



Messenger

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LOCKDOWN?

... God is still
out and about!

(see page 8)

Photo: Grantham Canal, David Bell



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Evangelism is not our primary goal

by Earl Ramharacksingh –
BUC Treasurer



If I were to say to you that our primary goal is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, I hope you'd agree. I would further say that without that we have no right to be doing any evangelism.

At the start of the pandemic I had a conversation with Andy, our regional HSBC bank manager, whom I have known throughout my 28 years of working for the church. I shared with him that throughout those 28 years, through financial thick and thin, we have never seen a decrease in tithe, and that currently we're expecting to be back at regular tithe levels by year-end! Our members do not give tithe, I explained, but

return it, because of our covenant relationship with God, and belief in the mission of the church.

Yes, for September, tithe has decreased by 12.6% (£2.2m), but has improved significantly from the 50% falls in the early part of the pandemic. God is good – all the time.

- Yes, we are expecting tithe below 2019 levels.
- UK and Ireland economies are in slowdown and we're seeing high unemployment.
- We have moved to operating through virtual programmes and meetings.
- Working capital and liquidity across the organisations are down. To recover our position will require much prayer and thought.

What are we doing to mitigate our situation?

- We are reducing costs where possible.
- Government grants are accessed where possible.
- We have become innovative and creative

Church accountants

by Fred Shone –
NEC Treasurer (acting)



From the beginning of the Advent Movement, we have been living in momentous times. Believers who lived through the Great Disappointment, the US Civil War, the two world wars and a flu pandemic (WW1) must have felt feelings similar to what we're experiencing today. When we feel that everything is beyond our control coping gets ever more difficult. It may be my age, but a song comes to mind by Mary Reeves Davis.

'This world is not my home,
I'm just passing through;
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me
From Heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore.'

Some years ago I was discussing things heavenly, and began considering what occupations will be in heaven. Some of it was easy to decide for the New Heaven and New Earth: Farmers and gardeners – yes! Well, someone has to look after the vines, gardens and animals! Musicians – yes! There'll be constant praising around the sea of glass, and all will be able to sing and play instruments. Scientists – yes! Imagine studying matter when we can ask exactly how it was all made! Astronomers and cosmologists – yes! There might be no undetectable dark energy and matter, but there'll be an infinite number of objects in the universe to study.

'What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived' – the things God has prepared for

those who love him' (1 Cor. 2:9, NIV).

Then we got around to discussing who will not be there in heaven. No sickness means there'll be no need of medical doctors. No untruths means there'll be no need of lawyers.

Face-to-face worship of our Saviour and Great Creator of the Universe means there'll be no need for pastors!

After the discussion, Elder Charles Bramble pointed out to me that I had forgotten about the accountants! Someone will be keeping track of all the stars, planets and creatures of the universe. (Some accountants may even find that counting infinite quantities will form a core part of their worship!)

In these momentous times, church and conference accountants are having to learn to be flexible like never before. I am constantly

'I praise God for His provision'

by Candy Layson –
SEC Treasurer



What a year it has been! Words like 'coronavirus', 'COVID-19', 'pandemic', 'lockdown', 'social distancing' and 'furlough' have become so ordinary that they no longer have the impact they had earlier in the year. Events are rapidly unfolding before us on a global scale. Prior to COVID-19, our tradition was to create a budget, by forecasting our income and expenses based on previous years' performance. Even before COVID-19 struck, balancing the 2020 budget was a painful process, but then it needed revision. Now in the process of preparing the 2021 budget, we know it will need to be flexible, and subject to regular review and revision as and when required.

Despite all the pandemic challenges we're experiencing, I can only praise God for His sustaining mercy and grace. Thank you for all

in how we do ministry.

- Evangelism is still our priority – where it can be done safely.
- We are supporting local community humanitarian projects throughout the country.

The effects of the pandemic can be seen in:

- Much-loved fellowship greatly reduced
- Peer-to-peer member support for each other, when it is needed most
- Missed praise and worship

Finally, I concur with the thoughts of our General Conference treasurer, Juan Preston-Persian: 'We remain optimistic, vigilant and conscious to conserve our resources. We give gratitude to the Lord. He will provide the means and the people to do the work that remains to be done.'

Thank you to all the treasurers in our local churches and the treasury staff in the entities around the BUC territory.

humbled by fact that our great movement is not funded by untold riches or ancient legacies, but through the continuing faithfulness of individual members in returning tithes and giving offerings.

On the one hand, our church relies on every saint doing their part faithfully; and yet, on the other hand, there are things beyond our control: whether that be the free gift of grace, without which there will be no salvation for us, or even the many everyday things which currently seem so far beyond us.

I trust that the fellowship of all members – and, within that, church accountants – will be but a foretaste of the more perfect fellowship we look forward to when 'there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' (Rev. 21:4, NIV).

your prayers, which are being heard and answered. My deepest appreciation goes to all members who remain faithful during these very challenging and trying times. I know many of you can testify of God's love and goodness that have kept us secured in His care.

Tithe up to September this year amounted to £9.9 million. Comparing this to £11.4 million for the same period in 2019, it is 13% lower – equivalent to £1.5 million. This is offset by the receipt of around £0.9 million from the Government's Job Retention Scheme (JRS), a proportionate reduction in tithe sharing, and cutback on travel and department expenses.

While so many companies have made employees redundant, once again I praise God for His provision, allowing us to maintain our workforce, except for a few who resigned or retired of their own volition. While the Government extended the JRS in November, the SEC required all ministers to go back to full-time work. The future is uncertain, but I trust what He has promised and has provided in the past: that God will indeed supply all our needs according to His riches in glory.



David Neal, Editor

'We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn'

On taking the first sip, my face screws up and I give an 'ugh', grumbling and muttering under my breath in disbelief that I am actually drinking this stuff!



As a child I was taught the value of eating apples with the well-known proverb, 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.'

Reinforced by the story of Daniel and his three friends graciously abstaining from the King of Babylon's poor diet, I knew it made sense (Daniel 1:8-20): but did I practise the habit? Far from it. During the 1980s and 1990s I would more likely consume a 'Bourbon Cream' biscuit than an apple. Not until my mid-fifties did the light go on about putting into practice what I'd been taught in childhood.

Connected to 'apple matters' is a historic prejudice against the idea of drinking apple cider vinegar. To my mind it is not a health supplement, but a natural version of 'horrible medicine'. Any virtue of its benefit to strengthen my immune system was immediately dismissed with, 'I don't care if it helps me fly to the moon – apple cider vinegar is not for me!'

And then came the pandemic . . .

All of a sudden, I'm a believer! For the last six months, as regular as clockwork, I have poured a tablespoon of this 'alien' liquid into a cup, boiled some water, added a dollop of pure honey and drunk every drop. On taking the first sip, my face screws up and I give an 'ugh',

grumbling and muttering under my breath in disbelief that I am actually drinking this stuff!

