relief response was that the goodwill spread by relief efforts could be undermined by resentment over missionary activity. ADRA has networks across the globe that have to respond extremely sensitively to this tension.

I suspect that there are those who hold the view that if you are not directly sharing the three angels' messages, you are not really doing God's work and have watered down what it means to be a Seventh-day Adventist. Humanitarian aid may not be viewed as a worthy goal in and of itself; the word 'humanitarian' even sounds secular and pagan.

The question could be posed, should we be involved with aid relief without pointing people to Christ?

However, I do not believe it has to be one or the other.

James made the point to those whose Christianity was only about preaching: this 'useless' brand of Christianity, when it sees needs, simply resorts to spiritualising the issues.

James 2:14-18, GNT: *'My friends, what good is it for one of you to say that you have faith if your actions do not prove it? Can that faith save you? Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, "God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!" – if you don't give them the necessities of life? So it is with faith: if it is alone and includes no actions, then it is dead. But someone will say, "One person has faith, another has actions." My answer is, "Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I will show you my faith by my actions.'*

James was saying that our Christianity needs to demonstrate a practical usefulness, because a hungry person has never had their stomach filled with a spiritual platitude.

So what is the difference between ADRA (the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) and a non-faith-based NGO (non-governmental organisation)?

The difference is you!

You may not be able to preach Christ when you raise funds for ADRA, but, as you are an ambassador of Christ, your interaction with the public is very much their interaction with the Christ who lives in you.

As Bert Smit has shared in his article on this page, door-to-door collecting this year is cancelled, but the ADRA Appeal is not. Whenever you receive this edition of *MESSENGER*, can I invite you to find creative and innovative ways to raise funds for ADRA? In doing so, you will demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ for the people we are working for, and the people we are raising funds from. Ours is an act of compassion and giving that, as James said, shows the genuineness of our faith by something more than words.

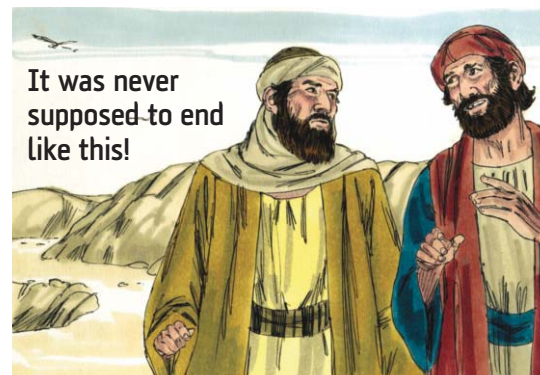
¹<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-24/boxing-day-tsunami-how-the-disaster-unfolded/5977568>

²<https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/22/world/worldspecial4/mix-of-quake-aid-and-preaching-stirs-concern.html>



David Neal, Editor

'And guide us when perplexed . . .'



The English poet George Eliot described Luke's account of what happened on the road to Emmaus as the most beautiful story in the world; and if there were only one story I could tell from the gospels, it would be this one, as recorded in Luke 24. If ever you wanted to read a tale of unexpected twists and turns, it is this one. It also a beautiful story which moves from utter despair to exhilarating joy. I like to describe it as the epilogue after the main event. If I ever get the opportunity, I would love to retrace those steps, and walk the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Luke records that two disciples of Jesus were heading from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They were not part of Jesus' twelve disciples, but probably among the wider group, the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-24). Traumatized beyond belief, they had experienced not only the brutal death of their Master Teacher, their Messiah even, but grief compounded by news from the women around Jesus that the body placed in the tomb had disappeared.

As they walked in the late afternoon, as dusk approached, the sun lay low in the sky. Cleopas and his friend (we do not know the name of the second person) repeatedly went over the events they'd experienced over the previous few days. It was never supposed to end like this! Why had the authorities been so cruel to the kindest, most caring, most hopeful person they had ever met? He was a great teacher, and what He said and did made sense. Unlike other religious teachers, He never said one thing and did another! His actions matched His words. It was so refreshing.

As Luke tells this story, there's an interesting dynamic taking place. The reader knows who the Stranger is, but the disciples do not. Verse 15 says:² *'While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.'* We know who the Stranger is, but they do not. As verse 16 describes, *'But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.'*

I've always wondered about this. First of all, how did they not see Him? One possibility is that the glaring afternoon sun was in their direct line of vision. Another is that they were so immersed in their understandable self-pity that they didn't look up when He approached. And, third: they were not expecting to see Jesus, so why for a moment would they think it was Jesus talking with them?

Then there is the mystery of why Jesus did not immediately reveal Himself to Cleopas and his friend. Wouldn't it be natural for Jesus to simply 'appear' and say, 'Friends, I'm here; it's Me! I have overcome death'?

Intriguingly, however, the Stranger asks them, *'What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?'* (Verse 17.)

Luke describes the drama of the moment after the Stranger had asked this question. The walking stopped, they looked sad, and then there was what could be described as an emotional outburst by Cleopas.

'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' (Verse 18.)

It's difficult for the reader to know if this was polite conversation, or a statement of incredulity. I'm more inclined to the reading, 'Really – you have no idea what happened – where have you been!'

And Jesus replied, *'What things?'* (Verse 19.)

If Cleopas was in reactive and distressed mode, Jesus answered with the calmness of a doctor who knows the problem exactly and is ready to write the prescription. But for a while He let Cleopas keep going. And keep going Cleopas did, with an outpouring of grief, describing every detail of the story – not just of the previous few days, culminating in the empty tomb, but of the hope he and his fellow followers had put in this Messiah.

As Cleopas came to the end of his version of events, it would have been a natural expectation at this point that Jesus might say, 'Cleopas, friend, I've got some good news for you both. I am not dead; I am alive!' The reader could even argue that this would have been the most compassionate action for Jesus to do at this point. After all, is He not the great Comforter, the great Healer – and needed, in this case, to heal double trauma?

As Luke writes this story, approximately thirty years after the event, I imagine him writing with a wry smile on his face as he describes another twist in the story. 'Reader, beware – this story's not over yet; there's another twist.'

Jesus decided that this was not the

moment to reveal His identity. Instead, He rebuked them, and followed with a Bible study. Please . . . !

'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' (Verses 25, 26.)

I wonder what went through the minds of Cleopas and his friend as Jesus shared details about Himself through the lens of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and even Malachi? All I can imagine is that something stirred; the light began to go on – and, by the way, this is exactly what Luke wants us to think.

The three walkers eventually arrived at Emmaus. *'He acted as if he were going farther.'* That's another significant line, giving the impression that Jesus did not want to impose Himself on His friends. We mustn't miss the spiritual lesson there: one we know well. He wanted to go farther, but Luke says that they convinced Him to stay.

What I would have given to be a fly on the wall in that room! It was evening; the room was oil-lamp lit and shadowy, with mud-brick walls and an open-holed window. The light was dim, shining only on the three people around the table. Already the very real grief of Cleopas and his friend had shifted away from grieving 'as others do who have no hope',³ because of the perspective they had gained. They prayed, and the Stranger blessed the bread and handed it to them.

JESUS!

And He disappeared from their sight.

Imagine their bewilderment, surprise and joy – unbelievable! He is risen! He is risen! He is risen!

Those three words, 'He is risen', are the answer to every question! They were then, and still are now. But the question we need to answer is, why the roundabout way for the Stranger to reveal His identity? You want answers to life's problems, global, national, personal? You want to try and understand the health emergency? Perplexed about what's happening to the church in your neck of the woods? Worried about paying the rent? Raising your children? Real, everyday concerns, they are. The Stranger says, get back to the Word, where you will find help – and, not least, perspective. For me, when 'the light goes on' (perspective), I take a big sigh and say, 'Thank You, Lord.' They are no dry words in the Bible, but the collective experience of ancient men and women encountering the one true God, centred in the raised and living Christ, who also walks with us as a Friend on our life journey.

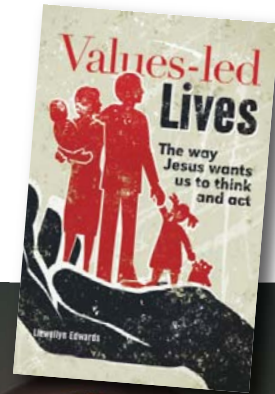
We've got to leave it there for today, but we're far from finished with this story yet. 'He is risen' is the rallying cry of the Gospel, but we've yet to see how Luke wants to make sure that we understand the meaning of the Gospel to its core.

Talk again soon. . . .

¹From the hymn 'Now Thank We All Our God' (559, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*) ²Bible verses in this editorial have been taken from the English Standard Version (Anglicised) ³A contemporary of Luke, Paul, writing in his first letter to the Thessalonians (4:13)



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 outlines some of the values that we once knew, which are now being displayed by secular organisations.



Part 6:
Our secret that the world knows and we have forgotten

Research by health scientists has, in recent years, caught up with something we have known for decades – that the eight principles of healthy living are the best formula for health and longevity. We are delighted that the world is cottoning on to one of our secrets. What took them so long!

But there is another church secret that we seem to have forgotten and that the world is ahead of us on. After all, didn't Jesus warn us that *'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light'* (Lk 16:8, KJV)? Lovett Weems, in his book *Church Leadership*, writes that a 'great surprise for church leaders when they begin reading supposedly secular books about leadership is that the language used in the best of the books seems to come directly from the vocabulary of the church. They expect to find elaborate grids, schemes, and designs. Instead, they discover words that have to

do with values and character. It soon becomes quite evident that there is no way to talk about leadership without talking about values, meaning, and personhood. The character and values of the leader do matter.'

Secular studies have come to the conclusion that an organisation without values (particularly one that claims to be of service to others) has no future.

