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Messenger

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

2 July 2020 • Volume 125 • 14



Stay connected

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How far would you be willing to walk to get a Bible?

The local bookshop, the nearest town, or only as far as your smartphone to promptly open the app store?

Two years ago this month, a group of youth from across Europe retraced the steps of a young girl who was so determined to have her own Bible that she saved for six years and then walked 26 miles to purchase a copy for herself.

It was the year 1800. While Bibles were becoming available, they were still very expensive and not for 'the common people'. Mary Jones changed all that, and her walk to gain a Bible has since inspired tens of thousands of people and led to the formation of the Bible Society, providing God's Word in multiple languages across the world.

Walking with that 2018 group of youth, I remember reflecting: *Mary Jones, why did you walk 26 miles across hillsides and mountains to obtain some ancient words, unless they are of immense life-giving and life-changing value? And I'm also wondering if the words that you went to find were words that would help you not just survive in difficult times, but also thrive. But is there an even deeper reason than that? Is it possible that you travelled this path because you actually wanted to travel home – to your spiritual home – to find that Person who loves you more than you will ever know, whose name is Jesus?*

While it's been interesting to share together over the last few months about 'how to interpret Scripture', I'm bound to reflect again, and wonder how much I really value my Bible.



To find out more about Mary Jones and her Bible, and our journey, go to:

<https://ted.adventist.org/news/1309-how-far-for-a-bible>

<https://www.bydmaryjonesworld.org.uk/>

EDITOR

Can we re-open our churches? from the British Union Conference field leaders

It is our sincere hope and prayer that Adventist churches throughout the UK and Ireland will soon be able to open again. However, this must only be done when it is legal and safe to do so. We must all recognise that the reopening process may be difficult and will take considerable time and careful planning. The following guidelines have been agreed by the presidents of all fields within the BUC:

Action summary:

- Perform risk assessment
- Report to Conference or Mission
- Receive permission
- Reopen church
- Record actions
- Reassess regularly

Key timeline of events:

- Government advice or guidance should be received by July in all regions.
- Church boards, working with their health & safety officer in consultation with the Health Ministries Department (where these are in place), must produce a risk-assessment document, with a corresponding implementation document.
- Government permission to return received – date may vary by region or even district when a 'hotspot' system is in place.
- Church boards 'sign off' their churches as ready to open, notify their Conference or Mission office, and send them the risk assessments and implementation documents.
- Conference and Mission executive officers collate responses and, based on that evidence, give formal permission for individual churches to open.
- Churches open, in strict accordance with their risk-assessment

and implementation documents, in full compliance with legal requirements and Government guidance, and in close communication with all of their members.

- Church boards ensure that they keep a record of all actions carried out as they follow their risk-assessment and implementation procedures.
- Local church boards take responsibility for ensuring that risk assessments and implementation documents continue to be followed carefully.
- If a risk assessment is not being followed, the church board should close the church and then repeat the risk-assessment, sign-off, and approval process as above.

Risk-assessment factors to consider:

- Churches vary considerably; therefore, the risk assessment has to be customised for the local situation.
- All churches, when reopening after a period of closure, will require a deep clean. This is not just for the coronavirus, but also for other hazards which may be present, such as legionella in stagnant water, etc.
- Congregations which rent from others will have to consult their 'landlords'.
- Church is not just what happens on Sabbath: it includes weekly meetings, house meetings, travelling to and from meetings, the visitation programme, etc.
- The situation is changing all the time, and the risk assessment will need to be checked regularly for changes in local circumstances, official regional risk levels, etc.
- Phased returns, multiple services in a day, singing, ordinances, fellowship meals, ticketing systems, deep cleaning, and any possible increased risk due to the demographic makeup of the church may all need to be considered.
- Adult and children's Sabbath School classes should continue to maintain social distancing.

For further information: <https://adventist.uk/departments/executive-secretary/reopening-churches/>

BUC



David Neal, Editor

Stay connected

I need it to be continually powered up to its maximum level. If I see the battery indicator falling below 60% I become unsettled.



If only I could have the same 'can't live without it' sense of need when it comes to staying connected with Scripture. 'Why does it matter?' you ask? Because Holy Scripture gives us an insight into the mind of God, who is different from us, bigger than us, greater than us – but who has chosen to reveal Himself to us. 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD' (Isaiah 55:8, ESV). Why is this important? Because, at the very least, it is helpful for understanding who we are.

If, like me, you've been on the faith journey for quite a while, we could be tempted to think that Holy Scripture has nothing new to say. We've known Bible stories since childhood. Bible teaching and doctrine we are familiar with. Prophetic outcomes are well rehearsed. With our picture of God fixed (about how He thinks and what He does), we misguidedly place the highest value on the preservation of 'the truth' we think we have discovered.

And all that might be well and good, were it not for one thing. The

primary purpose of reading Scripture is not to gain information about God, but rather to engage with the mind of God – who is very different from us. He is holy, and we are not. We cannot reach up to Him (an impossibility), but the Bible reveals how He has reached down to us – to restore a lost connection.

No mediocre obscure ancient near-eastern manuscript – the product of 'nothing more than the thoughts of men of bygone ages' – is Scripture.¹ This is 'God-as-He-has-revealed-Himself',² who doesn't do self-isolation, but longs to connect with us. 'We love because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19, ESV). 'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them' (Genesis 1:27, NRSV). 'And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people' (Leviticus 26:12, ESV).

It is the 'God-as-He-has-revealed-Himself' I want to stay connected with, speaking through the variety of inspired authors as they connected with Him, sharing with the people of their day their impression of God. Thinking about those authors, Rob Bell puts it like this:

'We have to embrace the Bible as the wild, uncensored, passionate account it is of people experiencing the living God.'

'Doubting the one true God.'

'Wrestling with, arguing with, getting angry with, reconciling with, loving, worshipping, thanking, following the One who gives us everything.'

'We cannot tame it. We cannot tone it down.'

'If we do, then we can't say it is the life-giving Word of God.'

'We have made it into something else.'³

The apostle Peter explains the agent at work to make the Word of God life-giving. During ancient times, 'Prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:21, NIV); and, for the one who receives the word of God today, Paul explains: 'And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit' (1 Corinthians 2:13, RSV). With the Holy Spirit working at both ends, this is what makes the Bible the 'life-giving Word of God'. We cannot underestimate both how unique and how valuable this dynamic is.

And yet, as I think about the Holy Spirit, I cannot forget that He is the continued personal presence of Christ in our lives. Unlike any other book I have ever read, am currently reading, or will ever read in future, it is the words of 'Holy Scripture' that keep me connected with the living Christ, who is the Word become flesh (John 1:14). Thousands of books may capture my imagination and stir my thinking, but none of them can be described as 'the living Word'. Neither may I regard them as having supreme authority over my life. Neither will they tell me the truth about myself, with Good News about how the 'myself' in me becomes re-connected with God.

For the last few months, we've studied together the ins and outs of how to interpret Scripture. How did you find it? An interesting experience, bringing greater understanding? Frustrating that the Sabbath School curriculum seemed to permit no variants to the orthodox? Concerned about the way Brother Smith thinks about the Bible? If there's one thing we can be sure about, this conversation will keep going.

But what about the Sabbath School 'shrug the shoulders' syndrome? When all is said and done, we've had our great discussion, but what difference does it make? Have we not a heightened need to stay connected with the 'God-as-He-has-revealed-Himself' through His Word?

Final thought:

'The Bible tells a story. A story that isn't over. A story that is still being told. A story that we have a part to play in.'⁴

I wonder what the psychologist would say about that?

¹Leon Morris, *I Believe in Revelation*, p. 12

²Ibid., p. 11

³Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis* (London: Collins, 2012), pp. 54, 55

⁴Ibid., p. 58



Our memorials – an uncomfortable truth?

by Pastor Ian Sweeney, President, British Union Conference

I have to admit that until a few weeks ago I had never heard or been aware of Edward Colston. Why should I? However,

this all changed when a statue of him, erected in 1895, was pulled down from its plinth and pushed into the waters of Bristol Harbour as part of the demonstrations following the death of George Floyd in the United States.