Why is it that changing a personal habit is so difficult? Good habits based on principle are important to support the orderly rhythm of life. Poor habits disrupt that order, causing potential short- and long-term damage to both ourselves and others. Even though our mind tells us we need to change, and we try, how many times have we raised our hands and admitted, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak'? As I've thought about overcoming my own poor habits, I've become aware that the real challenge is not in adopting new habits, but in 'unlearning' the old.

When Ellen White wrote the words, 'We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn', they were written in the context of taking a humble approach to the understanding of Scripture: yet to apply them only in the context of Scripture (as significant as that is) limits their spiritual value. Surely this is the confessional lifeline of the Christ-follower? When it is not, there is a problem, as the early twentieth-century Scottish Baptist preacher, Oswald Chambers, pointed out with great concern:

'I hate to meet a man whom I have met

*ten years ago and find that he is at precisely the same point: neither moderated nor quickened nor experienced, but simply stiffened.*²

Forgive me if I take a leap here, but what applies to the personal disciple can also apply to the collective life of the church. 'For I the LORD do not change . . .' (Malachi 3:6, ESV) is our anthem, fearful that the slightest change to the way things are will compromise a cherished belief or practice. Time and again we sing the anthem in our boards and business meetings, a song haunted with the hocus-pocus theology of the 'slippery slope'.

With an exaggerated loyalty to our own human and cultural tradition, we call on God to second the motion, misusing Malachi as evidence of God's inflexibility. At its worst it becomes a power game, misusing Scripture without recognising context. Malachi reveals not the fossilised God, but the God deeply hurt by Israel's perpetual wander-lust. The hurting God says to Israel, 'While your faithfulness to Me has changed, mine has not – and I am always here for you, and always will be.'

Perhaps a truer rendition of this anthem we are so quick to sing should be, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12:9, ESV). Paul, under pressure in his ministry for staying faithful to the unfashionable Gospel, still retains the ability to be a learner, a listener – flexible, open-hearted, sacrificially waiting for the promptings of the Spirit who holds him accountable – for the sake of Christ.

'Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways,' we sing in the hymn. We can't rewrite history, but learn from it we must – and unlearn every poor habit, practice, policy, structure and attitude that impedes our mission for Christ. Forbid, Lord, that we become collectively 'stiffened' like the gentleman Oswald Chambers met.

I have frequently compared the 'denominational' mindset with 'movement' thinking. If there is one characteristic we need to address in our current context, it is the problem of self-interest. 'Movement' thinking buries in the deepest sea even the remotest hint of personal or organisational self-interest. The financial challenges facing us in these times demand that we face up to this reality.

On the opposite page, our treasurers share the story of the moment. Called by the Lord with their fellow officers, they navigate the church through the financial turbulence with eyes fixed on mission. Pray for their 'burden', and for the Lord to lighten it. Send each one a message of encouragement.

As I sign off today, reflecting both on my own experience and that of the church, I wonder – are we willing to 'unlearn', before it is too late?

¹Ellen G. White, 'Search the Scriptures', *Review and Herald* 69, no. 30 (26 July, 1892): 465-66; reprinted in *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Assn., 1946), p. 37.
²Oswald Chambers, *Leagues of Light: Diary of Oswald Chambers 1915-1917* (Louisville, KY: Operation Appreciation Ministries), p. 42



‘Stronger Together’ – South England Conference Area 5 Day of Fellowship

Under the theme ‘Stronger Together’, approximately 1,000 participants zoomed in from Area 5 and elsewhere to hear the inspiring and timely address of Pastor Charles Wesley Knight. Supported with rich musical contributions from the members throughout the day, the ‘fragrance of the fellowship’ gave a great sense of belonging. We are God’s children – and we belong!

Relying heavily on Zoom and YouTube platforms, this was a digital event. Pastor Sinisa Horvat led the lively adult Bible study discussion with 300 ‘in the room’ listening, and some able to engage in discussion. At the same time, the children were having their own Sabbath School meetings, organised in three age groups, with around 40 in attendance for each, and with some 115 youth.

Pastor Wesley Knight in his sermon focused on relying on Jesus as the only reliable guide during the time of personal and collective turmoil.

As is traditional for a Day of Fellowship, we continued to meet in the afternoon and enjoyed spiritual and uplifting music of different styles, with performers from across Area 5, offering something for everybody. ASNA (the Adventist Special Needs Association) led by Sophia Nicholls ran their own early-afternoon programme called Gospel Train, a sing-along event aimed at supporting people with special needs, including their families and friends.

As Pastor Trevor Thomas (Area 5 coordinator) concluded the day, he shared a hope – that we will never again have to run it under the same circumstances, but take what was good and use it again in future. Reviewing the many comments on social media, it was clear that members were blessed and full of gratitude for the opportunity to fellowship. Even though they attended from the safety of their own homes, to join together with hundreds of like-minded people in the same Spirit was a huge blessing.

TIM ZESTIC



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Ben & Charlotte Collins holding Joel, with grandparents Phil and Judith Redman

Winchester baby dedication ‘We thank You, High God – You’re breathtaking!’

Never let it be said that a small church like Winchester – which, like all other churches in the UK, is closed because of COVID-19 – couldn’t celebrate the arrival of our newest member. Not even a global pandemic resulting in isolation stopped us from sharing the dedication of Joel Paul Collins.

For most of this year nothing seemed to make sense. Joel was born in mid-May, a time when we were feeling very much apart. Charlotte and Ben were excited and blessed with the arrival of the new addition to the family; unfortunately, though, due to unforeseen circumstances, Charlotte and Joel had to remain in hospital for a few extra days. This meant that initially Ben could only see his little family from the photographs Charlotte took in hospital or via video calls, as no face-to-face visits were permitted. This was a particularly hard time for parents and grandparents, along with the rest of the family and friends too.

On Sabbath 3 October Joel was dedicated with family and church members witnessing the occasion by Zoom. Friends and family from as far apart as Ireland and Scotland watched as Joel’s grandad, Phil Redman (a Winchester Church elder), dedicated his grandson.

During the service Phil requested that the viewers confirm their consent to keep a loving and watchful eye over this little boy and his parents. Accompanying the hand waving as Joel was shown close up on camera, I have to admit to seeing quite a few tears of joy.

Charlotte and Ben chose Psalm 139:13, 14 (Message paraphrase), a beautiful poem and two very fitting songs as part of the service.

*‘Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out;
you formed me in my mother’s womb.
I thank you, High God – you’re breathtaking!
Body and soul, I am marvelously made!
I worship in adoration – what a creation!’*

God bless you, Joel Paul Collins: grow strong in the knowledge that God loves you amazingly, know that Jesus is with you every day, and feel the Holy Spirit guiding you.