Robert Greenleaf in his *Servant Leadership* (Paulist Press, 1977) tells the tale of Leo, who is employed by a group of mythical explorers. Leo is the servant who takes care of all the menial tasks but who always does so with a cheerful spirit and encouraging songs. All goes well until Leo disappears. The party falls into disarray and eventually the expedition is abandoned. One of the group wanders about for some time and then discovers an order where the noble and great leader is none other than Leo.

The point of the story is that

organisations that do not embed servant leadership are doomed to failure.

Peter Block in his book *Stewardship*, written for the secular business world, says: 'Most businesses got the point in the 1970s and 1980s: if they did not find a way to serve their markets more quickly, with higher quality and lower costs, they would not endure.' Note the key word, 'serve'. No service – no future.

And they have recognised that those values must be intentionally internalised or embedded into all they do. Their stated values are what they do. It's not just a nice idea that is vaguely and occasionally done.

One company that posted superb values was Enron. It openly stated that *Communication, Respect, Integrity and Excellence* were what it stood for. Events subsequent to Enron's collapse revealed that these actually covered an embedded cultural

value of greed. Various books and numerous articles (easily accessed online) document this tragic betrayal of values.

A company that the 'children of light' would do well to consider is Southwest Airlines – an inspirational American business that demonstrates the effect of its values by being the company with the lowest number of complaints and the highest customer loyalty, and it has never recorded a loss in its history.

Ken Makovsky in a *Forbes.com* article¹ describes Southwest's three core values as follows: 'The values transcend the more typical ones, such as "Take the initiative" or "Care about your customers." **A warrior spirit**, according to Ms Hardage [Southwest Airlines' cultural executive and chief communications officer], means being fearless in terms of delivering the product. "We need to give our employees all the tools they need to support our customers. People travel for a

variety of reasons – business, funerals, vacations – and you need to be sensitive to their space and schedules."

'A servant's heart' also fits right in. Treat others with respect. Follow the Golden Rule. Put other people first. "We believe we need to connect people to what is important in their lives through friendly, reliable and low-cost air travel. If you respect their concerns and needs, and still provide low-cost and low-fare terms, then you do indeed have a servant's heart. The customer, hopefully, is getting more than he or she paid for."

'And, of course, a "fun-loving" attitude. "We want people who are proud to be here, people who have a fun and 'loving' attitude and don't take themselves too seriously. Our culture is defined by these three values, and they are used as the cardinal test for newly hired employees, who have to reflect those values."

I would recommend to all church leaders to take a little time reading about Southwest – in literature and online. Their

commitment to excellence, service and 'luv' (as they spell the word) is simply inspiring, and I would humbly submit that we as members, leaders and churches would not go far wrong in learning some of the wisdom of these 'children of this world'.

One of the stories that I liked that demonstrated Southwest's commitment to its values was one about a customer who wrote in to the company complaining about the levity (in Southwest's terms – 'fun-loving attitude') evidenced on the flight they had taken. The letter was passed on to the CEO. A usual reply might have been apologetic, but not Herb Kelleher's reply – he simply wrote back, 'We'll miss you.'

Kelleher is quoted as saying: *"You can't really be disciplined in what you do unless you are humble and open-minded. Humility breeds open-mindedness – and, really, what we try to do is establish a clear and simple set of values that we understand. That simplifies things; that expedites things. It enables the extreme discipline I mentioned in describing our*

strategy. When an issue comes up, we don't say we're going to study it for two and a half years. We just say, "Southwest Airlines doesn't do that. Maybe somebody else does, but we don't." It greatly facilitates the operation of the company."²

What amazes me as I read such literature about secular companies are the words that they use to describe themselves. Words like 'service', 'servant', 'disciplined', 'humble', 'songs', 'spirit', 'excellence', 'commitment', 'care'. They are using our terminology – the words that describe our basis for Kingdom success. It comes across to me that they have

learned something that we have forgotten.

Be encouraged – if the world can excel, there is no reason why we can't do even better. What an amazing church that would be – we would fly!

In our next excerpt we will share a handful of stories from secular organisations, one of which is described as having 'exemplary corporate culture, exceptional staff empowerment, and extraordinary commitment' (watch out for the quote!). Could you use those same adjectives to describe yourself or the church you attend? If not, why not?

Questions

Here are some questions that this wisdom of the world raises for the children of light.

- Reader, what are your core values?
- What are the stated values of your church?
- Is there a disconnect between the values we espouse and the values that we act on?
- Do some of our actions betray the values of the Kingdom we claim?

ADVENTIST ESSENTIALS . . .



'Kindness', an Adventist essential? Which fundamental belief is that? In reality, we don't have to dig far to find that value in each one. Let's try and explain once again, over a cuppa in a café . . .

It may be considered a strange Adventist essential, but I'd like to suggest that Adventists are kind people who care deeply about others and their well-being. Because of our trust and faith in Jesus Christ, deeply embedded in

our cultural and spiritual DNA is the value of kindness. We are kind, want to be kind, try to be kind – because the story of His life shows that that's who He is. We're honest enough to say that every one of us is on a journey, and are the first to admit that on some days we do better than on others; but, as His followers, we believe that His life of loving service and sacrifice is the life we copy.

The gospel records of Jesus' life and teaching show Him to be caring and compassionate, particularly to those who in His time and place were regarded as outcasts. There's one example of a Greek

woman whose daughter had what could be described today as serious emotional health problems (Mark 7:24-30). The Bible record states that in this instance these problems were caused by demon possession. Jesus responded to her by healing her daughter.

Then there is the story of a fella called Bartimaeus, who was blind. While a crowd of people are demanding Jesus' attention, this beggar on the street shouts out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' The crowd around him tell him to keep quiet, but he calls out all the more. Jesus notices and says, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The man replies, 'Rabbi, I want to see!' Jesus responds by giving him his sight: no ifs, no buts, no sermon, no conditions.

What I like most about Jesus is that His kindness was never calculated. There was never a hint of, 'If you do this for me, I will do this for you.' All He expects in return is that we accept His invitation to trust Him.

At weddings we often read from the Bible's 1 Corinthians 13, the great first-century love poem written by Paul. He explains what true love looks like:

'Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out.' (1 Cor. 13:4-6, TLB.)

Christians often talk about the grace of God. Unpack that, and you will find that it's about God Himself, whose character is the best example of love; who stoops – and cares – and rescues. The kindness of Jesus is the grace of God. Whatever the problem, whatever the judgement, even – Jesus always seeks to sort it out by an action that rescues, restores and resolves, while at the same time sending the heartfelt message: 'I understand.' The problem could be physical. It could be emotional. It could be spiritual. Jesus not only *wants* to fix it, but has the *ability* to do so. Why wouldn't being kind, as an Adventist, be an essential for me?



Gratitude and well-being Part 4 – Emotional & social impact

This final instalment of our gratitude and well-being series takes a look at some of the science highlighting the impact of emotions and social interaction.

Emotional impact

The *Greater Good* magazine published an article in June 2017 titled: 'How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain'.¹ Authors Joel Wong and Joshua Brown highlight new research that explores how gratitude positively impacts mental health. Three hundred study participants undertook a number of writing assignments for a three-week duration. One group were directed to write gratitude letters, another group were directed to express

their emotions about negative experiences, and the third group did not write anything. At the conclusion of the assignment their emotional responses were analysed. The study outcomes found the following:

- *Gratitude unshackles us from toxic emotions.* This was identified through positive writing experiences where less negative words were used and positive emotions were expressed.
- *Gratitude helps even if you do not share it.* Even study participants who did not send the gratitude letters felt 'better' having written them.
- *Gratitude's benefits take time.* You may not see the benefits immediately, especially if you are not used to expressing gratitude.
- *Gratitude has lasting effects on the brain.* Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) scans were undertaken on study participants three months after the research. These showed greater brain activation (in the medial prefrontal cortex) in the gratitude letter writers.

Another study, by Liang et al., concluded: 'Gratitude may enhance peace of mind, reduce rumination, and have a negative effect on depressive symptoms.'²

Social interaction

Harvard Health Publishing (Harvard Medical School) reports on some of the social impact of gratitude in its article, 'Giving Thanks Can Make You Happier'.³ They found the following:

- People who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive towards the other person, but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.
- Managers who remember to say 'thank you' to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder.

Positive Psychology, in an article listing the '28 Benefits of Gratitude',⁴ refers to several social benefits, including increased likability: 'Those who are more grateful have access to a wider social network, more friends, and better relationships on average (Amin, 2014). This is likely because of the effect that **being grateful** has on how trustworthy, social, and appreciative we seem to others.'

Be grateful!

¹https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain
²Hongyu Liang, Chen Chen, Fang Li, Shuman Wu, Lixin Wang, Xue Zheng and Benjun Zeng,
³Mediating effects of peace of mind and rumination on the relationship between gratitude and depression among Chinese university students', *Current Psychology* (2018)
⁴<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>
⁵<https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-gratitude-research-questions/>

Wellness tips to boost immunity part 1

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

In the light of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, boosting immunity is key to building resilience against this disease, along with hygiene practices such as effective handwashing, and maintaining social etiquette when coughing and sneezing.

However, lifestyle practices also play a significant part. Did you know that how we eat, move, rest and manage stress has an impact on our immunity?

Research demonstrates the efficacy of eating well, maintaining regular exercise, and getting adequate rest and effective stress management for enhancing our ability to resist bacteria and viruses, especially in the winter months, when colds and flu are more common.

Let's take a moment to examine these segments briefly.

Eat well

Sara Stanner, Science Director of the Nutrition Society, highlights the importance of a nutritious diet.¹ She states: 'A lack of nutrients including protein, zinc, selenium, copper, iron and vitamins (A, C, E, D and the B vitamins) will impact on immune function, so the best way to protect yourself is to eat a wide variety of foods.'