This statue was actually erected 174 years after Colston's death in 1721. What do we know about him, and why has this event led to widespread news coverage? Colston's legacy in Bristol is inescapable, with various streets, a concert hall, schools and alms-houses (charitable housing/hospitals) all carrying his name at various times.

Colston, born on 2 November 1636 in the family home in Bristol, was the eldest of some 11 children. Evidently, he was a staunch royalist, a member of the Church of England, and a Tory Member of Parliament towards the end of his life. Colston attempted to combine his religious and political principles with his concern for the poor in various schemes to improve schooling in Bristol. In 1695 and 1702 he paid for 10 boys to be added to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, the city's main school for orphaned boys.

Although Colston was born in Bristol, he spent much of his working life in London and made his money from imports and exports, sugar, wine and silk. During the 1670s, along with other family members, he became involved with the Royal African Company, a chartered joint-stock company with headquarters in London. The Royal African Company was the leading purveyor of slaves in English vessels from the west coast of Africa to the Americas. From 1672 to 1698 it had a monopoly on that part of the slave trade.

The Royal African Company provided slaves as the labour force for English plantations in North America and the Caribbean. Edward Colston became a member of the company on 26 March 1680. Over the next dozen years, Colston's active role in the company is without question. Many of the meetings he attended discussed the goods needed to purchase slaves in Africa, the wages paid to ships' captains, the dispatch of the company's ships, and the quality of sugar sent back to London from the West Indies. All this information I garnered from a pamphlet of the Bristol branch of the Historical Association in its local history pamphlets. Colston also made a number of philanthropic gestures to the people of Bristol, and in 1895 it was decided that his memory should be honoured for the gifts he had made to Bristol with the

erection of his statue.

A monument is a type of structure that is explicitly created to commemorate a person or event. In many cultures we set up monuments at burial sites, calling them headstones. Monuments have been around for thousands of years, and, as we are quickly discovering, they can create controversy.

In Bible history, for example, 1 Samuel 7:12 records a monument that was set up by the prophet Samuel. It reads, *'Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us"'* (NIV). Samuel, the great prophet of the nation, called a meeting of the nation's leaders where he announced to them that if they wanted to experience God's blessings they needed to serve Him faithfully.

At a placed called Mizpah, Israel gathered in prayer to seek God's blessing. At that moment, Israel's dreaded neighbours and enemies, the Philistines, saw this national prayer meeting as an opportune time to launch a military attack. God performed a loud miracle which sent the Philistines into such a panic and fear that they were pursued and killed in their retreat. This was a great victory for Israel; hence the erecting of a memorial called 'Ebenezer', meaning 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.'

This monument might have been a very simple design – crude, by today's standards – but it would have a story behind it, for the people of Israel as well as for the Philistines.

The reality is that a monument, which is one person's celebration, might be another person's revulsion. Part of the debate with the pulling down of monuments in the UK, the USA, and also South Africa is that, for some people, the pulling down of a monument means the erasing of history: but history cannot be erased; and, as we are discovering, someone's evil legacy will often be revealed.

On 30 October 2011, the BBC were paying tribute to one of the most famous names in British television and radio, who had died at 84. Tributes flowed in for this champion charity fund-raiser, including one from the Prince of Wales. His name was Sir Jimmy Savile. It was later revealed that he was a paedophile.

Sometimes, in ignorance, we honour the wrong people.

As I have already mentioned, Edward Colston was a member of the Church of England. His was a time when some people used the Bible to justify slavery, causing some people today to reject Christianity.

The problem with historical monuments is that they do not tell the full story, and nor do people particularly want to hear the full story. A monument is specifically built to remember,

or honour, the great achievement of an individual. There is an unwritten rule (a more) in our society that we should not tarnish a person's memory or achievement.

Part of the reason why I love the Bible is that it tells you about who and what people were – their history is on view for all to read. The Bible is not concerned about tarnishing anybody's reputation: whether it be Noah getting drunk, Abraham sleeping with his maid and having a child with her, Jacob/Israel cheating his brother and eventually having children with four different women, Moses being a murderer, his sister Miriam being a racist, or Gideon having numerous wives and a concubine for good measure.

Why does God allow these aspects of people's lives to be revealed?

Maybe God wants us to see that the human beings we often regard as our heroes of faith, like all humanity, were clearly far from perfect. Maybe God wants us to celebrate Him first and foremost.

Monuments are important because they have an ability to remind us of our past and help us reflect on what it means for today and our future. In this regard, monuments should not try to memorialise people as being perfect; they shouldn't cause celebration so much as reflection.

I detest everything about slavery, but I am glad that people have preserved the records of companies that ran the slave trade, such as those on display in the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool. As I looked at their spreadsheets (and I am no lover of spreadsheets, as every treasurer I've worked with will testify; my eyes glaze over), I was struck at how African slaves were seen as a commodity; not as human beings, just as a commodity. In looking at the slave ship exhibits, I saw the inhumane way slaves were transported – for the purpose of maximising profits. Money was a god – more important than people. Exhibitions like this call upon us to reflect on what humanity can be.

Auschwitz-Birkenau (Poland) is a monument that helps us to reflect on the evil practices that distorted ideologies can lead to. Monuments can be taken down, but all monuments should make us reflect on the past that was lived to help us create a better today and tomorrow.

Today we could use a memorial like Samuel's: a memorial to God's faithfulness. Here we raise our Ebenezer, because 'Thus far the LORD has helped us.' That's a reminder we could always use in a world ravaged by racism, injustice, prejudice and COVID-19!

Prayer matters

On Wednesday 10 June the British Union Conference family was invited to join with me in a National Day of Prayer. Our focus of prayer was three-fold:

- The grieving
- To stand up and be counted
- The reopening of our churches

These are specific prayer matters that we need to petition the LORD about. I'd like to invite every MESSENGER reader, and every member across our territory, to continue with me to petition God for His continued intervention in our world today.



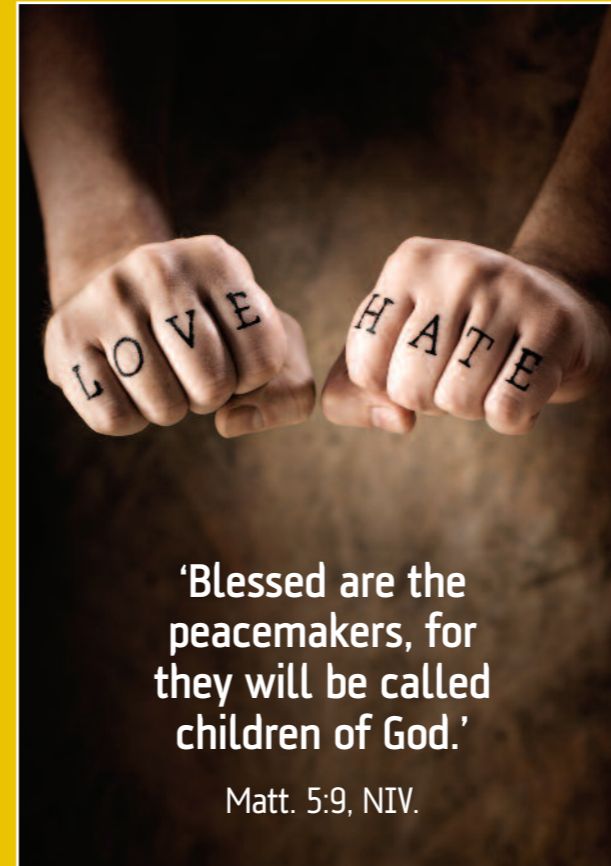
Racism, health and hope

Dr Chidi Ngwaba

Dr David Williams of Harvard University has conducted extensive

research into how racism affects our own bodies.¹ Many studies have suggested that if you're the victim of racism, your risk of heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure sometimes goes up threefold, which doesn't seem fair – you are the victim and you get sick. I would like to see another study – one which would study the racists. What happens to their bodies when they are the perpetrators of such racism?