WENDY BRADLEY, WINCHESTER COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

Site General Manager –

Hay’s Wood Training and Retreat Centre

Location: King’s Lynn, Norfolk, United Kingdom

The South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is currently seeking to appoint a competent and experienced general manager. As General Manager, you will be responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of our training and retreat centre in North Runcton, King’s Lynn. The Hay’s Wood Training and Retreat Centre is a new establishment which, along with its training facilities, offers beautiful log cabins and alternative holiday accommodation on 48 acres of Norfolk countryside.

The role

Reporting to the trustees of the site, we are looking for a general manager who is a practising Seventh-day Adventist member to take full accountability for the day-to-day operations of our unique training and retreat facility. It is essential that the successful applicant has proven experience in the areas of events management, business management and customer relations and is looking for additional responsibilities; as, within this role, the successful applicant will be managing 20 units of accommodation as well as the day-to-day operations of the centre.

Other important aspects are to be hard-working and motivated and to have a real passion for the customer experience, while ensuring that financial targets and budgets are met. Management of a small on-site staff team and overseeing casual contractors will also form a key part of this role.

Proven experience of working in the property management, tourism, hotel, or leisure industries in a similar role would be necessary.

Being a training and retreat centre, the role will require working flexibly according to the needs of the centre over 37.5 hours per week. In return for working for us, we offer a great salary package, with on-site accommodation of a four-bedroom house at a discounted rent of £850 per calendar month.

This job opportunity should be read in conjunction with the assistant site manager’s role, as the position may be best suited to a couple. Details of the assistant site manager’s role can be made available upon request.

Job type:

- Full-time, permanent
- Working flexibly 37.5 hours per week, salary is up to £33,960/year

Benefits:

- Non-contributory pension scheme
- Sick pay after qualifying period
- 20 days of holiday/year (based on a five-day working week)

Licence:

- Full, clean driving licence required

To request an application form, job description and person specification, please email Mrs Jacqui Crawford: jcrawford@secadventist.org.uk, or request the same by telephone: 01923 232 728.

Application deadline: 30 November 2020.

The South England Conference is an equal opportunities employer.





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Tottenham fundraising concert raises £5,000

As the finale to their music day on Sabbath 5 September, the Music Department of the Tottenham West Green Road church held a virtual concert to raise funds towards the church's extensive refurbishment works. From Birmingham to Montserrat, viewers near and far tuned in and were blessed by an array of talented singers from home and abroad. 'Home' artists included the Tottenham Gospel Choir, Jacob Hunter, TLI, Sharlene Green and the Tottenham Children's Choir. Neville Peter and Vocal Harmony, a group from Zimbabwe, made up the international contingent. Orchestral contributions came from the East London School of Music.

Not only did the concert feature singers and musicians, as you would expect, but interspersed were guest appearances from former Tottenham pastors (Anim, Burnett, Hamilton and Okumu), surprising Tottenham viewers with their greetings and words of encouragement: all, of course, with the aim of inspiring viewers to donate to support the continuing church refurbishment. Thanks to our former pastors for their support.

By the concert's end, the Music Department announced that just over £5,000 had been raised – what a mighty God we serve! The church is now well on its way to reaching its goal of £10,000 – it has a running total at this time of £6,337. If any MESSENGER reader would like to help us reach our goal, donations can be made here at this link: [gf.me/ulyqg54j](https://rb.gy/6brkun).

The music team, led by Audrey Meguille Soyam, wishes to sincerely thank all those who contributed towards the music day and concert. By God's grace the day was a great success, and it could not have been done without the support of all those in front of and behind the camera. May God bless you all!

The music day and concert can be found at our YouTube page at: <https://rb.gy/6brkun>.

DIANE APEAH-KUBI



Quality of pictures as supplied

Tottenham hosts first virtual international day 'Unity in adversity'

Sabbath 30 October saw Tottenham West Green Road Church hold its first ever virtual international day, watched by viewers from as far afield as the Cayman Islands and the Philippines. The theme of the day, organised by the Sabbath School Department, was 'Unity in adversity'. The origins of Tottenham members can be found in 20 countries from around the world. Each group of members represented their country in various ways: through song, presentations and simply through the colourful outfits worn.

Items of music were recorded especially for the day by the Advent Chorale choir from Winneba in Ghana, Mahali Selepe (based in Australia, but originally from Lesotho), and Seventh Degree and Emerald Quartet, along with groups from the Philippines. The programme, coinciding with Pastor Appreciation Day, included tributes from members expressing their appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the church pastor, Dr Jude Jeanville.

Greg Clay Davis (a trained psychotherapist and certified university chaplain from the Irish Mission) reminded viewers in his sermon of the need (and appropriate method) of apologising genuinely, along with the need to love each other, particularly during these difficult times.

As the day rounded off with a concert organised by the Tottenham Music Department, Hannah Obeng-Badu, the Sabbath School superintendent, reflected, 'It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the diversity God has given us, and for us to connect with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.'

The recording of the programme and concert can be found at: <https://rb.gy/6brkun>.

DIANE APEAH-KUBI



Welcoming four new members

On Sabbath 24 October four new members were added to church membership. Three of our young people, all of them from Adventist homes – Hannah Cudjoe, Isabella Constantinou and Philip Ilagan – were baptised, two of them demonstrating the positive influence of the Pathfinder ministry. Also joining the church was Liz Burns, who comes from a Church of England background and finally decided she wished to belong to the church after a 40-year association with it through its local charitable work and her heavy involvement with One Vision during the current pandemic.

A warm welcome is offered to all four new church members on behalf of the church family.

Here they give their reasons for wanting to join the church.

Hannah Cudjoe

'At the TED Pathfinder Camporee 2019, I made the decision to follow Jesus for the rest of my life. I want to make a public declaration that I accept Jesus as my Lord and Saviour; I believe in His truth, and that He can save and cleanse me from my sins.'



Isabella Constantinou

'I want to be baptised because I want to be devoted to God and to have a relationship with Him.'



Philip Ilagan

'I want to be baptised so that I can be closer to God while following in His footsteps and so that all my sins that I have committed will be forgiven.'

A few months ago, I started to take baptismal classes so that I would be able to learn and be more knowledgeable about God. As well as baptismal classes, I also rejoined Pathfinders because I wanted to serve Him as well as learn about Him. After a few months of classes and a whole year of



Quality of pictures as supplied

Pathfinders, I was finally able to step up and be baptised.'

Liz Burns

'I feel I have become a part of this special family here during my time in this One Vision operation, and would like to become a member of Stanborough Park Church. I am very happy with the beliefs of the Adventist Church, and they resonate very well with me and all it means to be a Christian.'



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Front, left to right: Elder Naomi Ninvalle, Yvette Philbert, Alicia Etienne, Elder Joan Saddler, Elder Anselm Moore; back, left to right: Elder Moses Arendse, Stuart Mendes, Elder Derek Morrison, Pastor Kevin Johns, Kevin Evans

Pastor Kevin Johns baptising Stuart Mendes

MOSES ARENDSE

Hampstead celebrates pre-lockdown baptism

Wednesday, 4 November 2020 punctuated a high evening of celebration when the senior pastor, Kevin Johns, baptised Yvette Philbert and her mother Alicia Etienne, Kevin Evans, and Stuart Mendes.

