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Messenger

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in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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Mental Health Awareness Week: 18-24 May

South England Conference Counselling Service enlists 50 trained volunteer counsellors and listeners in response to COVID-19, says Director Thembe Mapingire.

See full story on pages 10 & 11

NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO DURING THE LOCKDOWN?

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CCS is available to help. Access free telephone and online chat from our trained counsellors and listeners during the lockdown Covid-19 crisis.

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Remember this?
Is a promise to put GOD FIRST for the good times only?
Faithful stewardship - more than a merely optional Christian grace.



Earl Ramharacksingh, BUC Treasurer

A letter from the Treasurer

- We will have developed new online ministries.
- We will have forged new links in our communities.
- We will have developed new and deeper relationships through our virtual ministries.
- We will have a deeper prayer life and relationship with God.

Dear Friends

For nearly 28 years, working for the church as a professional accountant, I personally have been inspired by the resilience, but especially by the faithfulness, of you, the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church here in the British Union Conference (BUC) territory. For 18 of those years, I have had the privilege to serve as a treasurer – first for the South England Conference, and now for the British Union Conference. For sure, managing the finances of the church has been my key role, but the opportunity to share in the spiritual journey and evangelistic programmes of members, to join forces with many of my ministerial colleagues in support of your local church projects, is where my heart is. I have also felt particularly privileged to be able to spend time with our young people: to support them on their life journey in these difficult times has been an awesome experience.

My professional career has seen the financial depths of the October 1987 'Black Monday', and, more recently, the autumn 2008 financial crisis. During this pandemic period, our church buildings have had to be closed to safeguard you, our members. However, this has not meant the cessation of church services. Instead, a relatively new dynamic has emerged with the dawn of the virtual church. Technologically proficient members and pastors have emerged to drive our online churches. We thank them for their God-given talents.

We have seen new and inspiring ways of worshipping and praising God, including Sabbath services, Wednesday-night prayer meetings, youth programmes and baptismal studies – all continuing, but in a different way. The BUC youth director, Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, has been conducting Adventurer/Pathfinder e-honours on Zoom, with the support of his Conference and Mission Pathfinder colleagues.

A certain cartoon picture depicts the devil smirking to Christ, gleefully declaring, 'Coronavirus has closed all Your churches.' Christ responds by declaring, 'You are wrong, for I have opened one in every home.' The eternal battle continues unabated.

As a result of the pandemic and the need to close our churches, tithe for the month of March has fallen by 28% (see the tithe chart on the facing page). Adjusting for known prior year issues, a 50% fall would be a more realistic assessment for March. Despite these falls, the BUC continues to support its dependent organisations with the budgeted amount for 2019. With all of our sister

organisations, we have sought to mitigate our fall in income by focusing on important and essential expenditure at this time. As trustees we have prioritised the salaries of our ministers, especially those serving in the local churches, supporting safe forms of evangelism where this is possible, and finally supporting community-based projects meeting the needs of the needy and vulnerable in our society.

This has opened up new avenues of contacts, and new ways of making ourselves known in our local communities. Just two weeks ago I was invited to attend the opening of the One Vision project right here in Watford, run from our own Stanborough Park church. In attendance was our local MP, the Watford Mayor, the local Sikh leader, the local Muslim leader (despite it being during their Ramadan period), and the head of the Rotary Club of Watford, along with our own local church pastor and other prominent local dignitaries. A whole army of Adventist and community volunteers descended on our church to support the cooking and distribution of our food services.

As you continue in your daily devotion with the Lord, and as you continue in your spiritual journey, I appeal to you to embrace our covenant with God by returning not just your tithe to God, but also your love offering to God, in support of your local church budget and other offerings. While our church buildings are closed, there are still many fixed costs that ownership of a building incurs.

On our websites there are several ways indicated to enable you to return your tithe & offerings, electronically or otherwise: but I would also suggest that many of you who are able and strong enough to do so may also want to consider more practical ways of helping. You may be furloughed or not working at this time. If safe to do so, you may want to consider helping your local church in its community projects, as it seeks to meet the needs of the vulnerable and destitute.

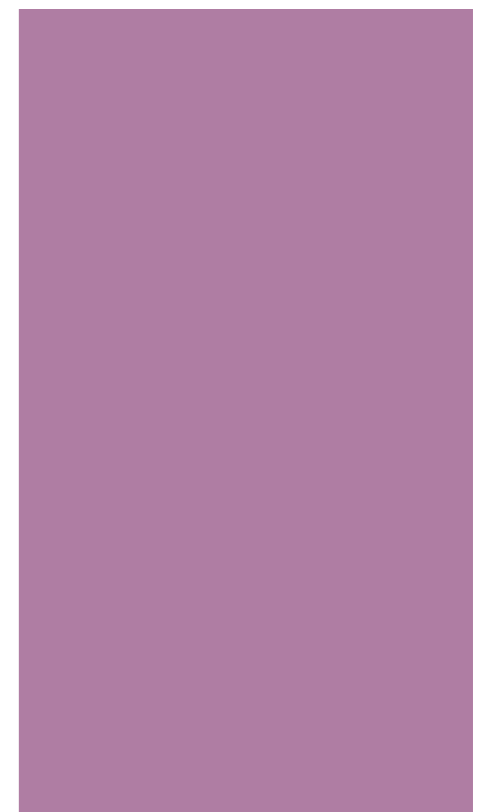
I believe that God has a plan and our finances will recover, but as we move forwards I also see new opportunities:

I do recognise that many of you have been furloughed or even lost jobs, and could as a consequence be experiencing isolation and depression. I am also aware that some have lost loved ones to the coronavirus.

My heart and my prayers reach out on behalf of each and every one of you who are suffering at this time. God is here with us in our prayers, and He is right by our side in our suffering and anxiety.

He cares. He loves us so very much. He is there for us always.

In closing, can I share a prayer with you that was recently shared with me?



British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
 Tithe Report - March 2020

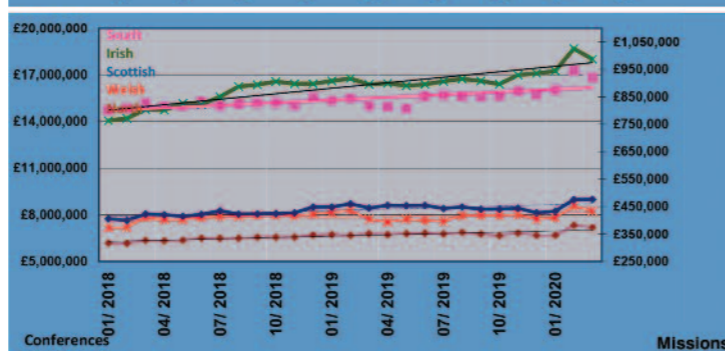
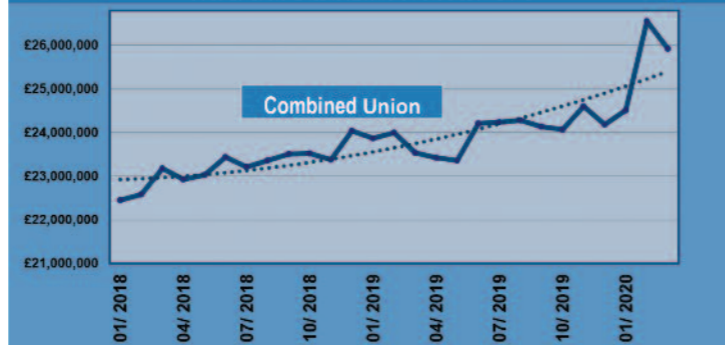
This Month	2020	2019	Inc / -Dec	Variance %
South	£953,128	£1,100,000	-£146,872	-13.4
North	£317,107	£628,546	-£311,439	-49.5
Welsh	£16,166	£36,352	-£20,186	-55.3
Scottish	£36,906	£37,652	-£746	-2.0
Irish	£31,270	£78,674	-£47,404	-60.3
Total	£1,354,576	£1,881,223	-£526,647	-28.0%