It would be a difficult study to do, I know, and we'll probably never know. But there is enough research to tell us that bitterness, hate, lack of forgiveness and lack of compassion are all negative indicators for our health. And I also know this because the Bible says, *'He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity'* (Rev. 13:10, NKJV). You can't be an oppressor without being oppressed. You might think that you are an oppressor, but your body will keep a score. It's worth noting that the same verse also says, *'Here is the patience and the faith of the saints'* (NKJV). That tells me it now requires patience and faith to deal with this issue.



'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

Matt. 5:9, NIV.

The racist and the Jew

I once saw a TV show called *Why We Hate*. It focused on a white gentleman who had gone to school in a deprived area, mainly black, with a black school. He was picked on and bullied, and really didn't want to go to school after that; he was really, really down. After he left school he started to mix with some other people who started to say, 'You know these black people? We need to start a white pride group.' He started wearing racist tattoos on his body, and ended up in jail.

Coming out of jail, he's covered in tattoos and can't get a job. His probation officer informs him that the only job going is in a shop – and the owner is Jewish. 'A Jewish owner?! I'll take it so long as I don't have to talk to him.' *Amazing*, you might think . . . but the owner of the shop takes him on, and he does his job. When the time comes to be paid, he's expecting that the Jewish guy is not going to pay him well. To his surprise he is paid in full, and receives a bonus because he is a good worker. 'At that point I was broken,' said the white pride racist activist. 'I used to march through the streets with our white pride and our swastikas, and people threw bottles at us, hurled abuse at us, and we could dodge that. In fact, every time that happened to me, I just got more energy and strength.' But when this guy who he hated treated him with respect he was changed. He had to leave. He now spends all of his time trying to educate people about why people join such racist groups.

Why am I telling you this?

I'm talking about health. I want us to be healthy, but we are never going to get there just with hate – and I mean hate – on both sides. We should never be tempted to lower ourselves to start hating. I remember what Jesus said in Luke 6:32-36. He said (and I paraphrase), 'Look, if you love people who love you, there's no benefit in that. Everybody does that. Hateful people do that.' He's saying, when people hate you – love them back. Listen: I know that's a difficult thing to do, but our healing and our future depend on that. It depends on us being able to forgive. All the indicators in science tell us that people

who are able to forgive, people who are seeking peace – those are the people who live longer and who live better. I'm not saying we condone everything; absolutely, I think we should do more. I think protesting is fine – but when that's over, when all the celebrities have gone back to their day jobs, we still have to fight this thing; and if you're going to protest, sure, but make sure you sign up to vote too. If you are going to make a difference, make a permanent difference.

I'm saying all this because I know that at the root of our healing, at the root of our health, have to be love, forgiveness and seeking unity. Jesus said, *'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God'* (Matt. 5:9, NIV). Being a peacemaker is not an easy job. It is a very difficult job, especially when you are trying to make peace with people who don't like you. But that is what we have been called to do.

Learning to love

Now, I love talking about health. Showing people how to reverse disease is a joy and a privilege. But at the heart of healing is learning to love ourselves and learning to love each other, as well as loving God; learning to forgive ourselves, and learning to forgive each other. When we're able to get onto that path, there is a future. I'm personally still on that journey. I find it difficult to watch what happened to George Floyd, and I really can't do it yet. But I have the feeling that God is asking me to forgive that police officer. As I say, I'm not there yet. I don't feel at peace when I see that video, but that is what lies before us if we are going to get to a place where we can have healing. You and I are going to have to start trying to work together for unity. I like what Martin Luther King said. 'Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.'

I know we're all being tempted to hate right now: hate each other, looking back into everybody's past, trying to take down this, take down that; that's natural. But I will remind you that over the years and decades there have been riots, there have been protests, there have been commissions, there have been reports and studies and we're still in the same place . . .

The only way we can make a change is when we use the power tool of grace, because first of all we've been forgiven by God. We can use that power to start making a difference in our community, starting just around us. This message is even bigger than physical healing. This is really a message of hope, and I hope that you take it, use it, and share it.

¹To find out more about the research of Dr David Williams, go to <https://scholar.harvard.edu/davidrwilliams/home>

Dr Chidi Ngwaba serves as the Health Ministries Director for the South England Conference. This article is adapted from a presentation he gave during the Sabbath morning worship service at the South England Conference virtual camp meeting, 20 June.

Adventist Radio London: redundancies for majority of staff

by Pastor Michael Hamilton



It is amazing how finance and economics can negatively, or positively, impact the mission of the church. Over the past eight months, the negative impact has been the reality experienced at Adventist Radio London. The financial crunch being experienced by the South England Conference has had a detrimental effect on our fledgling DAB radio ministry, and, as a result, the radio has seen drastic and threatening changes.

Our mission has been to 'unashamedly extend the teaching, preaching and healing ministries of Christ to meet the diverse needs of London, discipling its population to holistic living and experiencing Jesus their Saviour, the only hope for mankind'. The effective fulfilment of this mission demanded dedicated sacrifice from all the staff, which they courageously and untiringly gave for the past two years. However, sadly, it became necessary to give compulsory redundancies to the majority of them. These redundancies will affect all our live programmes which are broadcast each day. Our live broadcasts are what connect us with the listeners. We all love to hear a real person on the other end of the telephone. We like to ask authentic questions, live, and get a relevant and current response. That was the benefit of our live presenters. They were able to keep us connected with the current issues and relate them in the context of the Adventist faith.

A funding shortage has been the primary reason for the cuts at Adventist Radio London. Over the past six months, appeals were made, especially to our church members, for pledges and donations which would be used to support the radio ministry directly. We are very grateful to the many who have responded so generously, and we thank you very much for all that you have given. However, the rate of income

and the number of pledges have not been sufficient to indicate a positive and stable financial footing for the ongoing ministry of Adventist Radio London. As a registered charity, we have been restricted in how funds can be raised. Commercial advertising and sponsorships were not possible, and so donations from listeners and members were to be our primary source of income. For the immediate future, we will continue with our requests for donations, with the hope that our financial position will be strengthened, and this ministry will continue for the foreseeable future. The South England Conference Executive Committee has commissioned a special steering committee to look at a possible financial strategy for the continuation of our radio ministry, and it is hoped that a positive recommendation will be made, and that Adventist Radio London will be saved. In the interim, we will have until 31 August 2020 to continue a reduced-service broadcast. After that time, if no solution is found, we must sadly cease our transmission.

How effective has Adventist Radio London been for the advancement of the mission of the South England Conference? From its inception, numerous reports have been coming in about the impact that our broadcasts have had on lives across the SEC and around the world. Through this ministry souls have been baptised, and Bible study courses and health and lifestyle courses have been applied for through our Adventist Discovery Centre. People have had a change of lifestyle, returned to church, and expressed interest in knowing more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church; they have expressed a desire to leave their Sunday-keeping churches and to begin keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. These are just the ones that we know about. How many more are there who have silently received Christ and will wander into our churches and online worship spaces to express their desire to become members of the remnant church? Thank God! We may never know, this side of the kingdom.

It is sad that finance and economics have negatively impacted the ministry of Adventist Radio London. Does the God who created this ministry still own all the cattle, silver and gold? Is He still able to supply all our needs and 'to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Ephesians 3:20, NKJV)? We are fully confident that 'He who has begun a good work . . . will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ' (Philippians 1:6, NKJV). We continue to solicit your prayers and financial support for Adventist Radio London.

Stories changing lives

by Lynette Allcock

'You've been listening to the *Breakfast Show*, helping you to create a happier, healthier life!' I turn off the mic, gulp back a mouthful of water, and take off my presenter 'hat'. After a couple of hours on air, I'm switching into producer mode now, preparing for the next day's show and planning ahead for future broadcasts.

