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Messenger

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The church of the future

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Pride and prejudice

by Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference



Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* narrates the story of five sisters looking for suitable marriage partners. The main character is Elizabeth Bennet, the second of the sisters, who, although depicted as a level-headed young lady, possesses two unsavoury characteristics: pride and prejudice, the book's title.

'In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen looks at people who are guilty of pride and the effects it has both on their lives and the lives of others. . . . In this age of political correctness and media spin the notion of prejudice, as described in the novel, is very pertinent.'¹

While some might argue that *Pride and Prejudice* is a fictional story and therefore not applicable to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK in the twenty-first century, I believe that these two characteristics are destroying the unity of the church and preventing us from effectively fulfilling our mission.

After spending three and a half years ministering with His disciples, Jesus delivers a last motivational sermon. He encourages unity. Before He gives them the Gospel Commission to 'go into all the world', He pleads with them to 'be one'. 'And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.' (John 17:11, KJV.)

Jesus had witnessed the pride of the disciples in their jostling over position. He had seen their constant infighting and striving for dominance and recognition. He had noticed their racial abhorrence of the Samaritans, their gender bias towards women and their age discrimination against children. These disciples were filled with pride and overflowing with prejudice. Nevertheless, to these same disciples He gives a formula for success that will empower them to reach the world with the message of salvation. The formula He gave them was *UNITY*. ' . . . I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me . . . ' (John 17:23, NIV).

How can we live out the sentiments of this passage of Scripture in the twenty-first century with such diverse congregations in the United Kingdom? I believe that unity of purpose is vital for us to be a dynamic and vibrant church. I hold to the view that we must demonstrate organisational alignment, not simply by addressing our doctrinal beliefs but also by having defined strategic objectives that enable us to be a church that is immersed in the Word of God; a charitable organisation

that continually demonstrates best practice; and a corporate organisation that is a witness to the world of the best of the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

There are difficult times ahead. While we've emerged from lockdown, new COVID-19 variants keep emerging. Brexit has highlighted the fragility of the supply chain in the UK and continues to raise challenges for the Good Friday Agreement. The crisis in Ukraine has coincided with a hike in food prices, energy prices and increased fuel duty. Climate change has resulted in extreme weather fluctuations, and mental healthcare is in crisis. As Jesus Christ looked down the corridors of time, He knew these things would occur, but He still encouraged the believers to live in unity. People in our world are suffering and dying without the knowledge that Jesus loves them. Do we care about this, or are we more concerned about our own personal viewpoints and prejudices?

Over the next few months, we at the British Union Conference will be rolling out our new strategic plan with twelve strategic objectives. The purpose of this plan is to strengthen the mission of the BUC, unify all five regions in our territory, and see us work together to become a beacon of excellence in our region. Since the beginning of the year, consultations have been held with several focus groups, and the BUC Executive Committee spent a weekend talking about this plan together. Through this new strategic plan, we pray that God will enable us to remove our organisational pride and longstanding prejudices so that the BUC will be unified in Jesus Christ.

'Our religious life is characterised by diversity – which is healthy. But we have allowed diversity to defeat any struggle towards unity. Somehow, we must achieve unity in diversity . . . that we may be one.'
(J. Estill Jones.)

As we strive for unity in the BUC, have a think about what actions you can take to foster unity in your local church. Remember, we are stronger together than on our own.

¹Vincent Hanley, *The Themes of Pride and Prejudice in 'Pride and Prejudice'*, available to read at www.vinhanley.com





From the editor . . .

Julian Thompson,

Editor

Dear Reader,

There can be no doubt that children hold a special place in the heart of God; Jesus made this clear in His fiery reproach of the disciples who attempted to prevent children from being brought to Him. In fact, Jesus saves one of His fiercest rebukes for those who cause the little ones who believe in Him to stumble, suggesting that it would be better for them to be drowned at sea with a millstone hung around their neck!

If children hold a special place in the heart of God, then it logically follows that they should have a special place in the heart of our church. While I'm sure that our safeguarding policies, children's Sabbath School classes, Adventurer clubs and the like serve as an indication of this, the incident with the disciples in Matthew 19 cautions us to be alert to the fact that sometimes well-intentioned actions such as the disciples' attempt to prevent Jesus from being crowded can, albeit inadvertently, have negative consequences for our young ones.

In this edition of *MESSENGER*, you will find various reflections on how our actions in the present impact upon our children, the church of the future. It represents an attempt to take Jesus' caution seriously and contemplate the legacy we in the British Union are leaving for those generations that will follow us.

As I write these words, I can't help but reflect on the recent Euro 2022 final victory of the England national women's football team. While listening to the commentary, I was particularly taken by stories of how the sacrifices made by previous generations of Lionesses had paved the way for success in the present; some persevered through a 51-year ban on women playing football on FA-affiliated grounds; others had to buy their own football kits and supplement their salaries with second jobs; and still others, while on tour, had to endure stays in accommodation far inferior to that of the England men. Perhaps there are some sacrifices that we, the generations in leadership today, need to make in order to give our children the best chance of victory in the future.

I am pleased to present you with the August edition of *MESSENGER*; in it, I hope you will find challenge, hope and an image of a God who cares deeply about the church of the future in the British Union.



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How to future-proof your church – listen lower . . .

by **Karen Holford**, TED Family, Women and Children's Ministry Director

Come with me into the future – not very far, perhaps a decade or so – and let's visit one of the most flourishing churches in the country. When we arrive, the door to the church is wide open. A child, a teenager and an adult are in the foyer, welcoming everyone into the church. We find a seat and settle down to enjoy the service.

A family with junior-aged children prays for the congregation. The youth team show their own creative video, focused on the theme for the day. The sermon is short and interactive, involving all the children in one of the practical illustrations. A mother reads a psalm for the Scripture reading as illustrations drawn by her family are shown on the screen. An older person shares an inspiring story from their life. A small musical group accompanies the songs.

At the end of the service, the pastor comes to share their story. 'About ten years ago, just after the lockdowns of the pandemic, many families in our church stayed home to watch the service online. It was more relaxing to sit on their sofas than to drag their children and teenagers to an uncomfortable and boring church service. . . . So we asked the younger generations to help us make church an unmissable experience. You see, every Sabbath is an opportunity to turn their hearts towards their loving Father God, or away from Him. When church is warm, welcoming, inclusive and creative, then they see God as being warm, welcoming, inclusive and creative too. But when we create church services that meet the adults' needs but ignore the children, church becomes boring and meaningless to them, and they don't feel

heard, loved and involved.

'In Bible times, no one worshipped the way most churches worship today! People worshipped God in gardens, by altars, in tabernacles, in their homes, in the temple and synagogues, on hillsides, by lakes, in marketplaces and in house churches. When God designed worship services, they were inter-generational, interactive and multisensory, with things to see, smell, taste, hear, touch and do. Worship must be adapted to the needs of the community and their context. It's not something that is rigidly set in stone, because the world is constantly changing, and worship needs to be relevant to every generation.

'When we began including children, teenagers, and people of all ages in our services, people started coming back to church. Families from other churches joined us, because they were looking for a church where their children were happy to come.

'We learnt that the best way to future-proof our church is to listen to the needs, hopes and ideas of the younger generations. When the disciples asked Jesus who was the greatest in His kingdom, He took a small child and placed him in the centre of the group. When we make sure that the needs of the younger members of our church are considered in

all our events, the church becomes more relevant for more people.

'If we hadn't made these changes all those years ago, I think our church would be shrinking and maybe even dying. There are always people who will struggle with change. But now that we have regular times of listening and feedback, we have a process that will help to future-proof our church for years to come.'

Are you serious about including children and young people in your worship? We have 20 of Karen Holford's *Altogether Wonderful* books available to give away. For a chance to obtain this book email kholford@ted.adventist.org with your address and share one thing your church is doing to be more relevant to children and young people.





Post-humanism, AI and multi-planetary travel: Challenges facing future generations

by Dr Daryl Gungadoo

On 12 July 2022, at 14:30 GMT, I couldn't contain my emotions while downloading the first image from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope. It was a composite image of the stellar nursery in the Carina Nebula. As I marvelled at the sight, I couldn't help but recall the words of my late grandfather, a career pastor/missionary and a pillar of spiritual strength: 'God would surely not permit our fallen world to explore outer space, let alone land on the moon.' Yet the landing on the moon did happen, and Voyager 1 (Earth's furthest-travelling spacecraft) entered interstellar space in August 2012.

There is an inherent danger in using our limited and often dated worldviews and social constructs to interpret eternal biblical truths. While we as a church might still be wrapping our minds around post-modernism and how to adapt our evangelistic methodologies accordingly, the world has moved on. It strikes me that sometimes we are oblivious to the fact that post-modernism started as far back as the 1940s, declined in the late '80s, and was superseded by meta-modernism in the mid-70s.