Cumulative to Date	2020	2019	Inc / -Dec	Variance %
South	£3,391,597	£3,386,621	£4,976	0.1%
North	£1,458,969	£1,587,036	-£128,067	-8.1%
Welsh	£94,332	£101,138	-£6,806	-6.7%
Scottish	£112,004	£100,840	£11,164	11.1%
Irish	£185,141	£212,092	-£26,951	-12.7%
Total	£5,242,042	£5,387,727	-£145,684	-2.7%

Budgets	Annual	To Date	Variance	%
South	£15,922,044	£3,980,511	-£11,941,533	-74.8%
North	£6,750,000	£1,687,500	-£5,062,500	-75.0%
Welsh	£426,000	£106,500	-£319,500	-75.0%
Scottish	£427,000	£106,750	-£320,250	-75.1%
Irish	£920,000	£230,000	-£690,000	-75.0%
Total	£24,445,044	£6,111,261	-£18,333,783	-75.0%
BUC	£2,379,967	£594,992	-£1,784,975	-75.0%

Dear Friends, I bring you the first Coronavirus period Tithe report. The 2.7% reduction figure does not reflect a true picture due to the SEC total accrued figures last year until May 2019. Instead I will draw you during the following months to the top table showing the latest month's returns. Overall this shows a 28% fall on last March. This would be far lower, but for the SEC anomaly last year. On a straight line basis last year SEC would be showing a 27% fall. With NEC, 49% fall, WM 55% fall, IM 60% fall, only

British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
 Annualised Tithe Trends 2018 - 2020



SM 2% fall seems to have bucked the trend. The real challenge, however, is in the cash-flows. We are receiving 70% (£350k & £160k) less funds from the SEC and NEC respectively. This fall in cashflows provides confirmation of our need to make cost cutting measures and furlough where possible. Our own Tithe budget projections shows an 11.9% (£71k) shortfall in our expected income. March did include two weeks of Sabbaths prior to the churches' shutdown and so April is expected to be lower. We do give thanks for God's provisions. Earl

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted



The 2019 TED Pathfinder Camporee, Earl Ramharacksingh and TED Treasurer Nenad Jeuranovic stir the pot



In this final excerpt of *Values-led Lives*, Pastor Llew Edwards shares some ministry experiences when he let the Holy Spirit take the lead in pointing out sin. *‘That day I vividly recall walking from his home amazed by what the Spirit of Christ can do. . . .’*

Part 10:

But . . . when do we tell them to shape up?

Being values-led is not a matter of listing all the values one can think of that describe the Kingdom citizen and then scrapping all but the top few. It is more a matter of working out which are the ones that are the most important – the weightier ones – and then letting them guide your life to start with.

Jesus pronounced woe to the scribes and Pharisees for their emphasis on pernickety tithing of tiny seeds and excessive cleanliness while discarding values such as justice, mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23-26). He went on to indicate that it was not that tithing and cleanliness were wrong, but that their upside-down value system demonstrated that their insides needed changing.

And there lies the problem with the enthusiastic greeter who tells the visitor to go home and dress properly before entering the church. The greeter cannot see

that both he and the visitor need to be changed on the inside first, before they can be clean on the outside.

How else shall a person change? If they change because of fear or pressure, they will only have changed on the outside. It is the love of God inside the heart that truly changes the inside. Do we not understand that it is the goodness, kindness, tolerance and patience of God that turns us around? (Rom. 2:4.)

A lady in the church asked me to help with some Bible studies for a young woman she had met. We eagerly went to her home and began the studies. There was a problem in that her boyfriend lived with her. We ignored that and began our studies, starting with the prophecy of Daniel 2 and leading on to the news about the coming of Jesus. Her boyfriend sat in on the studies. On about our third or fourth visit the lady

asked if she could speak to us privately. It felt a little awkward going into her bedroom and leaving her boyfriend alone in the living room, but imagine our surprise when she told us that during her reviews of what we had studied the impression came to her mind that she could no longer live with her boyfriend in the same apartment. She asked if God expected that of her. We replied that she must ask God for wisdom in this matter. She was quiet for a short time and then said, ‘I know what God wants me to do.’ She then promptly went back into the living room and gently told the friend that he needed to find his own accommodation if they were to follow God. He did, and both later became members of the church. This lesson taught me that my work was to draw our contacts to the love of God and His truth, and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide

them in His own time. On another occasion I called at a house in response to a card that had been sent in requesting Bible study guides. A young man opened the door, but upon learning why I had come he apologised to me for the waste of my time, because he had filled the card in as a joke. He had expected the lessons to come through the post and planned simply to bin them. Nevertheless, I explained the guides and the free Bible that came with them. He told me that he did not have a Bible and had never read it. I offered him a deal – if he would do the first two lessons he could keep the Bible and tell me not to return again the next week when I dropped in to see how he had got on. He laughed, and then added his own conditions to the deal. They were that under no conditions were the guides or I to tell him that alcohol and his

conditions I was not to bring any more guides. I agreed. I was shocked the next week when, upon knocking on his door, the young man practically dragged me into his house. ‘These lessons are fantastic!’ he exclaimed; ‘I have never read anything like this.’ A week or two later, armed with lessons 5 and 6, I called again. This time he had not just completed the lessons but was devouring the Scriptures. This continued for another couple of weeks until, after delivering the next pair of guides, he again shocked me by saying, ‘Llew, God’s Spirit has touched my

heart and mind and I see that my misuse of girls for my sexual appetite is an abuse of them, and alcohol is a large part of my lifestyle. I have decided to stop drinking completely and will not indulge in sex until I find the woman I want to marry.’

That day I vividly recall walking from his home amazed by what the Spirit of Christ can do. There and then I determined that with all I worked with I would uplift Christ and allow the rising sap of the Spirit of God to knock off the old leaves of a dead life.

‘The precious blood of Jesus is the fountain prepared to cleanse the soul from the

defilement of sin. When you determine to take Him as your friend, a new and enduring light will shine from the cross of Christ. A true sense of the sacrifice and intercession of the dear Saviour will break the heart that has become hardened in sin; and love, thankfulness, and humility will come into the soul. The surrender of the heart to Jesus subdues the rebel into a penitent, and then the language of the obedient soul is: ‘Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’ This is the true religion of the Bible. Everything short of this is a deception.’ (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, page 625.)

‘But,’ you ask, ‘when do we tell them to shape up?’ My answer is: ‘You don’t!’

My model is Christ. Go to the stories of Jesus’ interaction with sinners, and you will find that He does not tell them to ‘shape up’ (there is one exception, which I will come to). Rather, He eats and drinks with them (at Matthew’s house); throws forgiveness at them (the man who comes down through the roof); calls active sinners to follow Him (Levi was sitting at his tax booth when Jesus called him from it); teaches that the father runs to embrace prodigals (Luke responds to each act of contrition by the son with a ‘but the father . . .’ – see Luke 15:20, 22). Jesus’ condemnation of sins is clearly aimed at religious people, not sinners; the people who claim to be on the

inside, not those on the outside. Our work is not to condemn. We will not be judged on how well we told the sinners off. We will be excluded from the Kingdom by our failure to love them. Our great task is to live the core values of God’s character. That is where we as individuals and churches must focus our efforts. Our critical focus must be on how well we are doing, not how badly they are doing. It is this outstanding love or steadfast mercy or amazing grace that we show that we must excel at.

Before we finish – that exception. In John 8:11 (ESV) Jesus said to the woman, ‘Go, and from now on sin no more.’ Let us be clear that this is prefaced by, ‘Neither do I condemn you.’ When I read this, I wonder whether Jesus is ignorant of her sin, that He can brush it away so simply. Does He have nothing to condemn her for? Surely He knew her deeds . . . but as I read the story more and more I begin to wonder what sin He tells her not to fall into any more. The Pharisees said that it was adulterous behaviour. Might it be that He was warning her not to be led into sin by religious people who had groomed her for the situation she found herself in?