Originally scheduled to take place on Sabbath, 7 November, the service was brought forward to Wednesday 4 November as new government lockdown rules were, like the sword of Damocles, threatening to delay the baptism. To prevent disappointment, and due to the shrewd thinking of Pastor Johns, the date was brought forward.

The high moments were captured on the Zoom platform and streamed live to members, friends and relatives who witnessed the baptism. Following COVID-19 protocols, Pastor Johns stepped into the baptistry as Elders Moses Arendse and Derek Morrison read the baptismal vows to the candidates. It was awesome!

There can be no doubt that there was unconfined joy in heaven, as well as in the hearts of our newly baptised members and their relatives and friends. Praise be to God!

The Hampstead deacons and deaconesses, Carolyn Daniel, Lawrence St Phorose and Kirk Morrison, are to be commended for their ministry in making this wonderful event possible.

Photos: David Bell



Grantham Canal



Lockdown? God is still out and about!

by Esme & John Sutton



Belvoir Castle, pronounced 'Beever'!

The first frost of the autumn was glistening on the grass; the mist was slowly lifting as the sun started to break through. It was a going to be a lovely day. We couldn't wait to get out and drink in the cold, crisp air! 'Must-do' jobs were completed and we headed for the Grantham canal.

We crossed the bridge onto the towpath and rounded the first corner – five swans were close to the path. The two adults and three adult-sized cygnets were snuggled down, sleeping. We crept past, fearful of disturbing them. Whether it was Mum or Dad that raised their head and hissed a warning, we don't know. The others slept soundly, undisturbed, as we crept past into the beauty that was awaiting.

The canal cut through the fields that had been harvested and were being readied for the next year's crops. Some of the hedges that lined the canal path had been cut back and looked as if they'd had a neat 'back and sides' job done. Other hedges were wayward and unkempt; brambles with shrivelled berries and vicious thorns held on to leaves that were no longer a dull green, but a mixture of crimson and scarlet. They were complemented by the shiny dark green of ivy that crept into every nook and cranny in an endeavour to take over the whole hedge. However, despite the ivy's efforts it was obvious that many hedgerow bushes and trees were leafless or were waiting for the last few leaves to flutter down to the ground. The odd trees, still strikingly spectacular with autumn colour, attracted our attention. They were on the skyline, tucked in the meadow

where cattle grazed, and on the banks of the canal, where we could see them reflected in the dark water.

The banks of the canal were lined with piles of reeds and muddy debris (including freshwater oysters). The reed beds had been cut by volunteers on the *Mudlark* – the Grantham Canal Society's trusty workhorse. That meant that less of the canal was taken up by reed beds, providing more room for the water birds to swim freely. There were plenty of water birds: ducks dabbling and diving, coots squawking their surprise as we approached, moorhens scurrying in the shallows, and swans – stately, serene and a bit scary (they always seem to be rather haughty and disapproving, despite their splendour).

There were birds overhead too: flocks of starlings, silently playing swooping and circling games. Other species, as well as smaller birds, were intent on getting from A to B! But then we heard the very distinctive sound of a swan. There was nothing silent about its flight: its huge wings cut through the air with a distinctive 'whooshy' sound. It was a magnificent sight; the neck was stretched, the body long and sleek – the perfect aerodynamic design. We watched in awe as he disappeared into the distance.

The Lincolnshire skies have a reputation for being huge, and the sky above us on our walk underlined the truth of that notion. A big bank of grey cloud sat sullenly near the fields ahead of us, but overhead a pale blue sky spread out over the landscape. It was festooned with some of the most amazing cloud formations I've seen. It was as if God had been 'doodling' in the sky. The 'blue' had been stippled and splattered, smudged and

sprinkled with tiny fragments of white clouds – complemented with long, thin wisps that had been curled and waved. The wonder of it was that it was changing all the time. It was as if an artist was making adjustments to a masterpiece to make it pure perfection.

As we neared the end of our walk, there were more treats in store for us. The family of swans that we'd caught napping were busy feeding. It seemed that they had invited the whole of the swan fraternity to a late-afternoon get-together, and they were all feasting. In just a few hundred yards we counted twenty-seven swans! But that was not all: the bank of cloud on the horizon was shrouding the fields in mist, making the distant trees and hedges look quite mystical. On the hill, set among the trees, was the pale outline of Belvoir Castle. Just above the castle, the cloud had cracked open – just a little – and the pale gold of the setting sun broke through. It was not the first time we had been filled with awe that day. We stood and gazed in wonder.

God gave us eyes to see the wonders of His love for us in the beauty of creation, the loveliness that we see in each other, and the loveliness of God, as seen in His Word. Every day we have a new opportunity to see just how good God is to us. We are His precious jewels. He wants us to shine, so He lights up our lives with His presence.

'OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART, LORD . . . I WANT TO SEE YOU . . .' Make that your prayer today, and you'll be sure to see God – for He has so many, many ways of displaying His love for you. Just look, and keep looking!

This article first appeared in the Grantham Church newsletter, compiled by John and Esme Sutton. Used with permission

God's love for man

by Ellen White

Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvellous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain, that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains, all speak to us of the Creator's love. It is God who supplies the daily needs of all His creatures. In the beautiful words of the psalmist:

*'The eyes of all wait upon Thee;
And Thou givest them their meat in due season.
Thou openest Thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'*
Psalm 145:15, 16 (KJV).

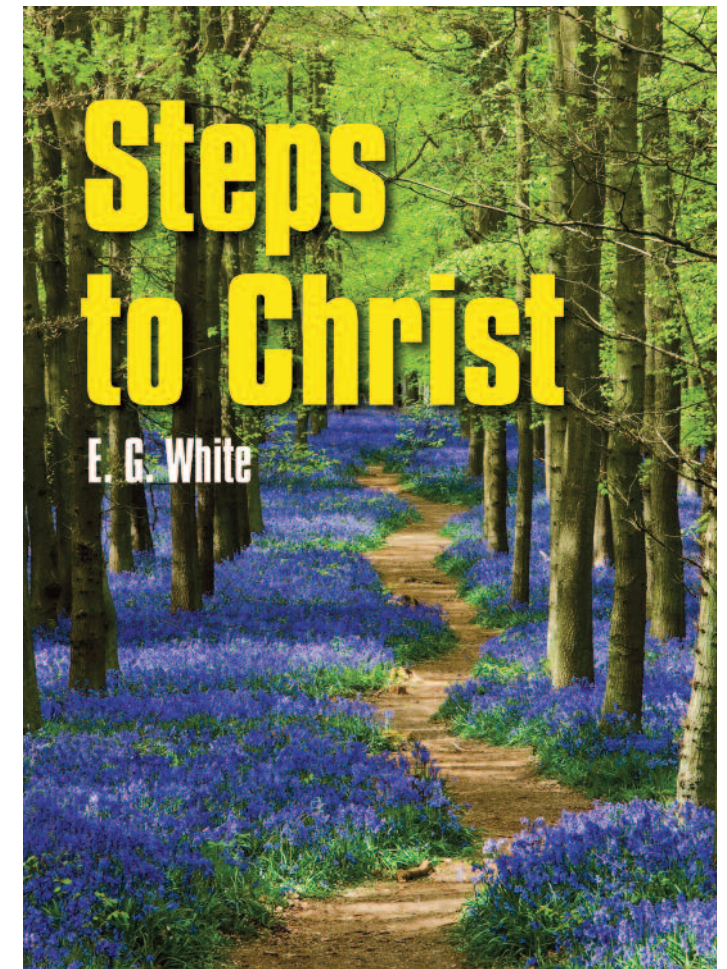
God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator's hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law – the law of love – that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground for man's sake. Genesis 3:17. The thorn and the thistle –