Before I became a presenter/producer for Adventist Radio London, whenever I listened to radio or podcasts, I thought it sounded like a fairly easy role – you simply chat to interesting people and relay useful or intriguing tidbits of information. Now, however, I appreciate how much time and effort goes into just a few minutes of radio content. For example, a script of 500 words takes just three or four minutes to present: yet, if you've ever had to research and write something yourself, you know how long that can take to prepare!

I open my computer and start exploring what is in the news and what people are concerned about on social media. I'm looking for ways to link what's happening in the world with the aims of Adventist Radio London – to share a message of hope, health, and Jesus with spiritually curious listeners in London and beyond. I prepare the content for the next day's script, working to inspire and encourage listeners; steer them towards holistic health; and show God to be real and relevant. I arrange interviews with authors, artists, counsellors, health professionals, pastors, and ordinary people with a God-story to tell. I edit all the interviews and recorded content I create. I love how much I get to learn along the way.

When I present, I've had to get used to speaking to a largely silent audience. I come from a teaching background, so I am used to seeing the reactions of my listeners immediately, but in this role I never know who is listening. That is exciting, but it can sometimes be disheartening, especially if you thought you would certainly get plenty of responses to your question or book offer . . . but the audience is quiet!

Encouragingly, though, there are moments when the team and I get feedback that reminds us that our work is making an impact:



'My mental health is better after I started listening to you.'
'I stumbled across your radio station and now I'm hooked. I believe that God has led me to you.'

'Your station has played a big part in my recent decision to accept Jesus.'

At Adventist Radio London, we are a small team with a big task; but, with each comment, prayer request, book giveaway, or Bible study request, God reminds us that His Spirit is working.

The stories we share are changing lives. By the end of 2019, Adventist Radio London had more than 62,000 online listeners and reached far beyond London, with listeners from over 120 countries. Over the year, we gave away 114 books on topics including relationships, health, and the Bible, and 27 listeners asked for Bible studies.

We want to see Adventist Radio London grow to reach more listeners with messages of hope, health, and the teachings of Jesus. However, as Pastor Hamilton has shared, and for all the understandable reasons that the COVID-19 crisis has brought about, the future of the station is in doubt.

It's not too late to become a friend of Adventist Radio London, so that together we can keep sharing stories that change the lives of people in London and elsewhere. This is mission!

I'm hoping that somehow we can continue to share stories and the new life God offers as we partner in transforming the lives of people from across London and the world.

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Discipleship and identity

by Pastor Michael Mbui

Unless you cease to live your life by taking on the life of Christ, you cannot become a disciple of Christ. Being a disciple of Christ takes more than learning and loving. It takes letting Christ live His life in you.

The following is a true account, although the names have been changed. After taking over power through a military coup, President Idi Amin embarked on making Uganda an Islamic nation by banning Christian churches and religious services, and by persecuting the church members and leaders. Gerald and his classmate had to travel to Watamu in Malindi, Kenya, where their theological college was relocating following the banning of the Church. As the minibus made its way towards Malaba town, the border crossing from Uganda to Kenya, none of the passengers had the slightest inkling of the life-changing experience awaiting them at the last roadblock. Their thoughts were all focused on getting out of the country to continue their ministerial training.

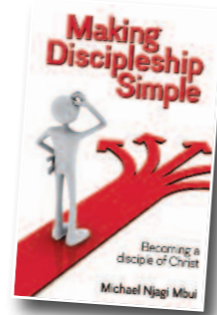
At the roadblock the soldiers had drawn a white line across the road where they expected every driver to stop. No vehicle was to cross that line, even by an inch. Gerald's driver had not seen it, and failed to stop in time. Before he could switch the engine off, the soldiers were on him. One grabbed him by the neck and threw him to the tarmac, where others kicked him and danced around his body. Some of the other soldiers entered the minibus and ordered everybody out. They were abusive, slapping and kicking the passengers as they ran out. Once outside, the passengers were directed to queue, holding their identity cards and all the money they had. The soldiers checking their identity were rough and rude, throwing the cards into the bushes and taking away their money. As the soldiers ended their inspection they came to Gerald, who was at the end of the line and not holding either an ID card or money in his hand.

The commander of the soldiers shouted at Gerald, 'Where is your identity card and your money, you idiot?' Gerald looked at him and asked mockingly, 'Which money are you talking about? Did you give me money to keep for you or ask me to carry your identity?' The commander could not believe his ears. He screamed, and pointed to the bodies that were scattered on the road – apparently those of passengers who had recently been killed.

Suddenly Gerald was surrounded by soldiers, all pointing their guns at him. His colleagues thought he was as good as dead, having aggravated a situation that was already made bad by the driver. Many of them were already praying silently, fearful that they would all be shot since they were in the same group. The commander spat at Gerald and shouted at him. 'Today count yourself dead, because this is the last day you will see the sun. Who do you think you are? Look at the dead bodies around you here. They were as foolish as you before we sprayed them with bullets. Do you have anything you would like to tell these fools you are travelling with before you die?'

Gerald put his hand in his pocket and looked at the commander as though he was nothing, and said, 'You are the most ignorant man I have ever met in my life. Who told you I am scared of any bullet or any death! If you want to shoot me, go ahead! But one thing I want you to know is that I died 2,000 years ago in Christ on the cross of Calvary. I was buried with Christ and rose with Him. I no longer live, but Christ lives His life in me. Shoot me, if you want to.'

By the time Gerald finished his testimony, his friends were in shock and believed he had sealed their doom. Interestingly, the commander asked the soldiers to lower their guns. As though in a stupor, he looked at Gerald again and asked him: 'How many years ago did you say you died?' Gerald



answered calmly, 'Two thousand.' As though apologising, the commander then told him that he had no idea that he was dead. They had thought he was alive, and since they had no dealing with the dead he could return to his seat and continue with his journey. He led Gerald back to his seat and apologised profusely. They then hurried everybody back to the vehicle, asking them whether they were also dead – and, if they were, why they had not said so. Gerald went on with his journey with all his money and his identity card intact. His testimony saved his life and those of his fellow companions.

The words spoken by Gerald to the soldiers, 'I died and rose again in Christ', were not just good words that saved the life of Gerald; they were very common terms repeatedly used by Paul to explain to believers what it really means to believe in Christ and to be one of His disciples or followers. His personal testimony in Galatians 2:20 reveals this fact: 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me' (NIV).

Jesus used a different term and explanation to communicate the same understanding on discipleship. To His disciples He stated, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' (Mark 8:34, NIV). The cross was a symbol of sacrifice, self-denial and death. The denial and death implied here are those of the disciple who ceases to live his life, or one who dies to his life, because he chooses the life of Christ. This is the meaning drawn from the numerous instructions and examples of Jesus on the subject, and from the statements of the disciples themselves as they testify of their own experiences with Christ.

Discipleship – from the days of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to the time of Christ and beyond – was about being 'the pupil or learner who attached himself to a teacher, a teaching, or a school of thought in order to learn and become an expert' (Ganoune Diop, *Make Disciples!* Oakwood College Press, Huntsville, Alabama, p. 5). The disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees, such as Saul under the tutelage of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), were individuals who committed to learn from their teacher so they could be like him: but Jesus gives the term a deeper meaning and significance than this commonly held version. To Him, it was about the total life of the master being revealed in the disciple.

The response of Jesus to the rich young ruler is recounted in Mark 10:21: 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me' (NIV). This highlights several factors about the discipleship of Christ: the price or cost of being His disciple; the pay or reward of discipleship; and the process of becoming a disciple of Christ. Next time, we shall consider each of these aspects of discipleship as stated by Christ in this account and in other passages of Scripture, and ask the question, 'Who is a disciple of Christ?'