She further points out the following: 'Nutrients with potential immune-boosting properties include vitamin A (for example, orange fruit and vegetables such as carrots and apricots), vitamin E (nuts, grains, vegetable oils and wheatgerm) and selenium (in Brazil nuts).'

One key food that has been highlighted as a possible treatment for preventing colds and the flu is garlic.

'Studies have shown that garlic reduces the risk of becoming sick in the first place,' as well as the length of time you stay sick. 'It can also reduce the severity of symptoms.'²

Treatment

What happens, though, when you eat well and you still succumb to colds, flus and viruses? You may decide to take a trip to the chemist to find a remedy. However, is the pharmaceutical industry always the best option?

An online article by the Independent Community Pharmacist³ titled: 'Brands warm up for winter' states: 'The cold and flu category is now valued at a hearty £142.5 million, benefiting from a 19 per cent year-on-year increase.'

Along with the expense come the concerns about some of the ingredients in the medicaments. However, one herbalist has some suggestions for natural remedies that can help with some of the common cold and flu symptoms. Betzy Bancroft⁴ suggests the

following, highlighting their use:

- **Echinacea** – may help support the immune system to fight colds
- **Elderberry** – helpful for seasonal flu
- **Elderflower** – can induce sweating, which may help reduce fever
- **Eucalyptus** – antibacterial and expectorant properties; can loosen congestion for easier breathing
- **Goldenseal** – can help with bacterial infections
- **Ginger** – can help ease congestion and warm the body, and its anti-inflammatory properties work as a sore-throat remedy
- **Liquorice** – has immune-boosting and throat-soothing properties (avoid if hypertensive)
- **Sage** – can help to ease sore throats and dry up sinuses
- **Slippery elm** – a sore-throat soother high in 'mucilage', a substance that coats the throat and helps relieve coughs
- **Thyme** – contains antibacterial compounds

As usual, we advise that you speak with your health professional or pharmacist before trying any new remedies (including herbs), especially if your symptoms are severe. This is particularly important if you are on medication or if you have a chronic health condition.

For more information on keeping well in winter, visit NHS Choices at: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/five-ways-to-stay-healthy-this-winter/.

Move more

Among the reasons given for keeping active are:

- Some research suggests that moderate exercise can strengthen the immune system, thereby reducing the risk of coughs and colds.⁵
- Regular exercise will make you feel more energetic, which should make it a little easier to get out of your warm bed on cold, dark mornings.⁶

Stress & sleep factors

Psychologists working in the field of 'psychoneuroimmunology' have revealed that our state of mind affects our state of health.⁷

In other studies, adequate sleep has been shown to enhance the efficacy of the immune system and its function to maintain well-being.⁸

Particularly in the colder months, adequate sleep and effective stress management are key to maintaining a robust immune system. Professor Eccles, Director of the Common Cold and Nasal Centre,⁹ states: 'Our immune systems are weaker at this time of year, and stress and poor sleeping are factors too.' These further weaken immunity, increasing susceptibility to infections.



Hygiene

Professor Eccles raises the importance of general hygiene and ensuring that hands are well washed, particularly after visiting public places. He points out that, because tears from the eye drain via a duct into the nasal cavity, when we touch our eyes with contaminated fingers we pass viruses into the nose.

Vitamin D supplementation

What about vitamin supplementation? Is there evidence for any specific vitamin which assists in building our immunity?

Commenting on the benefits of supplements, Dr Eccles states:

'I also take vitamin D3 as a supplement as it's known as the sunshine vitamin, something which is usually more lacking in the winter months, when colds are reaching their peaks. It can give the immune system a much-needed boost during winter when reserves may be low, and there is sufficient information to indicate that vitamin D is a vital vitamin for the immune system.'

Thinking through these well-being tips to boost immunity, I have realised that when I follow the principles outlined above on a consistent basis, my health certainly benefits. I wish the same for you, too.

Part 2 of 'Wellness tips to boost immunity' looks at nutrition in more detail.

Good health!

¹<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/9589437/Life-Coach-Prepare-your-body-for-winter.html> ²<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/garlic-fights-colds-and-flu#section2>
³independentpharmacist.co.uk/brands-warm-up-for-winter/ -Data republished from MESSENGER 12 February 2016 ⁴www.nhs.uk/news/lifestyle-and-exercise/can-exercise-ward-off-colds/
⁵peakfm.co.uk/news/bad-weather/winter-exercise ⁶<https://www.apa.org/research/action/immune>
⁷<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324432> ⁸<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health/professor-ron-eccles-gives-tips-2023202?pageNumber=2>



'When God Is Pleased'

On Saturday evening, 8 February, the members of the Birmingham Aston-Newtown church came together along with family and friends to witness the baptism of Robert Ince, a young gentleman who regularly attends and participates in church with his mother, Beverley Bailey. His decision was made based on a series of Bible studies given at the Handsworth and Aston-Newtown churches. Officiating in the service were local elders who played a significant part in the candidate's life. The sermon for the occasion was preached by Pastor Jermaine Swaby, who currently serves as the associate pastor at the Aston-Newtown and Windsor Street churches, under the title, 'When God Is Pleased', reminding us that baptism should always be seen as a celebration, and that Robert pleased God by his decision to follow Christ through baptism. The message had a deep spiritual application to the congregation.



Robert Ince with pastors, elders, family and friends

ASTON-NEWTOWN COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Edmonton baptism

It was a unique occasion to witness the baptism of three teenagers, along with their mother, on Sabbath 18 January. They were no strangers to Edmonton Church, where they have attended and participated in church activities for a number of years.



Left to right: Tahjae, Jayden, Jackie (mum) and Dontae Wright

It was also a touching moment for Dr Boldeau, who studied with the boys. It was the first time in his ministry of 31 years that he had baptised a family unit.

Wayne, the husband and father of the boys, attended the service and was very impressed! Please pray for him and all the family on their spiritual journey.

MERLE ALEXIS

Membership report

In the right-hand column of this page is the membership report for the British Union Conference and its constituent parts. It is a summary of membership activity for the fourth quarter of 2019. New lives in Christ totalled 314 (baptisms + profession of faith). Six former members returned to faith. Almost the same number of people transferred into the British Union as transferred out. Forty-seven members passed to their rest. There is also a 'Missing' column. The total number of members is tantalisingly close to a very significant figure. John Surrudge, for sure, will update and expand on this story very soon.

But for the grace of God

'But even though we were dead in our sins God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, gave us life together with Christ – it is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved – and has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with him in Christ in the Heavens. Thus he shows for all time the tremendous generosity of the grace and kindness he has expressed towards us in Christ Jesus. It was nothing you could or did achieve – it was God's gift to you. No one can pride himself upon earning the love of God. The fact is that what we are owe to the hand of God upon us. We are born afresh in Christ, and born to do those good deeds which God planned for us to do.' (Ephesians 2:4-10, J. B. Phillips New Testament.)

The New Testament in Modern English by J. B. Phillips copyright © 1960, 1972 J. B. Phillips. Administered by The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England. Used by permission.

British Union Conference

Secretary's Statistical Report - Fourth Quarter 2019

05-Feb-20

Organization	Churches	Companies	Church Attendance Second Sabbath Count	Church Attendance Seventh Sabbath Count	Church Membership at Beginning of Period	Baptisms	Baptisms - Former Members'	Professions of Faith	Letters Received	Adjustments	Letters Granted	Deaths	Dropped	Missing	Adjustments	Church Membership at End of Period	Sabbath School Attendance Second Sabbath Count	Sabbath School Attendance Seventh Sabbath Count
IM Irish Mission	12	9	814	832	984	8	0	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	995	508	633
NEC North England Conference	100	37	3,209	2,567	11,349	93	3	12	65	11	32	21	5	0	8	11,469	2,249	1,995
SM South England Conference	10	6	458	433	710	6	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	716	316	284
SEC South England Conference	161	60	4,500	4,744	25,754	145	3	43	205	28	210	25	2	191	18	25,732	2,365	2,507
WM Welsh Mission	13	6	330	304	681	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	681	235	225
BUC British Union Conference	296	118	9,311	8,880	39,478	253	6	61	275	39	246	47	10	191	27	39,593	5,673	5,644

Halesowen Central gets crafty

'Can we come tomorrow?' 'When is the next one gonna be?'

Those were the cries of children who attended the 'Clever Craft Club' organised by the Halesowen Central church during February half-term. Doors opened at 10am and a total of 11 children piled in to enjoy two hours of arts and crafts. It was lovely to see children from the community attend every day and take an active part in all the activities, including games and snack times. Homemade play dough, paper crafts and candle making were just some of the crafts on offer. With sponsorship from ADRA, the members voted on a community project for children in the Halesowen area. Thus the Clever Craft Club was born. 'This is fantastic,' exclaimed one parent who joined us with her two children from the neighbouring community. 'My little boy loves things like this,' she continued. Volunteers, who were drafted from church members on a rota basis, came in to make sandwiches and provide snacks and drinks, as well as to supervise during the activities.

'Please don't forget to drop a flyer through my door so that I can bring my grandchildren to the next session,' pleaded a grandmother. We were delighted that the children, parents and guardians found the club beneficial. The Halesowen Central members are now eagerly planning for the next Clever Craft Club, which will be held during the Easter holidays. We pray that by God's grace we will be



able to make an impact in the community through projects such as the Clever Craft Club and show our neighbours a glimpse of Christ's character.

TRACY EDINBOROUGH

East Kilbride Church encourages Women's Aid to dream big

Finding the right place at the right time! That is how it felt to meet Loraine from Women's Aid South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire (WASLER), the manager of their CYP (children and young people) team.



