



Messenger

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

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'Do you not say,
"Four months more,
then comes the
harvest"? But I tell
you, look around you,
and see how the fields
are ripe for harvesting.'

John 4:35, New Revised Standard Version

Are you willing to become
a 'radical Christian' for
the sake of the Gospel?

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When faith becomes presumption

by Pastor John Surridge, BUC Executive Secretary

Balancing a budget is tricky. Whether it is home or church finances, you've got to make sure that the money coming in balances the money going out. Ideally, your spending should be a bit less than your income, so that over time you build up a 'rainy day fund'. But exactly how much should you keep in your savings?

This is a personal question in the case of your home budget, but when it comes to church finances, it becomes a committee decision. Sometimes it can lead to conflict.

Jesus talked a lot about money. For example, we have the story of the widow's two mites (Luke 21:1-4) – the lady who had virtually nothing but gave the little she had to God. There's the story of the rich farmer who decided to build bigger barns so that he could store more of his crops and goods (Luke 12:16-21). Then there are the twin parables of 'building a tower' and 'the king

going to make war' (Luke 14:28-32), which are all about careful planning and counting the cost.

On church committees, including those at Conference and Union level, we often find champions for each of the above parables. Some committee members feel that, like the widow, we should spend everything we have as soon as we have it. 'It's God's money, so it should all go straight back into the work.' The problem with this is that you never build up a strategic fund to carry out major projects, like a church extension, or, in the case of a Conference perhaps, an evangelistic 'Centre of Influence'.

Those committee members in the 'building barns' camp tend to oppose any expenditure beyond the bare essentials. 'We've got to keep our reserves up. Who knows what might happen in the future?'

Things can get heated between these two

groups, with the 'spenders' accusing the 'savers' of not having enough faith. 'God will provide,' they say. 'Look how He has led us in the past; this church can never fail.'

On the other hand, the 'savers' will accuse the 'spenders' of being presumptuous. 'We've been given this money on trust; we must look after it carefully.'

At this point someone will bring up the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), where Jesus makes it clear that we are expected to use the resources we have, not bury them in the ground.

We all know that, in the end, there has to be a balance. But where do we draw the line? How much should we save, and how much should we spend? Where does faith become presumption?

Fortunately, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a great deal of experience in such matters. Since we were first organised in 1863 we have built up a wealth of wisdom, and this is passed on through publications such as the *Church Manual* (for local churches) and *Working Policy* (for Missions, Conferences and Unions, and so on). A careful study of these documents will take a lot of the guesswork out of our budgeting. Understood properly, it should also stop a lot of those arguments about exactly who is being faithful and who is being presumptuous.



David Neal, Editor

All change

'Change is painful to us all, especially when it affects our cherished buildings and customs, and we should not seek change merely for the sake of change. Yet true Christian radicalism is open to change. It knows that God has bound Himself to His church (promising that He will never leave it) and to His word (promising that it will never pass away). But God's church means people, not buildings, and God's word means Scripture, not traditions. So long as these essentials are preserved, the buildings and the traditions can, if necessary, go. We must not allow them to imprison the living God or to impede His mission in the world.'

John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, p. 143

As background reading to enhance this quarter's series of Sabbath School lessons about making friends for God, I've been going through Acts again, using John Stott's commentary for reference and study. There is something about Luke's record of the early church that is as fast-paced and intriguing as many a film series offered up on today's Netflix. I'm listening again to the story of this primitive church, and want to learn from its members' experience. I do so because I am convinced that if we really 'listen again', everything about our church life – its worship, witness and mission – will inevitably change for the better. More than that, my interest, our interest, is based on the biblical hope that what took place at Pentecost is yet to be repeated in greater power before Christ returns.

The above quotation about change comes in the context of Stephen's speech before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7. From their perspective Stephen blasphemed God, because he challenged their assumptions about the purpose of the law and the temple – the very place where God and His holy law lived. Ingrained in their DNA was the instruction given by God to their ancestors, *'And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them'* (Exodus 25:8, NKJV).

Well, they made a sanctuary alright, but they took a good thing too far. Did they offer true worship His way and put Him first in their lives? They did not, and chose instead to offer worship their way, with a stubborn pride that refused correction from the prophets. Through their fake worship and ritual, they tried to imprison God in a building.

As Stephen concludes his speech, he challenges their assumptions to the core, with the accused becoming the accuser. *'Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands . . .'* (Acts 7:48, ESV). 'How dare he!' But Stephen was not interested in defending himself. He had met the Master, the Promised One, the Deliverer of Israel – who had full confidence in the prophets. *'I desire mercy,*

and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners' (Matthew 9:13, ESV).

Hold these thoughts while I fast-forward to our times:

It is Sabbath morning at 11am. God's people are gathered together and we are singing the Doxology, the call to worship.

'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.'

Or perhaps we sing:
'Be still, for the presence of the Lord, The Holy One, is here; Come, bow before Him now With reverence and fear! In Him no sin is found; We stand on holy ground; Be still, for the presence of the Lord, The Holy One, is here.'

As the Doxology ends with the 'Amen', or as silence follows 'The Holy One is here', something inside me stirs. This is a special moment. The people of God are united together in 'holy time' (Sabbath) and in a 'holy space' (the sanctuary), and we claim His presence to be with us in a special way – over and above the ordinary time and place. We need these moments, and at this moment I am missing them.

At the same time, 'lockdown' is providing a new dynamic of how we worship, study and fellowship together. For example, in my experience, Zoom has wonderfully enhanced the Sabbath School Bible study experience. With greater participation, extended time for group prayer, and continued

discussion during the week, it is refreshing. I even wonder if this is a stepping stone towards the spiritual revival and renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit Christ-followers are promised?

This is why this edition of *MESSENGER* not only takes a look at how we share the 'Good News' to others, but also provides an audit tool to examine our evangelistic health. Is not this 'wilderness time' for the church a heaven-sent opportunity to 'listen again', 'think again', and 'pray again' about our priorities? On my mind are these questions:

- Is it possible that the way our church is organised from local to global could actually be an impediment, rather than a blessing to mission and evangelism?
- Is our evangelistic activity more 'method-driven' than 'Spirit-driven'?
- Are we so discouraged with the 'lack of kingdom growth progress' that we've succumbed to 'in-the-box' disillusioned thinking, buying into a view, held by some, that this is how the church will always be in the UK and Ireland?
- Can we continue to trust and hope for the biblical promise of an 'Acts 2' outpouring again? Or is it simply pie-in-the sky thinking? (a future *MESSENGER* article will particularly address this question).

Take a look, if you will, at two articles: the first on pages 4 and 5 by Pastor David Cox, and the second on page 8 by Pastor Patrick Boyle. Having once worked closely with both pastors on a daily basis, I continue to be impressed by their enthusiasm for Christ and the growth of His kingdom. With well-thought-through conviction, based on their ministry experience, each shares a perspective on the way forwards. While it's easy to notice the difference in approach, there are some common core ingredients. On pages 6 and 7, can I then encourage you to take a few moments to complete the 'Evangelism Audit'? It was first published in the *Atlantic Union Gleaner* back in February. Once complete, why not raise it as an agenda item at your next church board?

