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Messenger

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A story of faithfulness revisited

by Bill Hamilton (see page 4)



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Albania



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We are, first and foremost, a church!

by Pastor John Surridge, BUC Executive Secretary



The constitution is the foundational document of our Conferences and Union. The Missions have a similar document, but because they are not charities in their own right, it's called an 'operating policy'. Getting these documents right is crucial to the proper functioning of our entire church structure, and drafting them is not a simple matter.

We have two competing forces when it comes to creating, or modifying, our constitutions. On the one hand, we are part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church;

but, on the other, we operate within the legal and charity frameworks of the United Kingdom and Ireland. There are differences of opinion over which of these should have priority. Some feel that we should focus on producing a document which conforms closely to local legislation, while others feel that we should start from the model given to us by the General Conference (GC) and then customise it just enough so that it complies with the laws of the land.

As Conference and Union administrators, we take this latter

view. We are, first and foremost, a church. We are Seventh-day Adventists. This is our identity. This is our reason for existence. Yes, we are organised here as three charities, but only because we see this as the best way to run the church, given local laws and practices.

So, in writing a constitution, we begin with a document that is given to all Conferences and Unions around the world, and it's called the 'model constitution'. This document has two different elements: things that we *must* include, and other things that we *can* include if they work well in our territory.

This sounds simple until you get to the details. The problem is that there are some things in the 'must include' sections which clash with local charity law. Fortunately, the GC, which has a vast amount of experience in such matters, has made provision for this. Even some of the 'must include' parts *can* be modified, but only with prior approval from the GC.

The work begins with the 'Constitution Committee', which is set up at a Conference or Union session. This committee compares the existing constitution with the model, considers suggestions from administrators, the Executive Committee, and any ideas that might have come from the Session, and tries to formulate a document that satisfies everyone.

It's a delicate process of balance and negotiation. We take legal advice from experts in local charity law, and then report our findings to the GC. After going back and forth, often several times, we eventually have a constitution that is fit for purpose and ready to be voted on by the delegates at the Session.

The next time you hear someone referring to the constitution, or perhaps come across a copy of the document, please spare a thought for the many people who labour very hard to write it.



David Neal, Editor

Over the last few months we've been studying together 'How to Interpret Scripture'. As we've forensically examined the details of the right way to study the Bible, it has felt at times as though we're on a well-meaning adventure, but could end up missing the point. To be fair, when considering how to correctly interpret the Bible, it is impossible to avoid some heavy-duty detail.

The General Conference leadership initiated this series of lessons to re-affirm a global consensus about how Adventists understand the Bible.¹ This is important to us, because how we interpret Scripture defines our message and mission; and, for it to be effective, unity is important. How do we keep together a global church family of 20 million members in both faith and practice? Humanly impossible? But then comes the thought that the church is not a merely human institution.

'Over-literalism'

In its humanity the church is currently buffeted on one side by a couple of sincere, high-profile individuals, sharing their own 'over-literal' private interpretation of a prophetic timetable. Their conclusion, in not so many words, is: 'We've come up with a possible date for the end of history.' In the middle of such global

The Living Word?

uncertainty, what message could give more certainty if it were true? An excitable proposition perhaps, but sadly it is not true. I know it's not true because of the words of Jesus: 'But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only' (Matthew 24:36). I also know it's not true because of Paul's wise words to 'new believers' in Thessalonica, tipped off-balance about Christ's return: 'For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night' (1 Thessalonians 5:2). Wake up, church – most of us are not 'new believers'! For sure, it is in the DNA of Seventh-day Adventists to be 'expectant' people, but we will never be tipped off-balance by date-setting.

'Over-rationalism'

In its humanity the church is buffeted on the other side by a lack of 'confidence in Scripture'. At precisely the time when we and the world are facing severe 'times of difficulty' in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5), we go shaky on whether we can trust the reliability and authority of the Bible's ancient words. We do the opposite of what Paul counsels by quenching the Spirit

(1 Thessalonians 5:19): not that we 'despise' prophecies, but because of our 'over-literalist' friends we become 'risk-averse' and give predictive prophecy a wide berth.

Please don't misunderstand me: interpretation is important. Correct interpretation is important, and we need to dig deep for evidence to find the truth. A failure to interpret the Bible correctly once made it a tool to justify slavery. 'Test everything,' says Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:21). But, as we dig and search, the Holy Spirit deepens our conviction about God and His ways. The danger some face in 'digging deep' is the tendency to 'over-rationalise' Scripture, resulting in a lack of trust as to whether holy words have continuing relevance, diminishing Christ's power over our lives.

Every time I pass Sir Isaac Newton's statue in Grantham, I'm ever reminded of his third law of motion: 'To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.' It may be a law of science, but it's also how some Christ-followers operate. Nothing seems to give more satisfaction than reacting to inadequacies of the other side's

interpretive position. Who but the devil can enjoy this activity more, tipping us biblically off-balance as frequently as possible? The result is theological culture wars, which are not good for unity.

The Living Word

I wish I could hear more in our current Bible study discussions about how the Bible helps me grow and mature as a disciple of Christ. Looking again at 2 Timothy 3:16 & 17 raised in my mind the following:

I dare to wonder if I am still open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Why do I need to listen to the Holy Spirit, living in the comfort of my own echo chamber as I do? Like the soft furnishings in my home, it is a most comfortable place to be, but no need to worry: I am still teachable . . . am I not? I am surely 'more settled into the truth' as I see it than I have ever been! What do you mean, Lord, that I need to confess my timidity as Your follower? Do You think that my 'fruits of the Spirit' are not as ripe as they could be? As I've told You before, Lord, this spiritual gift business really isn't for me – I can't find one!

One of the values our community of faith places great emphasis on is that of 'present truth'. I'm never quite sure what that means, as it is used in many different ways, depending on your particular theological perspective. But what I do know is that the Spirit prompts me through the Word to respond to situations and circumstances with the 'mindset' of Christ. 'Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:5).

Whether they knew it or not, white police officers last week who knelt on the ground with peaceful protesters – protesting on the streets of US cities over the murder of George Floyd by their colleagues – took on the mind of Christ. To the attention of the world has once again come the cry, 'Black Lives Matter'. The crisis of the coronavirus has exposed the still-unexplained fact that black and minority ethnic groups are two-to-three times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the general population. Whether in the US, the UK or elsewhere, progress towards racial equality continues at a painfully slow pace.

'Best not get involved'; not my business: I'm white! I know the Lord will have compassion on those different from me, but 'best not get involved'. It's much more important that I'm 'settled into the truth', busy getting my dates right on the prophetic timetable ('what terrible times these are'), and making sure that my interpretation of Scripture is forensic.

To be continued next time: ' "Best not get involved" – and the Gospel'.

All Scripture references in this article have been drawn from the English Standard Version.

¹How to understand the Bible document . . . <https://www.adventist.org/articles/methods-of-bible-study/>

A time for us to listen to each other

The book of Ecclesiastes reminds us, 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' (Eccles. 3:1, ESV). Is it possible that the murder of US citizen George Floyd on 25 May is a defining moment in the history of racism in the United States and elsewhere? We trust governments to create the necessary laws to protect the citizen, but legislation is not the best agency to change hearts and minds. If we are to change things for the better to help bring about racial justice, both in society and in the church, surely the first step is to listen to each other – really listen.