There is a temptation to think of ourselves as 'innovative' when we embrace new media

platforms; however, the truth is that we often make the mistake of not first understanding the worldview of our intended audience. When using these new technologies, are we even speaking their language? Have we taken the time to understand where they are coming from?

I believe that there is a way for our church to be more relevant in this day and age. Relax: it doesn't involve diluting our theology by preaching about God's love and minimising the need for transformational repentance; neither does it involve retreating into last-generation theology or the prosperity gospel. Rather, if we want to be relevant and establish a thriving next generation of Adventism, we must be willing to engage the upcoming disruptive social revolutions heading our way.

Each generation living on the earth today has had to negotiate the social issues of their time. For the silent generation and baby boomers, these issues included smoking, alcohol, dancing and dress; for Gen Xers, it was substance abuse and the sexual revolution; for millennials and Gen Z, the social issues they face include gender identity and dysphoria; and for our up-and-coming Generation Alpha, brace yourselves for

post-humanism: gene editing, multi-planetary migration, the metaverse, cyborgs, synthetic life extension and artificial consciousness.

I'm a dad with kids who will have to face this next revolution, and I have to ask myself, *How do I prepare them for what comes next?*

We can learn a lot from the foresight of the NASA and European Space Agency aerospace engineers. While the James Webb Space Telescope was launched on 25 December 2021, and though its pictures only started to flow in July 2022, its inception actually dates back to 1996, six years after the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope. The engineers who conceived of the JWS Telescope are now in retirement, and some are in the grave. But they built it unselfishly, knowing that the next generation would reap the fruit of their works.

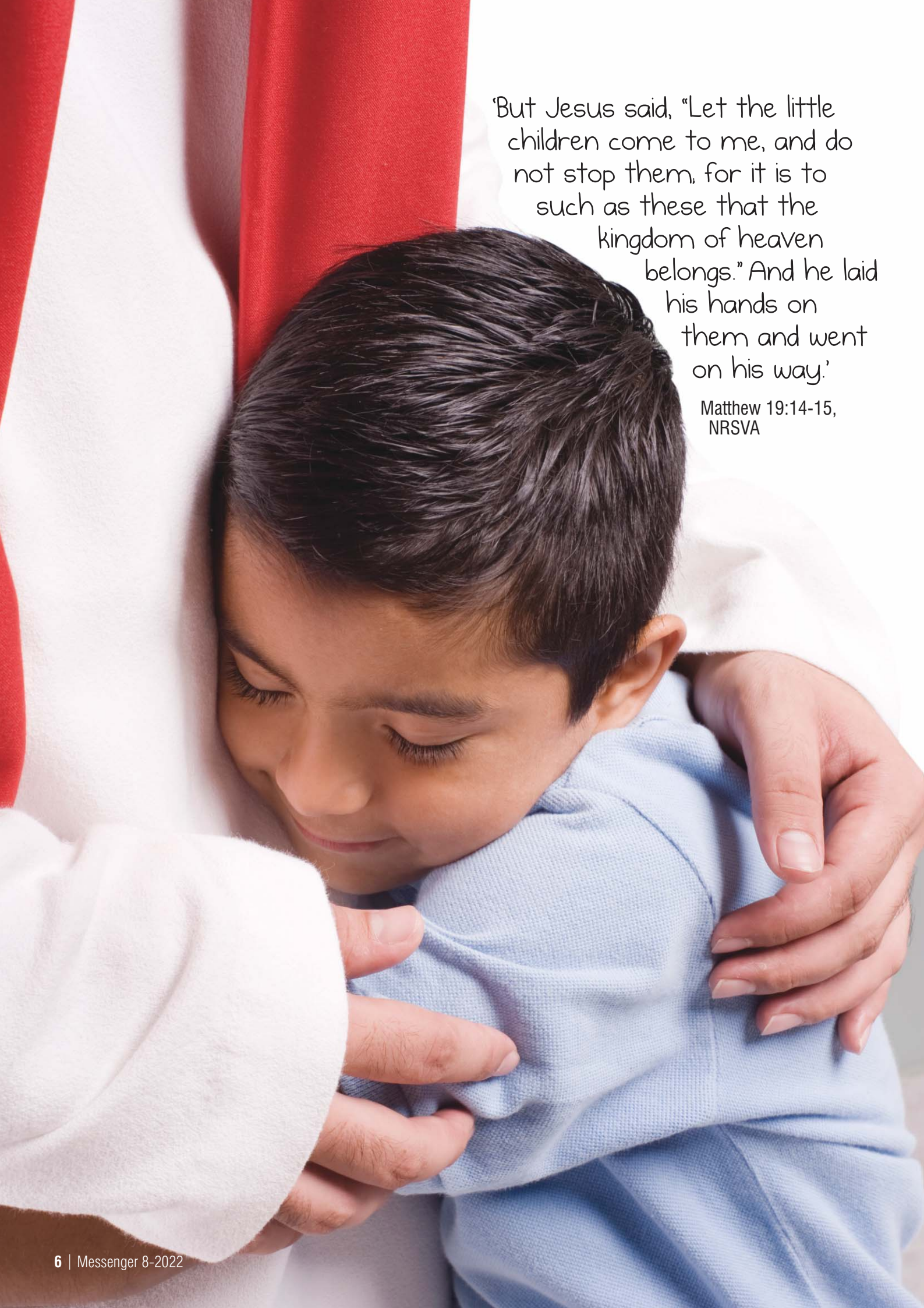
Let us not rest on our laurels, teaching the Bible as though our audience is stuck in a time capsule from the 1950s. Let's do our utmost to understand the tectonic plates of societal change shifting beneath us and let us find ways to share Truth that are relevant and meaningful to the world around us. We have a job to do, a 'Great Commission' to answer, and an everlasting message to share with a world in need of Jesus.



Image credit: NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI

Download this image for yourself at:
<https://stsci-opo.org/STScI-01G8GX1KMWX2XA4PK2EWM7KE3R.png>





'But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.'

Matthew 19:14-15,
NRSVA

How to communicate better with our children

by Emmanuel Asamoah

I'll never forget my conversation with Musa (not his real name), an erudite 12-year-old who arrived in my classroom for an intervention session. 'Sir,' he said, 'don't expect much from me today; I am fasting.' His conclusion was poignant, '... and, Sir, know that I am happy to fast every year because of my faith and religious duty.' Following that encounter, I found myself asking the question: How can we communicate our faith to our children in such a way as to empower them to become as confident and articulate as Musa? I offer the following three reflections in response.

Firstly, what we do is more important than what we say. This blueprint is found in Genesis 18:18-19, where God tells Abraham of his duty to instruct his sons and their families to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just. In other words, teaching is best carried out by doing. Psychologist Jean Piaget labelled the phenomenon whereby a learner (or child) builds knowledge through actions and activities as 'constructivism'.¹ I wonder, would Musa pray or fast or share his faith if those around him were not actively doing so themselves?

Secondly, we must actively plan for patterns of reinforcement or repetition. Again, we see this blueprint in Deuteronomy 6:6-9, where the Israelites are instructed to permeate their children's lives with godly instructions (when they sit at home, walk on the road, lie down or get up). The apostle Peter follows a similar pattern when he says, 'I will always remind you about these things – even though

you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught' (2 Peter 1:12, NLT). What we communicate to our children – both in words and actions – will be most effective when reinforced consistently and with repetition. I wonder whether a once-a-week children's story at divine service, complemented by one or two children's events in the year, is near enough.

Finally, when communicating with our children, we must do so with clarity. Many of the challenges our children and church face today seem to emanate from a lack of clarity. Few will deny the scale of confusion caused by information overload and the often-conflicting messages communicated in the media. Jesus showed us the way by reducing the hundreds of laws into two – loving God and loving others (Mark 12:30-31). What's being suggested here is not a call to a redacted Gospel, but rather a dividing and grouping of large sections of sacred teachings into smaller units, so they become easier to remember. This process is called 'chunking' and can significantly clarify communication.² To this end, it may be helpful for us to summarise what we are communicating in clear bullet points or with mnemonics.

The challenges of communicating with

our children in a world with so many distractions are real and often overwhelming. Yet, in Ellen White's words, 'The extent of a Christian's usefulness is measured by his power to communicate that which he has received.'³ With the Holy Spirit on our side, our response must be to develop a church fit for the future, a church that, simply put, can communicate what we have received to the future generations in our midst.

