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The Creator and creation:

God's affection for this world

for full story see page 8

Photo: David Bell



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Time for fresh thinking?

by Pastor Martin L. Anthony, former BUC president

I woke up with a start a few weeks ago after a dream about going around in circles and getting

nowhere. Dreams are usually not the most solid bases for a drastic change in the principles that govern our lives. As I lay in bed I began to think about the way our church has been operating, and how COVID-19 will make inevitable the need to dramatically overhaul the way that our church's financial resources are handled.

In the Church of the New Testament we are given virtually no information in Scripture on how church finances were to be structured. In 1 Corinthians 9:14 we read 'that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel' (NKJV) – a verse that is taken to support the principle that preachers should be financed by the income generated by those won to the Gospel. Interestingly, very little literature seems to be available on how this principle should be applied.

Our own church has evolved a five-level organisational structure, with the local church a central point of support. However, financial resources, including all tithes, are directed through the treasury to the local Conference or Mission, with decisions on salary scales the responsibility of the Union administration. Unions are organised into 13 Divisions currently, all of them coordinated by the office of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In recent decades the General Conference has stressed that in effect there are only four administrative levels, as the Divisions are simply the GC operating at the world levels – a somewhat specious argument.

COVID-19 has brought us face-to-face with reality. Personally I believe that, as a world church, we are over-organised. We do not need all these tiers of church administrative government.

The local congregation is the most important factor, and should surely have priority. It is becoming increasingly clear in my judgement – and I could be wrong, but I doubt it – that a dramatic slump in national and international income faces every segment of society throughout the world.

It is time for the church to tighten its belt, and quickly. We should be preparing for one national body to handle church affairs, including finances, in each major country or group of countries. Our world church should consider downsizing its cumbersome structures to just three levels, instead of the current five. In Britain this would call for a single administrative body at Union level, to handle all church matters. Senior experienced pastors would then be

given a wider leadership role in the current Conference districts, but would be answerable to the national head office. The General Conference should relate directly to the national church bodies (the Unions, as they are termed), eliminating the divisional tiers.

I would make one further suggestion that would greatly strengthen the local churches. A segment of church tithes, perhaps 10-15%, should be reserved by each church to be used exclusively for direct personal and public evangelism. This would place a heightened responsibility for the sharing of our message on every local congregation, and would bring new life to our people.

Would it work? Would the current GC administration let it happen? Only time can reveal this. But one thing is clear: things will have to change, and very quickly, if the church is to maintain its cutting edge. Our members, currently facing a winter of closed churches and minimal fellowship, are looking for action on the part of the leadership. What is the best way forward? What do you think?

Pastor Martin Anthony is a former president of the British Union Conference. The thoughts he expresses here were originally published in the August edition of the BUC retiree newsletter, *Pilgrim*. Reprinted with permission of the author.

In Britain this would call for a single administrative body at Union level, to handle all church matters. Senior experienced pastors would then be given a wider leadership role in the current Conference districts, but would be answerable to the national head office.



'As gold instead of grey'

David Neal, Editor

The Hebrew word for 'Psalms' is *tehillim*, meaning 'Songs of Praise'.¹ One of the reasons the Psalms offer praise is to call the community together to praise the Lord for His creative power. As C. S. Lewis points out in the introduction to his *Reflections on the Psalms*, 'Psalms are poems, and poems intended to be sung; not doctrinal treaties or sermons.'² As Israel's hymnbook, they reflect all possible emotions from praise to lament.

'A man can't always be defending the truth: there must be a time to feed on it,' says Lewis.

For the next few moments I want to invite you to feed on a couple of psalms: one ancient, and one modern. One Christian author once described worship as saying, 'Three cheers for God.' That's how I see the Psalms: an expression of who and how great God is, and what He means to me. Read and reflect on both psalms. I think both say something tremendously significant about God and His watchcare over us, then and now.

An Ancient psalm

Psalm 8:1, 3-5 (NRSV):

*'O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens. . . .
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.'*

As the psalmist David views the natural world, he sees beyond nature – he sees nature's God. In his innocence he 'wonders'. He's unaware that humankind lives on a spherical globe, composed of one-third land and two-thirds sea, that completes its orbit of the sun every 365 days. He wouldn't have had a clue about how his life support system is totally unique in the known universe: how the air he breathes contains exactly the right chemicals (nitrogen, oxygen, carbon dioxide and some other molecules) in exactly the right proportion to work. As he looks up into the cloudless night sky and sees the stars, he has no idea that they are light years away. All he sees is far bigger and greater than himself, much bigger than the hills and mountains in his small world. He responds with praise, worship and wonder. 'Why, O Lord, our Sovereign, would You ever think about us – for even a nanosecond?' Filled to the rafters with joy and happiness, the words take on a melodic tone. His words become a happy song.

Countless generations later, with science and technology informing us of how things are, and telescopes that see further into the universe than ever before, we still wonder. Think about a line we often use: 'The world is much smaller these days,' meaning that we know so much about each other due to travel and exploration. And yet, as we explore the cosmos – still almost exclusively through a telescope – the universe gets bigger! We are still the only known inhabitable planet in the solar system (our small village, in cosmic terms). And we still 'wonder', like the psalmist, 'Why, O Lord, our Sovereign, would You ever think about us – for even a nanosecond?'

Enjoy the words of 'As Water to the Thirsty' as they are set to music, bringing to mind beautiful pictures of Christ, at either of the following links:

All Souls Choir and Orchestra
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k3bMRP3cKqY>

The Salvation Army Staff Songsters
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNGZUbXjgN4>

A Modern psalm

*'As water to the thirsty,
as beauty to the eyes,
as strength that follows weakness,
as truth instead of lies,
as song-time and springtime
and summertime to be,
so is my Lord,
my living Lord,
so is my Lord to me.*

*'Like calm in place of clamour,
like peace that follows pain,
like meeting after parting,
like sunshine after rain,
like moonlight and starlight
and sunlight on the sea,
so is my Lord,
my living Lord,
so is my Lord to me.*

*'As sleep that follows fever,
as gold instead of grey,
as freedom after bondage,
as sunrise to the day,
as home to the traveller
and all we long to see,
so is my Lord,
my living Lord,
so is my Lord to me.'*

A modern-day psalm that speaks to me, and one which so comprehensively reflects the reality of life, is written by Timothy Dudley-Smith. Like the many poets and hymnwriters of old, 'As Water to the Thirsty' uses imagery and analogy to explain what Christ means to the Christ-follower (there are 19 allusions in all). 'Nearly every line is Bible-based,' says Dudley-Smith. 'Some are "water" (John 4:14); "strength" (Psalm 19:14); "truth" (John 14:6); "peace" (Ephesians 2:14); "sun" (Psalm 84:11); "freedom" (John 8:36); and "sunrise" (Malachi 4:2).'³ As we read these familiar lines, it's worth looking out for the 19 images of what Christ is like.