If you can't wait to read the next excerpt of *Making Discipleship Simple*, the book is available for £5.95 + p & p. To order, just click on the link below.
<https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/making-discipleship-simple/>



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After the flood
came the new earth.
The returning dove
was the sign that
restoration could
take place – much
like our hope that
after the lifting of
lockdown we can
start the restoration
of life...for ourselves,
for those that
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The raven and the dove

A serious reflection on life as lockdown eases

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau, Development Education Officer, 'I am Urban' lead – ADRA-UK

The story of the Flood is a well-known narrative with lessons around faith and faithfulness; but rarely do we consider that transition period when the waters start to subside, but the eight inhabitants are not yet out of lockdown. It's dangerous to move forwards, but they are restless where they are. They no longer want to be cooped up inside a boat full of animals, but they fear drowning if they emerge; and, anyway, they have no idea what the 'new normal' will be. They are 'weary, tempest-tossed voyagers' (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 105).

So Noah sends out a raven.

A raven is a bird of quick scent; it is an omnivore and will eat almost anything. It is also known to selfishly stash food away from others. The Bible tells us that the raven Noah sends is unsettled as it goes 'to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth' (Genesis 8:7, KJV).

Next, Noah sends out a dove.

A dove is a gentler, more giving creature. Doves are usually herbivores and will regurgitate their food in order to share it with their mate. After the dove is sent out and finds no place to land, it returns and settles back into the ark. Noah waits a further seven days and then sends out the dove again, and this time it returns to the ark with an olive branch in its mouth; hence the dove is now a symbol of new life, new hope, and a world that has been restored.

On 4 July 2020, lockdown will ease for many in the United Kingdom.

The flood waters of the pandemic have raged for the past three months. Many lives have been lost; hundreds of thousands of people have been in infected in this country, and millions worldwide. Developed countries are reeling from the economic impact, and the developing world will bear the brunt of subsequent waves of the contagion.

But one of the spin-offs of the lockdown is an attitudinal change in people. Many, like the dove, have been caring and kind. We have heard many stories of the kindness of strangers, the tenacity of unlikely fund-raisers such as Captain Tom (since promoted to honorary colonel), and the dedication of so many front-line workers who have risked their lives in service to others.

However, we have witnessed those who have used the lockdown for profit; those who have blatantly flouted the lockdown restrictions; and the many families who have experienced domestic violence in this period.

And, as we emerge from lockdown, what lessons have we learned? Are we re-entering the world more compassionate and caring, or have the past few weeks encouraged selfishness and self-satisfaction as we thank God 'that we are not like other men'?

Over the past few months, ADRA-UK has seen our churches come alive with a new spirit of compassion. Despite the closure of worship spaces, furloughed pastoral staff and lack of regular funding, 73 hubs throughout the UK have cared for their members, set up hardship funds, opened food banks, and distributed meals to front-line workers, refugees, rough sleepers, children in residential care homes, families on low incomes, people living with HIV/AIDS and those who have no recourse to public funds. In addition to this, they have provided psycho-social care through listening circles, helplines and face-to-face support (while observing social distancing). Much-needed hygiene products have been distributed, and clothing banks have been set up. They have cared for and helped to rehouse victims of domestic violence, and cared for those who are convalescing from COVID-19.

As we enter a new phase of recovery, which is a time of hope and restoration, we at ADRA-UK would like to invite you to join with us in raising funds to continue the work that we do with the world's most vulnerable people.

It's often too easy to be a raven and consider our own needs; it is harder to be a dove and care for the needs of others: but we are providing you with an opportunity to continue to demonstrate the gentle and meek spirit of the dove by supporting us as we relaunch our 2020 ADRA Appeal, which will run through July and August.



Noah waits a further seven days and then sends out the dove again, and this time it returns to the ark with an olive branch in its mouth; hence the dove is now a symbol of new life, new hope, and a world that has been restored.





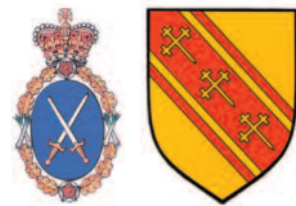
has been key in providing storage for frozen foods and also in sourcing food from local supermarkets and sharing that food with the other food hubs/food banks/food markets.

The volunteers have been delivering food since the lockdown on a weekly basis and helping and supporting the other food hubs/food banks/food markets with additional supplies of bread, potatoes and vegetables.

They have worked tirelessly and selflessly across all communities and have made a real and significant positive difference to the community of Preston.

The nomination was proposed by Andrew Pratt, the Bishop of Blackburn's interfaith advisor.

COMMUNICATION DEPT



Preston Adventists nominated for High Sheriff of Lancashire COVID-19 award

The role of High Sheriff is the oldest secular dignity under The Crown. The first High Sheriff of Lancashire was appointed in 1160. The High Sheriff is appointed by The Monarch. The High Sheriff's COVID-19 Awards will be given to people and organisations from the county of Lancashire that have made outstanding contributions to alleviate the challenges of the pandemic, either from the voluntary sector, charitable organisations or local public services.

The volunteers at the Seventh-day Adventist church, Grimshaw St, Preston have been pivotal in supplying food to vulnerable families in Preston. The church has been closed since March, but that has not deterred the willingness of any of them to help the people of Preston. As well as collecting food and delivering it to those in need, the church



General Conference to profile One Vision at its autumn global training seminar

Each year for a few days, before the Annual Council of the General Conference takes place, church leaders from around the world take a few days out to consider a significant aspect of church life, or a major initiative of the General Conference. Called the LEAD conference





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!



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(Leadership, Education and Development), the purpose is to train Division, Union and institutional leadership and members of the GC Executive.

Invited to participate this year is the Stanborough Park church's One Vision project, which has promoted collaboration between community groups in Watford and further afield to help those in most need during these difficult times. Coordinator Enoch Kanagaraj, responding to this invitation, requests prayer:

'Please continue to pray for the One Vision project. Currently we are serving more than 3,000 hot meals a week and 800 grocery food parcels to the vulnerable. Also, we are working with 18 schools in Watford, taking care of the school children who are not entitled to school meals and helping with essential goods for the families. In partnership with the BUC Convalescence and Restoration project over the past five weeks, we have been delivering 180 meals daily to Willesden Green and Hanwell Church. We are just about to launch a One Vision mental health platform, where we will be reaching different communities.'

COMMUNICATION DEPT







As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Returning tithes and giving offerings under lockdown

NOTED

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.

Should churches reopen? – N. T. Wright's perspective

On page 2 of this edition this matter was considered in detail by the BUC field leaders; but N. T. Wright, quoted in the 15 June edition of *Time* magazine, admits he's caught between two opinions:

'As churches debate whether to allow gatherings, I find myself caught between two viewpoints, both of which seem right. I understand that we need to be responsible and scrupulously careful . . . but, equally, by temporarily abolishing corporate worship and joining with others only on livestreamed services, Christians may seem to be agreeing that we are just like-minded individuals pursuing an arcane hobby.'

That's a serious point, Dr Wright, and it's not difficult to think that this situation is just a *hint* of a reminder of what it must have been like for first-century Christians – emphasis on the word 'hint', as our experience today does not include a knock at the door from the authorities. Permission to worship is a given. Wright continues:

'Part of the answer to this conundrum might be to recognise the present as a time of exile. We find ourselves "by the waters of Babylon", confused and grieving for the loss of our normal life. We must, as Jeremiah said, settle down into this regime and "seek the welfare of the city" where we are. But let's not pretend it's where we want to be.'

TIME MAGAZINE, P. 15, 15 JUNE 2020

Two horizons

'I have lived through massive change, and am struggling to understand it more fully so that I can proclaim the Gospel more effectively. If we fail to root ourselves in Christ and the Scriptures, we shall be tossed around with every whim of contemporary thought. Yet if we fail to root ourselves in the culture of our society, we shall be utterly incapable of sharing the Gospel of God with others. The herald of the good news must have two horizons: that of his message, and that of those he hopes to awaken to it.'

MICHAEL GREEN, 'ADVENTURES OF FAITH', REFLECTIONS ON 50 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE, P. 150

Reading pastors respond to terrorist attack

'The Seventh-day Adventist churches in Reading would like to express our deepest condolences to the heartbroken families and friends of Joe-Richie Bennett, James Furlong, and David Wails, fatally stabbed on Saturday, 20 June at Reading Park.