¹Lynn E. Cohen and Sandra Waite-Stupiansky, *Theories of Early Childhood Education: Developmental, Behaviorist, and Critical* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

²Mirko Thalmann, Alessandra S. Souza, and Klaus Oberauer, 'How Does Chunking Help Working Memory?' *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 45.1 (2019): 37–55.

³Ellen G. White, *The Voice in Speech and Song*, 1897, <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/148.162#162>.



Inter-Generational Worship training day

by Pastor Dee Edwards

On 25 June 2022, Area 7 held a training day on Inter-Generational Worship (IGW) at Luton North Church. Our trainer for the day was Karen Holford, the Trans-European Division Family and Children's Ministries Director, an expert in the field of IGW who has written several books on worship for children and young people.

Fifty people attended the training day, including children. There was a constant buzz of excitement in the air as participants enjoyed the interactive nature of the training and the opportunity to bring their experiences and creativity. Participants learnt that the way we presently do church is not child friendly and is radically different from how God intended worship to be experienced.

The traditional worship structure inherited from the church fathers was developed by theologians who did not have families and were all male. As such, they developed a service that only suited them and was mainly verbal. However, only 30% of the general population are verbal learners. Most people are visual learners and, therefore, do not gain as much as they could from traditional services. If the services were multisensory, celebratory and inclusive, as God meant our worship services to be, there would be a positive impact on members' learning, enjoyment and spiritual growth. Attendees received many tips and ideas from Karen, whom attendees found to be very knowledgeable. Participants all received a resource pack and came away with lots of books and information booklets to get them started in planning an IGW service.

What is IGW?

IGW is a more inclusive and holistic approach

to worship. It is a time when the whole family of God can learn from each other and grow together. In the traditional worship service, it is a struggle to involve our children and young people beyond giving them the Scripture reading. IGW enables a fresh and creative approach to worship that stays in the memory far longer, as all senses are involved. For example, rather than just reading about the walls of Jericho falling down, an IGW approach might involve the church re-enacting the story to bring it to life. A traditional worship service also tends to underestimate what children can understand. When done well, an IGW service never fails to provoke deep thought and reflection from adults and children alike!

Why have an IGW training day?

The idea to run an IGW training day came about during a discussion in the Area 7 pastors' forum. The concern was raised that there were not enough teachers available in some churches to teach and nurture the children within the children's Sabbath School. There was also a concern that the worship service did not cater sufficiently to the needs of children. Consequently, children were being failed by the adults, leading to boredom and disinterest. Failing to engage children in the worship service means we risk losing them.

One of the reasons why Adventist families do not attend their local church but travel great distances to attend other churches is the recognition that if they are going to keep their children in church, they need to find one where their children can thrive spiritually. This means that, as church leaders, we need to find creative ways to engage all the church family, not just the adults. IGW services more

readily engage children and people from the community. Therefore, IGW is not only great for retention but also an effective evangelistic tool and well worth the extra investment of time.

One of the participants shared that 'It was empowering training!' One of the great strengths of the training was the opportunity to plan and share ideas for an IGW template that participants could take back to their church and implement. Participants worked in their church groups to develop ideas for an IGW service. Many attendees experienced a shift in their thinking and were excited about the ideas being shared.

When attendees were asked to share one word that described the day or how they felt, the words chosen included: 'Amazing!' 'Wow!' 'Empowering!' 'Freeing', 'Inspirational', 'Creative', 'Enabling', 'Emancipating', and so on. It was heart-warming and delightful to see how many were already thinking of how they could make changes to the services in their church.

One participant was so inspired by the training that she decided to step forward to take on the Children's Ministries leader role in her church. She also couldn't wait to share all she had learnt with her family. Interestingly, it was only then that she realised that her children also felt that the services only catered for adults and that even the Scripture readings tended to use Bible versions that were difficult to understand. This shows just how much we need to rethink our services.

Next steps

Making positive changes to the worship service requires a shift in our thinking and church culture. Those seeking to do so will need support and follow-up. Therefore, Area 7 is already planning another training day for 2023, where participants can receive more training and share what they have already implemented at their churches.

If your area is interested in hosting an IGW training day, you can contact Pastor Dee Edwards at dedwards@secadventist.org.uk for further information. If you would like to invite Karen Holford to deliver training to your area, you can contact her by email at kholford@ted.adventist.org.





by Sharon Platt-McDonald Director for Health, Adventist Community Services & Women's Ministries

Faith and well-being

Research continues to point to faith as a protective factor, aiding in psychological, social and physical well-being. This issue of 'Enhancing health' explores some of the recent studies that have taken place in this area.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists, on their website page – *Spirituality and mental health* – state that 'spirituality can be an important – sometimes a central – part of someone's life. It can offer real benefits for mental health.' As such, they have engaged the clergy for advice and contribution in their service delivery, forming the Spirituality Special Interest Group (SPSIG). Explaining SPSIG, they state: 'This is a forum for psychiatrists to explore the spiritual challenges presented by psychiatric illness, and how best to respond to patients' spiritual concerns.'¹

An online article published in *Psychology Today* by Rob Whitley PhD carried the headline: 'Religion and Mental Health: What Is the Link? Exploring the scientific evidence surrounding religion and mental health.'² Reflecting on the vast array of studies in this area, Whitley writes: 'The amassed research indicates that higher levels of religious belief and practice (known in social science as "religiosity") is associated with better mental health. In particular, the research suggests that higher levels of religiosity are associated with lower rates of depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, and suicidal behaviour. Religiosity is also associated with better physical health and subjective well-being.' Whitley further notes that for mental health service users 'research indicates that religiosity can enhance recovery from mental illness, aiding in the healing process'.

Whitley's article also highlights the difference between 'extrinsic' (public) and 'intrinsic' (private) religiosity, explaining that public religiosity refers to active participation in congregational worship, and private religiosity identifies religious beliefs and practices at home or in the individual's mind. Whichever format was analysed, both were found to promote mental health. When listing examples of benefits, the article noted that the following were thought to enhance the recovery process:

'Regular attendance at a place of worship embeds an individual into a community of people who can offer material, moral, emotional, and social support, all of which can foster good mental health.

'Similarly, many people with mental illness report that private prayer, devotional readings, and religious programming (on TV, the radio, or the internet) can provide solace and comfort.'

Finally, in an article titled 'How can spirituality help with stress relief?'³ the Mayo Clinic shares the following overall mental health benefits experienced by individuals practising faith:

- **Feeling a sense of purpose:** Clarifying what's most important;
- **Connecting to the world:** A greater sense of purpose reduces feelings of isolation;
- **Releasing control:** Connection encourages sharing with others;
- **Expanding your support network:** Sharing spiritual expressions builds relationships;
- **Leading a healthier life:** Valuing spirituality enhances ability to cope with stress and increases well-being.

How wonderful it is that well-being can be an outcome of expressed faith!

Good health!



¹Spirituality and mental health | Royal College of Psychiatrists (rpsych.ac.uk)

²Religion and Mental Health: What Is the Link? | *Psychology Today*

³<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-mindfulness-connecting-spirituality-and-stress-relief/>



Creating a culture of evangelism – part 2

by **Dr Kirk M. Thomas,**

Evangelism, Missions, Publishing, Personal Ministries & Sabbath School Director of the British Union Conference

Creating a culture of evangelism requires change. Even when you think you are comfortable and doing well, change is inevitable for you to be relevant. What is the change that you would like to see? In preparation for this article, I came across some fascinating quotations on change that I found valuable for my life, church, and ministry context:

‘Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.’ Barack Obama

‘Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.’ John C. Maxwell

‘The price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change.’ Bill Clinton

‘The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.’ Albert Einstein

‘The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.’ Socrates

In various places, the Spirit of Prophecy speaks of the change that is to come:

‘The places in which the truth has never been proclaimed are the best places in which to work. The truth is to take possession of the will of those who have never heard it. They will see the sinfulness of sin, and their repentance will be thorough and sincere. The Lord will work upon hearts that in the past have not often been appealed to, hearts that heretofore have not seen the enormity of sin.’ (*Evangelism*, p. 21.1.)

‘Let there be the wisest planning for the success of the work. Decided efforts should be made to open new fields in the north, the south, the east, and the west. . . . The fact that the presentation of the truth has been so long neglected should appeal to our ministers and workers to enter these fields and not give up the work until they have clearly given the message.’ (*Evangelism*, p. 19.5.)

‘Truth, passing by those who despise and reject it, will triumph. Although at times apparently retarded, its progress has never been checked. When the message of God meets with opposition, He gives it additional force, that it may exert greater influence. Endowed with divine energy, it will cut its way through the strongest barriers, and triumph over every obstacle.’ (*Evangelism*, p. 20.1.)