With the COVID-19 pandemic showing no sign of letting up, and with the multiple social, economic, psychological and physiological problems resulting from it, some may be inclined to 'sing a song of sorrows'. Looking at the experiences of the psalmists, one thing is clear as crystal: **there are times in life when it's OK not to be OK.**

Life right now seems 'grey'. Many are experiencing dark times of pain, uncertainty and loss. Life is not OK – and we are not OK. But if there is a line from a song I have always held on to, it describes Christ 'as gold instead of grey'. That's who Christ is to me. That's who He continues to be to me in the dross of these times. I don't want in any way for this to come across as glib or an 'easy answer', but is it possible that 'your living Lord' may just be able to be 'as gold – instead of the grey'? As that line speaks to me, there are 18 other images of Christ – the living Lord – to choose from. I hope and pray that one of them is yours.

¹New Bible Dictionary (second edition), InterVarsity Press, p. 992 ²C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 2 ³Companion to the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, no. 460, page 457



Centre of Help and Hope: Willesden COVID-19 project

The Community Ministries Department of the Willesden church has been running its Centre of Help and Hope since 2016. In March 2020, as a result of COVID-19, the Centre of Help and Hope (CHH) closed its doors.

Due to the impact that COVID-19 had, and the impact it continues to have on our local community, our Community Ministries Department saw the need to launch a special COVID-19 rehabilitation project called 'iCare so iShare' through the Centre of Help and Hope, which ran from May to the end of July.

The community of Brent is made up of people from all walks of life, ethnicities and cultures – and they came out in their droves! Large bags were prepared with every imaginable requirement a family or single person would need: flour, rice, bread, sugar, cereal, cheese, oil, pasta, milk, yoghurts, fruits and vegetables. The funding for the weekly food hampers was made available through the generous financial contributions of our members and some of our local supermarkets – namely, Felix Park, Aldi Kilburn, Tesco Harlesden, M&S Greenford, M&S Ealing Broadway, M&S Swiss Cottage, and Tesco Harrow.

The centre then collaborated with the British Union Conference Community Services Convalescence Project and One Vision in distributing over 150 hot meals daily to our shut-ins, as well as to other elderly and vulnerable people in our community.

One very young girl was so thankful for what had been provided for her family that she sent in a beautiful picture to illustrate her appreciation. She informed us that her dad was no longer working due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and she was happy that we had given this food to them. She was so grateful that she sent us three thank-you drawings (pictured).

We have no idea how far-reaching the impact of this pandemic will be, but the Bible tells us, 'Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart' (Galatians 6:9, NKJV).

We thank all our volunteers, our sponsors, the pastoral team, and the Community Ministries Department for responding to the call of God to serve our community and thus build bridges of hope.

JOCELYN FISHER



Prepared food bags for the community

**Bournemouth baptisms in the sea!
Let me take you there . . .**

by Judith Cassidy, elder



Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt and Doug Vine lead Christine Chipare Matore into the sea to be baptised



Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt and Doug Vine lead Peter Breedon into the sea to be baptised as Bournemouth members watch on



The Bournemouth church family

It's Sabbath 26 September, and the sun shines down on a small group (the Bournemouth church family) standing a few feet away from the sea's edge, white foam constantly rolling in and out to the crashing rhythm of the tide reaching up the sandy beach.

Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt and Doug Vine (the local elder) led Christine Chipare Matore and Peter Breedon into the sea in turn, each holding on to an arm. Words of baptism were pronounced as they immersed Christine and then Peter into the water. Church members standing close to the water's edge watched, witnessed and applauded as all, in turn, returned to dry land.

After the baptism, Christine and Peter briefly shared their

spiritual journey with me.

Christine said that the time and circumstances were now right for her to give herself over to the Lord. She was feeling excited and thrilled before her baptism: pleased, thankful and praising God.

Peter's journey has taken over twenty years. As we shared together, I put some questions to him:

"How important was it for you to be baptised?"

"That's a good question! If you had asked me that any time before being baptised last Sabbath, I would have told you that baptism was not important to me – or so I thought. I would say to myself, if God's wants me baptised, He will sort it! Now, I believe it is the most important

but I feel that He has emptied me; I feel a changed man, which right now is indescribable, and I now see this world with understanding, through more wise and clearer eyes, something I have prayed for many times over the years.

"Do you feel any different since your baptism?"

"I do – I feel a peace I have not felt before, and a sense of joy at feeling more at one with Jesus; and, yes, I feel His love.

"What would you say to anyone thinking about baptism?"

"For anybody who is not sure or is waiting or undecided about baptism, like I was: wait no longer, because He will make your day perfect. Don't wait any longer; don't make the mistake I did of worrying about it all. Worry and indecision come from Satan, not from God."

For the Bournemouth church family it was a memorable and special day; but for Christine and Peter it was a new day, a symbol of new life in Christ. We wish them both all the joy Christ offers.

thing I have ever done in my life, or that anyone can ever do.'

'Why do you say that? What do you mean?'

'In a way it is hard to explain,



The Lord is Master of our school

Hyland House School Board of Governors invites applications for the following post

**Full-time, permanent
Early Years teacher
commencing January 2021**

We need a strong classroom teacher with proven experience within Early Years.

Hyland House School is an independent Christian school offering a happy, positive environment for both staff and pupils. Please contact Mrs J. Lemonius, head teacher, for a school visit and an application package. The successful applicant will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS check and a medical.

School location: Holcombe Road, Tottenham, London, N17 9AB
Email: Mrs Jessica Lemonius: j.lemonius@hylandhouseschool.org
The closing date for applications is 27 November 2020.

Hyland House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is committed to data protection and data privacy and is an equal opportunities employer.

Interviews will take place on 2-3 December 2020, with the work start date being 4 January 2021.

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Welcoming pupils and staff back to Stanborough School

by Kaz James, interim head teacher

We were incredibly excited to have our pupils and educators back in school again, particularly after such a challenging spring and summer. Our enthusiastic and motivated staff spent most of the summer term teaching remotely. Although this was extremely successful and most pupils made good progress when learning from home, we are delighted to have them back in school.

School leaders spent the summer preparing for the return of pupils and staff in September, and throughout the entire school year we will follow guidance from the Department for Education and our local health protection team (HPT) regarding confirmed cases of coronavirus and school opening or possible closures.