'Our hearts grieve with you, and we lift you in our prayers at this time. We recognise that the loss of a loved one is heartbreaking at any time; however, these tragic circumstances only intensify the pain of loss. We pray that God will walk with you through the grieving process, and, in time, wipe away the tears from your eyes.

'As members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we stand together with the community of Reading against such violence and condemn such acts. We pray that the love of God within the heart will overcome the motivations that led to such attacks.

'We join with all well-meaning groups in Reading, including spiritual leaders, community leaders, and citizens of Reading, as we work together for a better future in which each person is treated with the equity, dignity and respect they deserve.'

PASTOR TREVOR THOMAS

How can this be right?

Herbie Russell is a Brit who decided to work on a strawberry farm in response to the call to 'Pick for Britain'. Noting that Britain has the cheapest food in Western Europe, he believes we treat the 80,000 temporary migrant workers like slaves. 'Picking is hideously hard work,' he says. 'We start at 5am and do ten-hour shifts hunched over in the field. The pay, once rent and deposits are deducted, is about £7

an hour. And we're housed in damp caravans, full of mouse droppings, with no running water or mains electricity. . . . No surprise, then, that, of the more than 30 Brits who started work with me, just five remain.'

(*The Week*, 6 June 2020)

The prophet Malachi has a case against Israel: specifically, the priests of Israel. They are corrupt to the core, and he warns them in chapter 3 that their ways do not please the Lord. There will come a time when the Lord will respond:

'At that time my punishments will be quick and certain; I will move swiftly against wicked men who trick the innocent, against adulterers and liars, against all those who cheat their hired hands, who oppress widows and orphans, or defraud strangers, and do not fear me,' says the Lord Almighty' (Malachi 3:5, TLB).

SEC Virtual Camp Meeting 2020 archive

The presentations from the first ever virtual camp meeting are available to watch again on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCJwMkH9QCA8oMMfGt-Xlk3nBmbhuvFJ>

'10 Questions for God'

With all that is happening around us, all over the world – upheaval of relationships and uncertainty of the future – do you have some questions you would like to ask God? If God were physically standing in front of you, what would you ask Him? We have identified 10 questions that we believe many would want to ask. Look out for the Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland's upcoming online course launch – '10 Questions for God'.

Corrigendum

In the article 'It is not enough to know "what we believe"; we must know "who we believe in"' by Zlatko Musija, it was incorrectly stated that the author of the study guides, Thomas Rasmussen, was awarded an MA at Andrews University. It was in fact an MDiv. We are happy to correct this error.

EDITOR

Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland

Online Bible Study Course available from July 2020



10 Questions FOR GOD

www.discoveronline.org.uk

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Christ's Object Lessons

In 1895, while on mission service in Australia, Ellen White wrote a letter to a friend: "You know that my whole theme both in the pulpit and in private, by voice and pen, is the life of Christ." That one line to her friend symbolises her spiritual development during those years. Her main role in Australia was to provide counsel and direction for the expansion of the church in that territory. And she would write letters – hundreds of them – to church leaders, both in Australia and to those back home in America. At the same time, in her personal life, a new and more spiritually intense picture of Christ emerged. Often overwhelmed at the very thought of Him, she noted, "I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. . . ."²

By 1898 *The Desire of Ages* was published, but she had written far too much material on the life of Christ for one book. Christ's Object Lessons was the result, as the publishers lifted out her material on the parables of Christ and published it as a separate work.

I share this to provide but a brief context for this excerpt from Christ's Object Lessons about the good Samaritan. In the editorial of the previous edition of *Messenger* (issue 13), I quoted from the chapter, "Who Is My Neighbour?" It is a chapter that speaks to our time. . . .

EDITOR

For your chance to purchase your own copy of *Christ's Object Lessons*, follow this link: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/christs-object-lessons/>



'Who is my neighbour?'

by Ellen G. White

(Part 1)

This chapter is based on Luke 10:25-37.

"Among the Jews the question, "Who is my neighbour?" caused endless dispute. They had no doubt as to the heathen and the Samaritans. These were strangers and enemies. But where should the distinction be made among the people of their own nation and among the different classes of society? Whom should the priest, the rabbi, the elder, regard as neighbour? They spent their lives in a round of ceremonies to make themselves pure. Contact with the ignorant and careless multitude, they taught, would cause defilement that would require wearisome effort to remove. Were they to regard the "unclean" as neighbours?

"This question Christ answered in the parable of the good Samaritan. He showed that our neighbour does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, colour, or class distinction. Our neighbour is every person who needs our help. Our neighbour is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbour is everyone who is the property of God.

"The parable of the good Samaritan was called forth by a question put to Christ by a doctor of the law. As the Saviour was teaching, "a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Pharisees had suggested this question to the lawyer in the hope that they might entrap Christ in His words, and they listened eagerly for His answer. But the Saviour entered into no controversy. He required the answer from the questioner himself. "What is written in the law?" He asked, "How readest thou?" The Jews still accused Jesus of lightly regarding the law given from Sinai, but He turned the question of salvation upon the keeping of God's commandments.

"The lawyer said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." "Thou hast answered right," Christ said; "this do, and thou shalt live."

"The lawyer was not satisfied with the position and works of the Pharisees. He had been studying the scriptures with a desire to learn

their real meaning. He had a vital interest in the matter, and he asked in sincerity, "What shall I do?" In his answer as to the requirements of the law, he passed by all the mass of ceremonial and ritualistic precepts. For these he claimed no value, but presented the two great principles on which hang all the law and the prophets. The Saviour's commendation of this answer placed Him on vantage ground with the rabbis. They could not condemn Him for sanctioning that which had been advanced by an expositor of the law.

"This do, and thou shalt live," Christ said. In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law.

"Christ knew that no one could obey the law in his own strength. He desired to lead the lawyer to clearer and more critical research that he might find the truth. Only by accepting the virtue and grace of Christ can we keep the law. Belief in the propitiation for sin enables fallen man to love God with his whole heart and his neighbour as himself.

"The lawyer knew that he had kept neither the first four nor the last six commandments. He was convicted under Christ's searching words, but instead of confessing his sin he tried to excuse it. Rather than acknowledge the truth, he endeavoured to show how difficult of fulfilment the commandment is. Thus he hoped both to parry conviction and to vindicate himself in the eyes of the people. The Saviour's words had shown that his question was needless, since he was able to answer it himself. Yet he put another question, saying, "Who is my neighbour?"

"Again, Christ refused to be drawn into controversy. He answered the question by relating an incident, the memory of which was fresh in the minds of His hearers. "A certain man," He said, "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

"In journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, the traveller had to pass through a portion of the wilderness of Judea. The road led down a wild, rocky ravine, which was infested with robbers, and was often the scene of violence. It was here that the traveller was attacked, stripped of all that was valuable, and left half dead by the wayside. As he lay thus, a priest came that way; he saw the man lying wounded and bruised, weltering in his own blood; but he left him without rendering any assistance. He "passed by on the other side." Then a Levite appeared.



Curious to know what had happened, he stopped and looked at the sufferer. He was convicted of what he ought to do, but it was not an agreeable duty. He wished that he had not come that way so that he would not have seen the wounded man. He persuaded himself that the case was no concern of his, and he too "passed by on the other side."

"But a Samaritan, travelling the same road, saw the sufferer, and he did the work that the others had refused to do. With gentleness and kindness he ministered to the wounded man. "When he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." The priest and the Levite both professed piety, but the Samaritan showed that he was truly converted. It was no more agreeable for him to do the work than for the priest and the Levite, but in spirit and works he proved himself to be in harmony with God.

"In giving this lesson, Christ presented the principles of the law in a direct, forcible way, showing His hearers that they had neglected to carry out these principles. His words were so definite and pointed that the listeners could find no opportunity to cavil. The lawyer found in the lesson nothing that he could criticise. His prejudice in regard to Christ was removed. But he had not overcome his national dislike sufficiently to give credit to the Samaritan by name. When Christ asked, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" he answered, "He that shewed mercy on him."

"Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Show the same tender kindness to those in need. Thus you will give evidence that you keep the whole law.

"The great difference between the Jews and the Samaritans was a difference in religious belief, a question as to what constitutes true worship. The Pharisees would say nothing good of the Samaritans, but

poured their bitterest curses upon them. So strong was the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans that to the Samaritan woman it seemed a strange thing for Christ to ask her for a drink. "How is it," she said, "that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" "For," adds the evangelist, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." John 4:9. And when the Jews were so filled with murderous hatred against Christ that they rose up in the temple to stone Him, they could find no better words by which to express their hatred than, "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" John 8:48. Yet the priest and Levite neglected the very work the Lord had enjoined on them, leaving a hated and despised Samaritan to minister to one of their own countrymen.

"The Samaritan had fulfilled the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," thus showing that he was more righteous than those by whom he was denounced. Risking his own life, he had treated the wounded man as his brother. This Samaritan represents Christ. Our Saviour manifested for us a love that the love of man can never equal. When we were bruised and dying, He had pity upon us. He did not pass us by on the other side, and leave us, helpless and hopeless, to perish. He did not remain in His holy, happy home, where He was beloved by all the heavenly host. He beheld our sore need, He undertook our case, and identified His interests with those of humanity. He died to save His enemies. He prayed for His murderers. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, "These things I command you, that ye love one another"; "as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 15:17; 13:34.'

The next excerpt from the chapter will appear in the next edition of *Messenger*, published on 16 July.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941), pp. 376-381

Remembering William Shea: ‘Through faith in God’s Word, I have found peace.’

by Adventist Review staff

Renowned Seventh-day Adventist scholar William Shea died on 15 February 2020 in Manassas, Virginia, United States, at 87. A medical doctor and surgeon as well as a graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan, Shea published hundreds of articles and several books dealing with various topics ranging from ancient inscriptions to the meaning of Bible prophecy. In an interview first published in 2015, now retired Biblical Research Institute director Ángel Manuel Rodríguez asked Shea about his career, contributions, and the role the Bible has played in his life. — Editor



As a medical doctor, what influenced you to abandon that career, which was your first choice, to concentrate on Bible studies? Could you share the journey which brought you to this interest?

As a child, I grew up with almost no religious influence at all. Finally, during my last year in high school or secondary school, I came to believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible. When I went to college, I studied both courses in religion and science, since I had an interest in both. I finally decided to make medicine my vocation and religious studies my avocation. . . . My particular interest was history during the period of the Hebrew Bible and the light that archaeology can shine upon it.

I decided that if I was to do more of this, I would need to become better qualified in the field, so I spent three years at the Harvard Divinity School studying the Hebrew Bible, language, and related subjects. While I was there, I received an invitation to join the faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. I taught there for a total of fourteen years before I accepted to work for the Biblical Research Institute. My ‘pilgrimage’ into biblical studies was a slow and gradual one to finally come to the place where I am today.

What is your method, or for you, the best method to read the Bible? Could you give the reader a few recommendations on how to read the Bible?

There are two main ways to read the Bible. One is an intensive scholarly way. For that approach, I use what has been called the historical-grammatical method. This means that the reader must pay close attention to the analysis of the words present in the original language. The historical setting and the literary structure of the text must also be taken into account. Of course, many scholarly tools can be used for such a purpose. These include concordances, dictionaries, commentaries, and encyclopedias.

The average reader may not wish to go into such depth. In that case, one can read simply for personal devotional or spiritual benefit. One way in which to read the Bible for this purpose

is to read the passage or book that one is delving into several times. Each time it is read, more will appear of meaning to the reader. Also, as one reads, one should look for key words. These are the words that are used more frequently in the passage. The Bible writer has used these words over and over again because he wishes to emphasise them. One can take each of these occurrences and see just how the term is used in each case. That will give the reader an idea of the range of meaning in these words. All of these different avenues lead up to the idea that this is God’s Word, and through it He is speaking to us.

What is the Bible for you as a person, as a Christian?

To me, it is the Word of God: God’s thought made audible – or legible – to me individually. It also tells me where I as an individual and we as a people, as biblical Israel or the church, have been and are going. Thus, the Bible is multifaceted in its application to our lives. It tells us about our past, present, and future. Since so much of the Bible is history, it has been said that the Bible is the record of God’s mighty acts. Since He acted on behalf of His people like that in the past, we can rest assured that He can also act that way in our own personal lives. In that way, He can show us the road to salvation.

I believe that the Bible is the objective revelation of God. This means that the Bible is true, whether I have an experience with it or not. We may believe the Bible, or we may choose not to believe it; but, from an objective point of view, it is still true, regardless of the attitude of the reader. . . .

What arguments would you like to share which ‘prove’ for you that the Bible is, indeed, the word of God?

There are many answers to this question, but only one that will ultimately tell the tale to an individual: that of personal experience. The Bible is consistent from beginning to end in terms of the themes that it develops. Could this really have happened with 20, 30, or 40

ordinary human writers who worked and wrote over a thousand years? I don’t think so. I believe in the property of predictive prophecy, and I believe that it is manifested in the Bible. Why isn’t the Assyrian nation living among the nations of the world at this time? If it were, it would prove the predictions about its final fall to be wrong. Nevertheless, the Bible is still true in what it says about the absolute end of Assyria. Assyria was so thoroughly destroyed that men of modern times did not even know where its capital of Nineveh was located. It was completely lost from the collective memory of mankind until it was found again in 1840.

There is also the historical accuracy of the Bible. All of the wonderful inscriptions and reliefs and statuary that have turned up from the ancient nations have contributed to tell us more about the world in which the people of the Bible lived. Sometimes they tell us directly about specific events in the Bible. Nebuchadnezzar’s Chronicle, for instance, tells us that he conquered Jerusalem in the year 597 BC. It even tells us the date upon which that event happened: 2 Adar in the Babylonian calendar, or 16 March in our calendar.

But the most important evidence for the Bible is the change that it makes in the lives of people. I think that it was the philosopher Pascal who said, ‘The miracle of God is every believer.’

What are the great truths that the Bible has taught you?

Well, it has taught me many things, and none of them should be minimised. But I suppose that two elements that I would pick out to emphasise here are that God is our Creator and He is our Redeemer. Just as God created the world at the beginning, so He has created us through the processes that He set in motion at that time. The Bible also tells us that mankind is lost. It is lost through the fall. Therefore, we need to be redeemed back from evil. All of this we can find in God. Also, the Bible teaches us how to live.

What does the Bible bring to you in your daily life?

To start with, it provides the answers, as no other human document does, to the three great questions of life: where did we come from, what are we doing here, and where are we going? What that means is that the Bible gives the greatest meaning to life. In addition, it can provide internal spiritual peace. Rudyard Kipling speaks about a time when ‘all about you are losing [their heads] and blaming it on you’. Even in such times, the Bible believer can have peace. And it seems with the hurried pace of today’s society that there are more and more such times. Through faith in God’s Word, I have found peace.

The original version of this story was posted by the Shalom Learning Centre and also published in Shabbat Shalom magazine. Condensed and used with the permission of the Adventist Review.

Shirley Mae Thomas (née Webster) (1933-2020) d. 12 June.

Shirley was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, on 27 November 1932. Her early years were spent on her parents’ farm, ‘Wanderer’s Home’, in Zambia, until at age eight she was sent to boarding school at Helderberg College in the Cape, South Africa. As the youngest of five – with her older siblings already away at school when she was born – finding herself surrounded by so many



other children was quite an exciting experience. Shirley studied at Helderberg College as a student for thirteen years, taking the train home to her parents for school holidays, a trip of some 2,700 kilometres each way. She spoke very fondly of her time there, describing Helderberg as a ‘place that has a piece of my soul’.