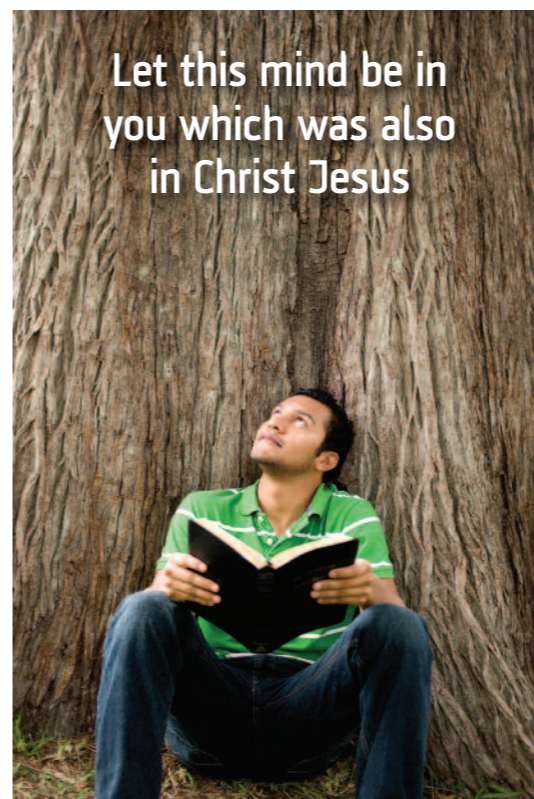
- How has the murder of George Floyd affected you?
- What is your experience of being black in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland? What is your experience of being black in the Republic of Ireland?
- How does your faith in Christ help you on the long journey towards racial justice/equality? What particular passages of Scripture do you turn to for encouragement?
- For white brothers and sisters to help bring about racial justice/equality, what three practical ways would you suggest to be most helpful?
- If you are ethnically white, can you suggest ways which will help promote racial justice/equality?

The first step to bringing about change is to listen – really listen. Is this the time? Please send a letter or write an article – a testimony, your story – to: editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk.

You never know whom it might help and enlighten.

MESSENGER is your voice.

Editor



What shall I give Him?

Bill Hamilton recalls a woman of faith and obedience



Meropi Gjika being baptised by Pastor David Currie



Meropi Gjika with Bill Hamilton

Thirty years ago, BBC News correspondent Bill Hamilton was one of the first Western journalists to enter the country of Albania, a few months prior to the collapse of its oppressive totalitarian government. Around the same time, the then-Trans-European ADRA director, Pastor John Arthur, was co-ordinating emergency relief to help the people of Albania, who were in desperate economic and social trouble. Somehow John and Bill connected with each other, and they remain friends with each other to this day. Bill is a member of the Salvation Army, and in a recent edition of *The Salvationist* magazine he tells the story of the day he met Meropi Gjika, an Adventist he describes as a woman of faith and obedience. Many *MESSENGER* readers will have heard this exciting story of faith retold time and time again: but, since 1990, for a new generation and a new community of *MESSENGER* readers, it is one they may never have heard. Whether you have heard this story 100 times, or for the first time, in these days this story of faith and obedience comes alive

again with new significance. The article concludes with a straightforward appeal, applicable to both *MESSENGER* and *Salvationist* readers alike.

The Lord, as the apostle Paul was eager to tell the early Christian church, loves a cheerful giver. In 2 Corinthians, he emphasises that when it comes to giving, motive matters. It matters to us, and more importantly, it matters to God. Our offerings must come from the heart voluntarily, not grudgingly or from a sense of compulsion.

Many Salvationists, adherents and regular worshippers now tithe through a standing order, which, in the case of those who are taxpayers, attracts Gift Aid. Before committing themselves, they no doubt consider prayerfully and carefully about the amount they should give, and whether it is an adequate reflection of God's generosity.

Others prefer to give via the weekly collection plate – but, with corps (church) buildings closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, this has no longer been possible. Add this to the suspension

of church lettings, and it has all added another layer of financial difficulty in these unprecedented times.

The hope, of course, is that when the crisis is finally over – and scientific and medical opinion seems to suggest that such a state may yet be many months away – the weekly givers will respond in kind, having safely stored the equivalent of many weeks of offerings.

It all reminds me of a remarkable story I was able to relate as the first television news correspondent to be allowed into Albania in 1990, just before the Communist government finally collapsed. For 46 years the nation had been ruled by a ruthless Stalinist dictator, Enver Hoxha, who abolished God from his country, destroyed all the churches and executed or sent to labour camps the entire clergy.

Yet many believers refused to allow the worst excesses of those dreadful years to extinguish the Christian flame which burned brightly within them. On the second floor of a crumbling apartment block in the capital,

Tirana, I was introduced to a remarkable old lady who saw every act of suppression as irrelevant to what God would eventually achieve.

Meropi Gjika had become one of a tiny band of Albanian Adventists in the 1930s who had been converted to Christianity by Daniel Lewis, a missionary who had settled in the southern town of Korca. In 1951, along with his Italian-born wife, he was arrested by the Sigurimi (secret police) and thrown into jail for his missionary zeal. He later died under torture after refusing to work on the Sabbath.

At great personal risk, and under the most severe psychological pressure, Meropi had visited Lewis regularly in prison, bringing him food and washing his clothes. More importantly, she vowed to carry on his work in secret.

As little groups of believers arrived at her house for worship and prayer, she would search for hidden microphones and blacken the rooms to foil the efforts of the secret police to photograph proceedings from windows on the opposite side of the road.

Just three years short of her ninetieth birthday, Meropi Gjika was finally baptised in an improvised pool right under the dome of the museum which had been erected to immortalise the man who had counted the banishment of religion as among his finest achievements. He was now dead, and visiting preachers were quick to spot an opportunity to bring the Bible message back to this corner of the Balkans.

After the ceremony, she invited me back to her home. From under her bed, she pulled out a wooden box. Inside were her offerings, faithfully given and stored every week for the past 25 years. The Adventist pastor was completely taken aback, but Meropi had more to show him and our BBC camera. Out came sheet after sheet of old, A4-sized paper. During those years of oppression, she had translated the entire New Testament of her Greek Bible into the Albanian language. What an example of faith in action!

Meropi told me she had 'three dreams'. The first was to be baptised; the second was to hand over her tithes; and the third was to see the building of a church to spark a religious renaissance which would prove that faith cannot be wiped out by decrees, bulldozers or bullets. Her first two dreams were fulfilled, but, at 97, she passed away just months before a new church opened its doors.

It strikes me that those of our congregations who prefer to give their offerings each week via the church collection plate might like to follow Meropi's example by putting aside the money week by week until the pandemic passes, and then bring along the total collection when services resume.

Just like Meropi, remember that God is always there: so let's stay strong in the faith and have confidence in a generous God who has promised never to leave or forsake us.

Published with the permission of the author and *The Salvationist* magazine.

'Not only faithful, but also courageous'

Towards the end of 2017, I had the privilege of attending an event in Tirana, Albania, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Adventism in Albania, following the fall of Communism. The anniversary coincided with Tirana members being able to open the doors of their new church building for the first time – a place of worship, and also a community centre to serve this city of one million people. Located on the ground floor of a highly modern upmarket 26-storey residential tower block, and set in the university district near the new national sports stadium, the new church was an inspirational symbol of a new beginning for the Albanian Mission. As we worshipped together on that 11 November

Sabbath, I couldn't help but be impressed – not only by where the church was located, but also by the continued faithfulness of Tirana members. It's fair to say that, over the past 25 years, the growth of the church has ebbed and flowed. Unlike in the UK and Ireland, the church operates not in a 'post-Christian' country, but in a 'pre-Christian' one. Note also that, within earshot of where they meet to worship, members will hear another call to worship from the mosque . . . and yet secularism seems to have as much hold on the country as ever.