Bibiana handing her donation to Elder Gordon

Searching for a cause in our community that we could support, we first contacted WASLER in January 2020 by phone. As do their other branches, this office also supports and empowers women, children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse. Statistics are alarming: it is estimated that

over 100,000 children in Scotland experience domestic abuse; and, because domestic abuse is under-reported, these figures are likely to be much higher. Speaking to Loraine, the physical, social, emotional and behavioural impact on the affected children and young people soon became our main topic. The help offered outside of WASLER often approaches them as bad, mad or sad and provides behavioural therapy or anti-depressant medication as a remedy. Loraine's team, however, adopt a radically different approach! The starting point of their support is the acknowledgement of the experience of trauma, and the results of their work so far have proved them right; so we know that we came to offer our support to the right place.

And why at the right time?

Because we caught Loraine's team planning to turn their current children's room into a multipurpose space with sensory facilities. However, upon hearing, 'We intend to change the blinds in order to control the incoming light and to place in a few bubble tubes', we soon recognised that their plans are minimalistic due to lack of funds. When encouraged to dream big, Loraine spontaneously smiled, 'This room can easily use £10,000.'

Despite being a small church of 15 members on the books, we want to dream big with WASLER! So we are putting £10,000 as our target figure in support of this project. We are not motivated by how amazing this room can be, but by the fact that 240 children, young people and by extension their mothers would benefit from the use of this room every nine months!

The board without hesitation voted £1,600 as our immediate donation, and Bibiana was the first who embarked on a further fundraising adventure. She made her appeal simple: 'I am going to turn 7 on 17 February. So, I would like to give you 7 days to give me £7 as a birthday gift' in support of WASLER. Thanks to generous people from near and far, even from abroad, she managed to meet her ambitious online target of £280, and altogether presented an envelope with £352 to Elder Gordon in church last Sabbath!



Loraine and her team with the first cheque from East Kilbride Church

Encouraged by this wonderful start, we pray and further brainstorm how to get as close to the £10,000 mark as possible. May your church help others to dream big, too!

JIMMY BOTHA



Ecology – Cinderella in Adventism?

by Dr Daniel Duda, Education Director, Trans-European Division

If we as Christians want to provide reasonable and adequate answers to the questions that people nowadays are asking, we need to know their questions. What people around us are concerned with is determined by them, not by us. If we do not listen carefully, we will not be able to give relevant answers to what is bothering people around us.

In the last forty years there has been a significant change in the approach to environmental problems, which in recent times have risen to the top of the scientific and political agendas. The world asks not only general questions regarding the future, but also about the future of our living environment. Being blind and deaf in these important areas can have far-reaching negative consequences for us if we want to be relevant.

As Christians, and especially as Adventists, what attitude should we have to these problems? Should we pay attention to them, or are they just a distraction from our important mission to proclaim the Gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20)?

Is it our responsibility?

As Adventists, we believe that Christ's coming is close. But many used to say that, because global changes are slow, we will escape dealing with environmental problems. Some even used to think (quietly, not saying it out loud) that the more we destroy our blue planet, the sooner Jesus will come; that we will actually "force" Him to return sooner and thus save His children from the destruction in an ecological disaster.

Such reasoning is very irresponsible for several reasons. Firstly, we are responsible for being faithful stewards of God's creation (Gen. 1:26, 28; Rev. 11:18).

Secondly, these problems give us the opportunity to show our holistic philosophy of life practically and to a greater extent. Our holistic approach emphasises the interdependency between mind and body, and includes on a wider scale relationships between men and women, as well as people and animals. Thus, we cannot have a holistic approach to life while at the same time discriminating against women, or being indifferent to the senseless plundering of the environment or the extinction of certain animal species.

Third, these problems remind us in a real way that faith cannot

remain only on a theoretical level, but specifically shows us how much our faith in God responds to the practical problems of life around us.

A short look into history

1. A certain unwillingness in our church to look at the current global challenges of our world is, to a large extent, caused by a kind of unresolved legacy of *Millerism*. Millerites expected that the coming of Christ would occur between 1843 and 1844. If Christ were to come in less than a year, building brick houses, planting fruit trees, or caring for one's teeth must necessarily have been seen as a betrayal of faith. Not bringing home the harvest from their fields, leaving secular jobs, selling all their assets and putting all their life savings and energy into preparing themselves and others for the coming of Christ were seen by these people in 1844 as a manifestation of a living faith. This was a natural consequence of their understanding of prophecies. To be interested in investing in pension benefits in this situation would be perceived as blasphemy.

However, after the Great Disappointment, people slowly began to realise that it would be necessary to take a different approach to life. It dawned on some that their belief in Christ's soon coming must be expressed in other ways. In the decades that followed, Adventists lived pragmatically as if Christ's coming would happen in a maximum of a ten-year timeframe (although we never said it out loud). This attitude influenced our planning, our construction of buildings, etc. It meant that nobody thought through the possibility that the coming of Christ might not happen for some decades. For this reason, society's (and hence the Church's) governance must be structured and guided differently. And it slowly dawned on us that such long-term thinking and planning does not mean a denial of faith.

On the other hand, it should be emphasised that whenever in history the Church has lost sight of Christ's second coming, it has adversely affected her spiritual condition (Matt. 24:45-51). It is not

easy to balance the two approaches. Throughout history, the Christian Church has often fallen into one or the other extreme, emphasising one side at the expense of the other.

2. Although we are believers, our normal way of thinking in relation to the world has been greatly influenced by the *philosophy of the Enlightenment*, which says that nature is here first of all to serve humanity and be exploited by it. But the Bible says, *'The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it'* (Ps. 24:1, NIV). God has not abdicated His ownership rights. According to the biblical model, man is only an administrator, not an owner. *'For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine'* (Ps. 50:10, 11, NIV).
3. In addition, our relationship towards ecology has been affected by the soteriology (doctrine of salvation) as understood by the *Protestant Reformation*. According to the reformers, Jesus came to the world primarily to die for people's sins. The essence of the Gospel was that He died for the forgiveness of our sins (so that we can go to heaven when we die). Thus we engage in evangelism, because it is about saving people from their sins. However, for many of us, it would seem strange to be involved in ecological initiatives, because they deal 'only' with saving blue whales, or gorillas. But the Bible shows that Jesus gave His life for the *cosmos* (cf. John 3:16; Eph. 1:10; 3:10; Col. 1:20). When Jesus died on the cross, He did not die just to save humanity, but His death was part of a great cosmic struggle that began long before our generation appeared on the scene, even before the first people were created.

On the cross, Jesus achieved victory over Satan and his powers. This victory means saving God's creation from the power of Satan and evil. Christ came to frustrate the work of the devil (1 John 3:8). Biblically speaking, to receive Jesus Christ, His death and His resurrection means to do everything in our power to save people and to improve the environment in which we live.

Of course, the full restoration of creation happens only when God creates new heavens and a new earth (Rev. 21). However, at His second coming Jesus will destroy those who destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18). Each one of us pollutes the planet and leaves an individual carbon dioxide footprint, so each of us individually should think about how we can and should commit to the rescue of the environment. The New Testament teaching about spiritual gifts leads us to ask how we can serve individually and collectively to help others by empowering and developing them. Likewise, our relationship to God's creation should cause us to ask what we can do for the preservation and enhancement of the planet's environment, both individually and as the church corporately.

We need to realise that the world we live in is changing incredibly fast. Seventy years ago, nobody talked about ecology, either in the world or in the church. People believed that the natural resources of our planet were inexhaustible. Only modern times and technology have brought the consumption of non-renewable natural resources at such an amazing rapidity that the need for new approaches has proved necessary.

Adventism and ecology

As Adventists, we have been quite successful in emphasising the *interconnectedness* of the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of an individual. Therefore, the Gospel we preach is not only about saving the

'soul', but is also about restoring the physical, spiritual and mental aspects of every person. A healthy lifestyle, in which all three components are harmoniously balanced, is part of the biblical Adventist message. The time has come to include another aspect in this triangle – the relationship with the environment in which we live.

We consider it our Christian duty to inform people about the advantages of a healthy lifestyle and the consequences of various harmful foods and drug substances on their overall health. Similarly, we should consider it part of our mission to provide people with information about the harmful environmental impact of waste which does not naturally decompose, and about lifestyles which cause deterioration of the environment and the impoverishment of other people (whether nearby or on the opposite side of the planet).

When it comes to education and schooling, we make it a priority. When it comes to taking care of our health – again, we make it a priority. We have built the largest Protestant health system in the world, even while believing in the soonness of Christ's Advent. It follows that it is necessary to engage in saving the environment.

Thinking through our *theology of creation*, if we are receptive to all parts of God's creation, it will bring us greater sensitivity and respect for those who are on the margins of society and the church (Matt. 10:29-31).

We can perceive the Sabbath too narrowly, just as the keeping of the *seventh day* in which we do not work. But then we do not appreciate the entire text of the fourth commandment, which includes other people and animals. If we realise the broader message of the Sabbath year and the year of jubilee (see Lev. 25), we will find that God is also concerned with the restoration of land, even of nature.

The use of CFCs in fridges and air conditioning, as well as phosphate detergents in households, has already been taken care of by the European Union (this will remain the case – even with Brexit). I hope that the day is coming when if our church members drain the oil from the car, or 'just' wash it in an unauthorised place, they get at least six months of church discipline (Rev. 11:18; 14:7, 12).

Why? Because if we believe that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water, and if someone is polluting sources of groundwater, thereby 'destroying the earth', they definitely should be under church discipline. This should be assessed at least as seriously as dealing with your own business interests and making money on Saturday. It is a violation of the same fourth commandment.

Maybe we should ask people before their baptism whether they have given up the use of PET bottles or whether they are sorting out household waste and do not throw away old paper, glass and plastic together with other waste into one garbage container. We must do this nowadays because the (so-often criticised) government has ordered it, but unfortunately not because of our Christian conscience and understanding.