It was at high school that she met a boy in her class by the name of Ken Thomas. Shirley tasked herself with beating his grades. Upon succeeding, they formed a relationship that later would become a marriage in

Juliana Keshishian

Juliana Keshishian from Watford, aged 22, had just graduated from the University of Leeds with a first-class degree in Middle Eastern Studies and hoped to work for humanitarian causes before she was involved in a fatal crash as a rear-seat passenger in Otley, Yorkshire, shortly after 6pm on 18 June 2020.

Her parents, Arto and Mirian, have paid tribute to their daughter, saying she ‘had her whole life to look forward to’ and they have now been left with a ‘permanent hole’ in their lives. She will always be remembered as a bubbly and gregarious person; always smiling, always willing to help her fellow students and the wider community in any way she could.

‘Juliana’s plan was to embark upon a career in international relations or work in a humanitarian capacity for a non-governmental organisation. She worked for the Adventist Help Organisation as a volunteer, at the Oynofita refugee camp in Greece. Juliana found the experience highly rewarding as she had the opportunity to practise her compassion and love for her fellow man.’

Juliana was ‘an accomplished pianist and flautist’ and used those talents on Sabbaths at Stanborough Park Church. Arto and Mirian added, ‘Juliana achieved more in her short life than many do in their whole lives. She was known for her larger-than-life laugh, and would always bring joy and happiness whenever she entered a room. She also had a cheeky side, and wanted to get the best of what life had to offer, often seeing the funnier side of things, even when nobody else around would get it. She will be sorely missed.’

Reflecting on the blessed hope that held a firm foundation in the family’s life, her parents declared, ‘She is resting in peace now, asleep, not feeling or seeing anything. But we look forward to the day when we will see her once more, fully restored, rising to heaven on that glorious day of Jesus’ return. Rest in peace, beloved Juliana.’

The minister of Stanborough Park Church, Pastor Terry Messenger, said, ‘We at the Stanborough Park church are shocked and numbed by the tragic death of Juliana. It is at times like this that we ask the question, “Why?” . . . We have set up a book of remembrance at the entrance of the church where people can add their messages of condolence to the family, Arto, Mirian and their son, Felipe.’

Pastor Messenger appealed to the wider church family by saying, ‘Let us pray for the family at this difficult time. Let us remember Psalm 116:15: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (NKJV). We look forward to that great resurrection day when we will be reunited with our loved ones again – including our dear Juliana.’



1954, and a home to two children (Muriel and Albert, born in 1956 & 1958).

Both were trained as teachers, starting their careers in the Transvaal, South Africa. From there they taught at schools in northern and central Zambia, before moving to Andrews University, Michigan, USA. Though the move was primarily for Ken to pursue his Master’s degree in Mathematics, Shirley also graduated from Andrews with a degree in primary school teaching. From then on, keeping track of where life took them becomes complicated! The two travelled extensively, Ken’s work taking them from Andrews to Nebraska (for a doctorate in maths), to Helderberg, to Zambia, and to Andrews again, before retiring in Scotland.

Shirley took on many roles during her life. Though trained as a teacher (30 years of high school science, primary school teaching, and eventually lecturing in primary education at college), she also worked in a dispensary, in an office, doing secretarial work for Ken and others (20+ years), and as a pastor’s wife (after Ken was ordained as an Adventist minister in Zambia) – a full-time job indeed!

She possessed a love and skill for craft projects, and was always knitting or sewing for somebody. She had a particular gift for spotting when she could use her skills to help those around her, and often a shirt would be ironed or a pair of socks darned even before anybody else had noticed.

This writer (her granddaughter) grew up calling her ‘Grandma Songs’, and has many lovely memories of sitting beside her at the piano in her house in Muthill, Scotland, where she and Ken eventually retired in 1999. With an ear for music and an eye for spotting endless fun activities for bored grandchildren, we spent many a happy hour singing ‘God Sees the Little Sparrow Fall’, and, as she grew older, doing jigsaw puzzles. She was an avid letter writer, and kept correspondence with friends and family, near and far. She loved visiting friends in Manchester, friends and adopted family in Norway, her family in South Africa and the USA, and her son and his family in Australia.

Otherwise in good health,

Shirley was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2018. She died suddenly in her beloved garden, after a fall on 12 June 2020, surrounded by kind and generous neighbours. Her funeral took place on 25 June 2020 in Crieff Cemetery, where she is buried with Ken.

When thinking of Shirley’s legacy, a quote from Simone Weil comes to mind, and I think it suits my grandma’s character: ‘Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.’ Shirley remains in our memories as a woman with strong convictions, someone who wielded a vivacious laugh, and who cared for others devotedly.

JEN LOGAN, GRANDDAUGHTER

Messenger

Volume 125 • 14 – 2 July 2020

Editor: David Neal
Design: David Bell

COPY FOR No. 15 – 9 July 2020

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Tel: (01476) 591700. Fax No: (01476) 577144.
Email: Editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk
Send high-resolution pictures to: dbell@stanboroughpress.org.uk
ABC Sales line: (01476) 591700
Mon-Thurs only, 8am-5.30pm.
www.stanboroughpress.org.uk

The Editor may alter, clarify, précis or expand articles sent to him if he thinks it necessary. Published fortnightly on Fridays by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For general enquiries, email: info@stanboroughpress.org.uk

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

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	24	9.00	9.12	9.11	9.34	9.38

Dagenham Eagles spring update – teen leadership trainee cohort 2020

by Dionne Corrodus-Weekes, Dagenham Eagles Director, damcorwee@aol.com



The Dagenham Eagles. This photo was taken before social distancing and lockdown.

Since the beginning of the global lockdown, contingency event planning has been tested and has proved to be a rewarding experience.

Dagenham Eagles are blessed with some of the world's finest twenty-first-century innovative visionaries. In a few weeks, after insightful staff leadership training, teen leadership trainees (TLTs) independently overcame the odds and redefined how to empower others in their sphere of influence through authentic servant leadership.

Holding each other to account, teen inventors created boxes of opportunities, and their selfless contributions made a huge difference.

With tenacity and vision, our TLTs, driven by godly determination, launched our Adventurer and Pathfinder Community e-Hub using digital technology. This has transformed safeguarding and provided wider access to our future Adventurer and Pathfinder community ministry.

In communication with their mentors and management team, TLTs have established daily/weekly ongoing activities and capably time-managed the administrative posting of their designated class schedules and learning outcomes.

Parents and our leadership teams have

seen a huge shift and transition in accountability and hands-on servant teen/youth leadership, resulting in various sustainable entrepreneurial plans.

To date, seven Pathfinders have requested Bible studies and expressed a desire to be baptised. Bible classes have begun and are ongoing.

As a by-product of the above, there have been several exciting outcomes:

- The Ranger class has started a Friendship Development Discussion Group with and for non-Adventist school students – for teens, and by teens – to talk about real issues in a safe digital community.
- Level-3 TLTs are actively leading, coordinating and managing daily class operations. Holding digitally coordinated, supervised, designated classes, they have solidly passed our recent internal assessment for our 2020/21 Pathfinder class.
- Prior to the global lockdown, the TLT level-3 finance team learned basic finance skills and processes that revolutionised our existing financial arrangements by using a digital platform, resulting in Dagenham Eagles rewriting our finance policy.

- TLT teaching specialists have taken the initiative to digitally manage specific classes within and outside our borders by agreement.
- At 8pm on Mondays and Thursdays an AY honour is taught, accessible by Pathfinders from other Adventist churches.
- At 7pm on Tuesdays an inspiring teen/youth forum called 'Empowering You(th)' fosters lifelong skills.
- At 7pm on Wednesdays the 'Estudios Bíblicos' studies discuss and share fundamental beliefs.
- On Sundays there are TLT clinics and drop-in sessions to catch up on progress.

You are invited, as a guest to these sessions, to participate and experience for yourself the impact of teen leadership training in action.

The transformation we have experienced in a short space of time, accompanied with accountability, vision, passion, courage, determination, commitment and leadership, is next to none!

I look forward to hearing from you by return email – stay safe!