While editing the story about Meropi Gjika I happened to re-connect with a former Albanian pastor, Julian Kastrati, now serving in

the North England Conference. He shared with me how he was present in person on the day of Meropi's baptism on 18 April 1992. Known affectionately to him as 'Mother Meropi' out of respect, he shared that her faithfulness played a key role in his decision to get baptised during the following week, 25 April. Later that summer, he felt a calling to ministry.

Noting her commitment to Scripture, he observed, 'It was a particular blessing to spend the early years of Adventism in Albania with her, especially during Sabbath School, when she'd serve as a living Bible concordance.' Describing what must surely have been a spiritual gift, Julian shared a familiar practice known to many an Adventist: 'After decades of daily reading, she had memorised the Bible. She read three chapters a day and five on Sabbath for seven decades of her life!'

How did she survive without church fellowship for thirty years? It seems that, under the radar of the authorities, she led small Bible study groups of eight to nine people in her home, or that of a trusted friend. 'Not only was she a faithful follower of Christ,' added Julian, 'but she was also courageous, because it seems that she was the only person to visit the jailed missionary, Daniel Lewis.'

EDITOR

To read more about the Albanian Mission and the faithfulness of its members, click on the following links:
The Adventist Review, 9 July, 1992: 'Breakthrough in Albania'
<http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19920709-V169-28.pdf>

TED News: '25 years on, Tirana inaugurates new church'
<https://ted.adventist.org/news/1222-25-years-on-tirana-inaugurates-new-church>



The history of the church in Albania, painted by Clarissa España-Corea: on the left-hand side, Daniel Lewis with his family, sharing the Gospel, and ending up in jail; upper-centre, the dome air raid shelter, to protect from attack by the global East or West during the Communist era; far right, the ADRA relief effort headed by Pastor John Arthur. Maropi Gjika is in the centre. Pastor Julian Kastrati is one of the two missionary cyclists pictured going door-to-door with the Gospel.



Tirana members celebrating the opening of their new church on 11 November 2017, joined by leaders of the Adriatic Union.



Tirana Central church members worship on the ground floor, right-hand side, in the heart of the community.



With this edition of *MESSENGER*, we begin a new book serialisation about discipleship, and specifically one which helps us come to grips with what it means to be a follower of Christ. It is one thing to make a commitment to follow Christ, but it is another to keep following Him. Dr Mbui has given this matter much

thought as a result of many years serving as a church pastor. What you read here is 'experience in the parish' speaking, organising the local church for mission. As a pastor he has a passion for empowering and inspiring every member to understand and experience God's vision for their lives. Currently Michael serves as the Personal Ministries Director for the South England Conference. Today's excerpt is an introduction for the journey ahead.

Part 1:

Making Discipleship Simple

Dr Michael Mbui

What is in a name, a title or a term? In the time of Christ, the giving of names was often intended to either recall a past event, or express a present or future expectation, or both, and this is still true in many cultures today. When people address me as *Pastor*, they are expressing a professional expectation, but when a person addresses me as *Mike*, *friend*, *darling*, or *Dad*, he or she is invoking an informal or relational expectation. When Jesus adopted the term *disciple* for His followers, was He only reflecting an existing dimension, or was He expressing new realities and expectations? What did Jesus intend this title to communicate to those who followed Him then, and those who follow Him now?

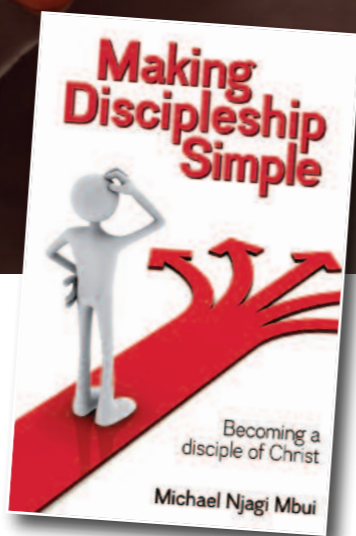
The people of Antioch referred to believers as 'Christians', perhaps because they were always preaching about Christ (Acts 11:26). In other parts of

Acts, we find the *religious establishment* calling them the *sect of the Nazarenes* and *men or women of the Way* (Acts 24:5; 9:2, ESV). Jesus, however, settled for *disciples* as the designation for His followers (John 13:35, ESV), because it was the term that reflected fully His expectations for them. Then, in His final conversation with these first disciples, He specifically tasks them with the work of making more disciples: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19, ESV).

According to Jesus, only by making the nations become His disciples would they be in a position to obey everything He commanded them. But before you can 'make disciples', you first have to become a disciple yourself, as was the case with the first ones Christ called. After they finally understood and accepted their discipleship, they were willing to defy the religious

establishment of their day in order to obey God, despite the threat of persecution (Acts 4:19, 20). They set aside selfish interests and shared all things in true fellowship (Acts 2:44, 45), and they spoke of Christ with boldness and conviction (Acts 4:13). True discipleship was the cause of such radical transformation in the lives of all who followed Christ back then, and it remains the same today.

It is my deep conviction that the Church will continue to suffer spiritual stagnation and dwarfism until our members understand and accept the important place and role of discipleship in the fulfilment of God's purpose for their lives. In many quarters the subject of discipleship receives little or no attention, and there is no effective programme to change this. Discipleship should be at the heart of the plan and programme of God, since it is the process of accomplishing His



work of salvation.

This study on discipleship aims to show the importance of being a disciple of Christ, and to explain what we believe Jesus meant when He used the word 'disciples' to represent those who believe in Him. We will then discuss what it takes to become a disciple.

Just as Jesus taught the truth of God using common sayings, popular stories, and life experiences, so we will draw parallels to the life of a disciple using modern-day illustrations. The purpose of these examples is to make the concepts and terms of discipleship easy to remember and apply.

As the title of this book indicates, we will discuss discipleship in a way that is simple, clear and practical to apply. The intention is to identify and expound on the core principles and practices of discipleship. The first chapter contends that being a disciple of Christ is the sole means to achieve the plans of God for the Church. In chapter two we will consider what it really means and takes to be a disciple, based on

the account of the rich young ruler, as recorded in all three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Chapter three discusses discipleship as a gift from God. Chapter four outlines how to holistically develop the received gift so that it can blossom and prosper. Finally, chapter five details how to realise the full potential of discipleship by sharing that received gift in ministry and mission.

I want to praise and thank God

for giving me the passion and the vision towards a true understanding of discipleship. I trust that, as we

journey together for a while, you will be blessed – and enjoy becoming a disciple of Christ.

If you can't wait to read the next instalment of *Making Discipleship Simple* – fear not!

Copies of Dr Mbui's book are available from the Adventist Book Centre's UK LifeSource Bookshop for £5.95 + p & p. In digital versions of *MESSENGER*, clicking on this link will take you directly to the web page for ordering the book.

<https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/making-discipleship-simple/>



Pastor Ian Sweeney and other leaders respond to the death of George Floyd

The horrific scenes captured and played throughout last week of the death of George Floyd at the aggressive approach of a Minnesota policeman and his colleagues have once again brought to the media attention the truism and realism that

racism is a real factor to contend with. The tragic death has caused ripples of outburst and anger not only in the US, but also here in England, resulting in mass protests on the streets of London, Birmingham and Manchester.

Floyd's death, on 25 May, was the latest in a series of deaths of black men and women at the hands of police in the US. The last words of George, whispering, 'I can't breathe', have become a slogan of truth and experience for many who have taken to the streets in protest.