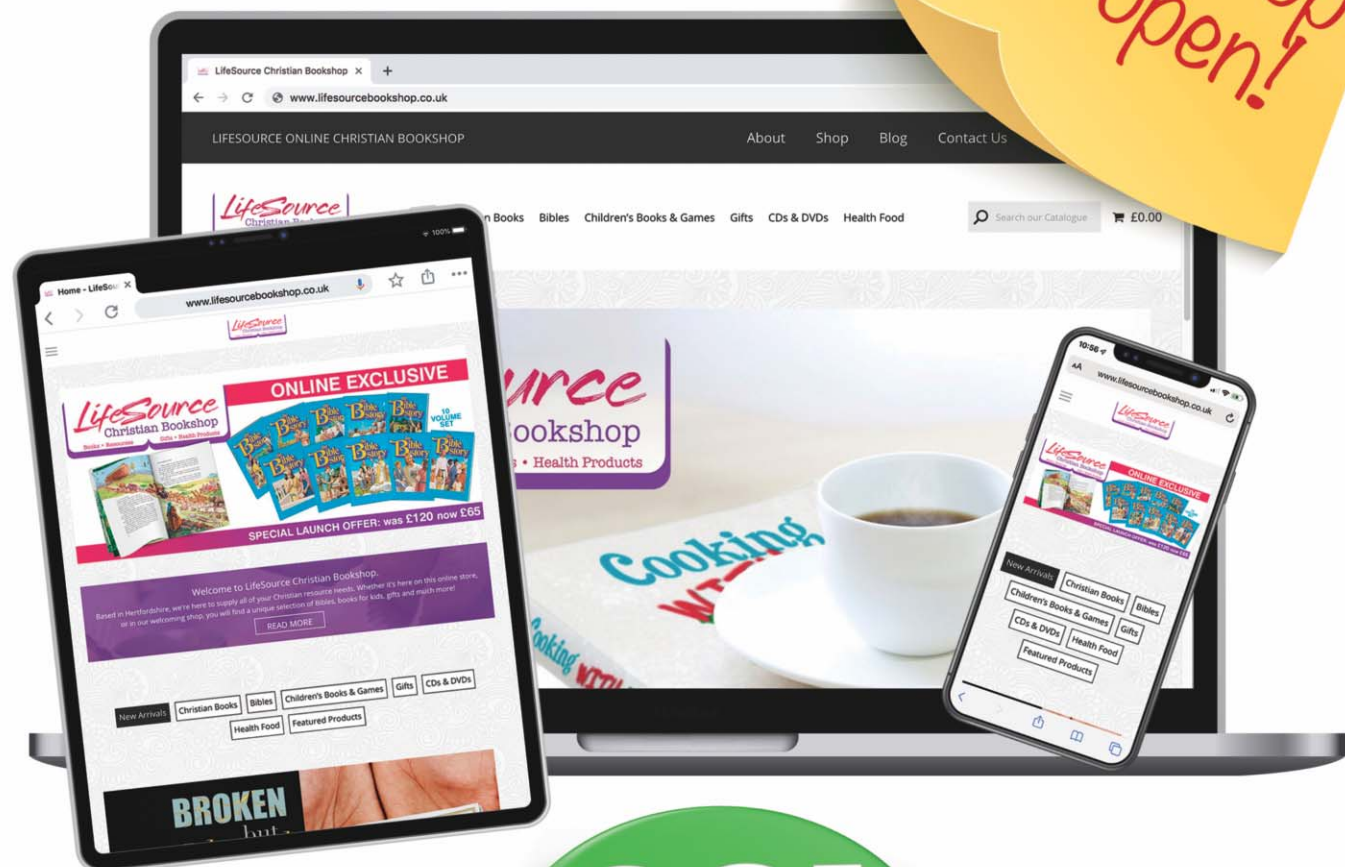
Based on our belief in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (we have the word *Adventists* in the name of the Church), we know that our endeavours, efforts and actions will ultimately not save our planet. This should protect us from one-sided extremism, unhealthy fanaticism, or worshipping nature. The perfect and final solution is only the second coming of Jesus Christ, the setting up of the kingdom of God. The ecological movement does not need to be led by various extremist individuals and initiatives. Balanced and born-again followers of Jesus Christ who care about the environment in which they live can and need to do more, much more, than we do today (Rom. 8:19-21).

Never in the history of the world has the situation been as bad as it is today ecologically, and maybe morally and socially. But never in the history of the world have there been so many real children of God who are willing to be influenced by the Holy Spirit (even without knowing it) and change the way they live in this world.

Scripture reminds us that, at the end of the creation week, the Creator declared everything He had created *'very good'* (Gen. 1:31). God has called us to be stewards of the earth and of all creation. All who live in this world are precious in the eyes of God. If we take seriously the message that God has entrusted to us, then we will not only be faithful stewards of God's creation, but also protectors of the environment. Our attitude towards the environment and ecology reflects the depth (or superficiality) of our spirituality.

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Medical missionary training in Battersea

Sometimes it's tempting to think small when you are literally small. This, however, is not the philosophy of Ebenezer Church in Battersea, South London. A very small group meet each Sabbath, but they took on a big venture with a fourteen-session medical missionary programme on Sundays. The presenters and students came from churches far and near, such as Battersea, Balham, Bethel, Basildon, Birmingham, Hackbridge, Lewisham, Wimbledon and West Croydon.

This church has an ongoing community programme. For example, on Sundays they run vegetarian cookery classes as well as giving health lectures. Every first Sunday they hold a community breakfast and sometimes take the breakfast to people who cannot come to them. They are also involved in door-to-door witnessing. As they meet people, they invite them to share in their vegetarian lunch on Sabbaths. They



also make sympathy cards for bereaved families, and for the sick in the community and hospitals.

With this mandate the Ebenezer members decided to move forwards in faith, knowing that the medical missionary work is of God and that He will provide. Normally such courses would be expensive, but, trusting that God will provide, they ran the medical missionary course for free. The Lord did provide, in that students made voluntary contributions, and others, including the church members, gave sacrificially to the project.

They were inspired by a quotation from Ellen White: 'The medical missionary work should be a part of the work of every church in our land. Disconnected from the church it would soon become a strange medley of disorganised atoms.' (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 289.)

Ten students were prepared for graduation. On Sunday 2 February, nine students gathered in the Balham Church hall where they graduated from the medical missionary course, supported by family, friends and other church members. (Savrina Joseph graduated in absentia.) The service included various special items, short talks, exhortations and testimonies. Pastor Bernard Akakpo (Balham's minister) presented the keynote message, in which he reminded us that God commissions us not only to preach, but also to heal and to encourage healthy living. He suggested that although the medical missionary work is often neglected, it should go hand in hand with the preaching of the Gospel and that the medical missionary work is of 'divine origin'.

After a well-prepared healthy meal and time for socialising, the group began to express their determination not only to practise what they had learnt on the course, but also to look for opportunities to share this with others. Ebenezer Church is planning to hold another series soon, as this small church continues to make health a big thing for their members and the surrounding community.

ERROL ANDERSON – COMMUNICATIONS LEADER AT BALHAM CHURCH

Susanne Kirlaw helps BBC's Songs of Praise viewers to go vegan

Millions of viewers of the long-running BBC series *Songs of Praise* tuned in on Sunday 1 March 2020 to see Susanne Kirlaw (aka Kirly-Sue) cooking vegan food with presenter Aled Jones.

The well-known author, vegan cook, and presenter shared with Aled her vegan cooking, and how her faith as an Adventist has played a part in her healthy food choices.

Reflecting on the experience, Susanne shared: 'I was so excited for veganism to be discussed on a mainstream TV show. Almost everyone has heard of veganism now; but far too few people know exactly what a vegan does and does not eat.'

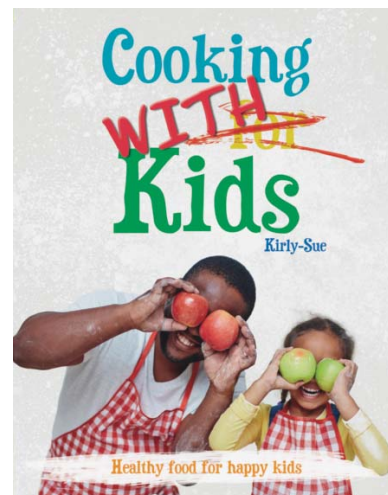
'It was a real privilege to appear on this iconic BBC programme. I made vegan cupcakes and was able to get 8-year-old Abigail Adams to appear alongside me on the show. Abigail also appears in the promotional photos for my vegan cookbook for kids, and she was able to try the cupcakes on the show. I absolutely loved being on the show. Hopefully I'll get another phone call to appear on it again soon.'

Songs of Praise features inspiring hymns and songs, together with stories of faith from around the UK and beyond.

Copies of Susanne's book, *Cooking with Kids*, are available from the LifeSource Bookshop (£12.50 for the paperback and £15 for the hardback version).

To see the programme, go to: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000g08z>.

COMMUNICATIONS



As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Reading West Church – Choir Day

On Sabbath 15 February Reading West members experienced a worship service like none they'd experienced before. It was Choir Day.

The Reading West choir was originally founded in 1994 at the Reading Whitley church – where the current Reading West church formerly congregated until 2013. The 'Choir Day' theme was established from the outset, as Divine Service began, with members of the choir blending in with the regular congregation, only to start singing from their various positions while moving to the front of the choir to group around the pulpit, treating the church to a number of songs.

As the service progressed, the recurring theme of 'Choir' was reinforced, with each item in the bulletin being undertaken by either a member of the choir or a relative of a choir member. The choir blessed the congregation with many classic songs, such as 'Tell Me the Old, Old Story', 'The Lord Is My Shepherd', and 'Master, the Tempest Is Raging'.