While our serialisation of this book ends with this issue, there are more chapters to read in *Values-led Lives*, available from the Stanborough Press for £5.95 plus postage and packing.

☞ <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/values-led-lives/>



Tony Hawkins and Pastor Dan Dachin

Nottingham Central baptism: with Christ, Tony's limitations have become his enablings!

On Saturday 14 March, at Nottingham Central Church, Tony Hawkins was baptised. For the previous two years Tony has been encouraged in his growing faith in God and Jesus by Sherelle Ramus, the deaf outreach leader.

'I began to read the Bible stories, and somehow began to understand their significance, and Jesus came into my heart,' said Tony. Continuing, Tony said, 'Prayer helped to answer questions I had about faith matters, but the time came when my faith in Christ grew to such an extent that I wanted to make a public declaration to stand for Christ.'

'My deafness did not prevent God from revealing Jesus to me, but the church's lack of deaf interpreters and resources, such as a Bible specifically designed for deaf people, did sometimes create challenges. Even a standard AV system is not designed to serve deaf people.'

Tony is using his new-found life in Christ to serve the church. Each Sabbath he offers his services to help the Nottingham church family learn sign language. During each sermon, Tony and Sherelle Ramus alternate to 'sign' to help the deaf community understand the Word.

It is essential that the church should continue to spread the good news of Jesus' soon return – not just throughout the deaf community, but in all communities.

DENNIS TAYLOR, NOTTINGHAM CENTRAL SDA CHURCH



Edmonton members present cheque to staff from the Nightingale Cancer Support Centre

Edmonton Church raises £377 for the Nightingale Cancer Support Centre

It was September last year when Edmonton members opened the doors of the Houndsfield Road Community Centre for their first bring-and-buy sale in aid of the Nightingale Cancer Support Centre charity in Enfield.

The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre has been supporting the

people in the borough of Enfield affected by cancer since 2002. The fast-growing population of the borough and the strain on NHS funding meant that many people were not receiving additional support beyond their cancer diagnosis and NHS treatment. Nightingale was formed to fill these gaps in the lives of people living with cancer.

The community centre teemed with designer handbags, a plethora of ladies' shoes, bric-a-brac, small electrical items and delicious homemade cakes and goodies.

The new community garden, a local 'pocket park', was decked out with a tombola stand, giant skittles, Cluedo and dominoes.

From the barbeque exotic delights were served, such as vegetarian Thai balls with tamarind sauce, jerk chicken, rice and peas and homemade coleslaw.

The sale was well attended by people in the local community, and £377 was raised. This will go to support the needs of the Enfield community and those affected by a diagnosis of cancer, including the patients and their families and friends.

The church is grateful to those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, those who supported and helped out on the day to ensure that the day was a success. Of particular mention are volunteers from the local community – Kamila, Ian and Chidu.

While this event may seem a little while back, the needs of the Nightingale Cancer Support Centre have not diminished in any way. Current trends suggest that demand for their support could increase in future months. God bless them as they continue to support the residents of Enfield.

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



Adventist Learning Centre, Lebanon

Crieff Church gives £230,000 for humanitarian projects

At a recent meeting of the CAP (Crieff Aid Projects) at the Crieff church the members were told of the new projects for the coming year. CAP was formed in 2006 at the instigation of Dr Stephen Logan, who was so impressed by the 'Make Poverty History' project that he wanted his church to do its bit. Since then, over £230,000 has been given by the church for humanitarian projects around the world. With a membership of just under 80, this is a wonderful effort.

The first project was to assist the Maluti church in Lesotho in its efforts to feed orphan victims – £4,000 was sent. The second project was to help an Adventist family in Romania who were trying to help homeless elderly people in their own home, so £4,000 was sent to this project, and this continued for a number of years. These efforts have resulted in a modern 55-bed home for the elderly. Crieff members were delighted to see the results of their generosity when the couple who had started the care home attended a recent Sabbath worship service. Brought to Crieff by the generosity of one of the members, this was their first holiday in eighteen years.

Since 2006, many more projects have been undertaken, including the purchase of many solar-powered lights so that children in Myanmar are able to complete their homework during dark winter evenings.

Some years ago, Wendy was a student volunteer at Roundelwood, which was the church's retirement home and health centre. She later



Sudanese school CAP primary class

married an Adventist doctor, and together they are trying to help isolated sick people in Kenya, where they now live. They decided to try to have a medical launch built to reach these isolated people. Crieff sent £5,000 to have the boat built, apart from the engine, and this boat is now helping to do a wonderful work.

Money was also sent to Beirut in Lebanon to add a further classroom to the Adventist school there, which is helping to educate Syrian refugee children.

Considerable sums of money have been sent to a home in the Philippines which rescues women and girls from prostitution.

£2,000 a year for several years has been given to help local charities, such as Perthshire Women's Aid, which helps abused women.

What has made CAP more meaningful to the Crieff members is that CAP normally knows the people connected to the projects, creating greater accountability. I should also add that, in addition to this £237,000, Crieff members continue to return a faithful tithe, and give generously to support their local church. In doing this work so generously, they have certainly learnt that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

BOB RODD

Prayer matters

In a report dated 2 May, authored by Harriet Sherwood for *The Guardian*, since the coronavirus lockdown began, 'a quarter of adults in the UK have watched or listened to a religious service.' Even more encouraging is that a survey shows that 'one in 20 have started praying during the crisis.' The survey, commissioned by Tearfund and carried out over the weekend of 24 April, surveyed more than 2,000 people. Of those who tuned into a religious service, one in five say they have never attended a church before. What did the survey find UK people praying for?

Family	(53%)
Friends	(34%)
The person praying	(28%)
Front-line services	(27%)
Thanking God	(24%)
Someone unwell with COVID-19	(20%)
Other countries with COVID-19	(15%)

What's the significance of this news report from *The Guardian*? Not least, it confirms that deep within our friends and neighbours there continues to be a God-shaped hole. Is it possible that the immediate crisis stirs UK and Ireland people to trust God, many for the first time? I haven't got a statistic to hand for this, but is it possible that most of our friends and neighbours are not 'lapsed Christian', but 'pre-Christian', who have only the faintest idea of who Jesus is? Is it not in times like these that people are open to talking about the deeper issues of life and death? Pray that we can both be a warm listening ear, and share the Jesus we know.

EDITOR

To read the full story, go to:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/03/british-public-turn-to-prayer-as-one-in-four-tune-in-to-religious-services>.

Stanborough Secondary School, open for September 2020 enrolment

Stanborough Secondary School, a Seventh-day Adventist secondary school, is situated on the serene Stanborough Park in Watford. From inception in 1919, school administration has held firm to the principle that education is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual powers. Stanborough still seeks to prepare its pupils for the joy of service in this world, and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.

COVID-19 has undoubtedly impacted Stanborough School, and the school is currently closed. However, God is the Master of this school and guides its operations. The teachers were prepared to move all the teaching onto online platforms when the Government declared a lockdown in March. A robust teaching programme has continued throughout this turbulent time.

In 2019, the school celebrated its centenary and looks set for another 100 years (unless Jesus comes before then). We will continue to run our school by biblical principles.

This is to advise all prospective parents and guardians that we are accepting pupils for September 2020 enrolment. Please visit our website, www.spsch.org, for a virtual guided tour of the school. For further information, or to discuss our admissions procedures further, please contact the school on info@spsch.org.

May God bless you, and keep safe!

One Vision commemorates VE Day and Stanborough Park Church

VE Day was commemorated outside Stanborough Park Church on 8 May with a ceremonial raising of the Union flag accompanied by a bugler and followed by a two-minute silence in remembrance of those who gave their lives for our freedom.

Organised by the Watford-based One Vision charity and self-help network, it was fitting for committee member Liz Burns to see the anniversary marked in this special way. Liz runs a veterans' group of 300 local ex-servicemen and women, some suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Recognising this need, she connects



daily with them, providing therapy groups.