This year's return to school will come with some new protocols and procedures in order to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Preparations for the school reopening in September 2020

We gradually integrated pupils back on their first day in September, meaning that the start time for each key stage was different. We made it clear to parents that our school procedures would only be effective if families followed up-to-date government guidance on all COVID-19-related procedures, such as checking for symptoms before coming to school, where/how to get tested in the event of a suspected case at home, self-isolation guidelines and rules for travel. We completed whole-school and location-specific risk assessments, and prepared an action plan for re-opening in September. We also implemented the DfE's 'guidance on protective measures in education and childcare settings' to ensure that we minimised the risk of vulnerable individuals contracting the coronavirus when the school reopened. We also prepared personalised risk assessments for pupils and staff with specific needs and those who are more vulnerable: for example, older adults (that is, people over 60 years old) and those with underlying medical conditions.

While the action plan has altered certain aspects of the school day, our goal is to maintain a normalised but safe environment where pupils can learn and teachers can teach. We have placed a heightened emphasis on sanitation.

A small number of pupils were required to stay at home due to COVID-19-related issues, but we have been able to provide work for

them to complete so they do not fall behind with their studies. In addition to this, we now ensure that pupils will be able to access the lesson remotely moving forward.

What enabled a smooth transition?

1. The activities that were done before school closed in July

- Well-being talks by the school chaplain for each year group
- Form tutor time team-building activities
- Whole-school team-building activities
- Celebration assembly – livestreamed
- Final assembly – livestreamed

2. The activities that were planned for the week before school opened in September

'Back to school week' focused on the school values. Meetings were held for both parents and pupils. These were livestreamed on the school's YouTube platform.

3. The activities that were planned for the first week of school

Different speakers held presentations for the different year groups. The Year 7s had a special talk about the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 by an experienced primary school head teacher. Form tutors discussed the school's rules and values with their pupils.

Pupils especially enjoyed the first week of school, as they were reunited with old friends, classmates and staff members. They kept saying how great it was to be back at school!

The 'Back to School' week programme

The 'Back to School' week programme, hosted by Stanborough Secondary School, began on Monday 31 August and ended on Friday 4 September. Various presenters spoke on the school's values: respect, courage, resilience and excellence. Meetings were held for parents and secondary school pupils at different times from Monday to Thursday, and then the two groups had a combined meeting on Friday evening. Pastor Ray Patrick, the Religious Studies teacher, took the service, which was truly inspiring.

The Well-being and Recovery Curriculum

Stanborough Secondary School experienced many challenges in the last academic year, including the impact of COVID-19. We thank



and praise God that He has sustained us. Knowing and understanding that pupils and staff had suffered trauma, loss and bereavement, with associated anxieties and uncertainties, the curriculum leader and pastoral leader worked together to develop a Well-being and Recovery Curriculum for the new academic year.

Stanborough staff and pupils value relationships – it is often said that the school is like a family – so leaders knew that the first task would be to re-build relationships. Leaders also knew that a programme had to be put in place to help pupils and staff recover from their losses (one pupil lost five family members during this time) and to help pupils to value learning and use their time wisely, especially the Year 11s.

The Well-being and Recovery Curriculum is divided into three phases:

1. **A holistic approach** – the first three weeks of school.
2. **Focused recovery** – personalised for individual pupils (beginning with SEN pupils and those who are suffering from anxiety and bereavement).
3. **Deep recovery** – a longer time period is required, as is parental and external agency involvement.

The aims of the Well-being and Recovery Curriculum are to:

- Create a safe environment and learning space for both pupils and staff
- Acknowledge loss, trauma and bereavement and support pupils in their recovery
- Re-build relationships
- Re-engage our pupils in their learning
- Strengthen the resilience that we know both staff and pupils have (demonstrated during online lessons)
- Assist and support pupils and staff in their well-being
- Create an environment where pupils can express themselves freely and be supported.

GCSE results

The school made a holistic, professional judgement about each pupil's likely grade, taking into account evidence such as any mock results, other assessments, assignments, performance in subjects such as music, classwork, and homework. We are extremely pleased with our GCSE results this year, and on behalf of the governors we would like to thank our dedicated and passionate staff for ensuring that our pupils reached their potential.

Ninety-four percent of pupils achieved a grade 4 in 5 or more of their GCSEs. This is compared to 89% the previous year.

A significant percentage of pupils for History (50%) and Music (100%) are high achievers in that they achieved either a grade 8 or a grade 9.

Year 11 work experience

Although work experience was cancelled over the summer due to COVID-19 restrictions, we managed to secure a wide range of jobs last week for our Year 11 cohort. The jobs ranged from learning how to run a hotel, working with disabled adults, or shadowing a furniture designer to assisting teachers. The work experience inspired many pupils to think seriously about a teaching profession, becoming an entrepreneur or running their own business. Many learnt new skills. We can only hope that their dreams and goals will also include God's mission.

World Fitness Day

Stanborough School values the holistic development of its pupils and promotes the NEWSTART health programme. Pupils are encouraged to keep fit and to pay attention to health principles. World Fitness Day was celebrated on 23 September, with Sam Sears, a personal trainer, coming in to Stanborough

School to motivate pupils. He did a series of different exercises that most pupils participated in enthusiastically.

Pupil Association

Every year the pupils elect leaders for the Pupil Association in a fast-paced simulation of a real-life parliamentary election. The Pupil Association is the voice of the pupils and is responsible for organising social events. It has taken a keen interest in the Week of Spiritual Emphasis programmes.

Community Services Day

COVID-19 and all its restrictions could not quench the missionary zeal that Stanborough School has for service. Friday 9 October saw pupils and staff put their creative skills to work as they made cards for children in Watford General Hospital and packed food parcels for the homeless.

Traditionally, pupils are taken off timetable and serve the community in various ways. However, due to COVID-19, this could not be done. The pastoral leader, Mrs Anderson, assisted by Mrs Mumbo, prepared all the activities and assigned them to each class. The food parcels were delivered to Liz Burns, vice chair of One Vision, at Stanborough Park Church. She was delighted that the food parcels each had a box of cereal and packets of pasta in them, as it was just what was needed for that week!

The generosity of the Stanborough School community is much appreciated.

Year 11 extraordinary parents' evening (virtual)

A special meeting was called for the Year 11s and their parents on 17 September. This was a virtual meeting. Pupils were given information about their GCSE subjects, and parents were given advice on how they could support them.

Classwork, homework, attendance and punctuality were discussed, and pupils were encouraged to start revising for their mock examinations. Parents and pupils then had the opportunity to meet with different subject teachers. The Year 11s were encouraged to work hard, as this would ensure their success.