Contrary to custom, a sermon was not necessary, with the choir utilising their gift of music as a means of ministering the Gospel to the church.

Notably, the choir used their day to proudly exhibit their newly acquired uniforms, donning kente cloth-style patterns, with smiles that matched the vibrancy of their new attire.

The choir also used a section of the programme to talk about their history, their successes, and the challenges they have faced over the years, but they were able to praise God for their growing membership, and especially noted the presence of five members who were present in the choir's original

establishment: Ruth Sentenga, Ellen Osei Domfeh, Margaret Aboagye, Janet Beccai, and Darlington Onditi – the latter two being integral to the choir's leadership. Darlington Onditi also invited members of the congregation to consider joining or, in some cases, rejoining the choir. Surely it's an invitation which will be considered, especially after seeing the choir's ability to influence even the youngest members of the church to praise through singing and the occasional dancing.

One of the elders, Peter Mensah, commented, 'We experienced such a blessed Sabbath. The choir lifted our spirits.'

Thank God for His continued blessings in Reading!

ELLIOTT ABOAGYE



What to do?

Towards the end of the 17 March BBC News at Six, Home Editor Mark Easton gave a reflection on the new order of things, living with the coronavirus.

'Normal life has been postponed. Across the country in every city, and in every town, and in every village, people are focused on hiding from an invisible foe. It is an emergency that demands the opposite instinct. Anti-social is the new social. Don't come together. Don't offer a comforting hand or a hug. Keep your distance. The human touch may be your enemy. Where once there were certainties, there are now questions and dread. People are struggling to work out routines, to cope with the practicalities of a world that feels like a new place . . . desperate for answers and for company. Everything is changing . . . self-isolation is not selfish; in the spring of 2020, it may be your duty. A storm is coming, and we must build our defences for winds which will blow and buffet for many long months. It will be the test of a generation to find the "great" in Britain and stay united in our island kingdom.'


Already in this edition of *MESSENGER*, Sharon Platt-McDonald has shared with us practical personal steps we can take in order to keep our immune system at its peak: but, as important as it is to look after ourselves, what about helping others? Where there were once many 'shut-ins', the number could now be quadrupled – and they can't receive visits. What to do? Here are a few practical ideas:

- Food parcels
- Bread making
- Medicine collection
- Financial support
- Sending a video on a CD (for the elderly)
- A daily phone call


People are fearful; and, let's be honest, so too are many of us. While we may not have dread, all of us are also living with uncertainty like never before. For people of hope, the invitation is to live out the love of Christ through acts of loving kindness. Could this crisis turn people to the Lord? All of a sudden, an edition of *Focus* we recently published on prayer has become time-critical. Could it be used to bring comfort to a

distressed and fearful person? Can it be used to turn an everyday conversation into a spiritual one, offering the friendship of Christ?

EDITOR



Turning everyday conversation into Good News



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Grace Walsh and Pastor Paul Haworth with participants

Diabetes reversal at Newtown, B'ham

Grace Walsh, Pastor Paul Haworth, Vinette Baker, Dr Toyin Oyelakin and Dr J. Halliday-Bell (MD) have been working alongside a stroke rehabilitation group at the Pannel Croft retirement village in Newtown, Birmingham, delivering a diabetes reversal programme since November 2019. The sessions have been running for several years, in a room at the village under the supervision of a volunteer, Leona Bramble. Other volunteers including Daniel, a Chinese student, have made a significant contribution to the success of the course.

The number of attendees has been around the mid-twenties. Each presentation includes the delivery of high-quality slides informing the

attendees of various factors that contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes and how this can be reversed. The participation has been lively and the discussion detailed. All of the participants have shown a strong desire to know more about how to improve their health.

Essentially, the course teaches that the reversal of type 2 diabetes can progress from sufferers and potential 'pre-diabetic' cases having awareness of the contributing factors, including epigenetics, weight management, the impact of various elements of our diet, and oxidative stress. At most sessions there were also opportunities for vegan food tasting and exercise.

Each participant had their initial height, weight, blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol checked. These parameters were checked periodically during the course, and encouraging results highlighting improvements towards reversing diabetes were found.

Although the majority of the group have suffered with strokes and a number of them have hypertension and diabetes, it was evident that they had not received some of the advice offered by the Adventist group as part of their previous interactions with health professionals.

The group graduated in mid-February, so it is hoped that many will continue to adopt healthy living, reflect on the learning points, and experience the impact of local Adventist health evangelists.

Hopefully they will share their learning with their friends and family on how to reduce the risk of what is an epidemic condition in the UK, with significant associated morbidity and mounting costs to the health service.

If you would like more information about how the diabetes reversal course can be delivered to people in your community, please contact your Conference Health Ministries director.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL

Golden couple

When many of the West Bletchley congregation were just born or of toddler age, Margaret and Patrick Dick were already on the road to beginning their married life together.

Both have shown great commitment in their regular attendance and participation in church life over the years in different roles, Patrick being the current treasurer and primary liaison in partnering with the council to support the community.

Their calming and supportive nature and their wise and humorous characteristics make them popular individuals with both young and old alike.

For those coming behind them – at whatever stage of their marital journey – the bar has been set high! Of course, none is so naive as to think that such a relationship comes without its 'growth pains', but Patrick and Margaret demonstrate that success is possible through Christ who strengthens them.

On Sabbath 8 February, a special re-dedicatory prayer was offered by Dr Augustus Lawrence, former Milton Keynes minister. A presentation of an engraved vase and flowers was made to the golden couple in recognition of this outstanding landmark of 50 years of marriage. Their 'secret' is nothing new, but is applied with diligence: 'patience and understanding . . . but above all – trust in God'.

SYLVONIE NOEL, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



Left to right: Pastor Michael Anim (current minister) and Dr Augustus Lawrence (former minister) with Margaret and Patrick Dick

PHOTO BY: SYLVONIE NOEL

A covenant of accountability

by Bill Knott

‘Self-love is the greatest of all flatterers.’¹

Our virtues, more than our vices, require the witness and confirmation of persons outside ourselves. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we may sense when we have transgressed God’s requirement of deep honesty. Perhaps we told most of the truth, or nearly all of it – or that portion that kept our reputation intact. Depending on how our consciences were formed, however, we may still mistakenly award ourselves the virtue of ‘honesty’ because of a familiar habit of self-flattery.

But to be known as ‘honest’ requires a community of persons beyond me, who bear witness to a value and a goal we all share. My ‘honesty’ is ultimately the consensus of a group of people who prize truth-telling – those who have observed my behaviour over time, and whose minds have been shaped by the law of God. ‘Ethical’ is not a label I may place upon myself.

We need a community of belief – a gathered company of those who pray to

understand both God’s will and His standards – to fully grasp what it means to act ethically in our private and public lives. The habits of integrity and acting for the good of others are observable behaviours in a congregation where we gently and gracefully hold each accountable. Other believers help me see what I might otherwise not see. They help me appreciate God’s high requirement, even as they help me understand His forgiveness when I fall short of it.

This willingness to be advised by the collective conscience of God’s people is a quality particularly needed among those we ask to lead us. Their decisions frequently determine the current spiritual health and well-being of many local congregations. Their actions also become a template for future leaders who will take their cues from what they witness.

Belonging to a church that prizes ethical behaviour means we must train those we ask to lead, and then hold them accountable to the standards of God’s Word. It also means that

there should be consequences when the church discovers that someone in leadership has acted unethically – for personal gain, to nullify the rightful decisions of others, or for the advantage of their tribal or racial group. This expectation of those we ask to lead – and of each other – is vital because of our belief in the nearness of Christ’s coming: ‘Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching’ (Hebrews 10:24, 25, NKJV).

The world is watching us who call ourselves followers of Jesus to see if our lives align with the Lord, who emphasised both God’s high standard, and His grace to help us actually live that way. Our witness to biblical truth will only be as credible as we ourselves are credible as a community that does justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly with our God (see Micah 6:8).

The church I want to belong to is . . . ethical.

¹Francois de la Rochefoucauld

Bill Knott is the editor of Adventist Review and Adventist World. This article first appeared in the March edition of Adventist World. Used with permission.

Why journalism matters to Adventists

What we cover, and how we cover it, matters significantly.

Aysha Taryam once wrote: ‘In politics, the pen is at its heaviest because it is weighed down by the collective responsibility it holds towards its people and their future in the eyes of the world.’¹

The statement applies as much to the church as it does to politics. The weight that rests on those responsible for reporting the movement and development of the church is significant. And the weight borne by the church itself to empower responsible journalism within its gates is even greater.

The church, in our case the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has a responsibility – an ethical imperative – to inform its members and communities accurately and consistently, even when the news is less than positive. At the root of this calling is biblical integrity – the courage to acknowledge our shortcomings, regardless of political consequences. Yet within our faith community we sometimes shy away from, even discourage, the dissemination of news that would compromise our shiny organisational facade or challenge leaders’ interests.

There are, however, several compelling reasons why we should reconsider such tendencies.

Transparency is the new norm

Around the world, transparency is among society’s core values. The shift is driven largely by the millennial generation, now 24-39 years old. Most millennials require – even demand – transparency from the organisations with which they engage. They grew up with the web and social media, both of which offer copious amounts of information for analysing and assessing just about anything. Organisations that don’t offer this level of disclosure are trusted less, or not at all.

Kira Karapetian writes, ‘It is clear that trust is the new currency of brand loyalty.’² Applying this to news, we can generally assume that if an organisation is honest with bad news, ‘it is more likely to be trusted with good news.’³

Bias is the great temptation

Surveying the landscape of news outlets, it’s apparent that secular news

operations are increasingly comfortable with either an implied or an overt ideological bias. While objectivity in journalism has always been far from perfect, in the past it was at least deemed worth the effort. Objectivity was the road to credibility. Today’s trend, however, of highly polarised news outlets unambiguously interweaving reporting with commentary is difficult to reconcile.