Members of One Vision, along with Watford's MP and Elected Mayor and Chair of the Rotary Club and the BUC President, attended

the short ceremony. Each spoke briefly, as did Liz Burns, of the sacrifices made for the freedom that we experience now, albeit coping with a different type of war with COVID-19. Loneliness and mental health were a big problem for them, and, as she said, it was important to keep in touch when so many were isolated: 'Loneliness must have no place to hide.'

BUC President Ian Sweeney finished the occasion with a prayer of sorrow for lives lost and gratitude for the freedom that resulted. He explained that the church is broadly pacifist but expressed heartfelt gratitude for those who have given up their lives for our freedom, and he drew attention to the adjacent Peace Garden, which was created to coincide with the centenary of the First World War.

Senior church members shared their memories of the day they experienced as children. Two remembered street parties in Sheepcot Drive and Spring Gardens, adjacent to Stanborough Park. Another, who

lived close to Stanborough Park, remembered events there, as well as witnessing the London crowds.

'The date is Sunday 6 May 1945. We have just heard that Admiral Doenitz in Flensburg Castle has given the unconditional surrender of Germany. On Stanborough Park, I, together with loads of other scallywags, started collecting any combustible materials, and over the next two days built an enormous bonfire between the football pitch and the Sanitarium tennis court, to celebrate VE Day on the Tuesday in two days' time. We spent two days collecting and building the bonfire.

'On the great day my mum and I went up early to London, met my dad (a London Fire Service fireman), and went to Piccadilly Circus, together with thousands of others (standing room only everywhere). Around midday we worked our way to the Mall, and, with tens of thousands of others, worked our way down the Mall to Buckingham Palace, and there we stayed till late afternoon. Around twelve we started chanting, 'We want the King; we want the King' – and, after about half an hour, out he came, with the Queen and the princesses, onto the balcony, and stayed for a quarter of an hour or so, waving to the crowds. This was accompanied with a continuous roar as though the winning goal had just been scored in the Cup Final.

'When the royal family went in, everyone stayed put. My parents, with the excuse of a 9-year-old little boy, had worked their way down to near the front. Every hour or so the crowd started up again, 'We want the King' – and, after half an hour or so, the royal family came out again. This happened several times in the afternoon, and each time my dad hoisted me on his shoulders and I got an excellent view; and, the joy of joys, around 4 o'clock they were joined by my hero, Winston 'we will fight them on the beaches' Churchill!

'After this climax, we went home in time for the lighting of the enormous bonfire on Stanborough Park. The evening was passed very merrily with much jollity, singing 'Rule Britannia', 'There'll Always Be an England', 'We'll Meet Again', 'The White Cliffs of Dover', and 'Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant Major'. Into the fire we kids would throw a potato, then hoick it out roasted and devour it (delicious!). Around midnight (I'd never been up till then) we drifted home and to bed.

'Ah, such sweet memories of yore!'

One of his contemporaries moved to Watford some time later, and so recalled a different scenario:

'I was living in Scotland during the war, and we moved down to Stanborough Park on 6 May 1946; so I missed out on that bonfire, but we did have celebrations up in Glasgow. However, the church members were widely scattered and we did not get together till some time later, to have a party with a meal of what each could bring with rationed food!

'However, I do remember that on the VE Day at Hyndland School we were all seated in the huge school hall, on the floor of course, to hear the news and to sing, though I can't remember what we sang; maybe it was Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again'. So many of the pupils had lost fathers or uncles. One of my uncles had been in the Royal Navy and his ship had been torpedoed by the Germans.

'What memories!'

JUNE COOMBS

VE Day message from the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Mr Robert Voss CBE

As the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, the personal representative of Her Majesty the Queen, it is an honour to join with the community of Stanborough Park to celebrate this momentous day, 8 May, the 75th anniversary of victory in Europe, the day when the war in Europe finally came to an end. I particularly recall my visit last year to the One Vision project and wish to show my appreciation of the support that One Vision is giving to the local community during this difficult time. I also salute the work that One Vision are doing to support the elderly, and especially the wonderful veterans who risked their lives to save ours so many years ago. Thank you for what you are doing today. On this special day I salute you all.

ROBERT VOSS

Author encourages all to join her in the break

by Darell J. Philip

A newly published author is calling everyone to *join her in the break*. Thelma Gage, a member of the Milton Keynes church, has recently published her first book. *Join Me in the Break* is a compilation of short devotional readings which offer the reader a spiritual perspective on occurrences during everyday life. This British-born author was raised on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, where she trained as a nurse before her return to the UK in the 1980s. The book, which she dedicates to her mother, Sarah Gage, and her late father, John Gage, brings together memories from various aspects of her life, while also inviting the reader to see the spiritual relation to these everyday experiences.

'From a young age, I have always been fascinated with reading and writing,' says Thelma. Smiling, she then continued: 'My interest in words in written form came from Daddy, who was particular about reading

with expression and the use of grammatically correct language. Those who knew my dad would understand my description of him as a "walking lexicon", whose use of big words expanded my own vocabulary by osmosis.'

Having grown up in an Adventist home, Thelma remembers having to read the *Morning Watch* for family worship each morning with fondness, as well as being an active member of the Pathfinder club. 'Being the eldest child, much responsibility was placed on my shoulders to set a good example for my three younger siblings in terms of being well behaved and respectful.' She excelled in her school work and subsequently studied at postgraduate level, which created an opportunity for her to return to the UK, where she continued to develop her nursing career. She is also an accomplished pianist and has now fulfilled a lifetime dream by publishing her first book,

which she hopes to use as a form of ministry.

'The main message I want to bring out in this book is that God is available for a relationship with us, and that, if we take the time to look around us and listen for His voice, He will manifest Himself in our everyday circumstances in ways we could never have imagined.'

Thelma identifies 'break times' as being the best times to share and hear from God, in the same way that tea breaks are taken at work. This often gives rise to times of reflection with oneself or with others. She invites readers of *Join Me in the Break* to experience the same.

'As I write on some of the everyday, seemingly mundane experiences of life with which readers can relate, I would like

them to use their spiritual lenses to reflect and see how God orchestrates situations to make Himself known to us.' It is her hope that readers will find their purpose in life, founded upon the higher power available to us through Christ Jesus, who has come to bring the love, peace and joy offered to us through the free forgiveness of our sins.

For more information on *Join Me in the Break*, or to purchase the book, please visit the official website:

<https://joinmeinthebreak.com/>



As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

BUC convalescence project partners with SEC counselling service

Sharon Platt-McDonald

BUC Director for Health, Adventist Community Services and Women's Ministries



The words 'trauma' and 'bereavement' have become closely associated with the current pandemic, as we face the loss of loved ones and even concerns about our own mortality.

Growing concerns are being voiced by health professionals and scientists who are urging government agencies to take action to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on our mental health.

'While emotional responses of stress and fear in the face of a pandemic caused by a novel virus for which little is known are normal and expected, excessive and protracted feelings of stress and powerlessness may have a significant impact on individuals' mental health.'¹

Launched in April, the BUC 'Restoration' convalescence project was birthed out of the need to support individuals recovering from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Along with the physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs that the convalescence project aims to meet, mental health is a key area of concern. As such, the British Union Conference (BUC) Health Ministries director invited Councillor Rabi Martins, a Mental Health Champion, and his team to provide counselling for those recovering from COVID-19 in the Watford area. They are currently working in partnership with the BUC convalescence project.

Realising the need to extend mental health support further afield, the South England Conference Cornerstone Counselling Service (CCS) has been invited to partner with the BUC to augment the aspect of mental well-being support as people convalesce.

We are grateful to Thembe Mapingire, co-ordinator for CCS, and her team, whose counselling service is making a positive impact during these challenging times. Sharon Platt-McDonald caught up with Thembe for an interview to share how CCS will assist with counselling support for the BUC 'Restoration' convalescence project.

Sharon Platt-McDonald:

Thembe, perhaps a good place to start is for you to share with us what you and your team do.