In response to such tragic events, the British Union Conference (BUC) expresses its sincere condolences to the family of George Floyd; and, although we do not condone the reaction of rioting and looting in several places across America, we recognise the hurt, anger and pain experienced by those who are marginalised in society as a result of their ethnicity or minority status. Pastor Ian Sweeney shares his words of condolence on behalf of the Church in the British Isles in this following video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45ft0M4CXY&feature=youtu.be>

Pastor Emmanuel Osei, President, South England Conference

'The global pandemic of racism is still wreaking havoc in the lives of those of African origin.

'We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the United States of America. . . .

'I believe that we, as a church, should be a voice for positive change, social justice, and reformation.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW2u2jeV28Q&feature=youtu.be>

Pastor Paul Tompkins, President, Scottish Mission

'In the Scottish Mission we are a church family. I have always appreciated the warmth of young and old, of all nations, supporting each other in Christian love. In a family where one is feeling pain, we all feel pain. And where one sees injustice, we all wish to stand together.'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=_bGULApucsw&feature=youtu.be

Pastor Dan Serb, President, Irish Mission

'We stand together! The fact that our church in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the community at large, has embraced people coming from across the world, from varying multi-ethnic and multicultural settings, is a testimony of the Irish people's spirit of tolerance and global solidarity.'

https://www.facebook.com/Adventist.ie/videos/3613088322041172/?v=3613088322041172&external_log_id=3320e1de520238c10a050b04da0f2a3a&q=irish%20mission%20of%20seventh-day%20adventists (from 4:40 of video)

Pastor Raafat Kamal, Trans-European Division

'On behalf of all Seventh-day Adventist Church members in the Trans-European Division, our heartfelt sorrow and sympathy go to the family of George Floyd. . . . We call on our church members and communities everywhere to seek ways to build community, break down barriers, empower the marginalised and speak out against hatred and injustice.'

<https://ted.adventist.org/news/1713-trans-european-division-reacts-to-current-tensions-surrounding-the-death-of-george-floyd>

Pastor Dan Jackson, President, North American Division

'To my African American brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I am deeply sorry. I am saddened that you have experienced prejudice and bigotry even in the church; and that there have been times when you were not allowed to eat in the same cafeteria or go to the same washroom as whites. I am deeply sorry that you have experienced these things. As a white man I know little of your suffering, but I suffer with you today as you look out at a future that seems uncertain. It is wrong that you should live with fear because of your colour. I am sorry.

Together with hundreds of thousands of other white people I want to say to you: "I love you – you are my flesh and blood in Jesus."'

<https://www.adventistreview.org/the-work-of-god-will-not-be-finished-until-we-demonstrate-gods-love>

Pastor Ted Wilson, President, General Conference

'On behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide family, I have sent letters of condolence to the families of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, expressing our sorrow for the tragic loss of their loved ones and stating unequivocally that as Seventh-day Adventists we stand strongly on the biblical principles that go against hatred, rage, racism, bigotry, evil surmising, prejudice, and more, and offered the families support, hope, and encouragement through God's Church.'

<https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story14965-a-time-for-compassion-and-healing-our-christ-centered-mission>



Richard Daly, BUC Communications Director, gave the keynote sermon with a message on building an unwavering communication with God. Richard noted that when our prayer life is weak, we worry more. Is it possible that when we replace prayer with worry, we are really saying to God: 'You are not big enough to deal with this situation and I am going to deal with it myself'? We have often heard about the importance of prayer, but Pastor Daly's sermon connected with many in a new and refreshing way.

In addition to the celebration of a special day of communication with God, we arranged for Manchester South women to lead us in consecrating our church in prayer. As a blessed multicultural church, we heard prayers in Zimbabwean, Portuguese, Romanian and Bengali. If prayer is key, music is the language! Our worship was lifted to great heights as Manchester South Men's Choir sang a song of praise. *MESSENGER* readers don't usually see pictures of the team that provide Sabbath lunch, but we've included one with this report because the day was packed – not just with great spiritual food and excellent worship, but also with a Communications Team lunch effort.

We concluded our day with a simple message: **Communication is key to any successful relationship; when the communication breaks down, the relationship breaks down.** How important it is to acknowledge this aspect in our communication with God.

ABIGAIL SARACUTU, MANCHESTER SOUTH COMMUNICATIONS TEAM REPORTER

Communication is key!

What is more important than language/communication, you may ask? It might be easy or difficult to find the answer. But how about prayer? Is prayer a form of communication that still has an impact? Back at the beginning of March, Manchester South used a whole Sabbath to discuss this question of prayer and its impact on our lives. Pastor

New Lewisham & district 24/7 prayer line

It was earlier this year that Pastor Kwarteng Ampofo, the minister of the Lewisham and Downham churches, instituted a daily morning devotional for the whole church via conference call. Set up initially for the global 10 days of prayer, it has become a regular part of our church life and ministry, continuing to this day. The daily devotional has been a blessing to both members and community friends calling in – at times with almost 100 callers.

With the success of the morning devotional, a number of members became convinced that this blessing was too great not to share more widely . . . and then came the COVID-19 global health crisis. How could we appropriately respond in the name of Christ with our limited resources? The answer staring us in the face was to extend the phone ministry to provide a 24-hour prayer line service.

As this ministry is developing, we are looking to move from the conference call line to a more professional virtual contact centre, but we need more help. Currently we have volunteers enlisted to join the

team by word of mouth, but we also want to give other members across the length and breadth of the Union, and beyond, the opportunity to participate in this ministry and share the work to make it lighter. Our prayer regarding this work is for more volunteers.

Here's our appeal to *MESSENGER* readers. The 24/7 prayer line is doing well, and with continued support it can be ready to respond as demand for its service increases. We are looking for Adventist volunteers to be on duty for half-hour slots daily/nightly or whatever time you are available to talk or pray with the lonely, the bereaved or those who just want to talk. If you would like to be a 'listener', or can connect us with a fellow Adventist who is willing to give of their time to help mend broken lives in this way, please contact Kwabena on 0788 885 0210, or the Lewisham church phone line, 0208 690 4443, where someone is waiting to take your call. Why not be a blessing to someone through the gift of intercessory prayer?

KWABENA KIMATHI, LEWISHAM PERSONAL MINISTRIES LEADER AND 24/7 LIFELINE VOLUNTEER OPERATOR

Editor's note: *We need to thank the Lord for this new ministry. The crisis of the hour requires that we provide new ways to minister and serve the community with the compassion and care of Christ. As a pastor, I know that the gift of 'listening' does not always fit easily with my personality type. It is sometimes in my nature to offer a solution to the problem before I am fully aware of what it is! Often I have to remind myself of the instruction from James, 'Be quick to listen, slow to speak' (James 1:19, NIV). This vital new ministry, initiated by the members of Lewisham and Downham, will not be the first or the last – and, without question, the need for this service is great.*

In the 21 May edition of MESSENGER, we highlighted the ministry of the Cornerstone Counselling Service, sponsored by the South England Conference. Thembie Mapingire, the director, shared that a team of 50 trained volunteer counsellors and listeners have been enlisted, working daily from 8am to midnight. Is it not a blessing that one ministry complements another? The Lewisham prayer line (along with other local church prayer lines) has the opportunity to serve as a feeder service to the Cornerstone service, as and when the 'listener' knows that, in addition to intercessory prayer, the caller requires additional professional help. Working together like this enhances the ministry of both – for His Kingdom.

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted



Teaching takes time; learning brings change

When North England Conference (NEC) Sabbath School teachers recently attended a two-day training seminar at the Birmingham, Camp Hill church, they were there with a purpose.

- They wanted to know how to improve their delivery of the Sabbath School lesson.
- They wanted to learn how to get students involved in the class.
- They wanted to learn how to cover the lesson topic more effectively.