Finally, returning to the opening quotation, if God has bound Himself to His church and to His word, that's assurance enough for me to believe that the best days for the church are still ahead. For my part, I'm open to being radical to bring about the necessary change. Are you?



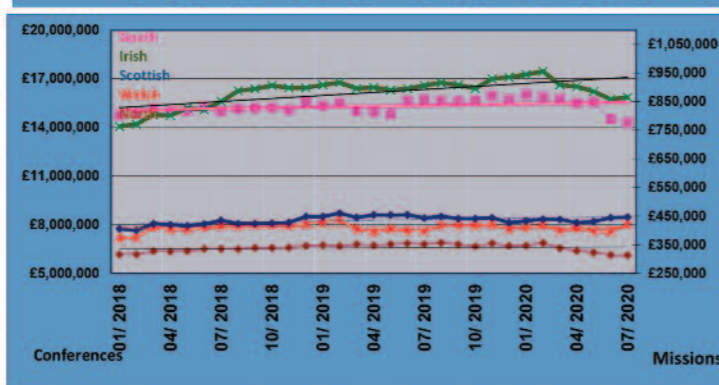
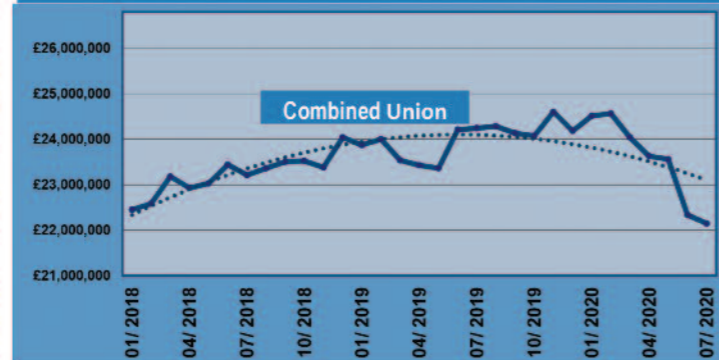
British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Tithe Report - July 2020

This Month	2020	2019	Inc / -Dec	Variance %
South	£1,009,277	£1,213,999	-£204,722	-16.9
North	£517,670	£533,505	-£15,835	-3.0
Welsh	£56,998	£30,888	£26,110	84.5
Scottish	£37,521	£35,103	£2,417	6.9
Irish	£88,191	£81,173	£7,019	8.6
Total	£1,709,658	£1,894,668	-£185,011	-9.8%

Cumulative to Date	2020	2019	Inc / -Dec	Variance %
South	£7,525,464	£8,950,525	-£1,425,061	-15.9%
North	£3,238,741	£3,814,954	-£576,213	-15.1%
Welsh	£237,884	£220,870	£17,014	7.7%
Scottish	£260,615	£241,585	£19,030	7.9%
Irish	£442,442	£512,521	-£70,079	-13.7%
Total	£11,705,146	£13,740,455	-£2,035,308	-14.8%

Budgets	Annual	To Date	Variance	%
South	£15,922,044	£9,287,859	-£6,634,185	-41.7%
North	£6,750,000	£3,937,500	-£2,812,500	-41.7%
Welsh	£426,000	£248,500	-£177,500	-41.7%
Scottish	£427,000	£249,083	-£177,917	-41.7%
Irish	£920,000	£536,667	-£383,333	-41.7%
Total	£24,445,044	£14,259,609	-£10,185,435	-41.7%
BUC	£2,379,967	£1,388,314	-£991,653	-41.7%

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



Dear Member and Friend,
Thank you for continuing to return a faithful tithe and putting God first in your life.

Working together for God's glory.

Earl Ramharacksingh





Haunted by Antioch

Part 3

by Pastor David Cox

Previously in 'Haunted by Antioch' we were left with some questions to reflect on and muse over:

Is the story of what God has done and how He has revealed Himself through Jesus our story, dead centre to our thinking and everything we believe? Or do we have everything neatly sorted now, clearly defined within 28 doctrinal statements and our understanding of prophecy?

In this concluding summer reflection, Pastor Cox sees lessons from Antioch for the church and its mission today.

I'm encouraged by the fact that *the story* still captivates 'large numbers' of people, as every new film about Jesus demonstrates: but I'm troubled that, while many are still interested in the God/man Jesus, they're not so interested in the church. How strange that is, since the church exists only to tell *the story*. The church in Antioch, however, didn't seem to have this problem; the church and *the story* were inseparable there. I wonder why.

There was one other miracle at Antioch which we must not miss. Luke tells us that *'the power of the Lord was upon them'* (Acts 11:21, NLT). The Holy Spirit was tangibly present in the interaction between the believers from Jerusalem and the *'large numbers'* who *'turned to the Lord'*. *'Turned'* here is from the same word that is used for *'converted'* elsewhere. Conversion and turning imply a change of direction, a change in life. Jesus described this change as being *'born again'* (John 3:3, NLT) and made it clear that it was the work of the Spirit – work that we cannot explain. The turning of *'large numbers'* to the Lord was a miracle indeed. Fortunately, the promise of the Spirit whose power made it happen is, as we have already noted, just as much for us as it was for them.

No church buildings? I said that there were no church buildings as such in Antioch where people could gather for worship. It's true: churches of the sort that we are familiar with did not exist until the Emperor Constantine's time, nearly 300 years later; but the believers in Antioch did have buildings in which to meet – their homes – dozens if not scores of them, scattered all over the city. And they met not just occasionally for worship, but frequently, to share life (and food!) together, one or two families forming the core of each believing community. Gatherings were informal, joyful occasions; and they were very attractive. *The story* spread quickly along the

natural networks of families and friends, and these small, intimate fellowships multiplied as *'large numbers'* joined them. 'Church' was a very social thing, very accessible to the wider community which it served in various ways. And it was very much part of *the story*. After all, those who turned to the Lord *were* the church! Church was a gathering of people, not a place. For Christians in Antioch, there were no sacred spaces, only sacred people.

If we could go back in time, I reckon that some of us would find the informality, spontaneity and intimacy of Antioch's typical home-based fellowship a challenging, even invasive experience. Likewise, a believer from first-century Antioch would not exactly feel 'at home' in the formality and predictability of 'the services', as we call them, which take place every Sabbath in the dedicated church buildings we feel are so essential to our existence.

The question is, then, are our buildings as essential as we think they are for the witness we are called to be in our towns and cities? Is it possible – God forbid – that they could be a hindrance rather than a help to our mission? The answer to that question depends entirely, of course, on how we see them, how we use them, whether they are 'fit for purpose'. Do they exist primarily to serve our needs, or the needs of our wider communities? Are they places which attract our non-Christian friends? Are our congregations growing because of the way our buildings are used?