Thembe Mapingire: Cornerstone Counselling Service is sponsored by the South England Conference. We have 19 locations across the SEC, and a team of 20 counsellors. Our team has counsellors specialising in trauma (with a specialist trauma referral unit), addictions, couples' counselling, children and young people, bereavement and family therapy, to name a few. We use cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and other models of counselling. We have been operating as a professional service for 24 years. CCS have now switched to online and telephone counselling during this current lockdown. We have counsellors and listeners who speak a variety of languages, such as Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, French, German, Bulgarian and many African languages.

SPM: What are your thoughts on being invited to partner with the BUC Health Ministries 'Restoration' convalescence project?

TM: We are excited to partner with the BUC on this

much-needed initiative to cater for those who experience challenges with their recovery from COVID-19. We are also grateful to the BUC Health Ministries Department, which funded us to equip our trauma unit with the necessary clinical equipment and supportive resources. With counselling currently conducted online, we are able to service members across the BUC, and also individuals in the community.

SPM: How is CCS currently working to assist individuals as they recover from COVID-19?

TM: We are drawing on the strengths of the initiatives that we commenced earlier this year. In early March, we launched the listening line to assist people who were distressed, overwhelmed, lonely, bereaved and afraid of coronavirus becoming a pandemic. Now the enormous loss of normality that COVID-19 has created has increased people's levels of anxiety. We have enlisted a team of 50 trained volunteer counsellors and listeners, who work daily from 8am to midnight. We offer free telephone counselling and online chat (<http://www.ccscounselling.org.uk/>).

Our 'listening volunteers' are background-checked before they are permitted to operate, and have been trained in the CCS procedures and professional guidelines. Ten more are still waiting to be checked and trained. This support will continue throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, free online counselling is being offered to NHS staff and other key workers.

SPM: What are some of the general issues that have emerged

for individuals recovering from COVID-19?

TM: Those recovering from COVID-19 often experience anxiety, fear and loneliness. What they need is the assurance that someone is there to listen to them and to connect with them. CCS provides this connection, enabling them to reach out for support.

SPM: On any given day, how does your CCS team help?

TM: Some of the issues we have faced so far include many calls from front line workers, helping with their fear of catching COVID-19, increased anxiety, burnout and the emotional drain of dealing with more than 15 deaths per shift. This includes grief and loss, and the pain of dealing with the death of colleagues; also, the paralysing fear that comes with asking, 'What if I am next?'

There's also anxiety and fear of loss of jobs for those on furlough, those experiencing financial loss, the loss of everyday routine, and all the multiple issues that arise as a result.

For those recovering from COVID-19 or another illness, there's the shock of returning to work to find that some colleagues have died. The pain, fear and devastation are immense.

The rise of domestic abuse due to the lockdown is also a great concern.

SPM: That's quite a workload for your team. What outcomes would you like to see as CCS engages with the BUC convalescence project?

TM: Perhaps one key issue is to

help people gain some level of confidence, even while facing the many uncertainties. People are now concerned about life after lockdown, the uncertainty and discomfort of the 'new normal', using public transport, sending children back to school and much more.

Uncertainty has the potential to create anxiety-inducing thought patterns. For some, maintaining a positive outlook and taking one day at a time – not trying to control the uncontrollable – can be overwhelming.

Our counselling methods work to help create or restore a positive mindset. We talk about how to face a problem in the context of the temporary versus the permanent. This brings hope and security. We suggest coping mechanisms such as journaling suppressed emotions as an outlet, and having positive affirmations. For those with a Christian faith, the use of Scripture is excellent. I like Philippians 4:13 (AMP), which says: 'I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His

purpose – I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace].'

I find that being grateful and reflecting on emotional growth helps in developing resilience. Also, taking time to make future plans can help take the mind away from the current anxieties and provide the brain with some needed dopamine. Other suggestions could include spending time discussing family values and looking forward to learning something new.

SPM: Thembe, it has been so enlightening speaking with you and getting the scope of the support you are able to provide, and specifically to those recovering from the coronavirus. How can your team be contacted?

TM: We can be contacted through the following means:
Phone: 0207 723 8050
Email: connect@ccscounselling.org.uk

NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO DURING THE LOCKDOWN?

ARE YOU ANXIOUS, FEELING ALONE OR FRUSTRATED?

Do you need Bereavement support or are you struggling with your children?

CCS is available to help. Access free telephone and online chat from our trained counsellors and listeners during the lockdown Covid-19 crisis.

WE ARE AVAILABLE EVERYDAY FROM 8AM-12 MIDNIGHT

We offer free online counselling for NHS and other key workers.

0207 723 8050
connect@ccscounselling.org.uk
www.ccscounselling.org.uk

CCS
Cornerstone
Counselling Service

NOTE: We have listeners who can speak Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, French, German, Bulgarian and many African languages.

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

by Sharon Platt-McDonald



Safeguarding mental well-being during times of crisis part 2

Faith & mental health

The Mental Health Foundation, in their publication, 'Fundamental Facts about Mental Health 2016', highlight some startling data. Here is one item:

'Every week, 1 in 6 adults experiences a common mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression, and 1 in 5 adults has considered taking their own life at some point.'¹ These are sobering statistics. Life can be challenging at times, but, in the current COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, safeguarding our mental and emotional health is key to surviving and even thriving during the season of lockdown.

Our faith as believers can have a preservative effect on our mental well-being. This has been a subject of interest for scientific communities for many years.

'There is also a growing number of studies in the UK and in the US that suggest that membership of a religious community which is accommodating and compassionate can benefit an individual's overall mental and physical health, and even the length of an individual's life.'²

Being balanced in our religious beliefs and practice has a significant impact on our mental and emotional well-being. Science continues to point to a positive expression of faith as having health-enhancing benefits. However, when faith and religious beliefs become extreme and negative, they can also have a negative impact on mental well-being.

'Studies indicate that religion and spirituality can promote mental health through positive religious coping, community and support, and positive beliefs. Research also shows that religion and spirituality can be damaging to mental health by means of negative religious coping, misunderstanding and miscommunication, and negative beliefs.'³

Over the past months, people have shared the negative impact of the daily news, with its COVID-19 death reports, on their emotional and mental well-being. Additionally, the diverse coronavirus conspiracy theories have created fear and panic. Not knowing what is truth can be unnerving: yet the truth of God's Word brings assurance.

Scripture holds many wonderful promises demonstrating that God comes alongside us in our challenging times, so that we need not feel overly anxious or become despairing.

One of these is Joshua 1:9. I love the way it is stated in the Clear Word paraphrase:

'I have told you to be strong and full of courage. Don't be afraid. Don't become discouraged or give up, because you don't have to do all this alone. The Lord your God will be with you every step of the way.'

Embrace God; He is health-enhancing.

Good health!

¹<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/fundamental-facts-about-mental-health-2016>

²https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Keeping_the_faith.pdf

³https://journals.lww.com/co-psychiatry/Abstract/2014/09000/The_role_of_religion_and_spirituality_in_mental.9.aspx

Returning tithes and giving offerings under lockdown

South England Conference

Account details
Sort code: 40-45-28/Account number: 11014153

Returning by cheque: cheques are payable to South England Conference.*
Returning by card payment: call the SEC office on **01923 232728**.

*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

Weekly local church text giving
70100 – £1 | 70300 – £3 | 70500 – £5 | 70575 – £10

To give £20, text 70750 as a one-off donation, NOT weekly. The donation will be added to your monthly bill or deducted from your pay-as-you-go balance.

'I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your faithfulness and generosity in supporting the church during this very difficult time. Please rest assured, the coronavirus will pass. May the Lord bless you and keep you safe.' Emmanuel Osei, President

North England Conference

Account details
Sort code: 60-80-09/Account number: 84598816

Returning by cheque: cheques are payable to North England Conference.*
Returning by card payment: call the NEC office on **01623 361156**.

*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

Online donations can be made via the Conference's own website: <https://nec.adventist.uk/contact-us/donate/>. Simply follow the instructions given on each area of the page, and ensure that the North England Conference is your choice for where the donation should go.