In life, change is guaranteed; it can make us anxious, give us the sense that we are losing control and even paralyse us into inaction. However, the good news is that God has a plan for your life that includes change, hope, future, blessings, miracles, prosperity, and, yes, evangelism. We need to learn to trust God and allow Him to make the changes that will help us to become more like Jesus Christ. There are several promises in the Bible I believe we can turn to for the inspiration needed to create a culture of change:

‘I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.’ (Joshua 1:9, NRSVA.)

‘I will open rivers on the bare heights, And springs in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, And the dry land fountains of water.’ (Isaiah 41:18, NASB.)

The truth is that an attitudinal metamorphosis needs to happen urgently. Recently, I visited one of our churches, and it was a high day in Zion! The seats were filled, so I stood by the entrance because I had



Let’s create an environment where people *want* to come inside and sit down.

to run to another appointment afterwards. A family approached the door, and, as I welcomed them, the wife quickly informed me that, while her husband and the children would be sitting, she would rather stand by the entrance to observe. Somewhat perplexed, I accommodated her request but felt a restlessness in my spirit. After some time, I gently enquired why she preferred not to take a seat. After a thoughtful moment, she relayed a sad story. She had visited the church with her children some months before. To her dismay, after settling into their seats, they were accosted by three loud and aggressive members who claimed she needed to move because the seats were theirs. She left with her children, vowing never to return. In fact, she shared with me that the only reason she returned was because her husband begged her to come. Sadly, in many congregations this story is all too familiar. Why can’t we be just nice?

Philippians 2:5-11 says, ‘Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became *human!* Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death – and the worst kind of death at that – a crucifixion. Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth – even those long ago dead and buried – will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.’ (*The Message*.)

Beloved, let’s change, let’s become more like Christ, and let’s create a welcoming culture of evangelism. Let’s not create an environment where people would rather stand by our doors than come inside and sit down.

Sharing God's love in Tottenham

by **Maxine Donovan**, Prayer Ministry leader

On Sunday 12 June 2022, Tottenham West Green Road Church (now Tottenham Lighthouse Church since 18 June) was buzzing with activity. 'Sharing the Love' was the theme of our second community day for 2022; it was spearheaded by our Prayer Ministries team and supported by other church departments, including our Community Services leader, Sister Sophia Charles, and her Food Hub team.

Before the doors opened, the day was committed into God's hands by Elder Janette Joseph. Our visitors included many of our Food Hub regulars, people coming from their Sunday services, passers-by and those specially invited by church members, including Councillor Tammy Hymas. Councillor Hymas shared that many people had spoken of our Food Hub while they were canvassing for the May elections. Posting later on Twitter, the councillor stated: 'I really appreciated the warm welcome at the SDA Tottenham Church for their community day.'

The services on offer during the 'Sharing the Love' event included, for example, health checks with a doctor available for follow-up, legal advice, education advice, business advice, counselling, massage, prayer, literature (donated by the BUC Personal Ministries department) and other gifts, a drug awareness session by Hope UK, and a floral arrangement demonstration. In addition, healthy meals were provided by Annalisa's Kitchen. Mr Miten Patel, the owner of the Good Health Pharmacy, kindly provided us with examination gloves, a glucometer with strips for glucose testing, and a blood pressure monitor.

Marian St Guillaume, a community member who volunteers at the Food Hub and also volunteered at the 'Sharing the Love' event, wrote the following feedback: 'Another great day for the community. There was a lovely atmosphere. So many people who spoke to me commented how they felt it as they entered. . . . I enjoyed the yummy healthy food, and was happy to see some of our regulars waiting for the doctor and nurses, which was good for them, as so many GPs are still not seeing many people face to face. I received special blessings from the sisters who prayed over me and my family. I was touched and emotional, so the Lord was present and listening. You and all church members should be proud of how you are carrying on and offering the community so much help while your building is going through renovations. I am full of admiration for that.'

Led by the Holy Spirit, our church has become more intentional in its efforts to mingle and engage with the local neighbourhood to transform lives and build up the community. We thank God for making the day a resounding success; it was a bright and sunny day, and our visitors outnumbered our members. We are thankful to all who willingly gave their time and talents to help share the love of God with our community.

It was a wonderful day, and I am grateful for Dannielle and Noreen Kydd-Sinclair, Annalisa Buraglio, and Kathleen Douglas, whom we met earlier this year at the SEC Health & Well-being

Fest and who subsequently came to support us.

Finally, for their continued support, I would like to thank Marian, Hanane and Mary, Elder Claudette James, Sister Serita Tapper and Dr Riesberg Amoah.



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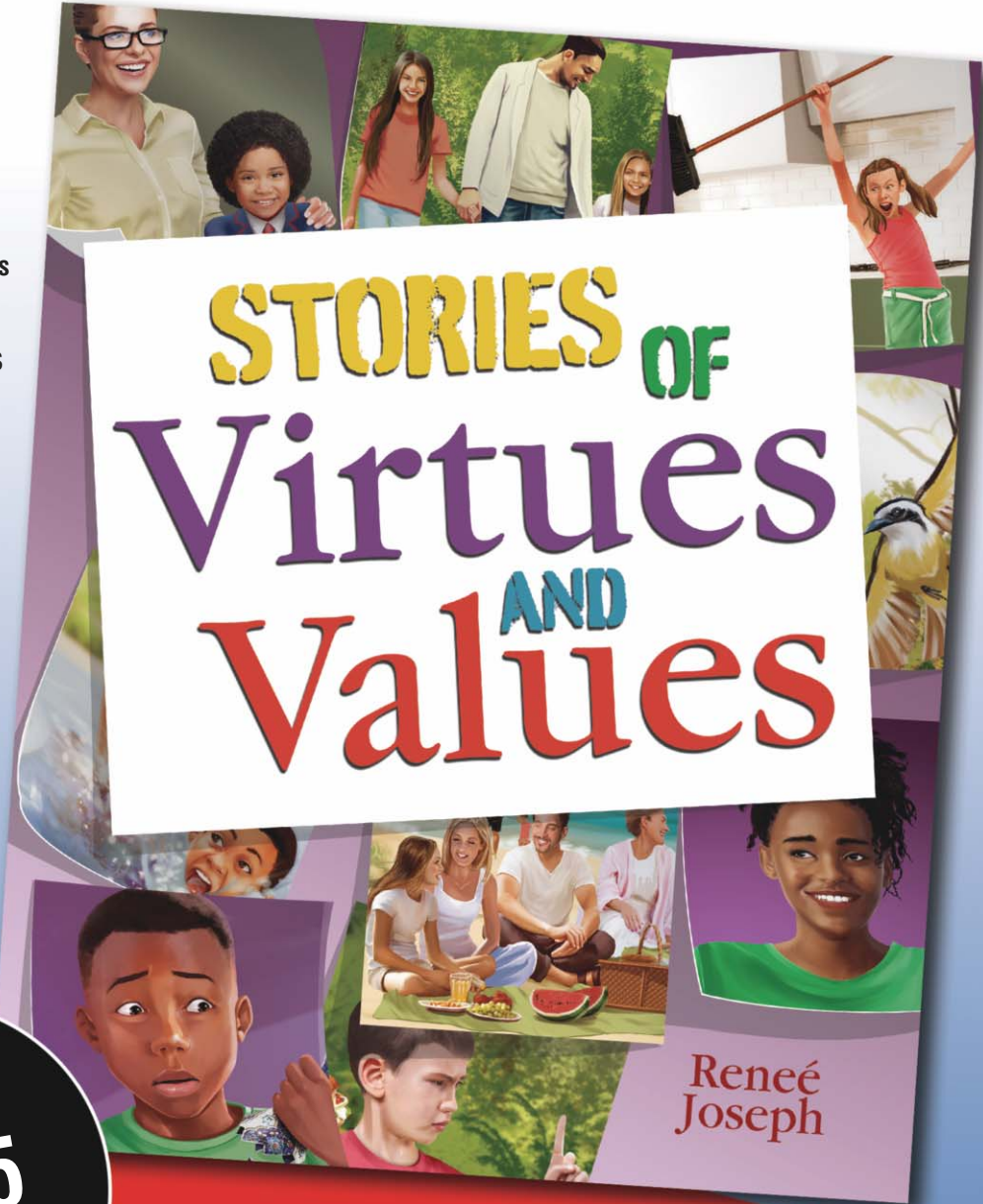


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by Renee Joseph

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2022 Bible Conference report

Newbold's Centre for Ministry and Mission hosts its 2022 Bible Conference

The 2022 Bible Conference titled 'Challenges, Issues, Opportunities: Adventism in the 21st Century', the first major event organised by the college since 2019, brought together a dynamic team of speakers who shared captivating presentations with their audience at Newbold Church and online on 27-28 May.