the difficulties and trials that make his life one of toil and care – were appointed for his good as a part of the training needful in God's plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought. The world, though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses.

'God is love' is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green – all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy. . . .

The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child.

Excerpted from Ellen G. White's book *Steps to Christ*, chapter 1, pages 9, 10, 15.



God's Wonderful World Calendar

God's Wonderful World Devotional Calendar 2021

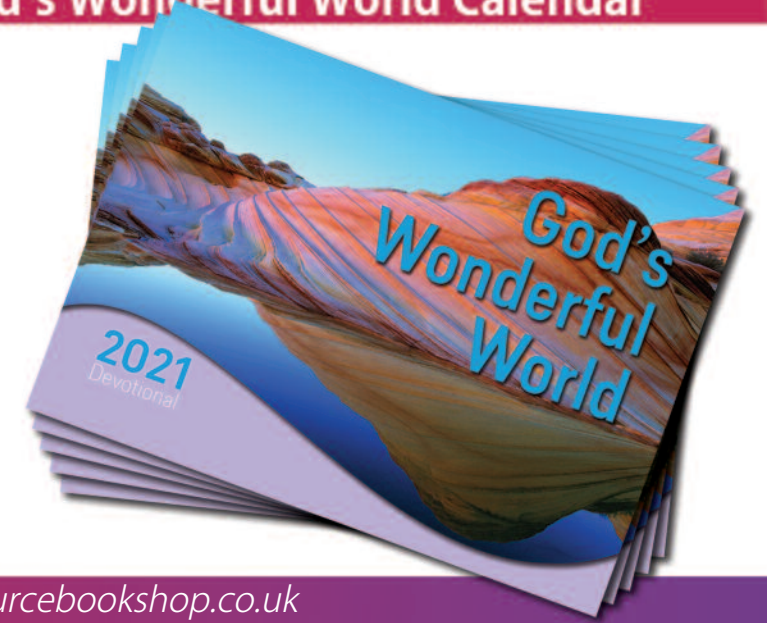
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PERSPECTIVE

‘When I needed a neighbour’

David Wright reflects

I was very interested to see the words of ‘When I needed a neighbour’ in a recent edition of *MESSENGER* (15 October 2020, vol. 125, no. 20), but, sadly, the name of its author had been omitted. The composer was Sydney Carter, who also wrote another Christian song that I’m sure we all remember from our school assemblies, ‘The Lord of the Dance’, which adapted the tune of the old Shaker hymn, ‘Simple Gifts’.

Sydney Carter was a folk poet, playing a leading role in the folk revival of the 1960s and 70s. He was born in Camden Town in 1915, attended Montem Street School in Islington, and enjoyed singing hymns in chapel each week. After reading history at Oxford University he taught in Farnham until the Second World War, when he joined the Friends Ambulance Unit, serving in the Middle East and Greece. Hating violence, he became a pacifist and aligned himself with the Quakers, believing that God is present in every human being.

I have fond memories of seeing Sydney perform at the Brangwyn Hall in Swansea, during my student days in the early seventies, and have appreciated his always-challenging lyrics about God, life and our responsibilities towards others. My early guitar-playing attempts were made using his songs and carols found in the ‘Faith, Folk and Clarity’ series.

The song that made the greatest impact on me was his controversial ‘Friday Morning’, written in 1960, which has one of the robbers crucified with Jesus crying out, ‘It’s God they ought to crucify, instead of you and me,’ before delivering the ironic line, ‘I said to the carpenter a-hanging on the tree.’

Sadly, in later years, Sydney Carter suffered with Alzheimer’s, and died in 2004. According to Rabbi Lionel Blue, his thought-provoking theology ‘spoke directly to the human condition, without fuss and with honesty’, and can best be summed up as: ‘Faith may be encouraged by what has happened in the past . . . but the only proof of it is in the future.’ Perhaps these lyrics from another of his songs demonstrate this.

**‘Give me the good news in the present tense.
So shut the Bible up and show me how
The Christ you talk about is living now.’**

BUC online Christmas schedule of programmes on YouTube

(search ‘BUC News’)

Friday 25 December

- 6pm London Adventist Chorale
- 6.30pm BUC Children’s Thanksgiving Concert
- 8pm Three Cosmic Messages – Mark Finley

Saturday 26 December

- 10am BUC Online Service



ADRA



ADRA-UK expands its COVID-19 support thanks to Barclays donation

by Cathy Boldeau, I AM Urban project manager



ADRA-UK has recently received a grant of £100,000 from Barclays PLC for *The Umbrella Project*, their UK response to COVID-19.

The Umbrella Project aims to provide a multi-agency approach to food poverty, physical and mental well-being, and sustainable livelihoods for some of the UK’s neediest and most vulnerable people. These include the elderly, families with no recourse to public funds, and children who are entitled to free school meals.

The grant was made possible through the one-hundred-million-pound Barclays COVID-19 Community Aid Package. The funding will be used to benefit 80,000 people through 73 urban grassroots community hubs in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, as well as in the north and south of England, with the support of over 700 volunteers.

This funding is specifically to be used to address food poverty and will address the growing need for adequate and nutritious food to prevent malnutrition, to improve dignity and to support long-term well-being.

The Umbrella Project is part of the *I AM Urban* initiative, the UK domestic programme set up in 2018 to complement our overseas humanitarian portfolio,’ said Bert Smit, ADRA-UK CEO. ‘Through this initiative, we seek to empower community hubs to competently deliver solution-focused sustainable localised outreach projects, motivate them to embed social justice in their project delivery, and support urban communities to positively impact society through active engagement.’

Nigel Higgins, Barclays Chairman, said: ‘COVID-19 has created an unprecedented social and economic impact in the UK, with many experiencing greater hardship due to the crisis. Incredible charities, such as ADRA-UK, have been playing a vital role in the UK’s response to the pandemic, ensuring that urgent help reaches those most in need of support. As a bank we have been doing all we can for our customers, clients and colleagues, and we hope that by partnering with ADRA-UK and many other charities across the UK, collectively we can ensure that as many people as possible in the communities in which we live and work are supported through this crisis.’