News outlets in the wider world of Adventism face the same temptation – to report from an angle. Report mainly controversial and negative news if you’re critical of the church; report mostly triumphalist news if you’re not. Bias engenders neither trust nor credibility. The church and its journalists ought to be above it.

The Bible is an excellent model

While the Bible isn’t typically viewed as a journalistic work, its authors nevertheless chronicled and reported on the journey of God’s people, beginning with Creation. A single reading confirms that these authors never shied away from giving a full and honest assessment of events. The biblical record contains the sullied past of many patriarchs – for our benefit. Because of fair and honest accounts, we have both an accurate history of the church and many lessons from which to learn.

The default position

In 2011 the Adventist Church released the document, ‘Transparency and Accountability in Financial Reporting.’ At its rollout, church administrators explained that the document’s principles transcended finances, and that transparency must be the default position of the Adventist Church in all arenas. That was a step in the right direction, one that should certainly apply to the church’s commitment to keep its members informed through truly fair and balanced news.

¹Aysha Taryam is editor of *The Gulf Today*, an English-language newspaper in the Middle East.

²Kira Karapetian, in *Forbes*, 8 Aug. 2017

³Glen Broom and Bey-Ling Sha, *Effective Public Relations*, 11th ed. (2013), p. 253
Costin Jordache is the director of communication and news editor for Adventist Review. This article first appeared in the online edition of Adventist Review on 1 March 2020. Used with permission.



For ‘at-risk’ youth leadership: South England Conference Youth Leadership Conference

‘Epic!’ ‘Refreshing’ and ‘Just what we needed’ were some of the comments used to describe the SEC Youth Leadership Conference 2020 (YLC), which was held at the Crowne Plaza in East Grinstead from 24 to 26 January. The theme for this year was ‘Rebuilding the Walls’, with over 90 youth leaders from across the SEC in attendance. YLC focused on creating dialogue on the realities of youth ministry and dying youth leadership in the local churches, while challenging the status quo with Spirit-led innovation. YLC successfully met the objectives for attendees to realise the need of change and innovation; to create an intimate platform to discuss best YM practices with leading experts; and to ensure that relevant specialist training and resources birth real solutions and new leaders.

Attending YLC as specially invited keynote speakers were Naomi Burgess, Development and Leadership Coach for Team GB; Pastor Laurent Grosvenor, the senior pastor of the Alpha Seventh-day Adventist Church in the US; Fabian Thorpe, Business Director and Entrepreneur; Jennie Hall, Senior Youth Leader Award Assistant; and Pastor Tihomir Lazic, TED Student Ministries Director – with special contributions from BUC Youth Director, Dejan Stojkovic; Pastor Nathan Stickland; and Pastor Lon Jones.

Workshops throughout the weekend included the introduction of specialist youth training in the form of the GC ‘Senior Youth Leadership Award’, ‘Values and Conflict Resolution’, ‘AY and Strategic Planning’, ‘Youth Leadership and the Holy Spirit’, and ‘Youth and Innovation’. Each presentation was thought-provoking as well as relevant, which allowed young people and leaders to adapt information to their respective areas, churches and individual lives. The youth leaders in attendance took opportunities to network and



Photo: Aaron Fenton-Hewitt

share youth leadership challenges and success stories.

In one of the interactive sessions, called ‘The Youth Leader’s Challenge’, youth leaders were invited to split into four groups, each of which was tasked to come up with a youth project from a business perspective with a budget of £100, £1,000, and £1,000,000. The ideas and creativity that were birthed as a result were amazing. One idea proposed was to set up an allotment and health store which would be run by young entrepreneurs in growing and selling organic and healthy food products.

One of the major problems highlighted by youth leaders is that they don’t understand how the church works at Conference, Union and Division level. The call is a request to engage more, and to work more closely together.

SEC Youth Director, Anthony Fuller, closed the conference by sharing plans he has for the coming years. He was encouraged that over 60 youth leaders had committed to the Senior Youth Leadership Award specialist programme, and he assured attendees that the South England Conference leadership team would be doing more to collaborate with youth leaders and youth in the local churches, and are committed to improving the quality and professionalism of youth work.

SEC YOUTH MINISTRIES

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor
Further to our chance meeting in the Lancaster church on Sabbath, I have committed some of my thoughts to paper as follows:

I am an avid reader of *MESSENGER*, even though I am not a Seventh-day Adventist and do not even possess the faith or commitment to attend a church of any denomination. The articles themselves are often original and thought-provoking, and other news gives some idea of what it is like to be part of a church community. The latest edition was exceptional in the relevance of several articles. David Neal’s comparison of the Church to a cruise ship or lifeboat was particularly poignant, as ‘cruise ship mode’ lists reasons I can’t bring myself to attend church, and it is refreshing to find that at least some people may understand why. I am looking forward to part 2.

An article by Dan Serb gave me the weird feeling of finding my own words in print, written by someone else. He fully understands that God could be portrayed as repulsive, to the extent that so many are not willing to serve Him. It would be easy to assume that this is purely down to an evil intent to discredit God, but I find that some Christian teachings and beliefs also contribute to this feeling. For example, obsessing about minor sin, or refusing to believe that such a category even exists (because ‘sin is sin’), creates the impression that God Himself is obsessive. In addition, the fact that we are expected to blindly obey Him, absolutely in all respects, suggests that God is also extremist. ‘Rethinking the approach’ is an interesting idea, which deserves to be developed. It certainly struck a chord with me, and I probably represent the very people the Church is trying to reach.

During my forty years of exposure to the Adventist Church, through my wife Cynthia, I have met wonderful people whom I now count as friends. It’s just that the spiritual side of things has not developed in the way that most would imagine.

IAN HARTLEY

Dear Editor
Having read Pastor Edwards’ article on ‘Values-led Lives’ (*MESSENGER* 21 February, p. 4), I hope the behaviour of the deacons in question is decidedly unrepresentative!

Although the instances I am about to cite come from a different context, they (like the examples Pastor Edwards has cited) show the wisdom of a proverb I remember being taught back in the 1950s at primary school: ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover.’ During the late 1970s and 1980s I often went hill-walking in the Scottish hills, and north of the Great Glen there was no Seventh-day Adventist church for miles. In 1977 I stayed in Kintail, and on Sunday I made my way to the local Free Church. My attire was typical of a hosteller, but the folk there made me welcome – it was only unaccompanied psalm-singing I had to get used to! Afterwards, one of the elders simply said, ‘Well, we differ about the Sabbath!’

In the late 1980s I had to walk 8 miles along the loch-side into Shieldaig, and the first place I encountered was the local Free Presbyterian Church. As in Kintail, I was made welcome, despite my hostelling gear – I even adjusted to their singing at a third of the speed I was used to!

In short, Pastor Edwards has done us a great service by his article!

BARRY GOWLAND

‘Believe His prophets’

by Pastor Leslie Hill

One hundred years have now passed since Professor William Whitla retired from his university chair in 1919 at the close of an eminently distinguished medical career. His reputation as a generous benefactor to his adopted city of Belfast is comprehensively documented.

A deeply devout man, Whitla was convinced of the importance of biblical prophecy: in particular, the book of Daniel. Those who knew this invited him to share his diligent research through public lectures. It was a time of nationalistic ferment in Ireland; and, as we approach the centenary of his talks, not only is the Irish question still alive, but Scottish aspirations are also running high. Yet, whichever flag you fly, Daniel’s message invites us to consider the overarching story of God’s ultimate purposes.

Among his many skills, Whitla’s understanding of literary criticism enabled his analytical and incisive mind to recognise specious reasoning. He was profoundly aware of the so-called ‘higher critics’ and found Sir Isaac Newton’s work on ‘The Babylonian Prophet’ a helpful resource in combating their arguments. John Murray later published this, together with Whitla’s

talks on Daniel, in 1922.¹

Does any of this have any relevance to our own study of the book of Daniel today?

I find the following salient points worthy of our reflection.

- The concerted efforts to undermine Daniel’s prophetic power have silenced its preaching in the churches.
- We dare not neglect the Messianic prophecies in Scripture.
- To limit the range of prophetic provision is unhelpful.
- First go to the biblical text to understand its divine intentions, before looking at past history or present conditions: not vice versa.
- Daniel chapter 2 is ‘priceless’ in its importance.
- ‘... In Daniel’s prophecies days are put for years.’
- The ‘seventy weeks’ (Daniel 9) should be ‘regarded as the keystone of the edifice of the Christian religion’.
- The ‘little horn’ (Daniel 8:9) ‘does not stand for Antiochus Epiphanes’.
- The believer should be open to the possibility of a greater clarity and ‘fuller knowledge’ and understanding.



- ‘Giving ear to the prophets is a fundamental character of the true church.’

Why is Whitla’s work on Daniel worth recalling? It would not be because he saw everything perfectly clearly: he was the first to acknowledge that. Rather, it is his conviction of the importance and relevance of the message of Daniel that resonates with us today. He rejected the interpretations of those who, through design or ignorance, would neutralise its impact. He refused to let its wings be clipped.

Daniel’s witness to his God in the university and government of Babylon would not be silenced. His words give us backbone to face secular and religious pressures to conform to political correctness and so privatise our faith.

¹Sir William Whitla, *Sir Isaac Newton’s Daniel and the Apocalypse: with an introductory study of the cause of unbelief, of miracles and prophecy* (London: John Murray, 1922).

in mathematics, IT, art and sports.

Perhaps unconsciously, as Andrew entered his later teen years he played up to the reputation of a ‘wild’ pastor’s child. Ironically, Andrew’s troubled years brought many people closer to Christ: firstly his parents, who were kept on their knees during ‘the struggle’, and also those who later heard his sermons in years to come, with the many memorable illustrations that these years provided. His strong-willed nature was a source of strength when he applied it well.