On Friday evening, Dr Laszlo Gallusz, Senior Lecturer in New Testament, set the scene for the theme of the Conference with the opening remark, 'Every society and organisation run by human beings has its own issues and challenges, which includes the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To deny or ignore the issues is equal to ignoring reality and missing the opportunity for constructive growth.' Dr Gallusz introduced the evening's keynote speaker, Dr Stephen Currow, Principal at Newbold, who delivered a presentation on the 'Seven Challenges Facing Adventists Today'. Dr Currow ended his talk with an encouraging appeal for everyone to 'preach the Word, fight the fight of faith, pursue godliness, be rich in good deeds and take hold of eternal life'.

The following day's programme provided plenty of food for thought with presentations from Dr Laszlo Gallusz; Dr Jan Barna, Principal Lecturer in Systematic Theology; visiting lecturer, Pilira Zapita; and sermons by Dr Daniel Duda, Education Director at the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Pastor Jonathan Holder. The day began with a fascinating presentation by Pastor Julian Thompson on the digitalisation of the Bible. He used the philosopher Marshall McLuhan's famous quote, 'The medium is the message', to explain how digital technology, mobile devices, texting, and even emojis impact how people interpret and understand the Bible. Dr Ivan Milanov, Senior Lecturer in Old Testament, followed with a presentation on the pitfalls of conspiracy theories. He unveiled a list of similarities between the views of some Adventists and conspiracy theorists, showing how easily people are lured into a culture of conspiracy. He added that God has already revealed Satan's intentions and plans in the Bible, so 'whatever conspiracy theory you are exposed to, pray for wisdom', and pointed out that 'wise people are a faithful people with a special bond with the Lord'.

One of the day's highlights included a presentation by Dutch politician Marianne Thieme on the dangers of the theology of perfectionism. She showed its link to meritocracy, a concept rooted in our society where people get ahead in life based on their accomplishments. She said we live in a world 'ruled by perfectionism' where 'we want to have a perfect life', pointing to an abundance of mobile apps available for self-help, self-improvement, and people wanting to measure everything in their pursuit of success. Ms Thieme explored the roots of the 'Adventist



Above: Singing group.
Right: Dr Laszlo Gallusz
Far right: Pilira Zapita
Below left: Stephen Currow
Below middle: Marianne Thieme
Below right: Julian Thompson
Bottom: Platform party



perfectionism narrative', making close comparisons with 'the meritocracy narrative', warning that it eventually leads to a 'winners and losers' mentality, and the tendency to become judgmental and condescending, all of which leads to frustration and spiritual burn-out. Concluding, she said it is 'incompatible with God's grace', which is 'an unmerited gift of love', emphasising that 'it is Christ's

perfection that saves us'.

The 2022 Bible Conference ended with a panel discussion led by former principal Dr John Baildam, who presented the speakers with questions from the audience and online viewers. Dr Currow ended the event by thanking the audience and everyone who took part, as well as Newbold Church.

NEWBOLD COLLEGE



What makes music at Stanborough School so wonderful?

by **Kari Layson** (School Music Committee, Year 10)

'Sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!' Psalm 105:2, ESV.

Have you ever heard a Stanboroughian play music to praise God, the Master of our school? Then you would agree that the experience was

stunning! But what exactly makes it so extraordinary? Well, one of the things is our special music programme in which every student at Stanborough, from

Years 7-9, is required to learn a musical instrument of their choice, which allows the students to try something they might not attempt otherwise. The teachers are all highly professional musicians who put a lot of time and effort into their tuition to help us stretch to our highest potential.

We have a very hands-on Head of Music; she knows our capabilities, is extremely passionate and hardworking and encourages us to try harder and put in our best efforts. In addition, we have an active music committee that helps plan various programmes such as the carol service, put together PowerPoint presentations for these services, and lead out in various musical items.

Stanborough also has a fantastic orchestra which often plays at school and community events. People have said lovely things about our orchestra; one of the school's senior teachers observed that 'the quality of sound is delightful – the students, as well as the participating teachers, are all in harmony when performing'. We also have a choir for Years 7-9 and voluntary members from year groups above. While this was put on hold temporarily due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to sing

at our speech night and carol service.

The wonderful thing about our orchestra and choir is that they empower students to work as a team. First Corinthians 12:18-20 says that God created us all with different talents and roles. When we play or sing together, we are a bit like different parts coming together to form one body.

All in all, the music at Stanborough is so lovely because of the passion, dedication, time and effort put in by students and teachers alike. Having professional musicians as teachers gives us an edge and helps us to improve. Our special music programme means that everyone has a chance to explore their musical talents.

It has been said that 'at first, many might have trouble, but at the end of the day, a wonderful piece is made – hard work pays off, and it really shows . . . from a cacophony of sound comes a harmonised, tuneful music pleasing to the ear.' We will keep marching on our journey with joyful sound and praise our Master until the day Jesus comes, as it says in Psalm 104:33, 'I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.' (ESV.)





Drums, demons and dancing

by Pastor Samuel Davis

I was visiting one of my church members in South Africa some years ago. After a while, he went to his office and returned with a paper he had written and asked me to read it. It was about music in the church. He was an elderly pastor, now retired, who had

served as a leader in the Conference.

I read the document and told him that I found it highly offensive. Essentially, he had walked into church one Sabbath afternoon and witnessed the mainly black youth choir practising a song. As far as he was concerned, what he had seen was 'demonic' and ungodly. I pointed out that he did not have a 360° perspective on music and was approaching the matter with a very narrow worldview. I asked him to

put the document away because of its demeaning and derogatory tone. He asked permission to share his document with the church board, which I duly denied. I told him it was so disrespectful that I would not even take the copy he had given me in case someone else saw it, and suggested that he destroy the offending document for the good of all concerned.

Unknown to me, the following Sunday after our church board meeting, he gave the document to board members, and World War Three erupted. It took much prayer, tears and pleading to calm the situation down and repair the damage caused by his unsolicited distribution. Music in the church has always been a cause of much contention, and, very often, that contention is based on personal tastes, preferences and perceptions about what God wants.

I recently received two text messages from friends of mine, independently, but on the same subject. The first friend wanted to know if I was the Conference President who gave approval when drums were introduced into the worship services of a certain prominent church, which just happened to be the first church where her membership was when she arrived in the UK. She went on to say that she was so glad that the church she subsequently attended had not yet adopted their use, as it 'conjures up evil spirits and dancing in the aisle and things like that'. Quite sincerely, she implored me to repent if I had, indeed, during my tenure given permission for the unsavoury influences to enter our churches.

I was happy to point out to my friend that she had given me far more power than was accorded to the President. The matter of drum use in worship was something for the local church and had nothing to do with the President. However, I did add in my response that had I been asked for my blessing, I would have been happy to give it. Drums, I pointed out to her, are inanimate objects that do not play themselves but rather must be played by the musician, as is the case with all instruments. Drums have no inherent evil, but rather how they are played can enhance the worship service or detract from it, depending on the knowledge and training of the musician.

The second text came very recently, saying, 'Pastor, they're complaining about drums again.' I could almost sense the exasperation in this mother's message. So, what is it about the drums that gets us so animated?

Well, the whole issue of music

Drums have no inherent evil, but rather how they are played can enhance the worship service or detract from it.



and appropriate instruments in church has been with us for a very long time. We must remember that many of the instruments we are comfortable with today were at one time frowned upon and deemed inappropriate for church use. Paul Hamel, former chairman of the music department at Andrews University, makes the following point:

‘There are certain kinds of religious or gospel folk songs and styles of performance that are out of place in the church. I personally question the use of amplified guitars, a trap-drum set, and a bass viol played in a certain style that emphasises beat and rhythm. These instruments have so many associational connections with secular musical situations that are openly wanton and musically and morally vulgar, that the minds of most people would be diverted from the worship service by their use.’¹

Hamel puts his finger on the pulse. It is not the instrument per se, but rather the association of that instrument with that which is ‘musically and morally vulgar’. However, writing back in the 1970s, he does posit a situation where:

‘There may come a time when there is no longer an unsavoury association connected with the amplified guitar, the trap-drum set, and other similar instruments, and when their use will no longer be responsible for a diversion from an attitude of worship. However, I doubt that this will occur during the decade of the 1970s, and it may never happen.’²

So, here we are around 50 years later, and we still have not lost sight of some of those associations. Is it not time for us as a church to give the drum a break? What is clear is that there are no biblical prohibitions to drum use. Indeed, in places such as Psalm 150 and 1 Chronicles 15:16 it is positively encouraged. From such texts, it is clear that there are no biblical restrictions on any musical instrument. They are all to be used in praise of the Almighty. Obviously, reverence and decorum in worship must be taken into account. If there are problems with the drums, it has to be how they are played, which is a matter of education.