About ADRA-UK

ADRA-UK is part of the global ADRA network that delivers relief and development assistance to individuals in more than 130 countries, regardless of their ethnicity, political affiliation, gender or religious association. By partnering with local communities, organisations and governments, we are able to deliver culturally relevant programmes and build local capability for sustainable change.

The £100m Barclays COVID-19 Community Aid Package is supporting charities that are helping vulnerable people impacted by COVID-19, and the associated social and economic hardship caused by the crisis. Alongside matching colleague donations and fundraising efforts, Barclays is partnering with a number of charities in the UK, the Americas, Asia and Europe, delivering help where it is needed most. You can find the latest list of charity partners here: <https://home.barclays/society/investing-in-our-communities/barclays-covid-19-community-aid-package/>.



AMERICA: a 'Promised Land'?

The foundational principles that underline the American dream are:

'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'

Part 2

by Pastor David Neal, Editor

From the time of the early settlers to America – and their reason for being there, which we looked at in part 1 of this reflection – I want to quickly fast-forward to contemporary America as it is today.

Gavin Esler, in his book *The United States of Anger*, writes from his perspective of a news-gathering resident of the US for eight years. As the BBC US editor, as he was exposed to every area of American life, he painted a picture of the crumbling American dream. From his perspective, 'Everybody was angry.' Whites, blacks, Hispanics, rich and poor – all were angry; as were politicians, left, right and centre. So too were Christians.

One of the more humorous illustrations he shared was of a Florida resident living in a beautiful residential suburb, with perfectly mown green lawns, inside a gated community. She is raging at the local police force because of their inability to remove a wandering crocodile who'd decided that a sleep in her garden was a refreshing change from the swamp down the road. 'Why were they not moving it – and fast!'

To an outsider looking in, the most

technologically advanced, materially prosperous land on Planet Earth should have enjoyed a huge reservoir of happiness. This was the land of promise, the land of refuge: for some, as we saw last time, 'the Promised Land'. The invitation was symbolised by the Statue of Liberty at the gateway to New York Harbour: 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me; I lift my lamp beside the golden door!'

While the move from oppression to freedom and from poverty to plenty became a reality for millions of Americans and their children, for many it did not. As many prospered, underclasses developed – most notably, working-class whites and African Americans. Working-class whites were often the victims of industrial outsourcing, and African Americans were victims of racial prejudice. Add into this mix the changing social attitudes of the late twentieth century, and the cocktail of anger was ready.

Charles Duhigg, in his article for *The Atlantic* magazine, 'The Real Roots of

American Rage', explains: 'America has always been an angry nation. We are a country born of revolution. Combat – on battlefields, in newspapers, at the ballot box – has been with us from the start. American history is punctuated by episodes in which aggrieved parties have settled their differences not through conversation, but with guns. . . . Even the country's mythology is rooted in anger: The American dream is, in a sense, an optimistic reframing of the discontent felt by people unwilling to accept the circumstances life has handed to them.'

Hold that there as we begin to consider what might happen in the future. Most contemporary observers agree that the pinnacle of 'America's greatness' has passed. Half of American citizens recognise this truth with the call, 'Make America great again.' Those who dream of this possibility, in the main, want America to return to the way things used to be (including the majority of white evangelical Christians). The other half of US citizens are still hoping for a day when they might begin to experience the equality, fairness and justice that they

believe the other half already experience.

Particularly relevant to us is the worldview of white evangelical Christians. More than any other cultural group, they feel a natural affinity to the founding fathers – no less than their Christian heritage. For them, this heritage is not just non-negotiable, but is 'the true America', the America 'under God'. From their perspective, everything wrong with America today is because God has been removed from the nation, from the government, from the classroom, and from civil society. If Americans would only return to God, the Promised Land would become a reality. In reality, the call is more deeply rooted in how they understand Scripture. Their narrative is that America will return to be a land of promise, because they have been chosen by God to make it happen. Combine that with a misunderstanding of the book of Revelation, promising that Christ will return to the Mount of Olives, and it immediately becomes apparent why they are so interested in shaping American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Which naturally moves us on to the election of Donald Trump. With his personal worldview, behaviour and attitudes, how could any Christian ever contemplate voting for him? At the time, to the outside observer, it just did not add up. His behaviour was the polar opposite of every value Christ-followers hold high, and I confess to trying to work out the disconnect over the last four years – and yet the answer is simple.

To the white evangelical, the most important value is to stop the decline of the way America used to be – a 'God-fearing' nation. More than that, it is a place to which we must return. They believe that Hillary

Clinton would have taken, and Joe Biden now will take us down a pathway away from God by working to further push the boundaries of what is often described as 'social progress' (for example, abortion on demand, sexual and gender equality), and by creating laws to this effect. That's why getting judges to the Supreme Court is so important. 'Most important to us,' say the white evangelicals, 'are values enshrined in law. So long as the President takes America back to where it should be, his personal moral character is of no concern to us – really, it is not!' And they will go on to share numerous examples from Scripture of ungodly leaders used by God for His purpose. Most notably, they are quick to cite Cyrus, the Medo-Persian king who freed the Israelites in captivity and allowed them to return home from Babylon.

Where does this leave America in prophecy? The Adventist narrative identifies America as the lamblike beast. It arose out of the ground, but it spoke like a dragon (Revelation 13:11, 12). Its lamblike behaviour is enshrined in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, as seen above.

Arising out of the ground in a relatively peaceful fashion, in a relatively unpopulated place, and at almost the same time when religious Rome lost its power (the infliction of the mortal wound), it has exhibited, as no one can argue, gentle, lamblike behaviour. Not least, religious freedom is guaranteed. So how does it get from being 'the land of the free' to being an oppressive power, as suggested in prophecy?

In truth, none of us know! The Adventist narrative (as described in *The Great Controversy*) is that Protestant America and

Roman Catholicism will, one day in the future, make an alliance to enforce worship, similar to the way it was enforced in the Middle Ages. But the purpose of this reflection has been to see if the US mood-music in any way indicates the possibility that the land of the free will become the land of the enforcer.

From the perspective of an outsider who regularly tunes in to both CNN and Fox News, I cannot see how there will ever be a coming together of people. Everything is politicised; everyone is 'outraged' about something, based on the values echo-chamber they inhabit. Faith in almost all institutions is weak. Science is suspect – and, with it, most experts of any sort. And if 'our rights' are not protected, we will take the law into our own hands. Throw into the mix a widely held trust in 'conspiracy theories', and it's not difficult to see how order can turn into chaos.

The sight of both men and women protesting with machine guns around their neck, such as outside a town hall – or even an election count – is perhaps the clearest signal yet that the United States of America, far from being 'a Promised Land', is very much headed in the opposite direction. Could there ever be a future dictatorship or a civil war? Not for one moment will it happen overnight, or even in the short term. But could there come a time when the freedoms US citizens currently experience will be restricted? Based on what I see and read, the empirical evidence suggests – to me, at least – that perhaps the seer of Revelation and those who have faithfully interpreted his words over the centuries still deserve to be taken seriously.