Another question: do they facilitate the creation of small, caring communities which enable us to share our hopes and dreams, doubts and struggles with one another, and where our love for one another bears witness to the fact that we are disciples of Jesus? If not, how can we restore this vital element of our life together?

No persecution? I said that no mention is made of persecution in Antioch. It's true: there was a Jewish 'quarter' in the city where most if not all Jews lived. Some of the believers from Jerusalem preached the Good News only to those Jews (Acts 11:19), but there does not seem to have been any antagonistic response from the Jewish leadership there, such as Paul faced during his three missionary journeys. Neither, apparently, was there any resistance from the pagan majority in Antioch. Why the overall lack of opposition? Why is the story of Antioch so positive for at least its first ten years? I suggest two reasons, and I'm sure there are more:

1. Antioch was home for most, if not all, of those who fled the persecution at Jerusalem – Nicholas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons (Acts 6:5), was probably among them. These refugees – both Hebraic and Hellenistic Jews – returned to their families, where they found not only safety, but receptive hearers of the good news they had to share: and, as mentioned earlier, the message about Jesus as Lord spread naturally through the networks of families and friends. This was not, however, an 'underground' movement: quite the opposite!

2. The believers from Jerusalem were 'good neighbours'. Like Jesus, they probably spent more time serving than talking. They loved not only each other, but also strangers, Jews and Gentiles alike – caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the poor and the needy around them. Rodney Stark, in his book *The Rise of Christianity*, describes how this practical ministry, by the fourth century, had created 'a miniature welfare state in an empire which for the most part lacked social services' (p. 74). In other words, the Christian community made the city a better place in which to live. The believers there truly were

'the salt of the earth'. Who would want to get rid of the salt?

Postscript: Unique among the records that we have of churches elsewhere, the story of the church in Antioch is included for a purpose, and deserves further prayerful thought. What strikes me most is how the story is both simple and profound: ordinary men and women shared the story of Jesus, and the power of the Lord was with them. The believers ministered without supervision for at least seven years; they did all the serving, leading, organising and baptising themselves. Apparently no one was paid for what they were doing; most if not all their financial resources were used for the poor and needy among them and in the wider community. The single most outstanding thing people noticed about them was their likeness to Christ, which means there was a lot of love among them. When, eventually, Barnabas arrived from Jerusalem, he was so impressed with what he saw that he went to Tarsus almost 90 miles away to find Paul. I wonder: was this for the sake of the believers in Antioch, or could Paul learn from the church there? Maybe it was both. Whatever the reason, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and taught there for a year before the church sent them on their first missionary journey. How wonderful is this! The church in Antioch, founded and established by ordinary people and the power of the Lord, was now the new centre of world mission! Simple. Profound.



Small groups

Three practical questions for you to consider:

- 'Have you ever thought of starting a small group in your home (or, at present, via Zoom)?
- 'Is there a ministry group that the Holy Spirit has impressed you to join?
- 'What would you think if your Sabbath School class were to become a Sabbath School action unit that meets once a month to pray, fellowship, study the Word and plan a mission activity?

'In the New Testament Christian church, there were no spectators. The same model works today. Get involved in a small group and you will grow in Christ, in your relationships, and in your witness to the world.'

Mark Finley, *Making Friends for God* (Pacific Press, 2020), p. 97

Returning tithes and giving offerings under lockdown

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'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

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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

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.

What's the evangelistic health of your church?

At least once a year we are encouraged to get a physical examination as a routine assessment of our overall health. The examination gives us a chance to talk to our doctor about any ongoing pain or symptoms that we are experiencing, or any other health concerns we might have. We should do something similar for our churches.

When was the last time your church conducted an audit of its evangelistic health? When was the last time your local church's members stopped to assess whether or not they were doing what Jesus asked them to do?

'Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."' (Matthew 28:18-20, NIV.) This includes opening the eyes of the spiritually blind, pointing them to the One who can turn them from the darkness of sin to the light of righteousness, showing them the power of forgiveness, and helping to meet a need in a way that puts them on the road to better physical and spiritual health.

If your church has never carried out an evangelism audit, or maybe has not done one for a while, take a moment to respond to the following statements that could help to start discussions on how your church is doing with carrying out its mission.

8. My church is not substituting the 'church gathered' as the primary place to 'preach the Gospel', but sees it as a place to develop Christians and serve as a dynamic example of Christian love and unity to the world.

① ② ③ ④

9. My church is 'a bridge' to the world.

① ② ③ ④

10. We are reaching whole households with the Gospel, concentrating first on reaching parents and not substituting a programme of child and youth evangelism for adult evangelism.

① ② ③ ④

11. My church is discovering and recognising members in the church who feel especially called to evangelism, and is encouraging them in their community and worldwide witness.

① ② ③ ④

12. New believers are integrated into the life of the local church as soon as possible.

① ② ③ ④

13. My church does not allow conflicts and critics to sap the evangelistic energy of the church.

① ② ③ ④

14. My church is utilising contemporary strategies and approaches to community and worldwide evangelism that are distinctive and unique to our particular twenty-first-century problems in reaching people for Christ.

① ② ③ ④

Evangelism Audit

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree
3 Agree 4 Strongly Agree

1. My church's mission statement is still relevant to the life of my church.

① ② ③ ④

2. The leadership of my church is evangelistic.

① ② ③ ④

3. My church is concerned about its immediate community and not substituting a programme of foreign missions to the neglect of those who live within our local reach.

① ② ③ ④

4. My church is led to pray for lost people.

① ② ③ ④

5. We are active 'as a body' in local church evangelism.

① ② ③ ④

6. The members of my church are open to reaching people who don't look or act like them.

① ② ③ ④

7. The sermons regularly communicate the Gospel.

① ② ③ ④

Evangelism

'The spreading of the Christian Gospel by public preaching or personal witness' – *Lexico.com*.

How does your church approach evangelism? As we begin a new decade, and with so many tools available to us, here are a few possible ways that evangelism is taking place in many places around the world. How many of the evangelism ideas listed has your church tried? We are interested in finding out more!

- **Open-air evangelism**

Those who conduct open-air evangelism go into public places out in the open and spread the Gospel through preaching, singing, and more – generally to crowds of people at a time.

- **Door-to-door evangelism**

This involves knocking on doors from household to household and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, as well as passing out literature.

- **Small group evangelism**

These groups usually meet in private homes where people pray, sing, share testimonies, and hear the Word of God.

- **Friendship evangelism (also known as lifestyle evangelism, servant evangelism, or relational evangelism)**

Friendship evangelism involves Christians intentionally building relationships with people, including socialising with them, loving them, meeting their needs, and eventually talking with them about God.

- **Radio evangelism**

Radio evangelism is taking off in the UK. Have you tuned in yet to **Adventist Radio London** or **Hope FM**? More importantly, have you invited your friends to tune in?