The three reasons above were discovered by NEC Sabbath School Ministries Director, Beulah Plunkett, during an interactive icebreaker deliberately designed to illustrate how to engage with class members from the start of a Bible study. The message was clear. If a teacher

AerosolShield Project

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of working with students of the Adventist Students on Campus Society (ASC) at the University of Birmingham as one of the university's chaplains.

A few weeks ago, Helen Gaynor (President of the ASC) and Jemima Nambo (a member of the ASC) approached me on behalf of ASC at the university with a project. It is a project they are considering that will enable them to demonstrate God's love in action to the community during the COVID-19 crisis. They had been made aware of how a researcher at the university had developed a new medical device called AerosolShield, which has been designed to improve protection from COVID-19 infection for healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, carers, paramedics and porters working at the front line. Furthermore, it could even enable family members to sit at the bedside of their sick relatives. Testimonials of the device from healthcare workers indicate that there is a need for it, but logistically it cannot be supplied yet without public funding.

An initial goal to raise £4,200 (£42 per AerosolShield) has been set to provide a minimum of 100 AerosolShields to care homes across Birmingham.

Louisa and Hannah Jeffery, members of Halesowen Central Church, approached ADRA-UK for support, and we are thankful that ADRA-UK will be giving its full support to this much-needed and exciting initiative.

A crowdfunding site has been set up for those who would like to support this project: <https://crowdfunder.co.uk/aerosolshields-for-care-homes-fighting-covid-19>. You can also donate direct to the NEC account with the reference 'AerosolShield' (bank name: NatWest; sort code: 60-80-09; account number: 61283304; account: North England Conference).

We would like to thank those who have already contributed to this fund-raising. We are also encouraging all members and churches to contribute what they can afford to the project, and to promote and fund-raise for it in any ways possible as we work together to reach the goal of £4,200 and beyond. Finally, may I encourage you all to pray sincerely for the AerosolShield project, and for the physical and spiritual opportunities of mission that it provides.

OBINNAYA IHEOMA, MINISTER: HALESOWEN CENTRAL, HALESOWEN, AND NORTHFIELD

wants participation of students, icebreakers are vital for what is described as student-centred teaching.

Commenting on the activity, Beulah Plunkett noted, 'I then asked the participants to reflect on how it felt to share what they would like to learn, and to talk to each other in pairs and threes. Their response was ecstatic, as they now had let go of all their fears, because they all knew that each of them had similar reasons for attending the course, and that the teacher was friendly!'

Other teaching principles the course highlighted included learning to teach experientially; helping students grow in confidence in speaking in a group setting; the responsibility of the teacher to create a group climate of respect and safety, ensuring that the Sabbath School class is a safe place to share; building friendships and enjoying fellowship as a result of sharing Scripture together; learning with and from others – having a teachable spirit; the challenge and dynamics of teaching adults; and, when it comes to teaching a Sabbath School class, preparation, preparation, preparation.

'Quite a tall order,' Beulah reflected with her seminar students. Prior to her role as NEC Sabbath School Director, Beulah was a lecturer at the University of Birmingham. Responsible for developing this training course, she added, 'The Sabbath School lessons are the best ever, and we are blessed to have them. When studied well, they draw us to the Bible to learn about the love of God.'

Summing up the seminar, Beulah said, 'Teaching takes time, and learning brings change. If we want to help our members truly to understand how to serve the Lord and build better relationships in church, then the teaching and study of the Word is key, but we need to give this real time in Sabbath School. Teaching is about causing to learn, and learning brings about change. Our desire and key purpose is to change from the sinful self to the Christ-filled child of God. It is only then that we are able and prepared to share the Word with others.'

BEULAH A. PLUNKETT, NEC SABBATH SCHOOL & WOMEN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR, PEACE ASSOCIATE ADVISOR & LECTURER

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Who are we and what do we do?

The response



If this is not good, uplifting conversation, I don't know what is!

A reminder of the challenge . . .

Can you find three to five everyday words (maximum five) which describe our mission, purpose and values with precision – words which uniquely describe to the core who Adventists are and what they do? As I've said, I don't think this is as easy as it looks; and if this is not possible, what about finding five punchy two-word descriptors?

Here are your responses to the three-word challenge:

Audrey Balderstone	Saved (for) compassionate service
Brian Davison	A caring, sharing faith
Heather Hanna	Love, faith and hope
Paul Hersey	Faith with purpose
Patrinne Irvine	Witnesses to freedom
Glyn Jones	Sharing living faith
Claude Lombart	Love; heal; live
Christ Lucas	Love for Christ or Hope through Christ
Karen Plaatjes	Introducing people to the hope of God
Zhané Simpson	Love God; love others; save all

Catherine Boldeau thinks that our church should adopt ADRA-UK's three words:

Justice; compassion; love

Is it possible, as Heather Keough believes, that our community of faith sometimes shares more than one face with the community? One is the positive, grace-filled, loving community we know, which Heather is committed to sharing. 'But there is,' she suggests, 'another face some folk see: one we can work out, for sure.'

Stephen Hulbert posted an interesting line:

Seventh-day Adventist

Stephen didn't comment further, but caused me to wonder whether he thinks our name says exactly who we are and what we do. Worth thinking about?

Althea Mason would liken our identity to:

Hope in the darkness

. . . but went on to make a wish. 'Wouldn't it be great if all Seventh-day Adventists were known for the never-ending kindness pandemic!'

Nathan Stickland pointed out that if a charity shop identifies with faith and hope, why not the church?

Faith; hope; charity

And, finally, Veselinka Becejac followed the OXFAM model, because in many ways three words are just not enough:

**Hope for all
Love for all
Liberty for all
Education for all
Grace for all
Salvation for all
Bible for all
Sabbath for all**

Thanks to each person who responded. Why not continue this conversation in your local church? It's a conversation for all to have. For youth meetings, teens' Sabbath School, prayer meetings and small groups, is there a more significant topic to remind us that our community of faith exists for a purpose? Be assured, to its core, this is about mission – it is more about the God in Christ we represent than it is about us.

EDITOR



Clapton Community Hub supports front-line workers during COVID-19 outbreak

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau

The news reports of deaths of front-line workers from COVID-19 sparked the small project by the Clapton Community Hub to supply visors for the staff at the local Homerton Hospital in East London.

Soon there was such an overwhelming demand that the small group of volunteers, some from the Clapton Seventh-day Adventist church and some from the community, found themselves using the premises of the church between four and six hours a day, six days a week, to make these much-needed visors.

Visors were sent to care homes, given to district nurses, and supplied to pharmacies and corner shop staff, as well as to the local hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital for children. Requests were then made from as far away as Hartlepool, Reading and Luton . . . so the production of 1,000 visors doubled to 2,000.

Great Ormond Street Hospital acknowledged their contribution in a letter of 20 May: 'We would like to say thank you for your donation of face shields for the Haemodialysis Unit at Great Ormond Street Hospital. The staff have commented on how comfortable and safe these masks feel, which is essential for our work with the children on haemodialysis. . .'

Alongside the visors, the Clapton Community Hub was also asked if it could provide hand cream for front-line workers. One member of the Clapton church started to make jars of hand cream with natural ingredients.

The opening of the church premises each day for the making of visors enabled people from the community to find safety and sanctuary and to spend time with God. Others entered the building and enquired if any food donations were available: and there started the food distribution project with both cooked and non-perishable food items, which were donated by local people.