'In seeking to fulfil the commission of Matthew 28, it is my desire that each congregation within the North England Conference should be an integral part of its community. Our congregations should be the place that our communities look to in times of storm, in times of crisis, in times of happiness and in times of celebration. Our congregations should be the place where refuge can be found, because we have demonstrated to them that all it takes to bring calm to a situation is a word from the Master, who never sleeps. Thank you for your continued faithfulness.' Richard Jackson, President

Irish Mission

Northern Ireland account details
Sort code: 40-45-28/Account number: 60476188

Republic of Ireland account details
Sort code: 93-32-95/Account number: 14012054
IBAN: 1E74 AIBK 9332 9514 0120 54

Returning by cheque: cheques are payable to Irish Mission.*
Returning by card payment: call the Irish Mission treasury office on **+44 (0)1923 672251**.

*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

'This crisis has taken us by surprise, but not God; He's still in control, and, at this time, may we all continue to entrust our lives and means into His care. Thank you all for your faithfulness and support in ensuring that the Church continues to fulfil her mission and carry out her ministry of care, nurture, and love. Blessings and good health to you all.' Dan Serb, President

Scottish Mission

Account details
Sort code: 16-33-45/Account number: 12318997

Returning by cheque: cheques are payable to Scottish Mission.*
Returning by card payment: call the Scottish Mission treasury office on **01923 672251**.

*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

'Thank you to all our members for making God first a way of life for all times and in all circumstances. I think for all of us this is a non-negotiable and irreducible minimum of our Christian faith. He is faithful and remains our "Jehovah Jireh" – the Lord our Provider.' Paul Tompkins, President

Welsh Mission

Account details
Sort code: 40-45-28/Account number: 70854085

Returning by cheque: cheques are payable to Welsh Mission.*
Returning by card payment: call the Welsh Mission treasury office on **01923 672251**.

*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

'Often, it is in times of great anguish that we are able to see more clearly the goodness of God. Let us continue to be faithful and true, for we are confident that even though we walk through the darkest valley, God is with us; He will never leave us and never forsake us.' Emanuel Bran, President

Noted

From the official newsletter of the South England Conference, vol. 3, issue 20

Dr Emmanuel Osei writes:
As an administration, we have been considering how our churches may safely reconvene now that the Government has outlined a plan to relax lockdown restrictions over the next few months.



Dr Chidi Ngwaba, Health Ministries Director, writes:
As we pass through yet another week, it is important to be on guard. Although the infection and death rates are reducing, [the coronavirus] is still a threat. Our government is starting to ease the lockdown requirements, but we must continue to 'stay alert'!



It may be necessary to run more than one service each Sabbath, in order to accommodate ongoing social distancing requirements. Additionally, many churches are finding that more people are present and contributing to Sabbath School lesson discussions and mid-week prayer services online. I'm sure many churches will want to continue exploring these new avenues for connection and interaction in the future.

During the last two weeks I have had the privilege of giving advice to two groups who have been set up by a) the Government, and b) the Labour Party, to look into why black & Asian people are dying at disproportionately high rates from COVID-19.

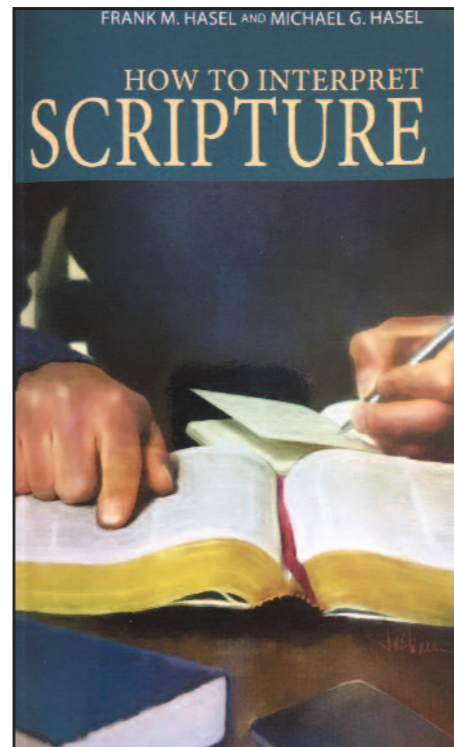
Many factors may, indeed, be involved, but one cannot escape the 10-tonne elephant in

the room: skin colour. Having dark skin in a country which has little sunlight means that we generate less vitamin D. As you've probably heard me say many times, vitamin D is possibly the most powerful booster to our immune system that we know of. Consequently, most black & Asian people in this country have low vitamin D levels, so are more vulnerable to all infections, including COVID-19.

This is not mere theory. There is much research going on right now regarding vitamin D levels and COVID-19 risk. Please listen to the BBC Radio 4 fact-checking programme, More or Less, which references several studies, including one which shows that 'people with low vitamin D levels are 20 times more likely to have complications and die from COVID-19!'

My advice is to at least make sure that you are not deficient in vitamin D3. If you cannot be tested, take a supplement anyway. Irrespective of your race, you need sufficiently high vitamin D3 levels, so take a minimum of 2,000 IU (50 mcg) per day.

¹<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08czkk7>



How to Interpret Scripture companion guide

If there is one matter that has always been an issue for Christians throughout the ages, it is: 'How do I interpret Scripture correctly?' That's why I am really enjoying this quarter's Sabbath School lessons by Dr Frank Hasel and Dr Michael Hasel. They are giving me new tools and understanding on how to read and how to understand the Scriptures more intelligently.

And, given that we're currently in lockdown, I have even more time to study the lesson.

But I like a bargain, and one thing that I have discovered is the companion book to the Sabbath School lessons, *How to Interpret Scripture*. It looks the same, but each week there is a chapter which goes into more detail on the topic that is being discussed in the lesson. It gives more information, more insight and greater depth. This is a bargain, because this is also a stand-alone book, and I know that when this quarter is finished I will go back and re-read it.

If you are looking for something to help you understand the Bible better; for something to help you with your Sabbath School lesson; and for a book that you will want to keep, I recommend that you buy *How to Interpret Scripture* by Michael Hasel and Frank Hasel.

To order online, all you have to do is follow this link, and it's yours for £3.75 + postage and packing. It's as easy as that!

PASTOR AUDREY ANDERSSON
<https://lifeforcebookshop.co.uk/product/sabbath-school-lesson-companion-book-single-quarter/>

'Why Interpretation is Needed' – a brief excerpt from the book that challenges the MESSENGER Editor's thinking, and hopefully will challenge yours too . . .

'It is possible to take pride in one's scepticism as well as in one's certainty'

'Pride elevates a reader's opinion above the Word of God, and, in a bewildering twist, "it is possible to take pride in one's scepticism as well as in one's certainty." Pride, at its ugliest, leads not to humility, but to humiliation and ridiculing the biblical text.

The evil twin of interpretive pride is interpretive sloth. It ignores the reader's freedom and responsibility and relies on others – a television preacher, a teacher, a commentary, and even the Spirit – to tell the reader what the text means. It leads the reader to forgo the effort of carefully attending to the text itself.

In contrast to pride that does not want to listen or laziness that listens uncritically, simply absorbing the thoughts of others, our knowledge must be tempered by humility. The attitude of humility is a willingness to submit one's belief to a higher authority. It embraces the conviction that God and His Word are greater than human reason and our current understanding. We must be willing to allow the biblical text to shape and reshape our pre-understandings so that our thinking – and doing – is aligned increasingly with the biblical perspective.'

From p. 57 of the *How to Interpret Scripture* companion guide, Dr Frank and Dr Michael Hasel

For returning tithes & giving offerings in the **Irish, Scottish or Welsh Missions**, email: abarki@adventist.uk, including the breakdown of T & O, the name of the church, and your Gift Aid number. The local budget offering will be credited into the church deposit (trust) account and later transferred to the local church bank account, upon the request of the treasurer.