- **City-wide evangelism**

Many churches in urban locations utilise this form of evangelism to draw large crowds of people. In preparation for the meetings, the churches invite people from a specific community with whom they may have visited or held outreach activities, such as health fairs, cooking classes, and more. However, the success of this approach is highly dependent on the level of preparation prior to the commencement of the meetings (two and a half to three years – Ed.).

- **Online evangelism**

This involves reaching people where they are through the use of technology, including websites, social media platforms, apps, mobile phones, and streaming, to name a few.

- **Personal evangelism**

Also referred to as 'one-to-one' evangelism, personal evangelism involves reaching out with the Gospel directly to one or a few people.

- **Medical ministry evangelism**

'Nothing will open doors for the truth like evangelistic medical missionary work. This will find access to hearts and minds, and will be a means of converting many to the truth. The

evangelist who is prepared to minister to a diseased body is given the grandest opportunity of ministering to the sinsick soul. . . . Medical missionary work is the right, helping hand of the gospel, to open doors for the proclamation of the message.' – Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 513.

Share with us

Share a significant evangelism story from your church

Are there ways of sharing the Gospel, not included above, that your church has tried? Have you found success using one of the methods above? We invite you to share an evangelism idea/story from your church with us.

Email the editor at: editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk.

SOURCE: Ednor A. P. Davison, writing in the *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, pp. 8 & 9 of the February 2020 edition (used with permission).

As we share ideas together, we are ever conscious that evangelism is much wider than an event; rather, it is a lifestyle.

We also recognise that, when it comes to evangelism, not one size fits all – and *context* is everything when considering what is the best way to communicate the Gospel to your community. Permission to contextualise – granted!

Our intent in sharing this article, along with previous articles on 'Making our church visitor-friendly' and '101 outreach ideas', is to enable the local church members to engage with each other on the mission. How best can we serve the Lord in connecting with people – for the sake of the Gospel?

(ED.)

Returning tithes and giving offerings under lockdown

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*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

Irish Mission

Account details

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'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

Scottish Mission

Account details

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'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

Welsh Mission

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To grow a church

by Pastor Patrick Boyle, former minister of Stanborough Park Church



media platform. This type of small group provides an easy way to help people to integrate into church life.

Any growing church needs to have an ongoing programme of evangelism. This can take various shapes: of which, one must be an intentional witnessing plan of evangelism and continuing growth. A growing church must continue to grow, and in due course have the members to create another church. It must never rest satisfied.

People are social creatures, and the church needs to have social activities which cater for all age groups, especially the teens (thirteen to nineteen).

Social activities draw people together and create friendships and a common trust. It is in this area where there are no social activities that the best of plans fail. A church intent on growing will pay attention to the social element of its members.

There are reasons for church growth and decline. A large influx of members can spur growth. A large exodus of members can lead to decline. Young people go to college or university, move for employment, get married and move, and suddenly the church is empty. Another factor can be the support, or lack of it, from a higher level of organisation, which enables or retards growth.

In planning to either grow a church or reverse its decline, some practical matters need to be given consideration. It is impossible to predict success in most operations. If success could be predicted, then one need never fail. However, while success is unpredictable, it is possible to pay attention to those elements which help to reduce the possibility of failure.

The simple way to grow a church: **A successful church will be one which welcomes people into its doors and makes them feel at home.** This is helped by a clean, well-lit building. The person who comes in is greeted by a friendly deacon or deaconess. The visitors are directed to seats marked 'Reserved'. In the seat there is an order of service and an envelope marked: 'Happy to have you worship with us today.' In the envelope is a brief note thanking them for joining in worship, as well

as a note of the pastor's address, phone number, and email, and a bookmark with the church address on one side and John 3:16 on the other, with an invitation to make contact with the pastor, either after the service or during the week.

Following this procedure assures the visitor that they are welcome to the church, and provides them with the possibility of making further contact with the pastor.

A church that is intent on growing must be a praying church.

Central to those prayers is the prayer which asks our Heavenly Father, 'Please send people into our church.' Without this continual plea at the heart of its life, a church will not grow.

An essential ingredient of growth is good, sound biblical preaching, week by week, by the church pastor.

This demonstrates positive leadership and vision. It gives visitors the confidence that the church has a Bible-based faith relevant to their spiritual needs. Churches will rarely grow without this vital element.

Churches need to provide small study groups of eight to ten people.

They can be church-based home groups or media groups on Zoom or another social

Conclusion:

Successful church growth will have these six factors around which its life revolves.

1. It will have a strongly welcoming approach.
2. It will be a praying church, asking God to send it people on a continuing basis.
3. It will have strong biblical preaching, week by week, by the local pastor. If this is absent there will be no growth.
4. There will be small group study available, either church-based, home-based or via technology such as Zoom.
5. It will have a planned ongoing outreach programme of evangelism.
6. It will have relevant social activities for all age groups.

A declining or static church

If there is one specific factor which is common to declining churches, it is the absence of strong leadership. However, even with strong leadership, a minister with more than one church to care for will be inhibited, despite their best efforts.

The other elements are poorly planned worship services – which have no structure and can go on for far too long. One and a half hours is not uncommon. Combine this with the lack of a warm welcome, no social activities, no attraction to teenagers, and worship in a poorly maintained building, and church decline is the direction of travel.

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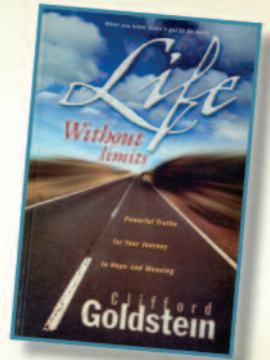
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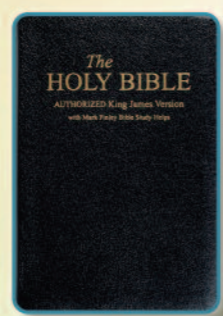
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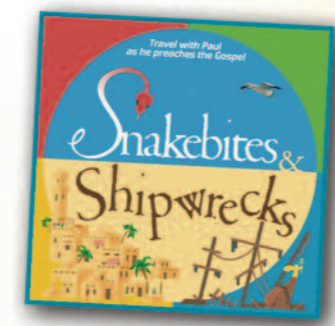
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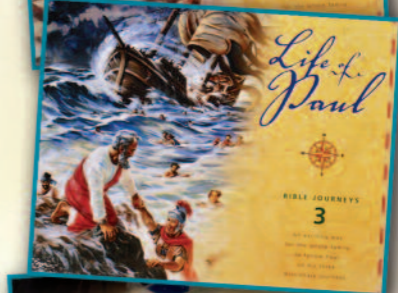
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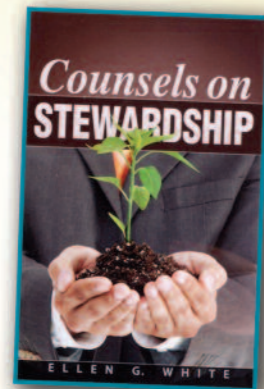
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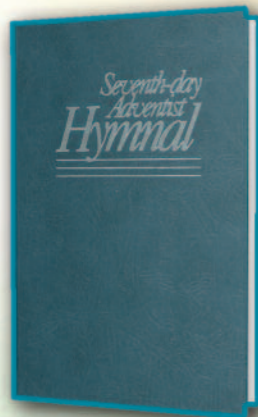
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A message from Pastor Ian Sweeney

From the outset, let me say that what I am about to share is not an argument for or against vaccines.