After leaving school, although first wanting to go into fashion design, Andrew chose to work in IT. By 2005, at the age of 24, he was already commanding salaries that people twice his age would have been jealous of. His career gave him the opportunity to work for high-profile companies in England and internationally, such as Barclay’s Bank, Expedia and the European Central Bank, including a time working in Dubai. On returning home to England, Andrew finally accepted the call of God to pastoral ministry.

Andrew’s ministry started before he officially became a pastor, an example being his work in Lavender Hill. He was most comfortable with community-based ministries, which gave him the freedom to trailblaze. However, this did not diminish his willingness or effectiveness to work in more traditional church settings.

Following Andrew’s internship at the Brixton church, Andrew and Natasha were called to minister in Colchester, Ipswich and Clacton, followed by Newbold College and, finally, the Parkside and Reading Central churches.

Andrew was also passionate about youth ministries, and completed his Master Guide training earlier in 2019. At Newbold he was an inspirational leader to the Pathfinder club, and was frequently called to speak to youth around the BUC and also internationally. Although passionate about youth, Andrew refused to be pigeonholed and insisted that his ministry was to the entire church family.

Above all else, Andrew’s first ministry was in his home. Family life was everything to Andrew, and in 2011 he started his own family when he married his soulmate, Natasha.

Together they had three beautiful children – Leila, Malachi and Zoe – with fun and laughter a hallmark of their home. Andrew’s exuberant and flamboyant personality was evident in boisterous playing and raucous laughter.

Andrew loved surprising his wife and children, whether that was a helicopter ride for his bride at their wedding, a new car, or even a new house! He took great delight in buying presents for his children, and some wondered who enjoyed them more – he or the kids!

At home, Andrew was known for his mega-munch sandwiches and love of grape juice. The family mealtime, with delicious vegan, homecooked food, was something Andrew looked forward to. Despite how busy ministry was, Andrew still made time for spontaneity with the family and had a cherished place for date nights with his ‘Tash’.

Home life was truly a piece of heaven on earth.

After a sudden illness, Andrew entered his rest on Monday 16 December 2019. Andrew is survived by his wife and their three young children, parents and sister. We also recognise the deluge of grief from the wider family. The loss of Andrew to his family and community is colossal, and he is most desperately missed. We eagerly await the return of the Lord, to be reunited with this man of God.

ANTHEA DAVIS BARCLAY

George Davis (1932-2020)

d. 10 January.

George Augustus Davis was born on 25 November 1932. Like many others of his generation, he also answered to another name: Welward. George’s first home was in St Andrew Parish, Jamaica, where he lived with his parents, Noel and Verona Davis. He was the eldest of eight siblings.

As a teenager his family moved to the parish of St Thomas, and it was there, in church, that he met and was attracted to the sweet singing of a young lady called Mabel Golding. They later married and had six children, one of whom was sadly lost to cot death.



OBITUARIES

John Oliver Milner (1930-2020)
d. 31 January.

John was baptised on 1 January 1983 by Pastor Roland Fidelia. In 1984 he became one of the foundation members of the Barnet church, where he served as elder, treasurer and lay preacher.

He was a civil servant working in customs and excise who became friends with Marjatta Tan through their mutual interest in classical music. Walking home one evening, he mentioned to Marjatta that he felt as if his wife, who had died suddenly, was looking down at him. Marjatta pointed out that the Bible teaches that death is a sleep and the dead know nothing. John, who was a thinker, came to see sense in this belief and accepted it.

In 1982 he visited the Seventh-day Adventist church at Wood Green; this was his first visit to a



Seventh-day Adventist church. John was deeply impressed by the kindness shown to him in the foot washing and communion service by someone he had never met. This experience led to a study of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s beliefs and to his baptism.

John was a man of keen intellect and intelligence. He became a student of the Bible and the writings of Ellen White, and has what must be a distinction: he read the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* three times.

John and Marjatta were married in 1996 and moved to Southend. In 2005 John and Marjatta moved to Watford, where they became members of the Stanborough Park church. He became assistant treasurer for many years, working with Roland Guenin, who, like so many members, remembers him as a gracious Christian.

John was a man with many interests, including trainspotting, music and travel. Above these, he

was a living witness to the transforming power of divine grace, a man who embellished his faith with numerous acts of generosity and kindness. His wife Marjatta testifies to the happy and joyful life they shared for twenty-five years. He was a man who made friends easily, and his passing is a great sadness to all who knew him.

John is remembered by his devoted wife, Marjatta; his step-children, Anne and Eric; his step-grandchildren, Alexandra and Jasper (Mischelle, Lise and Dean); and a host of friends in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

He was cremated at Watford Crematorium and his memorial service took place at Stanborough Park Church. The service was led by Pastors Boyle and Vontzalidis, and the eulogy was delivered by his close friend, Ray Hornet.

John sleeps awaiting the return of his beloved Saviour, when he will rise with those who share the same faith to life everlasting.

PATRICK BOYLE

Andrew Samuel Davis (1981-2019)
d. 16 December.

Andrew Samuel Davis was born at Newham Maternity Hospital on 27 September 1981, the second and youngest child of Samuel and Rowena Davis. His sister, Anthea, was born 15 months earlier. At the time of his birth, his father had just begun studying for the ministry at Newbold College. Soon after his birth, the family moved to Newbold for several years.

Those who knew Andrew in his childhood may remember him for his cheeky grin, ultra-thick glasses and mischievous ways, and yet the young Andrew was quite introverted. Yet a flare for the theatrical was spotted by his primary school teachers, and he was cast in the leading role in the school production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. At school he excelled



spent many happy hours there.

George’s relationship with Mabel spanned 65 years. He was never one to wear his heart on his sleeve; however, he was a faithful, committed husband who showed his love by working and providing a home. George demonstrated his love by bringing home dresses, and later learned to bring Mabel the flowers that she loved so much.

The church was his passion, and Christ the centre of his life. George leaves behind many family members who continue to be committed to Christ and who are looking forward to that great getting-up morning when the dead in Christ shall rise.

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Sunset					
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	Lond	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Apr	3 7.38	7.50	7.44	7.56	8.05
	10 7.50	8.02	7.56	8.10	8.18
	17 8.01	8.14	8.09	8.24	8.32
	24 8.13	8.25	8.21	8.39	8.45

The power of acceptance

Revisiting the unforeseen changes to the 2020 ADRA Appeal

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau

Before January, most of us had never heard of COVID-19, and the phrases 'self-isolating' and 'social distancing' were tags for the deeply introverted.

What a difference *three months makes!*

In January 2020, we were preparing for the door-to-door collecting that was to begin on 28 March. Supplies were sent out, databases updated, training sessions held and promotional visits scheduled. There was a buzz in our office. It was 'Ingathering' time, and, judging from the calls that we received from pastors, agents and members, there was growing anticipation and expectation for the first ADRA Appeal of the decade.

What a *difference* three months makes!

The stealth of this unseen and tiny infectious agent has changed the world as we know it; and, amid the panic, the lockdown of ordinary people, the constant news reports, the misinformation, and the light-hearted satire, we have no choice but to accept that life may never return to the normality that we once knew a few months ago.

What a difference three months makes!

Overseas needs

For ADRA-UK, we are learning to accept the 'new normal' and trusting a God that says, 'For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). And accepting the 'new normal' means that we have to adapt our ways of promoting our 2020 Appeal, and raising funds for some of the world's neediest people, without a door-to-door

collection or hosting fund-raising initiatives.

Acceptance also means that we change our attitude and start to view situations through life's looking glass in positive ways. Each of us has the opportunity to be part of the Appeal this year through online giving. You can donate to this year's ADRA Appeal through the link or QR code below: and it's often in times of crisis that people's hearts are moved to give in order to assist those in need. While we are struggling here in the United Kingdom, there are many people who are in dire straits without the basics of adequate food and clean water. Our commitment to the 1.2 million people that we served last year is ongoing, and no virus will ever dampen that commitment.

UK needs

Over the past 18 months ADRA-UK has intentionally partnered with Adventist Community Services through its 'I am Urban' initiative. The purpose of this partnership is to mobilise local churches in their community outreach initiatives here in the UK by resourcing and guiding them through the minefield of changing legislation, volunteer management, bid writing and community cohesion, also involving our young people. The 'I am Urban' team is currently working on a strategy to be rolled out across the Union in the coming weeks on how best to continue community development, not only in the localities where we worship, live or work, but in how we can best serve our senior members and others in our congregations who are vulnerable, including mothers and children and those who have insecure incomes right now.

At ADRA-UK our prayer is, 'God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,' and we trust that you will join us to assist the world's neediest people overseas and in the UK in these challenging times.

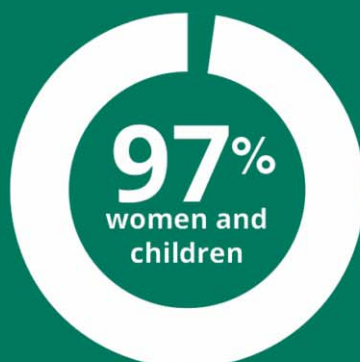
Please allow me to encourage you to donate to the 2020 ADRA Appeal at: <https://adra.org.uk/get-involved/annual-appeal/>.

In 2019 we helped over
1.2 million people

1.2
million

We supported 42 community hubs in the UK,
assisting 7,500 people with the help of over
1,000 volunteers.

97% of the people we
are working with are
women and children



94p

4p

2p

In every £1 we spent in 2018,
94p went on delivering
services and making change
happen, 4p went on fund-
raising and governance and
2p was kept for future use.

(Source: Charity Commission website)