The initiative grew even further as the Clapton Community Hub was



Pastor Nerine Barrett, pastor of the Clapton church, with the local first responder team

invited to assist families on low incomes, as well as pregnant mothers who were still shielding and were not able to purchase or make their own baby food. Within 24 hours of putting out the call for supplies, they were overwhelmed with food, baby clothes and packs of nappies.

Their next venture is to provide 50 face shields to every local school, and also to supply barbers and hairdressers with them.

'We will continue to join in the community spirit of making a difference to our front-line key workers and also serving our neighbourhood with food,' said Beautine Wester, a key mover and shaker behind these initiatives in Clapton.

'From small acorns, mighty oaks grow,' said Pastor Bert Smit, CEO of ADRA-UK. 'It is truly exciting to see how a single-focused initiative around PPE has grown into a project that has impacted nearly 3,000 people over the past eight weeks. I am humbled by the dedication of the volunteers who freely give of their time to assist others in need.'

By supporting www.adra.org.uk you are helping to support 73 community hubs throughout England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

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Churches might be closed still, but we can supply your quarterlies direct to you.

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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

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.

Teens, anxiety and lockdown

by Liseli Samwinga

Anxiety is a normal, human feeling of fear or panic. Most people will experience some form of anxiety from time to time. Unfortunately, some people end up having way too much anxiety and struggling to control it over a long period. That's when anxiety becomes a problem and may need some medical attention, whether it's in adults or teenagers.

I would like to share with you a few things about anxiety from a teen's perspective, in view of the current lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Teens are not exempt from anxiety. Did you know that 13.3% of 16-19-year-olds and 15.8% of 20-24-year-olds have suffered from problem anxiety?

This means that problem anxiety is much more common among teens than many parents think.

The symptoms of anxiety

Although every teen's experience with anxiety may be different, some common symptoms of anxiety include:

- feeling nervous, on edge, or panicky all the time
- feeling overwhelmed or full of dread
- feeling out of control
- having trouble sleeping
- experiencing low appetite
- finding it difficult to concentrate
- feeling tired and grumpy
- having a really fast heartbeat or thinking you're having a heart attack

- having a dry mouth
- trembling
- feeling faint
- stomach cramps and/or diarrhoea/ needing to pee more than usual
- sweating more than usual
- wobbly legs
- getting very hot

Anxiety in lockdown

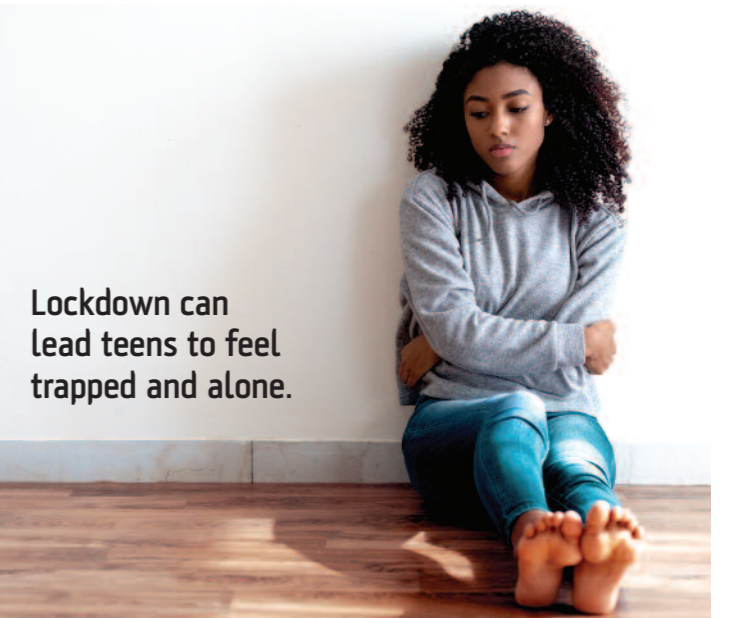
Quarantine isn't the best environment for people with anxiety. Lockdown can lead teens to feel trapped and alone, because they miss school and church, both of which offer a chance to meet friends. With social distancing, teens miss out on going out, eating out, and shopping with school or church friends.

Even when the lockdown is lifted, travelling to school on public transport will stress many teens, especially those who already have anxiety issues. They will be extremely concerned about the risk of being infected with the coronavirus on public transport or at school.

Dealing with anxiety

Thankfully, there are things that can be done to reduce anxiety.

The charity Anxiety UK suggests that the first step is to speak to someone you trust



Lockdown can lead teens to feel trapped and alone.

about how you are feeling.¹ This could be a teacher, a parent, a relative or another adult you trust. However, teens need to know that they can, in confidence, talk to counsellors at charities that help teens with conditions such as anxiety. These include Anxiety UK; the 'No Panic' youth helpline for 13-20-year-olds; and Young Minds Crisis Messenger.

In addition, parents must educate themselves so that they are able to spot the symptoms and support their teens when they're going through a dark patch.

Above all, every one of us, both teens and adults, can confidently lean on our faith in God to cope with all life's challenges. I would like to conclude with this promise from the Word of God: *'Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you'* (Psalm 55:22, NLT).

May God be with all the teens in our conference and around the world.

¹<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/anxiety-information/young-people-and-anxiety/>

Opportunities for employment within the Police Service



Dear Pastor Neal

Thank you for the conversation we had yesterday, and it was welcoming to have an open-minded conversation about the many educational and career opportunities that we have where we could potentially reach out to the Adventist youth.

I am the Apprenticeship Officer for Nottinghamshire Police, which is a very exciting and rewarding job. My role entails creating and giving young people age 18+ opportunities for employment within the Police Service, where they can work towards a nationally recognised qualification in an apprenticeship role, and where they also earn a good wage in a very exciting and rewarding organisation.

I am about to advertise a number of roles, and I would like to share these opportunities with your readers.

- Communications Department (media team)
- Crime scene investigators
- Administrative roles (secretarial)

- Camera safety team
- HR CIPD
- Archive and exhibits
- Citizens in policing
- IT Department

The roles are non-uniformed and office-based, with the majority working from Police HQ, Monday to Friday. If any of your *MESSENGER* readers would be interested or wish for further information, please contact Ron Lawrence MBE at Nottinghamshire Police 01159 670999.

RON LAWRENCE MBE CEO 6832, APPRENTICESHIP OFFICER

Tel: 101 Ext: 3106832, Blackberry: 07970184783

ron.lawrence@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk

Nottinghamshire Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PP
www.nottinghamshire.police.uk



A man with a white van

by Esme Sutton

Our nephew Duane had an accident on Sunday – he had been enjoying his exercise on his bike, but unfortunately he took a tumble! Despite wearing his cycle helmet, he sustained a nasty cut on his head. A man in a white van came to his rescue and took him to A&E for treatment. He also transported Duane's bike to his dad's house. What a lovely man! He was not a knight in shining armour, but a 'man with a van'!

It made me so very thankful that there was someone at hand to help Duane. That experience reminded me of something that happened to me over thirty years ago!

I was teaching 30 (of the 60) 6-7-year-old children in a large local infant school. We had been studying the 'plague' as was experienced by the people of Eyam in Derbyshire. To bring the history to life, we took all 60 children to Eyam, where the locals regaled the children with facts, as well as hair-raising stories, as we visited the numerous historic sites in the village. It was a successful trip! We intended to spend the afternoon walking around Ladybower Reservoir. So, after lunch and a short drive, all were eager to let off steam and enjoy what the countryside had to offer! All 60 children, the head teacher, class teachers and support staff formed a very energetic and untidy 'crocodile' as we explored the delights of Derbyshire.