¹<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/01/charles-duhigg-american-anger/576424/>

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Max Mace, 82, Adventist music legend, passes to his rest

Heritage Singers' music brought hope to millions

by Mark A. Kellner, for *Adventist Review*
(adapted for *MESSENGER*, with permission)

Following a battle with cancer, Seventh-day Adventist music legend Max Mace passed to his rest on 4 November 2020, one day before his 83rd birthday. His family said Mace was at home in Placerville, California, United States, when he died.

In 1971, Mace and his wife, Lucy, who survives, formed the Heritage Singers, devoted to Christian music. Both Seventh-day Adventists, the Maces wanted to bring contemporary harmonies to their fellow believers. Over the next five decades, the Heritage Singers would employ an aggregate of 300 singers – generally eight at a time – and hold concerts in more than 80 nations. The number of people who saw them in person likely numbers in the millions, a figure multiplied exponentially by those who heard their recordings on vinyl, CD, or over the airwaves.

'He knew his calling was just music ministry, and just loving people,' said John Lomacang, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, evangelist, and singer who sang full-time with the group from 1984 to 1986 and continued part-time for 20 years, beginning in 1989.

'He had an ear for the Heritage "sound",' Lomacang added. 'Although the group's roster has changed throughout the years, it still has a sound that is unmatched. No other group with eight singers had that sound. He knew what he wanted; he knew it instantly.'

Heritage performed songs made famous by artists such as Amy Grant, Michael English, Bill Gaither, and others. The music

was presented, however, in a comfortable format that resonated with audiences. Even overseas, where English wasn't the audience's first language, crowds sang along as Heritage presented music that praised Jesus.

Each concert ended with Max making an appeal to audience members for a commitment to Jesus as Saviour. Mace, or one of the singers, would pray with each person who came forward.

Overseas tours

The group regularly toured in Europe (including the UK – Ed.) and had planned 2020 concerts in the Czech Republic and Romania before the global pandemic made such travel impossible.

Daughter Val Mace-Mapa noted that the group has over 200,000 Facebook followers, and that news of Max's passing brought more than 1,000,000 comments on the Heritage page. She remembered her father not only as her 'best friend', but also as someone who was 'the most forgiving. He always wanted to make sure that if there was a wrong, it was made right. When he forgave, he never remembered the offence.'

Singer Jennifer LaMountain, though never a part of the group, came to know Mace and Heritage during her professional career, and remembered Max's high standards: 'Excellence was always a part of anything that he did. Anybody in his sphere could not help



Muriel Amy Calvert (Jordan) Logan (1925-2020) d. 21 August.

Muriel was born on 4 April, 1925 in Delgany, County Wicklow, in Ireland. She was the second oldest of six children – three boys and three girls. Muriel lived in Ireland during the Second World War, when, in 1944, her father, a 'saddler', applied for work on the farm of James Logan Senior. At the age of 18, Muriel and her family then moved to Scotland. This was a huge act of courage for Muriel, since she hated water travel, especially crossing the often-stormy Irish Sea!

When James Junior came to meet Muriel's family off the ferry, he caught the eye of Muriel and vice versa. (Later, in January 1945, they married, and their union lasted over sixty years.)

Several months after getting settled in her new country, Muriel began to study the Bible, which ultimately led her to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Muriel and James were dedicated members of Glasgow Church. Having a large family of their own – five children – Muriel entertained many through her cooking skills. One of the highlights of the church year was inviting the 'seniors' to their home, which later became known as 'Seniors' Day'.

It was not until later years, in their retirement, when James and Muriel moved to the Dundee area, that she gave up her job as a faithful deaconess, a position she held for many years. In their later years they worshipped at Dundee.

Muriel is survived by her five children: her daughter Linda, in the United States, and four sons: James, Alan, David and Gordon, all in the United Kingdom, along with more than fourteen grandchildren, and more than twelve great-grandchildren.

Muriel was laid to rest in Tayport Cemetery, alongside her husband, on Monday 14 September. The service was conducted by Pastor Paul Tompkins and attended by her immediate family members, carers, and a few close friends, in accordance with the COVID-19 restrictions.

Muriel sleeps, awaiting the Life Giver's call.

GORDON LOGAN/PASTOR PAUL TOMPKINS



Gladys Joan Patricia Frost (1923-2020) d. 14 September.

Joan was born in Plymouth on 2 September 1923 to Albert and Laura Holland. She had two brothers and several sisters. After becoming a Seventh-day Adventist in 1927 following a tent campaign, Laura enrolled her four youngest children in Fletewood School. Joan was one of them, and spent ten happy years there under the tutelage of Miss Willis and Miss E. Raitt. At 16, Joan accepted Jesus and was baptised at the Plymouth church by Pastor A. K. Armstrong. After serving her apprenticeship in tailoring and soft furnishings, Joan moved to Watford to work at Gransose Foods. During the Blitz, she served with her sister Sylvia as an auxiliary nurse in Black Notley Hospital, Braintree, Essex.

At a day of fellowship in 1942, Joan met her future husband, Jim and Andrew Farthing were ushers, and, as Andrew was Sylvia's boyfriend, Jim asked his friend who that girl was who was sitting next to Sylvia! They were later introduced at Stanborough Park, and were married at the Walthamstow church on Sunday 24 September 1944 by Pastor W. W. Armstrong. Joan walked down the aisle on the arm of her brother-in-law, Pastor George Roper, who had married her sister, Irene. Her sister, Sylvia, and Jim's sister, Clarice, were bridesmaids; and her brother Will was asked to be the best man when the one-to-be became delayed. It was war time, and difficulties were to be expected.

After their wedding, Joan encouraged Jim to resume his ministerial studies at Newbold College, which he'd put on hold for lack of funds, and he graduated in 1950. They were initially assigned to work in Watford, and a year later they were relocated to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. In their joint ministry they conducted evangelistic meetings and cared for the district. One of the highlights while living in Norfolk was to hold summer garden parties for the church. Joan would bake and prepare delicious food, and the children would be treated to delicious ice cream on the sea front at Gorleston! They



were moved 27 times during their marriage. Their last assignment was in Torquay before retiring to Cheltenham, but finally they obtained an apartment near the water at Oulton Broad.

They experienced several tragedies: their only son, James Jr, served in the Georgia Conference, USA, as Ministerial Secretary and Vice President, and came to celebrate his parents' diamond wedding anniversary at Oulton Broad. Just a few weeks later, at 53, he was killed in a tragic plane crash. Then, in February 2013, they also lost their daughter, Carol, to pancreatic cancer; and also Julie, one of their granddaughters. Joan's husband, Jim, passed away in January 2018 after 73 years of marriage.