Testimonials from pupils – Year 10

'I feel very happy and joyful. I feel this way because I get to see all my friends once again!' Philip

'I am happy to come back to school because I have missed socialising with people and learning new things as well.' James



Reevka, one of the pupils, wrapping food parcels for One Vision



Sarai (left) and Ruby (right) get ready to wrap food parcels in support of the One Vision project

Stanborough Secondary School,

Stanborough School, which is situated on the serene Stanborough Park in Watford, holds firm to the principle that education is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual powers. Our curriculum is designed to provide young people with the core knowledge and cultural capital needed for further academic study, while enabling them to develop as citizens and engage effectively in the world beyond school.

Please note that we are accepting pupils this year. Prospective parents who would like to discuss our admissions procedure further, please contact the school at info@spsch.org.



The Creator and creation: God's affection for this world – part 1

The great Creator, who reveals Himself in Scripture, loves this world His hands have made. His affection is not narrowly confined by modern ideas of love, but embraces all persons, all creatures, and the land itself.

Hints of this are embedded throughout Scripture, commencing as it opens: *'The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters'* (Gen. 1:2). The word 'hovering', describing the Spirit of God at Creation, is used only once more in the Pentateuch, this time in Deuteronomy: again describing God, but now with the children of Israel during their wilderness wanderings.

In this, the first article in a two-part series on the relationship between our Creator and His created world, Dr Jo Ann Davidson (Professor of Systematic Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary) looks at what the first five books of the Bible have to say about creation.

'He [God] found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, so the LORD alone led him' (Deut. 32:10-12).

The affection of a mother bird hovering over her nest is used to illustrate God's feelings as He creates our new 'nest'. This is a striking analogy. Though God

foreknew that the human family He created would rise up and kill Him someday, He resolved to tenderly create our new 'nest'. The Creator also expresses His great pleasure over what He makes each day of Creation Week, calling it 'good' – even 'very good'. Later, He recounts to Job the exceedingly great joy at that time: *'Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?'* (Job 38:4, 7, emphasis added.) This was such an amazing event that the entire universe was rejoicing with the Creator!

On Day Five, after fashioning the birds and water animals, *'God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth"'* (Gen. 1:22). With the same words He uses the following day when He creates humans, God blesses the new birds and sea creatures – as yet there are no humans around to listen. He delights in the diversity of life just created, much of which He made with His own hands, just as He will make Adam on Day Six: *'And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground. . . . Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air'* (Gen. 2:7, 19).

God joyfully refers to life's diversity as He exults to Job over some of the animals He has created. He obviously treasures the animal kingdom in His longest speech in Scripture, a magnificent four-chapter address starting in Job 38. God mentions animals such as a lioness, a wild

mountain goat, an ox, an ostrich, a 'majestic' horse, a hawk, an eagle and a raven. He then turns to the behemoth:

'Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; he eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength is in his hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles. He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit. His bones are like beams of bronze, his ribs like bars of iron. He is the first of the ways of God' (Job 40:15-19, emphasis added).

Moreover, God speaking directly to newly created creatures on Day Five of Creation Week implies an innate intelligence that humans have been slow to appreciate. Scientists continue to learn about the amazing intelligence of animals – even featured in a cover article in *Time* magazine. This intelligence is implied throughout Scripture, including Balaam and his donkey, where the text states that *'the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey'* after Balaam beat her (Num. 22:28). The donkey then talked to Balaam, complaining of how she had been treated. A divine being also severely scolded Balaam for beating his donkey. The point is that the donkey already had intelligence, and now with her tongue unloosed she could express human language.

God's affection for all life He created is also reflected in the comment He makes to the newly created humans when granting them dominion over the fish, birds and every living thing:

'Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and

Photo: David Bell



Photo: David Bell



multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' And God said, *"See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"* (Gen. 1:28-30, emphasis added).

With this divinely designed, non-violent, cruelty-free diet, human dominion is defined and circumscribed by precluding killing. God provides peaceful meals which preserve life. After six days of creating life and matter, God displays the most extraordinary skill by creating the Sabbath, for the parameters of His power are limitless. **As the God of space and time, His power is limitless.** More verbs are connected with the creation of this day than any of the other six: God ceases from His work and rests, also blessing and sanctifying the seventh day. It is the first day to which He gives a name (Exod. 20:8, 11). The previous six days of Creation Week were named by number –

'day one', 'day two', 'day three', etc.

The seventh day is the first entity God makes holy – not a building or a mountain or a city, but twenty-four hours of time – and, to make certain everyone understands that this is the same kind of day as the previous six, the phrase 'the seventh day' is repeated three times in the two verses summarising the end of Creation Week (Gen. 2:2, 3).

The first human couple hardly had much time to work the first day of their life, the sixth day. But the very next day, their first full day of life, they were to rest in the Creator's finished work. **His all-encompassing love for all life He created is manifest in this gift.** He wants all creatures to rest for a seventh of their lives.

God refers back to this time when giving the Decalogue on Mount Sinai. He apparently loves the seventh day, for the fourth commandment is the longest of the ten, containing a third of all the words in the Decalogue. God just cannot stop talking about the Sabbath! He refers to the first Sabbath day during Creation Week and then reminds us that Sabbath rest is provided for all life. Nor can the seventh-day Sabbath be considered

Photo: David Neal



Photo: David Bell



God does not hesitate to place humans and animals under the same covenant protection. In fact, He repeats this four times in His covenant statement (Gen. 9:8-17).

At Sinai, God gives His people civil laws that govern their relationship with each other, the animals, and the land itself. For example, they must help a staggering donkey even if it belongs to an enemy (Exod. 23:4, 5); large farm animals cannot be muzzled when helping with the heavy work of harvesting – they must be allowed to eat when working (Deut. 25:4); fruit trees must be spared, even in warfare – at a time when siege walls, constructed of wood, were used extensively in warfare (Deut. 20:19, 20); the land/soil must be allowed to rest every seven years (Lev. 25:1-7). Because God cares for this earth, He provides for its protection. The Jewish historian Josephus would subsequently comment on the humane nature of the Mosaic laws:

'So thorough a lesson has He given us in gentleness and humanity that He does not overlook even the brute beasts, authorising their use only

*in accordance with the Law, and forbidding all other employment of them. Creatures, which take refuge in our houses like suppliants, we are forbidden to kill. He would not suffer us to take the parent birds with the young, and bade us even in an enemy's country to spare and not to kill the beasts employed in labour. Thus, in every particular, He had an eye for mercy, using the laws I have mentioned to enforce the lesson.'*¹

See the next issue of MESSENGER for the rest of this inspiring article.

For further study
If you would like to gain the full blessing from reading this article, we warmly encourage you to do so by copying the link below into your search bar. This will allow you to read the complete article with the extensive original footnotes.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1183&context=pubs>

All Scripture quotations in this article are drawn from the New King James Version.