After we had been walking for an hour or so, we reached what we thought to be the halfway point. My fellow class teacher, June, was a Derbyshire girl, and she had cycled around the reservoir many times in her youth! We looked to her for guidance. Do we turn back and return to the coach the same way, or do we press on? There was some hesitation, but we decided to press on! The road ahead beckoned invitingly. (Risk assessments had been made and entered into the risk assessment book, and all emergency equipment was to hand: but we didn't have an OS map of the area, and we only had a rough estimate of the distance back to the car park!)

We all thoroughly enjoyed the walk until some little legs began to tire and the stragglers had to be coaxed along. After another two hours of walking we were sure we would see the car park around the next bend in the road. But there was more of the same – beautiful trees, shrubs and the shining water of the reservoir! The staff were feeling very uneasy. We talked together about our options. The decision was made. June opted to walk (at greater speed than 60 tired children) back to the car park to ask the coach driver if he would drive down to meet us. In the meantime, we would continue our walk. It didn't help that the light was fading fast – it

was late autumn, and the moon was rising.

For some children this was an adventure of epic proportions. Others had to be coaxed and cajoled! We sang nursery rhymes and every song we knew, over and over – it buoyed our spirits up. The moon got brighter, and the trees got darker! *Surely June must have got back to the car park by now*, I thought; *so where is the coach?* Only one solitary car had come down the road and passed us by! Even with all the children around me, I felt very alone and concerned. I glanced at my watch. We should have been arriving back in Grantham about now! I pictured all the parents waiting at the school gates for our return. My prayers had been flying heavenward for some considerable time – for the safety of the children, and for a solution to the problem!

The crocodile of children had got longer and longer. The head teacher was at the front of the line, and I was bringing up the rear. All the singing had stopped. The children just kept putting one foot in front of another. Suddenly I saw the light of a vehicle coming towards us. I willed the head teacher to flag the vehicle down, but she just kept on walking! The vehicle, a white van, edged along the crocodile of children. I couldn't let the opportunity pass! So I stepped forward, waving my arms in the air. The vehicle slowed to a stop. A young Asian man was in the driving seat, and a young woman was in the passenger seat. I asked, 'Did you see a tall woman walking along the road?' He had not seen anyone! I asked another question: 'How far is it to the car park?' He said it was about another mile! I asked another question: 'Do you think you could take some of the very tired children back to the car park?' Amazingly, he agreed! Before I knew it, the rear doors of the van were open wide, and some of the children that were really struggling – and one of the support workers – clambered in and sat on the floor. The floor was clean! In fact, the van looked as if it had not been used before! 'I can take more!' the driver enthused. Over 20 children fitted in, snug and secure.

About 20 minutes later the van returned. It slowed down and stopped. The driver offered to take more children back to the car park. Gratefully we accepted his kind offer. He told us that our coach driver had not felt confident enough to drive down the narrow road. June had done her best to persuade him, but without success! Off they went: it was just the

stragglers. The tail-end of the crocodile plodded on till the white van appeared once more and gathered up all that were left – including me! How lovely it was to sit on the floor of the van. The children sat quietly until



we reached the car park. And then we all voiced our thanks! 'I know the children would love to write to you and thank you properly,' I said to our rescuer. 'We are so very grateful! I'll just get something to write with so that I can take your name and address.' I grabbed writing materials and hurried back to the . . . it wasn't there! The van had vanished! There was no sign of it anywhere! I looked around in disbelief. How could a white van just vanish into the night? It began to dawn on me that I had witnessed a miracle: a man with a brand-new white van that could transport over 60 children and staff back to their coach, in just three journeys!

The coach driver was eager to get going. The first important stop was at a telephone box, so the head teacher could contact the school caretaker and give her our news. 'We're safe and should be home by 7.30!' The rest of the journey was a blur! The exhausted children fell asleep, and the head teacher imagined irate parents, but I couldn't get the young Asian man and his white van out of my mind. My prayers had received a spectacular response!

The head teacher had no need to worry. There were no repercussions at all. The Chair of Governors remarked, 'Someone was looking after you yesterday.' One of the dads expressed the mood of the parents when he quipped, 'Can you take them on a 9-hour walk more often? They went to bed and went out like a light! No fuss, no monkeying around!'

What a day that was! When you see a man in a white van, especially if it's a spanking-new van, think of the miracle I witnessed! I praise God for His answer to prayer. What an answer I received that day! I smile about it as I recall the experience, for many white vans and their drivers don't have a good reputation! Only God would think of sending a white van out into the moonlit Derbyshire countryside to rescue 60 children!

This article first appeared in the Grantham Church newsletter, where Esme serves as an elder.

Catherine Davey (née Ayres) (1929-2020) d. 21 April.

Catherine was born in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, in 1929. Her father worked at Fort Dunlop in the tyre industry. Cathy had no brothers or sisters, but she had a multinational ancestry with forebears from France, Germany, Holland, England and Ireland. She also had noble ancestors from Prussia when it was a separate state before 1864.

She worked as a typist at Fort Dunlop after the War, but trained as a nurse at Wimborne Community Hospital in Dorset.

In 1962 she became an Adventist under the ministry of Pastor Peter Stearman, who encouraged her to go to Newbold College to train as a Bible instructor. The writer remembers her from 1965-66 as a charming, sunny personality whose picture appears in the Newbold yearbook of 1966.

Sadly, she had to go home after one year to care for her mother, who had cancer. She had already lost her father. No wonder, then, that her favourite verse was Revelation 21:4, where *'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes'* (KJV).

Living at 297 Alder Road, Poole, she took in a lodger – an engineer called John Cecil Davey, who had been involved in the design of the Bailey bridge, which helped the Allies win the War. They married in 1973, she being 44, and he 67. Sadly, he too died after a few years, and Cathy became a widow with no children.

In 1985 David Booker was baptised following a David Curry campaign in Bournemouth Town Hall. The local pastor, Arthur Cooper, encouraged David (Booker) to bring Cathy to church in Alma Road, Winton. They became firm friends, and latterly David visited her every day as her health declined. They never married, but the present writer saw 'love in action' in a big way. I was her pastor from 1990 to 1997 and was cheered by her constant joy. She was loved by the church, who mourned her loss after the many spells she had in Poole Hospital, mainly with broken limbs due to weakness.

Her funeral took place on



22 May at St Mark's Church in Wallisdown Road, near her home in Alder Road. She was reunited with her husband John in a graveside service, helped by the vicar of St Mark's, the Reverend Rupert Higgins, who shared with us the resurrection hope in 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, when we shall meet 'on that beautiful shore' on the Day of Christ.

'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!'

PASTOR ROBERT VINE

Moyra Cochrane Macdonald (née McKenzie) (1926-2019) d. 16 October.

Moyra was born the eldest of three children to Isabella & George McKenzie in Glasgow, a sister to Ruth and Donald. Moyra started attending the Adventist church, with her parents in Glasgow, when she was 4 years old. She was baptised in 1938, the year before the church acquired the building in Renfrew Street.

She worked hard at school, latterly during wartime, which paid off as she went on to achieve degrees in English, a Mathematics Master's at Glasgow University, and a degree in Teaching. Not satisfied with teaching in state schools, she trained to work in special education in Manchester and loved her many years of teaching in Glasgow School for the Deaf.

Moyra would spend many a summer during her youth hitchhiking around Europe. When she was 19, she took a job at Imachar Hotel on Arran, where she met lifelong close friends. It was her love of languages that drew her to continue travelling around Europe throughout her life. She could speak German, French, Dutch and Italian, and passed her O level in Gaelic the year before she retired.