'Remember'

by Dr Alex Collins Arthur*

Recently I called an elderly gentleman who attends my local church to check on his well-being and how he was coping with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I was amazed at how relaxed and upbeat he sounded on the phone. In the course of our conversation, he recounted the numerous global upheavals and personal challenges he has experienced in his lifetime, including the Second World War, the 1939 earthquake in Ghana, his childhood education, adult working life, and migration to the United Kingdom. The striking theme in his narrative was the firm belief that the intervention of God has been the sole source of his strength and guidance in overcoming all his life challenges. Much as he was both cautious and receptive to the government directives and general health advice, it was obvious that he was not perturbed. His confidence was in the fact that the same God who saw him through his previous life challenges is alive, and will see him through the period of COVID-19. This reminds me of Ellen White's famous quotation in *Life Sketches*, page 196: 'We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.'

It is an undeniable fact that our world at present is in turmoil as a result of the chaotic social disorder created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The mood in the atmosphere is gloomy, and there is a lot of fear about. Stock markets are volatile, and it is feared that many businesses which closed their doors at the end of March may never reopen. The unemployment story is yet to be realised. Lockdown has separated families and friends, denying the natural human yearning of physical and social interaction, which are fast disappearing and rather being replaced with haphophobia (fear of being touched). International and local governance systems,



Lockdown has separated families and friends, denying the natural human yearning of physical and social interaction . . .

clinicians, and business strategists appear to be struggling to control a situation they've never faced before. The afflictions and confusion have resulted in mental anguish, with many people questioning, 'How long is this going to last? Will there ever be an end? What will the end look like? Will the world ever be the same?'

Hope from Scripture and science

There is both scriptural and scientific evidence which confirms the benefit of remembering previous experiences to overcome present fears. 'Remember,' says the Bible! Moses, in his final message to the Israelites, advised the children of Israel always to remember the Lord's past blessings as a safeguard to preserving their lives (Deut. 32:45-47). Joshua was given similar advice when he took over the leadership of Israel after the death of Moses (Joshua 1:8, 9). The Psalms affirm that we can derive comfort in times of trouble from reflecting on the Lord's past accomplishments. Hebrews 13:6 also recognises the Lord as our Helper, the One who drives away our fears.

Similarly, psychologists believe that our past experiences contribute to our perceptions of the outcome of related present and future events.^{1,2} The theory suggests that, as we go through regular life activities, our past exposures are stored in our minds in formats relating to the human senses of sight, taste, smell, touch and hearing: and it is this information that is recalled whenever we face a similar incident. What this information does is guide us in modelling the outcome of the present event, to reflect the pattern of the previous occurrence. It is therefore important, whenever we face challenging situations such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, that we pause and reflect on the lessons from previous similar experiences, and especially how we overcame them.

The Bible contains multiple assurances about God's ability to protect His children from COVID-19, and also to heal those who become infected. Third John 2 testifies that it is the desire of God that His children prosper and be in good health. Exodus 15:26 affirms God as our Healer, and states that obeying His commandments relieves us from experiencing the diseases which befell the Egyptians. James 5:14-16 encourages the sick in the church to approach the elders for prayers of faith for their healing. The Bible also contains multiple assurances of the blessed hope of a second resurrection for those who lose their lives to the pandemic. 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 confirms that, just as Jesus died and rose again, so the righteous who die in the Lord shall rise again at Jesus' second coming. The apostle Paul further affirms in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 that believing in Jesus' resurrection provides the hope of our own resurrection at His second coming.

Turn fear into hope

Friend, are you worried about COVID-19 and its impact on your finances, health and social relationships? Are you already experiencing the dreaded repercussions of being infected, or have you lost a loved one? The political systems and world's leading clinicians are trying their best to address the issue, but there are still a lot of unknowns. Their ability to provide convincing assurance in finding a lasting solution to the problem remains uncertain at this point in time. When we combine what the Bible promises with our own personal experiences of God's past deliverance from challenging situations, we have the potential to experience strong assurance and comfort in these times. When Ellen White said, 'We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history,' it was a statement of faith that God is still on His throne!

¹Damasio, A. (2006). *Descartes' Error, Emotions, Reason and the Human Brain*. Vintage Books, London.

²Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking fast and slow*. Penguin Books Ltd, London.

*Dr Arthur is a senior consultant at a London-based construction practice. He can be contacted at Alex.Arthur.10@ucl.ac.uk.

Pastor Brian Pilmoor (1921-2020) d. 10 May.

Pastor Brian Pilmoor had an extraordinary zest for life, with the aspiration to make 100 years. He was driven by the loss of his father due to lung cancer when Brian was just 9, leaving his mother destitute. One of his passions was a desire to help people 'kick the habit', abandon the harmful, and live healthfully.

He left school at 14 and was fortunate to work at the confectioner company Terry's, in the recently established Graphic Design and Display Department (wrappers like 'All Gold' were among his early designs). During this time, he went to the York School of Art to develop his abilities in fine art, along with the ability to capture attention and communicate ideas, and he studied the interplay between light and darkness, proportions, and a sense of perspective, all of which were skills he made use of as a pastor.

In 1939 he was obliged to enlist for military service, and he offered the skill of 'camouflage artist', which was sufficiently diffuse for his papers to become unnoticed, with the belief that this would help him avoid combat, for which he had no desire. In 1942 he joined the RAF and was posted to India to be deployed in Delhi as a cartographer, drawing detailed pen-and-ink maps of aerial photographs for the ground forces in Burma.

In 1946 he returned to York with a determination to submit his life 'to the Lord' and to serve purposes greater than himself. While still uniformed he met Dorothy, whose love he shared for almost 70 years. Together they attended an evangelistic campaign conducted by Pastor Victor Cooper in York, followed by their baptism in Leeds. He was particularly inspired by a world view that envisaged an end to war and the conflicts of powerful agencies, and a world where people are to live healthfully and in harmony. The symmetry of Christ's rest on the Sabbath was a theme he came to repeat often.

He prepared for ministry by attending Newbold College. His alma mater was the environment



in which his love developed and his ideas were honed, and this also became a homely and thought-provoking environment for his final years. To the end, he would visit the libraries in Binfield and Newbold to pursue his passion for information and new ideas.

In 1950 Brian was called to serve several churches, including Leeds, Bradford, Nottingham, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle. He became well-known for using his art for weekly wayside posters and campaign literature. In the Ken Lacey Camp Hill meetings he fascinated audiences by drawing biblical themes with luminescent chalk under black light, while Derek Mustow sang a gospel hymn. The drawings became a trophy for those who brought the most visitors. In terms of current legacy, his example in graphic illustration inspired his son to introduce the graphically meaningful tithe envelopes now used throughout the BUC.

In 1960, Brian was called to pastor a brand-new church which became a beacon of Adventist presence on one of the main boulevards of Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia. This was followed by service in Salisbury/Harare with exposure to the Trans-Africa Division, its leadership and the broader mission. During this term he established and built a small church in Mutare. After furlough and more study at Newbold he was called as Bible teacher and pastor to Rusangu Secondary School, providing opportunity for hundreds of young people. Many of these became significant contributors to public life in the newly independent Zambia, and several now enrich the fabric of the church in Britain. During these years church members were struggling with debates around the nature of Christ and the Godhead, which resulted in Brian taking particular interest in the Trinity, helping many to resolve their paradox.

He returned to pastoral service in 1973, serving Eastbourne and Hastings, and then returned home to Yorkshire to serve Huddersfield, Halifax, Barnsley, and Oldham across the Pennines. He did a final year in Birmingham, retracing his steps to find the contacts and interests made thirty years previously, before finally retiring in 1987. Visitors to the Huddersfield

church will see a painting with the Adventist church placed central to local landmarks and at the heart of the community.