¹Josephus, *Against Apion*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (London: Heinemann, 1956), 1.2.210-15



Photo: David Neal



Photo: David Neal



Belief in the pre-advent judgement – bane or blessing?

Six reasons why it's good news

by Dr Kim Papaioannou*

Introduction

The pre-advent judgement is a doctrine specific to Seventh-day Adventists, and it states that the judgement of God's people takes place before the Second Coming, rather than after it. Indeed, it is already going on, and individual cases are examined as time goes by.

Of all Adventist beliefs, this is the one that is least understood and appreciated by other Christians, and even by some Adventists. Two criticisms are often levelled against it:

- It has little or no biblical basis, and
- It detracts from the assurance of salvation.

The second criticism can be especially damning. If my salvation depends on the decision a heavenly court might come up with at any given moment, then I can have no assurance of salvation until the court proceedings are over. Or so the argument goes.

Anecdotal stories say that this belief has been used to 'encourage' Adventists, especially youth, to conform to the Adventist lifestyle. What if your name comes up in the judgement even as you are involved in some activity that is not totally acceptable? Sipping a cup of coffee? Being at the movies? Driving down the highway above the speed limit? Listening to questionable music?

To be honest, in my 52 years as an Adventist, I have never seen the doctrine used in such a way.

And, to be frank, judgement is judgement. Whether it has already begun, as Adventists believe, or whether it will commence after the Second Coming, as other Christians believe, the fact remains that we will be held accountable for the life we have lived: so I don't see how a judgement now is more fearsome or detracts from the assurance of salvation more

than a judgement in the future.

Be that as it may, Daniel 7 counters both criticisms in a most dynamic way. First, it gives the pre-advent judgement a solid biblical foundation. Second, it presents it as good news – indeed, excellent news!

The certainty of the pre-advent judgement

Daniel 7 describes four beasts coming out of the sea. They parallel the four metals of Daniel 2 and represent four kingdoms – Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome – which reigned in sequence from 605 BC to AD 476: that is, for more than 1,000 years.

Following the four beasts/kingdoms, ten horns rule, and then an eleventh, 'little' horn appears. The horns parallel the feet of iron and clay in Daniel 2. These divided kingdoms rule from the collapse of the fourth kingdom until the end of human history: at which point both visions, in Daniel 2 and 7, end with the establishment of God's kingdom.

Even as the little horn is active on earth (7:8) – that is, well within historic time – Daniel's eyes are directed to Heaven, where he sees a heavenly judgement scene (7:9), in which the following are involved:

- God the Father, the Ancient of Days (7:9);
- Jesus, the Son of Man (7:13);
- The myriads of angels standing before God's throne (7:10);
- Possibly unfallen representatives from the far reaches of the universe, who may constitute the court that is seated, as opposed to the angels, who are standing (7:10);
- God's people on earth, here called 'saints of the Most High', who are not physically present but are judged and vindicated (7:18).

The pre-advent judgement is biblical. But is it good news? Absolutely!

That this is a judgement scene is verified by the phrase, 'The court sat in judgement, and the books were opened' (7:10, ESV). The books in question contain the records of life, and are directly connected to judgement (cf. Rev. 20:12).

That this judgement takes place before the Second Coming – that is, in the final days of earth's history – is confirmed by the fact that at its conclusion the dominion is taken away from the little horn and the kingdom is given to the saints.

Here, then, we have clear biblical support for the pre-advent judgement.

The good news

The pre-advent judgement is biblical. But is it good news? Absolutely!

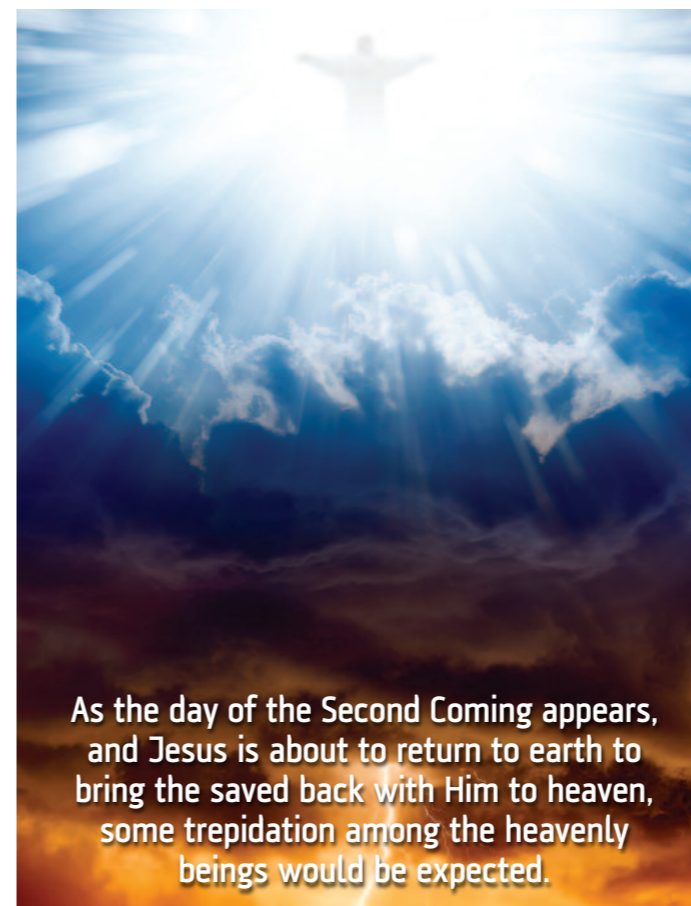
First, the vision portrays one violent kingdom following another before the little horn wreaks havoc on God's people. God's answer is the heavenly judgement. Its order, majesty, and fairness mark the complete opposite of the chaos and oppression of human history.

Second, God's people in Daniel 7 are repeatedly referred to as the 'saints of the Most High' (7:18, 22, 27, ESV). This is not a name given to people who are about to be condemned by God. It is clearly a name of endearment. We belong to God. With Him on our side we have nothing to fear from the judgement.

Third, judgement is given 'for the saints' (7:22, ESV), 'in favor of the saints' (NKJV) or 'in favour of the holy people' (NIV). Indeed, it seems almost as if the judgement takes place in order to rescue God's people from the depredations of the little horn.

Fourth, the judgement results in the kingdom being given first to the Son of Man (7:14), and then to the saints (7:27) with Him. Since He inherits the kingdom, we inherit with Him.

Fifth, throughout the Bible, for God's people, the judgement is good news, because in the judgement Jesus our Defender acquits



As the day of the Second Coming appears, and Jesus is about to return to earth to bring the saved back with Him to heaven, some trepidation among the heavenly beings would be expected.

every believer from the accusations of the enemy (for example, Psalms 7:8; 50:4-6; 67:4; 72:2; 82:8; 96:10, 13; 119:84; Prov. 31:9; Eccl. 3:17; Isa. 3:13-15; 11:3, 4).