As a preacher, when I am asked to preach at a new church, there are certain things that I want to know about the congregation. Are they old or young? Conservative or liberal? What is the cultural context? This information will inform my preaching style and the manner and method of presentation. Similarly, I would like to suggest that the same principles apply to our young drummers and musicians.

Let us not demonise our young and aspiring percussionists. Our Pathfinders have shown us just how excellently they can perform on the drums within the context of their marching and parades. Is their drumming to be confined only to public display or Pathfinder drilling? Surely not! Let us educate our musicians so that they know how to play the drums for worship. Playing for the church on Sabbath morning may require a different approach than when playing for the teens at camp meetings. Know your audience. Will they appreciate the way I am playing? Can I adapt my playing style to meet the needs of the congregation?

I attended a church some years ago where the drums were being played. I was very impressed with the young man who played that morning. Not only did he have all the required skills, but he also possessed a particular sensitivity to the needs of his audience. Instead of using drumsticks, he was using brushes. This meant that the drumbeat was very much in the background rather than in the foreground. I congratulated him for the poise he demonstrated that morning. Admittedly, I have not seen many examples of that kind of reserve. However, I do recall one other occasion where I witnessed that kind of sensitivity being demonstrated by a young lady.

The key to overcoming our reluctance to embrace the drums is not to demonise the instrument; there are no biblical restrictions. Let us educate our young musicians and work with them to develop their craft. Within the SDA church in the UK we have a rich musical heritage. Let’s embrace that heritage and build on it for the future. I would much rather see my grandkids playing the drums in church than playing for someone else on ‘X-Factor’ or ‘Britain’s Got Talent’.

If you are opposed to using drums in church, ask yourself, *What is my opposition based on?* Is it God’s Word, a personal dislike, worldly association, or something else? Much of the Christian music we listen to today has drums as a core part of the musical backing ensemble. This includes the Gaithers, Winans, Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, Heritage

Singers, Larnelle Harris, Donnie McClerkin, Hillsong and so on, to name a few. I find it interesting that we do not object to the use of drums by these artists, but when we see the drums in church it evokes a different response.

As a former youth director, pastor and musician, I have good insight into the struggle of differentiating between appropriate music and inappropriate music. One young man said to me, ‘Pastor, I sat in church playing my electronic drum set on Sabbath, and no one batted an eyelid. However, had it been the physical drum set, it would have been a different story.’ Clearly, some of us are still struggling with the association.

As I close, let us remember that we worship a God who accepts worship from many different cultures and not just the Eurocentric forms of worship to which we have become accustomed. When we pastored in South Africa, from time to time I went to visit the churches in Soweto. I was often disappointed by their tendency to offer the more western-oriented style of worship. Then, one Sabbath, I found it. The rich, harmonious, melodic, rhythmic, acapella African voices. It was beautiful! I have witnessed the joyous dancing of Ghanaian worship, the more reserved solemnity of Romanian worship, as well as the contemplative ornamentation and microtones of Hindustani worship. God accepts them all.

We serve a God of difference, a God of colour, a God who receives worship across a vast range of cultures with their varying musical forms. Let us embrace the drums and educate our musicians to play them with sensitivity and with reverence. After all, not too long from now, a day is coming when the saints of all ages will stand on the sea of glass and raise their voices in praise and honour to our God for the great things He has done. On that day, when the saints from all ages gather to form one magnificent choir, dancing and raising their voices in glorious celebration, playing the trumpet, the lute, the lyre, the timbrel and, of course, the drums! What a wonderful occasion it will be!

¹Paul Hamel, ‘Music in the Church’, *Ministry* magazine, 1973, p. 6. ²Ibid.

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Lyrical lies

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

You wake up on a Sabbath morning and can't be bothered. You tell yourself you don't want to go to church, not because you have lost faith in God, though you do have your uncertainties, but because of the others. Those 'Happy Sabbath!' bandits who pounce on you, maybe before you have even entered the building, expecting a courteous smile, complete with the echoed report of

'And a happy Sabbath to you.' All along, you just want to cry, run, or shout at them, 'How dare you placate me with your enforced happiness when you don't even know me, and you don't know what's going on in my life!'

Of course, this all happens before and maybe after a service. But even during the service, you're not free from the Jolly Jesus jesters. You fear the thought of certain individuals leading the music with the pep talk comment instructing congregants to sing the words of the song as though they mean it. You know that if you look around, you will see people singing with gusto, singing those songs about happiness and joy, God's goodness and provision, and even the mighty power of things in nature being surpassed by the almightiness of God. You know that all this may be true, but you have had a horrendous week, not that anyone would know you well enough to ask, beyond the superficial greetings of 'Have you had a good week?' – maybe with the prefix of 'Happy Sabbath . . .'. You know they don't really know you, so, rather than share your heart, you flick your head up and say, 'It was fine.'

I have Steven Hulbert to thank for sharing a *Premier Christianity* article by the lead singer of Rend Collective on social media. Chris Llewellyn describes how he was challenged about writing Christian songs about his day-to-day life with God.¹ I don't mean to ponder on his article so much as pick up on the title, which he drew from a quote by A. W. Tozer. 'Christians don't tell lies; they just go to church and sing them.' Tozer was a pastor and author in the first half of the last century. I'm convinced that this is not about the Christian lyrics themselves being a lie; it's about Christians singing the lyrics but not fully meaning them; they are singing lyrical lies.

I remember being in one church some years ago and looking around at the attendees while singing the hymn 'I am so glad that my Father is in heaven'. I turned to the person next to me and pointed out the contrast between the joyful words of the song and the solemn look on people's faces. While the slow plod of the accompaniment may not have helped the situation, I am driven by the expectation that when people sing a chorus line about being glad that Jesus loves me, their non-verbal communication should correlate with the words muttered from their mouths.

So here's the dichotomy. While some people can come across as pretentiously joyous, others can seem as though mechanical attendance is all that's needed to have a faith relationship with God. I'm mindful of the Casting Crowns song, 'Stained Glass Masquerade'. The song is about someone attending church but restraining the pain of their life for fear of being excluded.

The chorus heralds:

'Are we happy plastic people
Under shiny plastic steeples
With walls around our weakness
And smiles to hide our pain?
But if the invitation's open
To every heart that has been broken
Maybe then we close the curtain
On our stained glass masquerade.'

I wonder if this is what the Tozer quote is all about? We sing what we know about; we are lacking or even longing for the full experience of God. I don't have the statistics to hand or the exact references, but I did read an article that surveyed the songs of the last half-decade. The suggestion was that every number of years there seems to be a difference in emphasis in the new songs being written. Again, I'm not wanting to critique their statistics or analysis, but I do wonder if or when we might have at least a spattering of songs expressing other aspects of people's faith journeys. After all, Jesus sang a song while hanging on the cross. Jewish bystanders would've recognised the lyrics we know today as Psalm 22, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

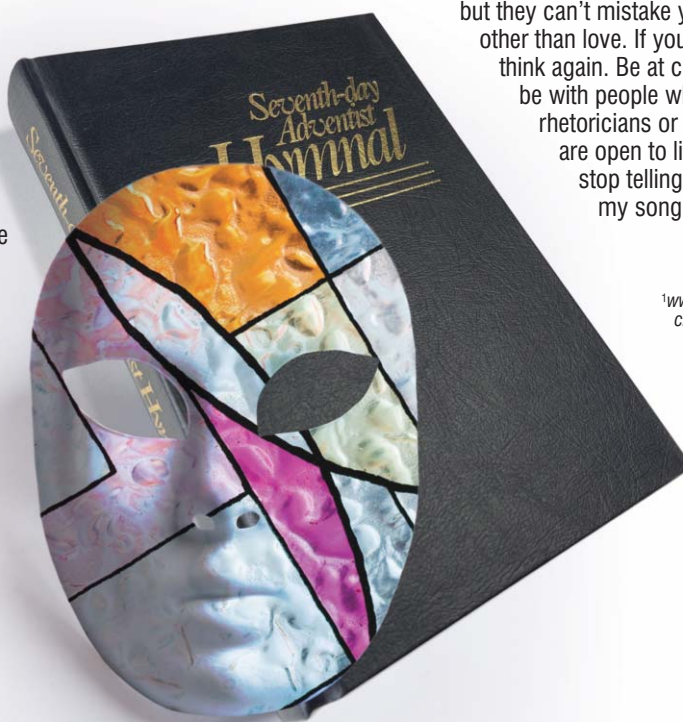
In his book *The Unquenchable Worshipper*, Redman looks at ten approaches to God a worshipper should consider, express, or at least bear in mind. In chapter 8, 'The undivided worshipper', Redman tells the story of how he came to write the song 'Heart of Worship'. He speaks about how things have become more about the production and show of the music set rather than the approach of the believer to worship. Having gained a reputation for mind-blowing music, the band turned up to rehearsals to find the pastor had stripped everything away so that the emphasis would instead be on what the worshipper had to bring to God. The chorus of this song speaks of the singer,

'[I'm] coming back to the heart of worship,
And it's all about You,
It's all about You, Jesus.'