Realising that some people don't like to read beyond a headline and the opening sentences, mine is a call for us to *read, pray, and talk* this matter over in our families, and then *write* a Holy Spirit- and conscience-led response.

- 1. Read:** With the desire to produce a vaccine for COVID-19, the UK Government on 28 August 2020 released a link asking for members of the public to share their views on proposals that will affect all of our lives in one way or another. The link can be found by searching for 'UK government consultation vaccines', or here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/distributing-vaccines-and-treatments-for-covid-19-and-flu>.
- 2. Pray:** Having read through the above link, I was certainly led to pray for greater understanding regarding the implications of proposed implementation. I am praying for our government as law makers, our healthcare professionals, and indeed the pharmaceutical industry. I am also praying as to what I would do if a vaccine is rolled out.
- 3. Talk:** We should hold conversations with our family and loved ones as to what we will do to support one another, particularly if our views and practice differ.
- 4. Write:** UK Seventh-day Adventist church members are also

'I Must Tell Jesus' – NEC Women's Ministry Prayer Conference 2020

The weekend of 7-9 August was filled with joy for women who attended the NEC Women's Ministry Prayer Conference, with many expressing that they had gained a deeper understanding of exactly why we must tell Jesus.

'I Must Tell Jesus' was the theme, and our speaker was Dr Nadine Collins, a certified prayer counsellor and women's leadership expert. She shared that, along with talking to God in prayer, we also need to be able to hear Him and distinguish His voice. On Sabbath she walked us through the biblical truths about prayer, and showed that our prayers can be so fully in God's will that God would definitely give a positive answer. In contrast, we need to recognise those times when He has clearly given us a negative answer.

'Silence', listening to God, and talking to God daily can help us to grow spiritually.

If we pray as directed by God, all will be answered. We must humble ourselves, pray, and seek God's face – that is, talk to God, enter His presence, and turn from our wicked ways.

It took a strong team of amazing people to make this 'virtual prayer conference' take place. Though it was a challenging learning curve, its success is clear evidence of answered prayer. Women joined us from all over the world, including Grace Walsh and Winsome Brown-Baadjes, who strengthened us with prayer and took prayer requests from the live chat facility.

We went on our way with renewed strength for the journey, an increased awareness of the responsibility of improving our prayer life, and the blessing of knowing that the prayer of faith, humility and obedience brings real answers from God.

BEULAH PLUNKETT (NEC)



members of the public, and it is for us to be led by the Holy Spirit to share with the Government His wisdom and counsel as communicated through us. If we wish to write as part of the consultation, the deadline is Friday 18 September 2020.

For those who are interested in the statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, here is the link: <https://www.adventist.org/articles/immunization/>.

It reads:

'The Seventh-day Adventist Church places strong emphasis on health and well-being. The Adventist health emphasis is based on biblical revelation, on the inspired writing of E. G. White (co-founder of the church), and on peer-reviewed scientific literature. As such, we encourage responsible immunisation/vaccination, and have no religious or faith-based reason not to encourage our adherents to responsibly participate in protective and preventive immunisation programmes. We value the health and safety of the population, which includes the maintenance of "herd immunity".

'We are not the conscience of the individual church member, and recognise individual choices. These are exercised by the individual. The choice not to be immunised is not and should not be seen as the dogma nor the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.'

IAN SWEENEY (PASTOR & PRESIDENT)

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A Modern-Day Exodus Experience of Transition

Sunday 4th – Sabbath 10th
October 2020
Live Stream & Via Zoom
(details to follow)

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Activate October

For the second year running, ADRA-UK, through its 'I AM Urban' initiative, is encouraging everyone to engage in social justice. When the phrase 'social justice' is mentioned, images of protests, sit-ins and civil disobedience spring to mind, and unfortunately many Christians seek to avoid it.

However, social justice, put simply, is putting right societal wrongs. Social justice is embedded in the Bible. In Isaiah, God states, 'For I, the LORD, love justice' (61:8, NIV), and also in the same book He encourages His followers to 'learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause' (1:17, ESV).

The Activate October calendar highlights some key dates on which anyone and everyone can be involved in micro-volunteering. You may decide to contact an elderly neighbour on the International Day of the Older Person on 1 October; or you may wish to host a well-being quiz on Mental Health Day on the 10th; or consider food waste on World Food Day.

Whatever you do, we would encourage you to right some of the societal wrongs during the month of October; and we would love to hear your stories from the community. Please email them to urban@adra.org.uk.

Activate October
SOCIAL JUSTICE MONTH

- INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PEOPLE
- INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NON-VIOLENCE
- WORLD TEACHERS DAY
- WORLD HABITAT DAY
- WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY
- INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD
- WORLD FOOD DAY
- INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISASTER REDUCTION
- UNITED NATIONS DAY
- WORLD CITIES DAY

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Generation COVID ADRA-UK 2020 Gift Box Appeal

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau
Development Education Officer

Mary, a 34-year-old mother of two, lost her job during the pandemic, as she had to care for her two children when the schools closed due to lockdown. Her husband is a front-line worker and they have found it challenging to purchase school uniforms for the new academic year for their children.

Deyvid goes to school each morning without breakfast. He is entitled to free school meals, but his stomach grumbles through his morning lessons and he struggles to concentrate.

Sarah has a new baby, but she is finding it hard to breastfeed as she hasn't had a proper meal for several weeks and the cost of buying baby milk is prohibitive. She is not only worried about her own health, but also about the health of her newborn.

These are real stories; real children; real lives.

There were 2.4 million children who were living with food insecurity prior to lockdown, and a fifth of these households have gone hungry during the pandemic; and a further 1 million children will fall into poverty by the end of the year.

ADRA's 2020 Gift Box Appeal, called 'Generation COVID', will focus on the disadvantaged children in the UK. Many of our hubs are working with low-income families and families who have no recourse to public funds, such as the hubs in Swansea and Cardiff in Wales, The Cook-In in Edinburgh, and the hubs in Cork and Dublin. Several of the hubs – those in the West Midlands – have joined together to run the Area 5 online tutoring sessions for young people who may need extra tuition due to the closure of schools during the lockdown; and others, such as the E5 Baby and Children's Bank run by the Clapton Hub, and the Solid Start Breakfast Club created by the Edmonton Hub and a local school, are tackling issues of child poverty head-on.