Sixth, every person will come into judgement. If we accept the pre-advent judgement, then it follows that believers are judged and acquitted in absentia.

By contrast, most Christians believe we will all stand in judgement before God, in person, after the Second Coming.

How would you rather be evaluated and judged before God and the watching universe – in absentia, or in person? I think for most the answer would be obvious – in absentia. We will stand before God, but only to receive the kingdom! So how can anyone say that the pre-advent judgement is bad news?

Synthesis

The pre-advent judgement is a biblical reality. It is also exceedingly good news. Heavenly beings have been watching events on earth. They know we are sinners. And sin is the worst thing that has ever happened.

As the day of the Second Coming appears, and Jesus is about to return to earth to bring the saved back with Him to heaven, some trepidation among the heavenly beings would be expected. Will these forgiven sinners infect the heavenly realms with the poison of sin?

The pre-advent heavenly judgement is God's means to acquit His people: not so much before Himself, since He forgave them the moment they believed, but before the watching universe. The books of heaven contain the record not only of our sins, but also of our repentance, new birth, and sanctification.

As Jesus our Advocate presents our case favourably, the watching universe can do nothing but declare us forgiven and fit to enter the heavenly realms.

The pre-advent heavenly judgement is the event that ensures that when we enter heaven, we will be warmly welcomed by all heavenly beings. As such, it is very good news!

*Kim Papaioannou holds a PhD in Theology with an emphasis in the New Testament from the University of Durham in England. He once served as a pastor in the Irish Mission, as a professor of theology, and currently serves in the Cyprus Mission.

by Sharon Platt-McDonald



Solutions to combat loneliness

January 2020 saw the publication of the Government's first annual report on loneliness, providing a progress update since the publication of the cross-departmental Loneliness Strategy in October 2018. The foreword includes a joint statement from The Right Honourable Nicky Morgan (Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and the Minister for Civil Society, Baroness Diana Barran, MBE, highlighting the scale of the problem:

*'We have been struck by the amount of correspondence which has come through to us on loneliness. With somewhere between 6% and 18% of the population often feeling lonely, this level of interest is not surprising. We know the negative impact that loneliness can have on a whole host of aspects of our lives, including our health, well-being, productivity, and self-esteem. . . . We believe that the Government has a part to play in reducing loneliness.'*¹

Mental Health Foundation support

Recognising the isolation experienced by individuals during the lockdown as a result of the pandemic, Mental Health Foundation UK have written a guide on nurturing relationships to combat loneliness. They state:

*'Now, more than ever, is the time to keep up those strong social networks that act like a buffer against poor mental health. Staying in touch via video calls, WhatsApp or just regular phone calls is vital. Keep up your routines where possible.'*²

Among the list of solutions they give are the following:

- **Give time** – put more time aside to connect with your friends and family.
- **Let yourself be listened to** – honestly share how you are feeling, and allow yourself to be heard and supported by others.
- **Try different ways to stay in touch** – use phones, computers and the post to stay in touch.

Further solutions can be found at: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/nurturing-our-relationships-during-coronavirus-pandemic>

NHS support

The NHS webpage 'Feeling Lonely' states:

*'Try not to tell yourself that you're alone – many people feel lonely at some point in their lives, and support is available.'*³

They advise:

Contact the Samaritans: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>, call: 116 123, or email: jo@samaritans.org if you need someone to talk to. Try simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/feel-better-and-happy/>. Find out ways to raise your self-esteem: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/raising-low-self-esteem/>. Listen to free mental health audio guides: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>.

Additional support

If loneliness is impacting your life and you are concerned about mood changes, the NHS has created a Mood Self-Assessment test that you can undertake to ascertain what level of support you may require. You can undertake the test via the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment/>.

Good health!

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-first-year>

²<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/loneliness-during-coronavirus>

³<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/feeling-lonely/>

An interview with Professor Helen Rodd, MBE

ADRA-UK trustee, Professor Helen Rodd, a consultant paediatric dentist at the University of Sheffield, was recently awarded an MBE for her services to children's dentistry and NHS leadership. She talks to Bert Smit, ADRA-UK CEO, about her work and her commitment to the health and well-being of children.

Bert Smit: Helen, congratulations on your recent award. I understand that for the past 30 years you have devoted your life to paediatric dentistry. What inspired you to do this work?

Helen Rodd: After qualifying as a dentist, back in 1988, I spent the first three years in various hospital posts wondering if I had made the right career choice. I knew general dental practice was not for me and was considering becoming an orthodontist. But luckily a 'random' paediatric dentistry lecturer's post came up in Sheffield, with the opportunity to train to be a consultant and do a PhD at the same time. I feel so fortunate to have found a career working with children. They can be challenging, and they can bite, but they are also great fun, and once you gain their trust they are amazingly accepting of treatment.

BS: Why do you believe that it is important for children and young people to have a positive experience of dentistry and their dental health?

HR: It is very common to have a fear of dentists, and once it has developed in childhood it will often last a lifetime. Children who are dentally anxious have poorer oral health, miss more dental appointments and have a greater number of extractions than non-anxious children. It is therefore absolutely vital that we ensure that children have positive dental encounters by giving them a sense of control and communicating in a way that they can understand. Reducing dental anxiety is one of my areas of research interest, and our team has developed a number of resources for children and their parents called 'Your teeth – you are in control', which is based on cognitive behavioural therapy and has now been translated into nine different languages (<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/dentalschool/research/person-centred-population/child-dental-anxiety>). Children with poor dental health can be hugely disadvantaged in life, experiencing repeated episodes of pain and infection, disturbed eating and sleeping, missed schooling and a host of other negative social impacts.

BS: According to Public Health England, 23% of 5-year-olds have dental decay, the figure rising to 34% in deprived areas and falling to 14% in wealthier areas. Why is there such a big discrepancy?

HR: You are right: there are huge social inequalities in children's oral health in this country. Children from deprived backgrounds, particularly in the north-west of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, have significantly more decayed teeth than children in more affluent southern counties. There are a number of factors for this discrepancy, including access to dentists, but the main reasons are the poor diet and oral hygiene practices that are associated with poverty and lack of education.

BS: Tell me, what are some of the challenges of COVID-19 regarding the dental health of children here in the UK?