Redman also quotes Tozer, having once talked about a place where we are 'so hopelessly and totally in love with God that the idea of a transfer of affection never even remotely exists'. Is that too much of a spiritual utopia for us to yearn for? Even if we've had a dreadful week, maybe smudged with grief or disappointment, could we not be the person someone like us needs to experience attending church? While some people are genuinely joyous in their daily experience of God, others masquerade their messianic credence like mannequins. But there are also people like you who can make the difference by modelling genuine godly grace and showing a generosity of interest, even if they choose to hide their pain.

Who do you know who needs your generosity of interest today? They may mistake your lyrics as lies, but they can't mistake your listening for anything other than love. If you are thinking of giving up, think again. Be at church for those who need to be with people who are not plastic rhetoricians or robotic religious reciters but are open to listening to your heart. Please stop telling me how to sing. Listen to my song.

¹www.premierchristianity.com/opinion/christians-dont-tell-lies-they-sing-them/5447.article





SEC and NEC unite for the Senior Youth Leadership Award Course

The weekend of 13-15 May saw the North England Conference youth leaders join the South England Conference Youth leaders for the Senior Youth Leadership Award Course.

For the past 3 years, the SEC has been running the SYLA course ever since Pastor Anthony Fuller (SEC Youth Director) returned from a youth congress in Germany, having seen others in an unfamiliar uniform. The unfamiliar uniform was the Adventist Youth navy blazer with a Senior Youth Leadership (SYL) pin and tie. This experience sparked Fuller's vision to bring the SYLA to the SEC, and the following year (2019) sixteen youth leaders, including himself, graduated, having completed the SYLA course. A further twelve graduated in 2021, having completed the course during the lockdown, and there are many more on the books to complete this year.

A Senior Youth Leader is the equivalent of a Master Guide, but instead of ministering to 4-15-year-olds (Adventurers and Pathfinders), they minister to the senior youth (16-30+). This is a system the General Conference has had in place for many years, but, unfortunately, it's a concept that many have been slow to adopt.

With the SYLA course established in the south, it was time to join forces with the north. Pastors Anthony Fuller (SEC) and Micah Campbell (NEC) joined forces to plan a united training weekend at Hay's Wood Retreat with further sessions on Zoom.

The weekend started well with Pastor Clifford Herman (SEC Pathfinder



Pastors Anthony Fuller and Micah Campbell



Discussing our spiritual gifts with Leah

Director) bringing in the Sabbath with an introduction to youth ministries. He emphasised that youth ministry is not always easy, but we do it to lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and to help them embrace His call to discipleship. Our task as youth leaders is to get to know the youth personally and to minister to their unique needs there and then. Relationship is the key to a healthy youth group, church, and walking with God.

Pastor Campbell's devotional on Sabbath morning brought us back to the critical issue that some people are more interested in the church building than they are in being the church. Some, he observed, are more interested in restoring burnt-down cathedrals than feeding the needy. When we focus on the building, we lose our spirituality.

Pastor Fuller, in his session on mentoring, emphasised the importance of leading to inspire others to be better than oneself. He noted that we should allow the youth to make mistakes, implement programmes with them and give them authority and responsibility and involve them in the life of the church. When you get young people into something they want to do, they will make choices differently. Before leading and influencing, we should take time to self-evaluate if it is 'well with my soul'. You can't lead others if you cannot lead yourself.

Pastor Campbell noted that youth ministry leaders need to reflect Christ. Before we lead, we must follow. We are called to work together and to love one another, even if we disagree with them. There is no such thing as a perfect leader; rather, we should be willing to learn from our own mistakes and find biblical solutions to practical issues.

One of the most distressing issues the youth often deal with today is crime and violence, which can be prevalent even in the quietest of places. Mohammed Shavir Miah emphasised the severity and impact of 'county lines' drug trafficking – the practice of trafficking drugs into rural areas and smaller towns, away from major cities. Workshops like this are key to understanding what our youth are subjected to and give us as leaders valuable insights on how to help and detect when a young person has been targeted.

Pastor and Mrs Johns joined us for the late afternoon session, emphasising that we need to look after our health and personal ministry before we can influence anyone's life.

Our final devotional time together on Sunday morning was led by Cleopatra Wright, who emphasised that a leader must be willing to sympathise with individuals going through struggles, whether racial, financial, emotional, spiritual, and so on. She noted that a leader is someone willing to meet the needs of those in great difficulty by putting himself or herself in others' shoes.

Leah Blenman led the session on spiritual gifts. Although to some it might seem obvious where their God-given talents lie, others can struggle to identify them. Identifying and understanding our spiritual gifts is a must if we are to grow.

Mental health awareness was our final topic and was taken by Emma Davis. She pointed out that there is very little a young person can do about their mental health, as much of their routine is set for them – they can't change jobs, house, family, and so on; therefore, how we approach them is even more important. Rates of mental illness have dramatically increased over lockdown, and we have to learn to recognise the characteristics and help or 'signpost' when appropriate.

The SYLA course isn't a one-weekend event but takes 18+ months to complete. The course guides and equips youth leaders and their teams by focusing on six key areas: you and your God, youth leadership, your youth, the church, you, and the community. Many of the requirements come hand in hand with being part of a youth leadership team, and, by completion, the graduate has a portfolio of work they can turn to when called to lead out. Further workshops on Zoom cover creative ministry, planning, outreach, and digital ministry.

Everyone is a leader! No matter what position we are in, young or young at heart, there is always someone looking to us for guidance, whether we are aware of it or not. Once you start, you must keep going. The youth depend on us to keep our enthusiasm and look to us for guidance. It should be our personal priority to lead people to Jesus Christ. We are called for such a time as this: to be relevant, loving, and what we are needed to be. We are all leaders, and we are stronger together.

JENNIE HALL (SYLA CO-ORDINATOR AND GRADUATE OF COHORT 1)

Stanborough Park Church celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

With all of the closures and restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, the Platinum Jubilee seemed the ideal occasion to get Stanborough Park Church meeting together again in an informal setting. The church board agreed, and Audrey Balderstone once again found herself responsible for organising a church event! Volunteers for organising such events are always in short supply, and with no budget Audrey managed the impossible!

On Sunday 29 May the weather was kind: a mixture of sunshine and cloud, not too hot – an ideal afternoon to sit outside and enjoy a picnic and fellowship. Flags from Commonwealth countries and Union Flag bunting were hung from every available point. The essential bouncy castles proved popular, as did sales of ice cream from a horsebox! A couple were to be seen providing massages, and stalls selling food or items for various charities proved popular. Although fundraising was not the primary objective, £1,450 was raised for different good causes!

While the young men participated in a continuous game of football, Paula Carrillo (aided by Pathfinders and her daughter Elisabeth) organised children's races. Her husband, Davide, was to be found in the church car park with Gabriel, our young missionary from Brazil, washing cars for charity. Probably not something Gabriel expected when he applied for the position! But, as Pastor Terry Messenger pointed out in his sermon the following Sabbath, service comes in many forms, and humility is essential!

As you would expect, the event ended with patriotic songs customarily sung on the 'Last Night of the Proms', led by Pastor Geert Tapp and Cathy Boldeau. Pastor Geert had acted as Master of Ceremonies throughout the afternoon and claimed that he was entitled as a Dutchman to wave the Union Flag during the singing as Britain once had a Dutch king in the form of William III. Well, you can't argue with that!

Much appreciation must be given to Audrey Balderstone and her team for their hard work in organising such a successful event. Summing up the afternoon, Audrey said, Judy Plaatjes, Michele Vitry and I were delighted that so many from the community joined with the

church members for such a fun afternoon. The children's events, run by the Pathfinders, were particularly popular, as were the ice creams, lollies and drinks sold from the converted horsebox. There was plenty of interest in the various stalls (including the cake stall), and those who did not bring a picnic were glad of the delicious hot food sold by the school PTA and those collecting for the Laverne Byng Fund. Many people helped make the day a success, and we are grateful to each one of them.'

JUNE COOMBS



Area 6C Community Health Fest & Platinum Jubilee Celebration

As thousands across the country celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Area 6C, working in partnership with Newham Council, put on a special two-day Community Health Fest and Platinum Jubilee Celebration at Stratford in East London during 4-5 June 2022. Hundreds visited the Health Fest across the weekend, which offered a diverse range of activities to attract everyone, from the outdoor arts and crafts station for children to the free massages and general health checks for all ages inside Stratford Library.