In 1956, Moyra married Donald Macdonald. They had the privilege of being the first couple to get married in the then-new Glasgow church in Queen's Drive. They had three children: John, Carol and Roslyn.

Moyra continued teaching, but took early retirement at 58 due to failing eyesight. She enjoyed playing musical instruments. She would laughingly remind her children that she got a Grade 1 in singing at university. Her favourite hobby was researching her



ancestry. Through this she was in touch with distant relatives throughout the world, many of whom came to stay with her regularly.

Moyra loved to support the church in any way she could. She served as Sabbath School superintendent and church clerk, and would open her home to prayer meetings.

Sadly, Donald passed away in August 2001. Moyra continued to be active, travelling to see her five grandchildren or on holiday with friends.

Though a loyal member of the Glasgow church, in later years Moyra frequented the Paisley church. She felt particularly close to Paisley members, and was extremely grateful for their help and friendship.

Right to the end of her life, Moyra was known for being full of life and always ready to enjoy a good discussion. She passed away peacefully in the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley. Moyra is greatly missed by her family and close friends, as well as the Glasgow and Paisley church families and many others living further afield.

The funeral service was officiated on 25 October 2019, by Pastors Rory Mendez, Claudiu Popescu and Paul Tompkins, our Scottish Mission President. Now Moyra awaits that great day when all sadness and tears will be forever wiped away.

ROSLYN KEHOE

Messenger

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Sunset						
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		London	Card	Nottingham	Edinburgh	Belfast
Jun	5	9.13	9.25	9.25	9.52	9.54
	12	9.18	9.30	9.31	9.59	10.00
	19	9.21	9.33	9.34	10.03	10.03
	26	9.22	9.34	9.34	10.03	10.04

BUC National Day of Prayer Wednesday 10 June

Wednesday 10 June has been set aside for members across the British Union Conference to spend time in prayer concerning the pressing issues we face today. The decision, ratified by all presidents from the South and North England Conferences, as well as the Scottish, Irish and Welsh Missions, reflects a unified front from all territories of the BUC for the need for collective prayer.

Please remember:

- **The grieving:** The ongoing coronavirus situation has caused many to face bereavement. There are also others struggling with financial hardships, depression and work uncertainty.
- **To stand up and be counted:** Following the recent racial tensions starting in America and now across the globe, let us pray for God's guidance to make appropriate responses to challenge and stand up to the evils of racism, prejudice and discrimination in all its forms.
- **Guidance in re-opening our churches:** As lockdown restrictions are being lifted, let us pray for God's wisdom to the Union, Conferences and Missions as they prepare guidelines regarding the reopening of our churches.

For further elaboration on these three points, watch this video as BUC President Pastor Ian Sweeney addresses the British Union on the day of prayer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUPcpf9M2Q>

'I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: "Look! Look! God has moved into the neighbourhood, making his home with men and women! They're his people, he's their God. He'll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good – tears gone, crying gone, pain gone – all the first order of things gone. . . . Look! I'm making everything new."
Revelation 21:3-5, MGE, adapted

God whispers in our pleasures,
Shouts in our pain – but in both,
In reassuring tones, He says,
'Better times are coming.'

(GOD'S LITTLE BOOK OF PROMISES
BY DAVID MARSHALL)

Youth and Pathfinder directors talk about the Bible

If there is any group of people called to help Pathfinders, teens and youth enjoy digging deep into the Bible, it is their leaders. But what does the Bible mean to them? What's their favourite text and Bible character? And why read the Bible? This is what they had to say . . .

Adam Ramdin
(Youth Director, NEC)



Life text:
'When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him' (Proverbs 16:7, NKJV).

Why?
The more friends and the fewer enemies we have in life, the better!

Bible character: Moses

Why?
I'm not sure if I identify with him in terms of my experience, but he's my favourite Bible character. Seeing what he endured and accomplished in life is something I always find inspiring. Taking his people from captivity to freedom and enduring 40 years in the desolate wilderness are all life experiences that I know little about, but his faithfulness in the midst of these huge trials is worthy of emulation.

Regular reading important?
The Bible has answers to life's challenging questions. In it is life, and its words give encouragement from day to day. The Bible is the book of the ages that has stood the test of time.

Jeremy Johnson
(Youth Sponsor, Welsh Mission)



Life texts:
Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1-5

Why?
The reason both of these texts resonate with me and encapsulate everything that I stand for is that they announce boldly like a town crier that God is the Centre and Creator of all things. Just the thought of it provides a sense of comfort and joy.

Bible character: Jeremiah

Why?
I definitely identify with my namesake, Jeremiah, who was called to deliver several messages to God's people in order to reconcile them with Him. Through pain and suffering, and often disliked for preaching a message of doom and gloom, he stayed obedient to God's calling.

Regular reading important?
During the lockdown I've had extra time to read the whole Bible again, and it's enlightening! Every day, Bible stories highlight the wonderful good news of the salvation offered through Jesus Christ. Reading the Word every day helps build a closer relationship with our Lord and Saviour, which is essential as we navigate life's difficult challenges.

Clifford Herman
(Pathfinder Director, SEC)



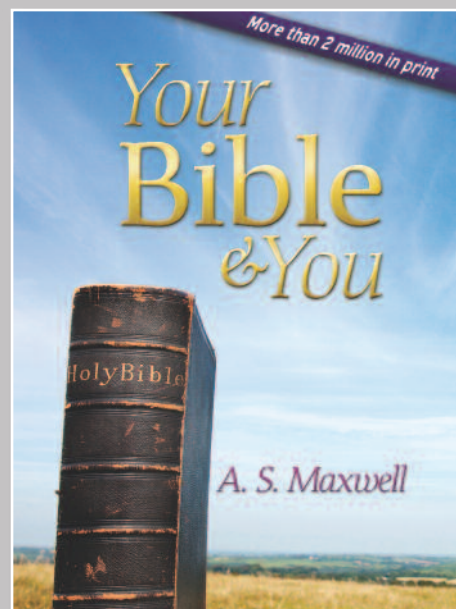
Life text:
'Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it' (Philippians 1:6, NKJV).

Why?
The text represents the assurance I have in God that He is capable to complete an incomplete human like me.

Bible character: Peter

Why?
He was a 'speak first, think later' kind of guy whom God used to do cool things sometimes, but needed God's cold splashes of water to cool him down and get him down to earth sometimes.

Regular reading important?
To keep me sane! The Bible is an amazing book that challenges us to engage with it: to hear, metaphorically speaking, all that it has to say about the story of redemption. It truly is a masterpiece that uncovers all aspects of life within this universe, showing how much our God loves mankind.



Ikwisa Mwasumbi
(Pathfinder Director, NEC)



Life text:
Jesus before Pilate (John 18:33-38)

Why?
What a privilege it was for Pilate to have a one-to-one with Jesus: yet he blew it!

Bible character: Jacob

Why?
His willingness to give up everything for the Truth – to win the blessing and favour of God!

Regular reading important?
First, it is the voice of God, God talking to me – a building on a rock. Time will pass, but God's word will remain. Second, hope for eternal life is hinged on TRUTH! But talk is cheap. The Bible is unique in comparison to the Bhagvat Gita of the Hindus, the Qur'an of the Muslims, and the Tripitaka of Buddhism. To quote the late Dr Ravi Zacharias: *'In real terms the New Testament is easily the best-attested ancient writing in terms of the sheer number of documents, the time span between the events and the documents, and the variety of documents available to sustain or contradict it. There is nothing in ancient manuscript evidence to match such textual availability and integrity.'*

Of its principle character, Jesus, it is said: *'The character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortation of moralists.'*

WEH Lecky – historian and a sceptic, quoted by F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972)