HR: One of our biggest concerns is the 'backlog' of children who had their hospital admission cancelled back in March due to the pandemic. We currently have around 600 children waiting to have their teeth out under general anaesthetic at Sheffield Children's Hospital, and we continue to receive around 100 new patient referrals each week. And the situation is the same in all the dental hospitals. Many of these children have required repeated courses of antibiotics and are experiencing pain and swelling. Some of these patients also have serious medical conditions which place them at greater risk from COVID-19. We have phoned all the families to provide support and prioritise them for treatment according to their dental, medical and social needs. We also have severely reduced capacity to use high-speed drills for our fillings, due to concerns about the spread of the virus through aerosol generation; so some children are having to just have temporary fillings. It is also really difficult trying to establish a rapport with young children when we are completely trussed up in our protective gear and they can't see our faces. But we are all trying our best to keep services running and provide urgent care for those who need it most.

BS: In 2018 you joined us here at ADRA-UK as a trustee, and we would like to thank you for your consistent and continued contribution to our work at board level. What drew you to the work of ADRA-UK?

HR: As clichéd as it may sound, when I became a dentist, I always wanted to head out to a developing country and do voluntary work. I made a few enquiries over the year,



but nothing ever came of it. Then, out of the blue, Steve Logan (an ADRA-UK board member and good friend) emailed to see if I would join the ADRA-UK board. I initially said 'no', as my workload was completely unmanageable. That same day, the vicar from my village came round to talk to me, and straight up asked, 'How are you with God?' We had a long chat, and I reflected on how work seemed to get in the way of my relationship with God and the dream I once had of working in the mission field. The minute he left, I realised that God had been asking me to join ADRA-UK and sent the local vicar round to ask me again! So I emailed Steve right back and said 'yes'.

BS: Children feature highly as ADRA-UK beneficiaries, and we have run or supported several projects in the past that focus solely on the well-being of children. In your opinion, are there any other ways in which we could support child dental health in our projects?

HR: Dental decay is largely preventable, and simple oral health education can easily be delivered by non-dentists to children. Key oral health messages could be embedded in many of ADRA-UK's educational or health projects around the world. Supervised school tooth-brushing programmes and twice-yearly application of fluoride varnish can be really cost-effective in reducing decay in children.

BS: Thank you, Helen, for sharing your story, for your commitment to the health of the nation's children, and for responding to God's prompting.

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‘Scripture and violence’ – the 2020 Beach Lecture

What is the relationship between religious scripture and violence? The 2020 Beach Lecture explored this question – in 105 minutes. Holding the lecture online was a ‘first’ in the Beach Lecture’s 22-year history of commitment to religious bridgebuilding. The second unique quality was the featuring of not one but three speakers – a Christian, Dr Julia Snyder; a Jew, Dr Daniel Weiss; and a Muslim, Dr Omar Shaukat – all from the Cambridge Interfaith Programme. Each speaker surveyed the connections between their own community’s sacred texts and human violence. They came up with surprisingly similar conclusions.

Dr Snyder began by exploring the many factors which lead up to an act of violence. She suggested that singling out someone’s religion as the cause of the violence is offering an over-simplistic account of human behaviour. A clear distinction needs to be made between motivation for violence and justifications cited for violent actions – often after the fact. Despite the fact that some violent men cite the New Testament to explain why they beat their wives, she said, ‘There is no evidence of a correlation between religiousness and domestic violence.’ All the speakers demonstrated the fact that, in religious communities, ‘People cite Scripture all the time in any circumstance and use it as a secondary justification.’ They showed how a great deal of violence is also motivated by financial, political, historical or social factors.

Dr Shaukat confirmed the complexity of human motivation as he shared the results of interviews he had conducted with recruits for ISIS and other similar organisations about their relationship to the Koran. He described how some of his interviewees began their violent activity in response to leftist propaganda which gave expression to their perceived sense of injustice towards Muslims in the wake of 9/11. Only subsequently did they discover what they perceived to be justification

for violence in Koranic texts and jihadist interpretations of those texts. A second area of agreement between the speakers was the importance of people *not* deciding what they will understand from a scriptural text just by reading it themselves – especially if they do not belong to the community concerned. People from *outside* religious communities rarely understand the role that scriptures play *inside* them. They all pointed out the fact that, within their religious communities, different groups of people are debating the meaning of religious texts. Dr Saukrat recounted how Sunnis and Shias, for instance, disagree on what sort of purity the Koran demands of Muslims. All speakers agreed that discussion is vital.

Dr Weiss illustrated Jewish engagement with religious texts by exploring rabbinic approaches to two texts in the sixth-century AD Babylonian Talmud – the basis of most contemporary Judaism. Jews believe the scriptures are the Word of God, ‘who is good and wants human beings to choose life and blessing,’ he said. He looked at two ‘violent verses’ which came out of a community needing to maintain justice by taking care of victims. Leviticus 24:19, 20 calls for ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’. Deuteronomy 21:18-21 seems to advise the stoning of ‘a stubborn, rebellious, gluttonous and drunk son’. ‘The value of a violent-sounding verse is that it stimulates community discussion,’ said Dr Weiss. Jews believe that Scripture should be treated as something that needs to be discussed within the community; and they conduct that discussion conscious of the broad context of different scriptural exhortations. ‘Asking questions moves us away from our assumptions and prejudices,’ he said, and ‘makes a community less likely to use violence’.

To find out more about ‘Scripture and Violence’ further material can be found at <https://www.scriptureandviolence.org/>.

HELEN PEARSON

The full lecture and Q&A session can be viewed online at <https://www.facebook.com/newboldcollege/videos/3362860667136926>

Pastor Colin Morris (1934-2020) d. 13 September.



Colin Morris was born on 24 March, 1934, in the small mining town of Abertillery, Wales. He was the fourth child of Stanley Charles Morris and Eliza Anne Weaver. After his father was seriously injured in a mining accident, the Morris family emigrated to Bristol, England. During the Second World War, Colin and his older sister, Betty, were evacuated back to Abertillery due to the intense bombing of Bristol by the German Luftwaffe. There his big sister was his best friend, guardian, and spiritual mentor. Upon returning to Bristol at age 11, Colin and his sister began to attend a Sunday school at the Bedminster Tabernacle near their home. It was there, under the anointed teaching of Mr Moody, that Colin learned more about Jesus. He also met a beautiful young lady named Florencia Maria Ramseyer. They were both baptised as followers of Jesus at Bedminster Tabernacle at age 13.

There had always been a special bond between Colin and his older sister, Betty. When Betty contracted tuberculosis in her late teens, young Colin enrolled in the St John Ambulance Brigade, where he learned basic first aid. He cared for his beloved sister until her death at age 21, contracting tuberculosis himself in the process. During the months he spent confined to bed at

home, many other young men expressed interest in his special friend, Florencia, but she refused to be drawn away from her childhood sweetheart. Not long after his recovery, Colin and Florencia were married at Bedminster Tabernacle. They were just 17 years old.