While teaching, as an eccentric in the English tradition, Brian began looking for patterns that he believed brought harmony between biblical texts and the ideas of science. This became something of an obsession and a theme of research for the rest of his life. It became the subject of his conversation with everyone he encountered, whether on the bus or walking around town. While some of his ideas were stretched, his curiosity and capacity for research were an inspiration for many young people, with whom he had a remarkable rapport. His approach, whatever the topic, was to look for an additional dimension, a life skill that opened his canvases to those with closed and certain ideas.

He leaves a home in Binfield cluttered with writings, some illustrated with pen-and-ink diagrams and collected into booklets representing his pattern of thought over the last fifty years. To every young person he would say, 'Never stop learning.'

At almost 99, Brian, a man with an earthy Yorkshire outlook, subtle humour and repartee, leaves an entertained family represented by his sons Victor and Roy, and their bemused wives, Anne and Sandra, along with four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, almost with the fashion that the number 4 has special significance.

NOTICE OF PASSING . . .

Joseph Gatharia Karauni
On 7 May Joseph Gatharia Karauni, formerly a member of the Dublin Ranelagh church, and in more recent times Boulton, passed away unexpectedly as a result of contracting COVID-19. Born on 1 January 1960 in Kenya, he leaves behind his wife, Jennifer; three daughters: Maureen, Suzan, and Shaina; and two grandchildren: Elijah and Ezekiel. With his family, we look forward to the glorious resurrection day.
A full obituary will follow.

Pastor Amalendu (Amal) Bairagee
On 9 May 2020, Pastor Amalendu Bairagee passed away unexpectedly as a result of contracting COVID-19. Born on 20 October 1949 near Calcutta, India, he leaves behind his wife, Helen, and two daughters, Tina and Shikha. With his family, we look forward to the glorious resurrection day.
A full obituary will follow.

'King Nebuchadnezzar . . . spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" 'They answered . . . "True, O king."

' "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." Daniel 3:24, 25 (NKJV, emphasis supplied).
Brian suffered an incurable skull infection for more than a year; in his final weeks he was isolated by the dreaded coronavirus and died on 10 May in Kings Lodge Care Home in Camberley, having been visited by his sons in the final days.

VICTOR PILMOOR

Messenger

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Sunset

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
May 22	8.57	9.09	9.08	9.32	9.35
29	9.06	9.18	9.17	9.43	9.46
Jun 5	9.13	9.25	9.25	9.52	9.54
12	9.18	9.30	9.31	9.59	10.00

Youth Week of Prayer: 'The Embrace'

by Darell J. Philip

Far from being a cliché, the adage that a lot can happen in the space of a week really does ring true. Little did we know that Hackney's Youth Week of Prayer, held during 7-14 March 2020, would be our last gathering together before the closure of all churches due to the coronavirus, which has now become a global crisis. While what we are presently experiencing is unprecedented and the times uncertain, the one thing that remains unchanged is that the God of Heaven is still in control of Planet Earth. With arms wide open, He is ever ready to receive us into His loving embrace. Each of the inspiring messages given by guest speaker, Elder Clarence

Jackson, attested to that fact.

Elder Jackson, the author of *The Journey from Yard to Broad*, reminded Hackney youth of the importance of using the gifts God has given them as a witness to those who need to know Him: but, additionally, they are also to be used spiritually in building up the body of Christ. 'Once you know your calling in Christ, you are to work in it with excellence, giving God the very best service. You are not to allow fear to cripple you, because God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of love, power and a sound mind,' said Jackson.

In a message geared for everyone, Jackson, who is also affectionately known as

North England Conference 'Kids Praise' concert

When the BUC church leadership announced that the Government was insisting that places of worship needed to be shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was then that Pastor Patricia Douglas, the North England Conference (NEC) Children's Ministries director, came up with an initiative to start 'Kids Praise' children's concerts to be broadcast on Sabbath afternoons.

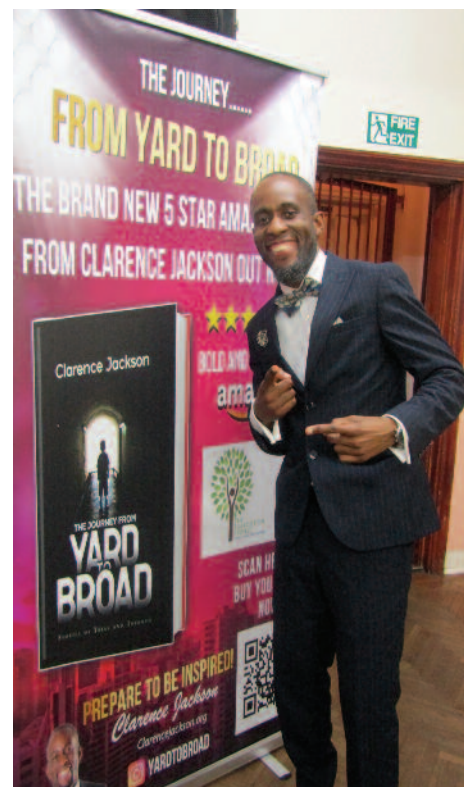
This began on 26 April with the Area 5 'Kids Praise' concert, followed by the Area 1 concert on 2 May. Each church received an invitation to be part of this initiative, which is to be a regular feature for Sabbath afternoons throughout this pandemic and possibly beyond. As Newcastle's Children's Ministries leader, Lynne Sesinye-Samwanga saw this as a wonderful opportunity and organised a children's concert for the area (NEC Area 1 churches include Newcastle, South Shields, Middlesbrough, Darlington, Catterick Garrison, South Cumbria, Carlisle, Durham and Lancaster). Lynne proceeded to start a WhatsApp group for each Children's Ministries leader in Area 1, and, together with Patricia, started working on the concert with the help of Pastor Roman Smejkal. Parents were asked to record their children singing, playing a musical instrument or reading Scripture verses and then send the clips, which were then compiled before being aired on 2 May.

Asked what inspired this idea, Pastor Patricia said, 'With so many being affected by the coronavirus and experiencing suffering, this called for something special as a means of instilling hope, strengthening faith, and providing the reassurance that there will be a brighter day. This was a message that would have to come from the 'lips of babes' commissioned by God to bring praise. They would be given a platform from which their voices might be heard. The truth is, in encouraging others, they would also be blessed and encouraged in an amazing way.'

Pastor Patricia would like to thank Clifton Hayden and his team in Area 5 for their commitment, and also Area 1 under the leadership of Lynne Sesinye-Samwanga and her team for organising the 'Kids Praise' concert.

Children have been given a platform from which they might be heard. The Holy Spirit is working through this ministry of our children to instil hope and strengthen faith, presenting the reassurance that we are going to make it through this pandemic by God's grace. The children are coming to realise the transformative nature of praise. The gift and power of music should not be underestimated.

PASTOR PATRICIA DOUGLAS & LYNNE SESINYE-SAMWANGA



the 'Poetic Preacher', reminded the wider church of the responsibility it has in accepting every young person who returns from 'a far country' with open arms and a loving embrace, free from judgement, as to do so is pleasing to God – our Father and Creator. He continued, 'We must be like the father in the parable of the prodigal son. He had a heart of forgiveness; and, upon seeing his son, with open arms he ran to and fully embraced his returning child. In like manner, we are to give our returning children the best robe, the best food and the best seat. There are many we have written off that will make it into the Kingdom – even at our expense, if we are not careful.'

In messages that followed during the week, Elder Jackson reminded us all of the lessons we could learn from those seemingly insignificant characters in the Bible who became significant through the acts of faith they demonstrated. From the men who tore off the roof to lower down the bed on which a crippled man was sick, to the woman plagued with an issue of blood, made whole after pressing forward in faith to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, Jackson told the church to do likewise. He said: 'When you build and act upon your faith in Jesus, He will make you experience victory in your life and enable you to overcome every obstacle and trial that comes your way.'

As the time came for Hackney's youth and the wider church to give Elder Jackson and each other a final embrace, albeit one from a social distance, Jackson encouraged each of them to 'be the person God created you to be and always live a life of purpose on purpose.' And, with all that is currently taking place in the world right now, what a great opportunity we have been given to be and do just that!