Children are very important to God. Jesus said, 'Anyone who welcomes a little child . . . on my behalf welcomes me' (Mark 9:37, NLT). He also provides a stern warning about protecting children, saying, 'but if you give them a hard time . . . taking advantage of their simple trust, you'll soon wish you hadn't' (Matthew 18:6, MSG). And, while many of the disciples wanted Him to ignore the children and only minister to the adults, He said, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them' (Luke 18:16, ESV).

Like Jesus, ADRA-UK believes that we need to care for the needs of our children. With this belief in mind, we need to support the many disadvantaged children living in this country, helping them not only to survive, but also to thrive.

Please help us to help Generation COVID to have a brighter future. You can donate at <http://adragiftbox.org.uk>.

Soap bubbles, Focus magazine, and 'Mum – who read it all'

Although the coronavirus has done its best to keep everyone indoors, the lockdown hasn't stopped Erdington members from reaching out to the local community while keeping a safe 2-metre distance. Inspired by the ADRA-UK 'I AM Urban' initiative, and in partnership with The Kindness Offensive organisation, we were able to distribute toiletries such as soaps, bubble bars, bath bombs, and bath melts.

With support from ADRA-UK, the Erdington church became a community hub and was the distribution hub of sweet-smelling, tantalising toiletries. Young and old worked together, including some of our teens, banding together to separate the products into gift bags. The gift bags not only included toiletries, but also included tracts to encourage and inspire faith, including the Focus magazine.

On the morning of Sunday 31 May, the Women's Ministries team and the deaconesses worked together to distribute the gift bags to community friends – happy to receive the gift bags gladly.

Reflecting on the experience, Family Ministries assistant, C. Forbes-Grandson, said:

'Going out into the community to give fragrant gifts was a great experience because I know there was a greater gift that went with it – a tract. I am hoping and praying that each tract will sow a seed in the heart of the recipient, so we pray that God will move upon the hearts of the community. I also gave my mum one of those Lush bags with all those soap bubble items. But the bag also included a FOCUS magazine, and to my joy she read it all. The message she got from one of the articles was to never give up praying!'

What a wonderful way to witness in the midst of a pandemic! Let's pray that God will continue to bless us all and help us to create dynamic and safe approaches to witnessing in these times.

REBEKAH ECCLES (COMMUNICATION SECRETARY)



AerosolShields donated to nursing home

Readers may remember a report in MESSENGER (issue 12, p. 9) about the AerosolShield invention created by a group of Adventist Students on Campus (ASC) at the University of Birmingham. The AerosolShield is a transparent, pop-up tent that covers the patient's head and shoulders, can be deployed in seconds, and reduces the chances of carers coming into contact with droplets from the patient's lungs.

Inspired by this story, Erdington members decided to purchase this new product and distribute it to three nursing homes managed by a member of the local congregation. On 7 August, church elder and head of Personal Ministries, Stanley Farrell, presented the AerosolShields to Abbey Rose, Priestly Rose, and Meadow Rose nursing homes. In appreciation of the kind donation, church elder Steve Kazembe responded on behalf of the nursing homes and stated on behalf of the MACC care group of nursing homes, 'We are extremely grateful for such a donation in such a time as this,' going on to highlight how the AerosolShields will be instrumental in keeping residents and staff safe.

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This is my story

by David Neal

This is 'my story', an up-close and personal perspective on race and diversity matters within the British Union Conference. In sharing, I trust it will not only inform, but also help us in understanding each other. In part 2, we look at my roots.

My maternal grandparents became Adventists in the mid-1950s as a result of an evangelistic campaign conducted by Pastor Kenneth Lacey at the Theatre Royal in Birmingham. With Adventism their new spiritual home, along with their teenage son, they became members of the Camp Hill church.

Previously, they had been deeply embedded in the Salvation Army's life, mission and identity. They wore the uniform, played in the band, and sang in the songsters, and their four children attended Sunday School. Sunday was the busiest day of the week at their place of worship, the Sparkhill Corps (located 1.5 miles along the same road, south of Camp Hill Church). Travelling by bus from their South Birmingham home of Shirley, it would be a morning, afternoon and evening activity, as it had been for the prior thirty years. With street witness a regular and consistent activity, and the selling of the *War Cry* in the pubs on a Saturday night, they knew the streets between Sparkhill and Camp Hill like the back of their hand. Of note was the parish of Sparkbrook, soon to become a settling place for Commonwealth immigrants.

In the post-war years Adventism in the UK was a small and strange denomination from the perspective of most UK Christians (at least, those who were aware of its existence). Its adherents insisted on keeping Saturday as the Sabbath, practised strange dietary habits, and were heavily influenced by a nineteenth-century American called Ellen White. In short, it was regarded as an oddball American sect. And yet, when Pastor Ken Lacey shared Scripture in the packed Theatre Royal, my grandparents were keen to discover more about the great truths of Scripture. For them, truth became more important than tradition.

The racial make-up of the Camp Hill congregation in the mid- to late-1950s was overwhelmingly white, strengthened by significant new members from the frequent campaigns during the decade. Of the *Windrush* generation just beginning to arrive and settle, a significant number were already Adventists from back home, and many became Adventists once settled. The church was a safe place in comparison to their distressing experience in society.

I first visited Camp Hill with my grandfather in the mid-1960s. If my memory is correct, I would estimate that by that time a significant proportion of the membership was already

Afro-Caribbean (possibly as much as 60%). The church pastor was white, as was his intern, and as was the Bible instructor. Of note in this context is that by this time my grandfather worshipped alone. For whatever reason (and there were many), my grandmother didn't stick with Adventism. Her mono-cultural Salvation Army world in Sparkhill, in the context of a rapidly changing Birmingham, was perhaps a safer place. To say that it was her life is an understatement. Sure, she had been enthralled by what the evangelist had shared in the Theatre Royal, but, from what she shared with me, Adventism for her was a strange experience. Her verdict – Adventism was big on sin, whereas Salvationists were big on joy: case closed!

But I can't ignore a further reason for her returning to her roots. For many immediate post-war Brits of the time, there was huge suspicion and fear about people of colour settling in this country. Most Brits had never before met a person of colour, and suddenly, in the course of a few years, the familiar parish of Sparkbrook had dramatically and visibly changed. The inevitable question arising from my grandmother's story is whether the many Camp Hill members who became Adventists during the first half of the 1950s shared similar feelings and attitudes. As we well know today, it is an easier task to sow and reap than to keep! The historical narrative suggests that, like many other UK Adventist urban churches, white Camp Hill members yielded to 'white flight' due to a feeling of being 'overwhelmed' by the arrival of people who were ethnically different. It is a narrative difficult to deny, still based on conjecture, but also due to a story that whites are openly reluctant to admit or share.