A turning point in their lives occurred in 1953 while visiting Florencia’s mother. Colin picked up a Voice of Prophecy Bible School card that someone had slipped under his mother-in-law’s door. He decided to enrol in Bible studies, and, after months of careful study of the Word of God, Colin and Florencia became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bristol, England. This was one more step in their life-changing journey together. After working for several years as a quantity surveyor assistant, Colin sensed the call of God to become a pastor.

In 1960, Colin, Florencia, and their two young boys, Stuart and Derek, moved east from Bristol to the small village of Binfield, Berkshire, where Colin attended Newbold College. He completed a BA in Theology with honours four years later.

Pastor Colin Morris began his pastoral ministry in 1964 in Southampton, England, serving during the next 13 years in London, Hastings, Brighton, and then back in London. During his years as a pastor in the South England Conference, Colin continued his graduate studies, earning an MA in Religion with honours from Andrews University

in 1973. While serving as pastor of Hampstead Seventh-day Adventist Church, Colin received an invitation to pastor a church in Ohio, USA. He emigrated with his wife Florencia to the United States of America in 1977.

For the next 27 years, Colin served as a pastor and hospital chaplain in Ohio, Tennessee, Maryland, and Kentucky before retiring after 40 years of ministry to Deltona, Florida, with his wife Florencia in 2004. Even in retirement, Pastor Morris was actively involved in ministry, preaching and teaching the Word of God to all who longed for a closer relationship with Jesus. Colin and Florencia moved to an independent living facility in DeLand, Florida in 2016, where they spent their final years. When Florencia died on 14 June 2020, Colin was heartbroken. Best friends since they were 11 years old, and married for almost 69 years, Colin couldn’t imagine life without his sweetheart. He died three months later on 13 September 2020, but he did not die without hope. Trusting in the promises of Jesus his Saviour, Colin had the assurance of eternal life. The headstone where he was laid to rest next to his beloved life companion expressed the blessed hope he and Florencia shared: ‘Together Forever’.

Colin is survived by his two sons, Stuart and Derek; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. His family long for the day when God will make all things new.

PASTOR DEREK MORRIS

Coming soon . . .

Week of Prayer, 7-14 November

Theme for the week: ‘Reach the World: Faithfulness in Christian Lifestyle’

To download readings, click here:

<https://www.adventistworld.org/november-2020/>

Messenger

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Sunset

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Oct 30	4.37	4.49	4.37	4.36	4.51
Nov 6	4.24	4.36	4.24	4.21	4.37
13	4.14	4.26	4.12	4.08	4.25
20	4.05	4.17	4.02	3.57	4.14

Newbold Diversity Centre



Lecturer:
Amanda Mukwashi
Chief Executive, Christian Aid

DOES POVERTY HAVE A COLOUR?
How the Church can restore dignity, equality and justice for all.

Tuesday
10th
November
2020
7.30pm

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contact: Helen Pearson 07775 612 610



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Plymouth's Adventurers and Pathfinders finally celebrate investiture!

It's been a tough year for everyone: young and old have been affected by the restrictions of COVID-19. In March 2020 a large group were ready to be invested into the Adventurers and Pathfinders club, Anchored in Christ, in Plymouth Area 1. With sadness the church closed its doors the Sabbath before the investiture was due to take place.

Though Plymouth has had a club for a few years, we had many new faces all ready to experience their first investiture and receive their scarves, sashes and a few awards/honours they had worked on from January.

Finally Plymouth Church was given permission to open its doors on 5 September, so club directors and counsellors quickly sprang into action to organise an investiture for Sabbath afternoon, 17 October. Adventurers had been set the task of completing two awards a week from the BUC virtual awards programme over the school summer holiday. A portfolio of workbooks was given to each, and one young Adventurer, Annette, took the challenge to heart and joyfully presented her work, having completed all awards and requirements. Pathfinders too were given summer workbooks, this time three a week, as well as interactive Zoom sessions to complete the Friend class.

With the church beautifully decorated, the day came, and with excitement everyone gathered on Sabbath afternoon. Children from the church, school and community gathered with their parents, all temperature-checked and socially distanced, while wearing face masks. Other church members and parents joined on Zoom in support.

The investiture kicked off with Pathfinders Suely, Faith and Felipe marching the flags to the front, followed by a quick welcome from Pastor Deyvid Batista (APLA) and Jennie Hall. Next, Faith recited the Pathfinder pledge, and Felipe recited the law. Diana and Ianna stood for the Adventurers and flawlessly recited the law and pledge. We were also blessed with special items: Faith beautifully recited Psalm 23, and Felipe accompanied his sister Talita on the piano while she sang 'Side by Side', Fletewood School's theme song.

The area coordinator, Pam Catchpole, travelled down for the afternoon to oversee the investiture, and her message was: 'Things happen in their own time.' After a young Adventurer, Elinka, read a short scripture reading, Pam likened life to a tree in different seasons. In winter the tree appears dead; in spring it's coming to life; in summer it's thriving; but in autumn the tree appears to be dying again. Today we may feel frustrated and stagnant in a season of winter, in this time of pandemic lockdowns, but we must always remember that God is in control



Suely receiving her sash from Area Coordinator Pam Catchpole



The Pathfinders getting ready to start the investiture ceremony

and there is a season for everything.

The church is blessed to share its premises in Plymouth's city centre with Fletewood Adventist Primary School. Several of the children from the school were invested by teachers Mrs Grey and Mrs Cooper, as they shared a 'bubble' with their students. Other Adventurers and Pathfinders were invested by family members with the help of AC Pam and club staff. The head teacher, Mrs Grey, also voiced her support and emphasised the positive influence the 'Anchored in Christ' club has in bringing the school and church together.

In total 14 Adventurers and 6 Pathfinders were invested, and the club members are already beginning to work towards their next investiture. Adventurers, Pathfinders, parents and counsellors were all blessed and encouraged by the afternoon's events, and everyone left inspired.

We'd like to thank everyone for showing their support in these difficult times: in particular, the area coordinator, Pam, and Mrs Grey and Mrs Cooper for their continued support. The club, of course, could not function without the enthusiastic support of its directors and counsellors, particularly the Adventurer club director, Gracie, who tirelessly organised and provided for the many children in our Adventurer club.

We want to encourage all Adventurer and



Annette proudly wearing her new sash

Pathfinder clubs across the country to continue to be creative, work with the COVID-19 guidelines and continue on to investitures. It may be more difficult at this time, and as usual will require lots of dedication, but we will persevere in God's name, 'for we are the Adventurers and Pathfinders strong!'

More photographs can be found on the Plymouth Church website: plymouth.adventistchurch.org.uk.

JENNIE HALL