Joan has been a much-loved and faithful member of the Great Yarmouth church since the Oulton Broad church was closed. For many years before that, Joan and Jim served the church wherever they were called.

During the last twelve months or so, Joan was unable to come to church because of her condition; and, since the pandemic hit our country, her health gradually deteriorated, including her eyesight – but she remained courageous and cheerful. She looked forward to receiving the sermons each week on DVDs that the church provided for those unable to get online.

In early September, Joan was admitted to the James Paget Hospital, where she eventually passed away peacefully with her daughter Sandra at her bedside, accompanied by Pastor Mark Borrett, who was reading Psalm 23 to her at the time. She will be sorely missed, but we rest assured that she will soon awake to the welcome voice of her Saviour.

The funeral took place at our Lowestoft church on Friday 9 October, broadcast on Zoom and livestreamed on Facebook. Relatives in the United States also shared in the service. A few years ago, Joan gave the writer the hymns for her funeral, together with the Scripture reading (Rev. 21:3, 4). Although congregational singing was not permitted due to the pandemic, each of the three hymns was beautifully rendered by Helen Wilkinson, one of our Great Yarmouth members. The service was conducted by the

writer, who spoke on 'the blessed hope', and Pastor Mark Borrett, who prepared an audio-visual tribute. The committal took place at Waveney Memorial Park and Crematorium in Beccles.

Joan had five children, the surviving children being Sandra (the eldest), and then Wendy and Lorraine. She had eighteen grandchildren, including Julie (deceased), and numerous great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. To each of them and their spouses we offer our heartfelt condolences.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER,
COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

Messenger

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Where's the information about Adventist history?

'Mum! Dad! At Pathfinders they want us to research the history of our church. Can you help me find the information? They also want us to find out about the history of our church in the UK and Ireland. You will help me find the information, won't you? I need to find the information by the time we next meet. . . .'

For history about the Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland, go to this link to find pictures (617 in all), documents and links leading to further research areas: http://www.adventisthistory.org.uk/list_photos.php

To commemorate the history of our church from 1902 to 1992, a special souvenir edition of *MESSENGER* was published, which can be downloaded at this link here:



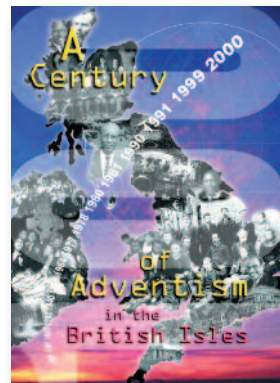
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In 1998 *MESSENGER* reported on 'A Century of Adventism in the British Isles'. Download the copy here: <http://www.adventisthistory.org.uk/documents/CenturyofAdventism.pdf>

To discover Adventism's early beginnings in the UK and Ireland from 1878 to 1900, Pastor Richard Daley's recent video documentary, 'A Story of Perseverance', tells the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uoG29UIDXnQ&feature=youtu.be>

A general history of Adventism can be found at the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research: <https://www.adventistarchives.org/>

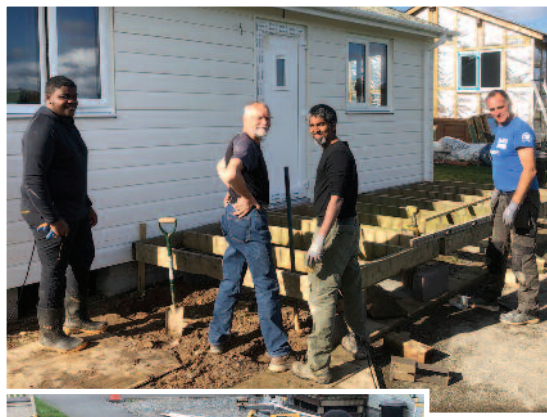
Enjoy searching!



Aberdaron work retreat

The Aberdaron Advent Campsite might have been closed to campers this past summer, but it didn't stop a hardy group of willing volunteers from coming to help in renovating and rebuilding from 27 September to 4 October. We were blessed with good weather, and, along with willing spirits, we managed to get a good amount of work done. The chalets were built about 20 years ago, but over time they have deteriorated, at least on the exterior. The current project should give them another 25-30 years of life, and should also mean that any repairs are easier to effect in the future.

The current chalets are in need to recladding. This involves taking



off the current exterior and then putting new insulation and cladding around the chalet, along

with new windows, doors and decking. The youth who joined us for this week have all been regulars at the youth camps over the last several years, with some having attended since they were young children. This level of ownership and commitment to the camp is what makes Aberdaron unique.

The youth were joined by some others who were more

mature in years, but whose commitment to the Aberdaron camps over the years remains a hallmark of many people who come to Aberdaron. There is something about the location and the site that engenders loyalty and a love for the peace and tranquillity that it provides.

We look forward to when the site will reopen in happier times to campers both young and old. For more information about booking the site, please email: enquiries@aberdaroncamp.com.

NEC YOUTH DEPARTMENT

Refresh: virtual weekend summit

After spending eight months of the year either in lockdown or in some variation of it, for many people the year is slowly dragging on, and their spiritual lives are in need of a reset or recharge. With this in mind the Youth Department of the NEC hosted, in partnership with the Central California Conference (CCC) Young Adult Department, a weekend virtual summit. For 34 continuous hours there was programming that the youth and young adults could participate in!

From 5pm on Friday, 6 November until 3am on Sunday, 8 November there was either a live-streamed sermon, a musical concert or a panel discussion interspersed with Zoom Bible studies, prayer sessions, social games, small groups and testimonies. It was a great opportunity to meet other young people from a different conference who are also going through similar challenges and struggles at this time. We were joined by the young adults not just from Central California, but also from the Philippines, various parts of Africa and across the United States of America.

On Sabbath for our main church services we did a pulpit swap, where, for the midday service (for the NEC), we were blessed to have a message by Pastor Anil Kanda, the Young Adults Director from the CCC. Then, at 8pm (which is midday in California), Pastor Adam Ramdin gave the message.

A particular highlight for those who attended were the Zoom Bible studies, online socials and small groups, which gave a chance to meet and get to know people we don't normally interact with, while engaging in spiritual and fun activities. Natalie Jeffers from Preston Church said, 'For me, a highlight was being able to interact with people from the US, and during the panel sessions I got to hear the different views. It was great, interactive and diverse.'

Dylon Mushumbi from Perry Beeches Church, who was integral to the organising of the event, also said, 'It was a very refreshing event – no pun intended! – I found myself enjoying it much more than I thought I would, taking the time outside of my time zone just to stay up and listen to the words being spoken. All in all I felt renewed. After the year I've had, it was really something I needed.'

We look forward to more innovative collaborative efforts that we can make in the future, and we hope – if, one day, travel restrictions are eased – that we could do an in-person event with our friends from the CCC.

All the sermons and Bible studies have been uploaded to the NEC Youth YouTube channel, and you can find them at www.youtube.com/necyouth.

NEC YOUTH DEPARTMENT

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