My grandfather stayed the course as an Adventist, but, along with many other white Adventists, in the end, not at Camp Hill. To describe his leaving Camp Hill as 'white flight' is an over-simplification: but out of Camp Hill in the 1960s came the satellite church of Erdington and the small company in Stratford-upon-Avon, whose ethnic profile was, in the main, white. As I understand the story, the motive for the Stratford-upon-Avon company was to plant an Adventist church in this historic English town. At least two Camp Hill families lived in Stratford, giving an obvious reason to set up a new church. Was this a cover for 'white flight', or a genuine attempt to

give Adventism a presence in a new area? Perhaps we need to admit that the reason we plant churches where and when we do sometimes has an uncomfortable subtext. The Stratford-upon-Avon company existed for about 15+ years, but in the end wasn't deemed to be sustainable due to a lack of growth.

As I finish this piece, I also want to try and quickly provide a general perspective on pastoral ministry and church life during the 1960s and 1970s. Administratively, the church was run as a top-down organisation. If the president made a request of the local pastor, he quickly complied. It was a top-down mindset often copied by the church pastor in running the local church (big or small). This worked well enough with the indigenous membership, who were in the main deferential towards their pastor. Theirs was a high-trust context, sharing not least the same ethnicity.

But from the perspective of the new Afro-Caribbean member, pastoral care and leadership under a white pastor was a completely new experience. Could he be trusted? Would he treat me differently from my new employer, or my landlord? Likewise, for the white pastor, there was no training course in how to minister to the newly arrived members of his congregation. Trust issues and misunderstandings were common. New members brought new ideas about church life to the table which were frequently rejected, sometimes even without considered discussion. 'This is how we did it back home' didn't bode well with the pastor, nor with his indigenous members.

As the church went through that dramatic demographic transition during the second half of the twentieth century, the 'white flight' story is one that continues to disturb and challenge me personally to this day. What about me and 'white flight'? Few whites will talk about the story in such a framework, for with it is attached an ugly label. The matter requires further deep consideration and reflection.

To be continued.

The author is responsible for any material inaccuracies in this article, and welcomes correction. Readers are also welcome to share their perspective on any matter raised, in the spirit of 'we listen and learn together'.

Protest & Progress

Black Seventh-day Adventist leadership and the push for parity

'The most important book published on race relations in the Adventist Church' – Douglas Morgan

Reviewed by Victor Pilmoor

Protest & Progress is published by Andrews University Press, which indicates that the expected readership will be leaders and scholars of Adventist Church history, particularly in North America.

While founding Adventists were active in the abolition of slavery movement in the period leading up to the American Civil War, subsequent white adherents soon found themselves aligned with the 'separate but equal' theories of society.

Establishing the Adventist message 'in the South' among African-Americans was a slow, resource-strapped struggle. Beyond economic limitations, emerging black leaders suffered a catalogue of barriers and indignities. Several are mentioned, but grievance is not the book's purpose.

By similar token, church, education and health institutions limited access to black people for the convenience of well-heeled white clients. A turning point came when a member from New York with a terminal condition was turned away from Washington Adventist Sanitarium. This misfortune was compounded by insensitive correspondence from leadership which implied their racial bias.

A 15-year argument for self-determination by black leaders in the form of black-led conferences was conceded post-World War 2. Seventy years on, commentators, millennials and onlookers question whether the 'Regional Conference' route was valid, and whether their cause continues to be ethically appropriate. The author's purpose is to explain the founding rationale, their success and the merits of continued parallel service in Adventism.

The cause of leadership was further progressed with aspirations for Black unions. This proved to be more challenging, with opposing schools of thought between the integrationists – those whose dream was aligned with Martin Luther King, Junior – and those who asserted the identity of African Americans with a distinct cause and culture.

Vignettes of the actors in this struggle are well documented for posterity. An interesting turn of events, in the appointment of Charles Bradford to Division leadership, eventually undermined this quest.

It is in this debate that Rock lays out with clarity the merits of the argument that will serve a wider audience. He makes a case for acknowledging cultural identities as a practical reality this side of the kingdom: identities which are not going to dissolve in the melting pot.

Part II of the book is a significant treatise on the sociology and theology of diversity, which offers a platform of discussion not driven by partisan positions, angst or guilt. There is no expectation that spiritual conversion and the love of mankind will dissolve culture or identity.

In Part III Rock looks to the future with a call for social activism, for political engagement in favour of justice. He notes the history of social conservatism that has restrained both the Christian church and Adventism.

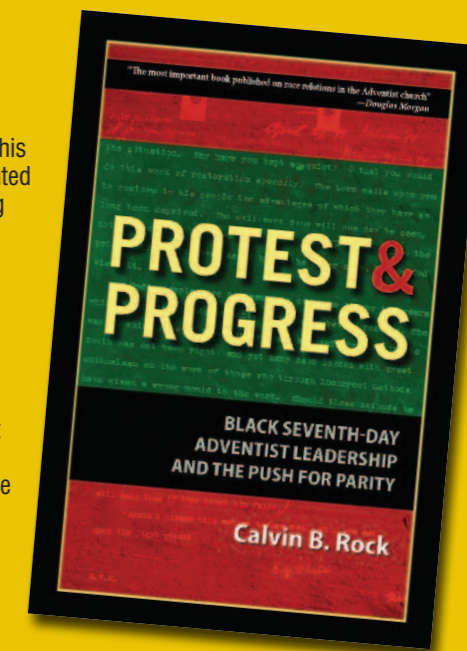
The African-American context, rooted in 300 years of cruel slavery with recent emancipation, does not directly transfer to other situations with tensions in diversity, but there are sufficient principles for an enriched conversation.

Learning to love and respect the best in each other's culture has become critical in times of social distance and unrestrained aggression.

Those who wish to embrace change for the better will want an understanding practically laid out in this history.

Protest & Progress is available online from lifesourcebookshop.co.uk at the following link for £12.75 plus postage & packing.

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It's a small world

by Karen Shelbourn

My husband and I own a small dog, whose name is Eric. He is a Chihuahua/Yorkshire Terrier cross, and sometimes seems to think that he owns us! I walk him twice a day, and he enjoys talking with other dogs while I enjoy talking with their owners.

At some time during each day, come rain or shine, I walk Eric on the local football field, and I have met many other dog-walkers over the two or three years I have been going there. He enjoys running around, and I enjoy looking at the big sky and the clouds and listening to the birdsong. Some days I meet several other people and their dogs. I do not always know the names of many of these people, but I usually know their dogs' names!

Many of my fellow dog-walkers are already acquainted with people that I know. One is



currently studying as a lay preacher for her Methodist church, and she used to live opposite our former pastor. Another volunteers for the local talking newspaper, and her house was cleaned by one of my church friends; yet another lives in the house where some other church friends once lived; and one couple sent their children to Dudley House School, where they

knew several more of my friends, with whom they keep in touch.

It is indeed a small world, and the impression that we make on people lives on in their memory. Each of my dog-walking friends said warm and positive things about the people we both know.

We are representing Christ, whether we are conscious of it or not!

Pearline Alphenice Mosquito (née Caesar)
(1933-2020)
d. 23 May.



Pearline Alphenice Mosquito (née Caesar) was born on 9 July 1933 in Newcastle, Nevis, in the Caribbean. She was one of three children. She had a brother and a sister. Her brother passed away six weeks before she went into her sleep. It seems that the loss of her brother in the current restrictive climate left her heartbroken. She passed away peacefully at her home on 23 May 2020, surrounded by members of her extensive family of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Born in Nevis, Sister Mosquito was one of the key pianists at the Birmingham Camp Hill church. She had begun learning to play the piano when she was 9 years old, and this continued until fairly recently. Her family left Nevis and moved to the neighbouring Federation island of Saint Kitts (Saint Christopher) when she was 12 years old. She married in 1955 and lived on this island until she moved to Birmingham, UK in 1959, in the footsteps of her husband, Daniel Mosquito. Once in the UK, as a devoted Seventh-day Adventist she was befriended by many Adventist members, including Sister E. Sinclair, who was a huge support when her husband passed away.

This gifted yet modest musician led worship and praise

for both Sabbath School and Divine Service, and worked for God with various Camp Hill choirs – travelling with them when they went to other churches to minister. She patiently taught numerous young people the fundamentals of piano playing.

As well as music, Sister Mosquito enjoyed knitting and sewing. Her six children – four boys and girls – were gifted with her craftwork on birthdays and during the festive season.

Once retired from her manufacturing position at a local factory, Sister Mosquito maintained strong friendships with some of her former work colleagues. She also began travelling to various parts of the world, including an inspiring trip to Israel, and she made many other memorable journeys with church friends and family members.

Her children fondly described their mother as a well-respected, loving woman of grace, faith and prayer. They recounted her counsel and wisdom, and thanked God for her life.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL

Alan Sven Öhman
(1946-2020)
d. 23 August.



We were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Pastor Alan Sven Öhman (known as Sven) on Sunday 23 August 2020. Sven was born on 18 July 1946 in Northampton to Lennart and

Agnes Öhman. He spent his early years in Quebec City, Canada, where his father was planting churches, and where his younger sister, Karin (Edwards), was born. From there the family moved to Sweden and Sven remained there till he was ten, when he moved with his mother and sister back to England after the passing of his father. After his school days he went into agriculture until he felt the call of God to the Gospel ministry.

Because of this call, he and his young family went to Newbold College of Higher Education, from which he graduated in 1977 and entered denominational work. He served first as an area publishing director, and then as a pastor in various churches in the South England Conference, and later was called to the British Union Conference as Publishing Director. He left denominational employment at the end of 1995 and continued in various employments until his retirement in 2014, but continued to work on a casual basis until his passing.

Sven was a larger-than-life character, known throughout the British Union Conference. He was an ardent student of the book of Revelation and had recently completed a series with Adventist Radio London on his favourite topic, 'Jesus, The Heart of Revelation'. He will be greatly missed in his home church of Kettering, where he used his musical gifts on the piano and accordion as well as his teaching and preaching roles. He served the Lord with a passion through

the church and through his personal life and witness.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sven's wife, Roma, and their children and grandchildren, as well as his sister, Karin, and the wider family and friends. We now look forward to Christ's soon return and that glorious resurrection day.

KARIN EDWARDS

As Karin Edwards shared, Sven recently completed a series with Adventist Radio London on his favourite topic, 'Jesus, The Heart of Revelation'. A thank-you to Adventist Radio London for arranging this. To listen to the series, copy this link: <https://adventistradio.london/podcastfilter/jesus-the-heart-of-revelation/>

Messenger

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Design: David Bell

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Sunset

Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by HM Nautical Almanac Office.

	London	Card	Nottingham	Edinburgh	Belfast
Sept 11	7.23	7.36	7.29	7.40	7.49
18	7.07	7.20	7.12	7.21	7.32
25	6.51	7.03	6.55	7.03	7.14
Oct 2	6.35	6.47	6.38	6.44	6.56

WANTED

As I begin making plans for the 2021 fortnightly editions of *Messenger*, a search is underway for new volunteer writers and reporters.

Here's what I am looking for:

- A page in every edition to connect children to the magazine.
- Testimonies about your life, combined with Christ's life. What was your life like before you met Christ, and how did it differ from what you experience now?
- The joys and challenges of sharing your faith in today's UK and Irish societies.
- The lighter and funnier side of church life. Humour is biblical and permitted!
- Why I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Imagine you are talking to a family or community friend who has no understanding of your faith. How would you share it in a winsome way?
- How to live as a Christian in the toughest of times.
- Have you a Bible study that you'd like to share? Ideas on how to help small groups turn into growth groups?
- And then stories on church life in general. Has something really special happened in your church life recently that you'd like to share? That's something *Messenger* readers used to see a long time ago, which I would like to revive. When a couple get married, we need to record it and celebrate! When there's a special anniversary – it needs to be noted! When our grown-up children graduate from university, we need to know.

Messenger is for the Adventist family in the UK and Ireland. Let's help one another to keep it that way.

Isle of Man youth summer fun

In between Ireland and the United Kingdom lies the jewel of the Irish Sea known as the Isle of Man. COVID-19 has affected everyone in the world, but, through prayers and people complying to restrictions and guidelines, God has protected our little island. Through God's grace we were able to worship as a congregation with our first Sabbath together again on 4 July 2020.

On 1 August 2020 the Isle of Man youth celebrated Pathfinder induction with guest speaker Pastor Alan Hush, North England Conference Executive Secretary and former Pathfinder director, through the platform Zoom. The induction gave the opportunity for the children and counsellors to publicly show their commitment by reciting promises and principles concerning the objectives of the Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs.

Between 14 and 16 August 2020 a Pathfinder summer camp weekend was held. The fun-packed weekend was full of activities to acquire badges, which included:

Pathfinders: Camping Skills II, Prayer and Bible Marking.

Adventurers: Camper, Prayer Warrior, Bible II and First Aid Helper.

The camp's theme was 'In His Footsteps'. Pastor Mugari inspired the Pathfinders with his message on Naaman's maidservant. God's message was transmitted through a little girl who mobilised peace between two nations. The

influence of God can be felt by even a child; no matter your age, you can be of service for God's purpose.

We would like to thank our Pathfinder/Adventurer club director, Edilmar Espinosa, counsellors and junior counsellors for leading out, but also the sponsors and church members for their participation. We truly enjoyed God's nature through camping.

On 22 August 2020 the Sabbath was designated as a youth day in the Isle of Man church. From Sabbath School to Adventist Youth Service, the youth were actively involved in the programme.

The youth speaker, Jifthe Paguntalan, delivered a powerful message not only to the youth, but also to the adults. The message tells us to sit in God's presence and listen to His voice. As the Bible states in 1 Samuel 3:10 (NIV), 'The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."'

We truly give thanks to the Lord for delivering the whole island, despite this pandemic. The island was COVID-19-free by June, and we were truly blessed that we were able to carry out these events. Praise God!

JHOEZETTE AZUPRA