Area 6C Health Coordinator, Kwadwo Densi Amankwah, was happy with the community's response to the weekend's activities. He said: 'We give God thanks for a successful programme. Each day began with prayer for the community and the Queen by our Area 6C Prayer Coordinators. Members of the public were then invited to visit our eight gazebos on display inside Stratford Library, where they could be treated to a free massage, BMI, blood pressure and general health checks, as well as receive information based on our NEW START model of health.'

The Pathfinder Drum Corps, in particular, drew a large crowd of visitors. Many members of the public were fascinated by the exceptional drumming skills and sharp attention to drill instructions the young Pathfinder group displayed. Their involvement of the community in drumming and drill instruction proved to be one of the weekend's highlights!

Area 6C Pathfinders Coordinator Roz Parsons said: 'The Area 6C Health Fest over the last weekend was a real treat for our local community in Stratford, East London. It was packed with information regarding healthy living, arts and crafts and free gift bags for everyone. Our Pathfinders also challenged members of the public to participate in a drumming and drill workshop session, with many taking part and rising to the occasion, surprising both themselves and us with how good they were. To God be the glory; great things He has done! We look forward to witnessing the



Pathfinders drill outside Stratford Library



Area 6C Community and Health team



Mother and son drumming



Pathfinder Drum Corps Leader



Massage for all the community

growth of the spiritual seeds planted in this part of God's vineyard.'

With the event taking place a few weeks away from Windrush Day (22 June), a film was shown of members of the SDA Church community sharing their experiences of the Queen visiting the Commonwealth and various areas of the UK.

As well as musical performances from a local steel pan group, the Community Health Fest ended with performances from the East London School of Music, under the direction of the school's manager, Fiona Pacquette. She said: 'It was a beautiful two days with many members of the public attending, with one suggesting that we come back. Also, it was a real joy to see young people and children doing missionary work, including the Pathfinders who assisted in the distribution of gift bags and literature around Stratford Centre.'

Many visitors responded positively to the free healthy vegan food on offer. They gladly received the gift bags and literature, which included the books *Health and Wellness* by Dr Peter Landless, and Ellen G. White classics *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ*.

DARELL J. PHILIP, AREA 6C COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Bristol Central Church at Race for Life 2022

'Race for Life' is Cancer Research UK's biggest series of fundraising events. This charitable event takes place on different dates across the UK. It features 3km, 5km and 10km routes for participants to walk, jog and run, as well as a 'Pretty Muddy' obstacle event. The 'Race for Life' event has been taking place for more than 25 years but was initially a women-only event. It has now grown into hundreds of events across the country, raising nearly £500 million towards beating cancer over the last quarter of a century.

According to NHS statistics, 1 in 2 people develop cancer. The most common types of cancer are breast cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer and bowel cancer. Although losing a loved one to cancer is traumatic, the

organisers have found ways of making the race fun and attractive to all. Its brightly coloured pink attires are unique to the race, and everyone makes an effort to wear them. In 2019, 'Race for Life' opened its doors for men to participate, making it a truly inclusive movement to beat cancer.

The 'Pretty Muddy' event is one of the features that is well attended, not just by adults but by many young people as well. It's a 5km muddy obstacle course that everyone can take part in, no matter their fitness level. It is very messy and, of course, very muddy! Nevertheless, people love taking part and climbing, crawling and sliding their way into solidarity with the cause to help beat cancer.

On Sunday 26 June Bristol Central Seventh-day Adventist Church was invited to participate in this popular and well-established event on the Bristol Downs in Clifton. This incredible event attracts participants and cheering fans from all over. The church had a presence at 'Race for Life' from 2015 to 2019. Like everything else, the pandemic had an adverse effect on the event. So, when the invitation came to team up again this year, it was a welcomed idea.

Evan Green from Newport Seventh-day Adventist Church, who has supported the church's community events since 2014, was on hand with a smoothie bike. This was very popular, and the participants loved the thrill of getting a free smoothie and a workout by pedalling on the bike!

It was great to interact with so many people who wanted to know who we were and why we were doing this for free. It allowed us to tell them about our faith and beliefs. Unfortunately, the incoming rain ruined our literature display, but a few people took some promising items to give them a read. An 8-year-old child, accompanied by her grandfather, surprised us by taking a photo with two of our books. When asked why, she replied, 'I just love to read.' The stall became even more alive when a group of over 20 students from Marlborough College stopped by. They were so enthusiastic about the race that not even the intermittent rain could dampen their spirits.

Reflecting on the day, Brother Hughlin commented, 'I had a good time interacting with people. I felt at peace as we had played our part in giving out fruits and literature. I was inspired to see how committed the participants in the race were in their fight against cancer. If only I could have a zeal for the cause I represent. I guess the fact that I was there shows some level of interest; we need to be more consistent in having a presence at these meaningful events.'

Many of us have been affected by cancer in one form or another. Bristol Central Church will be making a meaningful donation towards Cancer Research.

MARY PHILIP, COMMUNITY HEALTH LEADER, BRISTOL CENTRAL CHURCH



Photos by Nelson Khanje



Left to right: Pastor Obi, James, Jayne, Rob, Emma, Danny Reid, Cliff Lewis, Ashley Grandson and Allen

Heaven rejoiced!

There was joy in heaven on Sabbath 9 July as one precious soul was baptised in the Erdington Seventh-day Adventist church. After a time of searching and study, Jayne Blackburn decided to make the step to follow Christ all the way. She wanted the church and her own family to rejoice with her as she made this significant step.

Jayne had been seeking answers to life's questions for a long time. When a friend she spoke with overseas suggested that she visit an Adventist church, the conversation led her to Erdington Church. She felt welcomed and soon afterwards became convinced that she needed to make Erdington her home church. That was some three years ago!

After a period of diligent study, Jayne surrendered her life to the Lord. Her husband Rob, son James, daughter Emma and family friend Allen attended and rejoiced with her. The SEA (Sutton Coldfield, Erdington, and Aston-Newtown) district of churches came out in number to support and warmly welcome her into the family of God. To God be the glory; what a witness!

DANNY REID, PERSONAL MINISTRIES LEADER



Five souls won for Christ at Wood Green

It is always a delight to witness souls who commit their lives to Christ, and the congregation of Wood Green Community SDA Church certainly expressed their joy when five precious souls were immersed into the baptismal pool on Sabbath 11 June 2022. The day was made special by the rendition of musical items performed by friends and family of the baptismal candidates and by the delivery of a dynamic sermon entitled, 'A resurrected life', presented by our pastor, Joojo Bonnie. He spoke of what it actually means to be a Christian, referring to what it was like in the early phase of the Christian church when it was not popular to give your life to Christ and was associated with a sense of shame. He implored them to take up their cross and follow Jesus, who will give them the strength to endure whatever challenges lie ahead. The morning ended with the presentation of gifts to each candidate and a wonderful Sabbath lunch as the church received them into fellowship. The baptismal candidates were Anna Pierre, Grace Owusu, Jeremy Adjei Anoky, Roshon Ekoli and Sharon Ricketts.

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Matthew 5:16



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Audrey Margaret Rose Fullam (née Bradley) (1930-2022) d. 9 March. Saying goodbye to an old friend is never pleasant, but we have a faith that teaches us of the hope that lies in Jesus.



Audrey was born into a Bradley clan and was the eldest of 5 children, Fay, Beryl, David and John. With the war came separation, and, when the children were evacuated for their safety, a kind family took in Audrey. In her youth, Audrey was a member of the Church of England and was in the Girl Guides. She went on

to train as a teacher, taught in primary education, and became head teacher in many schools.

While out with a friend, they saw a poster advertising an Adventist meeting and decided to attend. Audrey became convicted and soon started attending the Adventist church in Chiswick and later at the New Gallery church in Regent Street, London, where she met and married Richard Fullam. Her teaching skills were invaluable at church, as a member of the Pathfinder club, and while helping the Bible workers with whom she lodged.

After retiring in 1986, she and Richard moved to New Milton on the south coast of England. She and Richard began attending Southampton Adventist Church, and she became the first female elder. She supported many ministers, cared for the congregation and could also preach a good sermon. Audrey was known for sending pretty cards containing encouraging messages. Her handwriting was very distinctive – as soon as the envelope dropped through the letter box and onto the doormat, you just knew who'd sent it.

As the years went by, she started to experience challenges with her health, and soon her husband Richard passed away. Her beloved Pekinese dogs brought her comfort and were great company. Audrey loved the beauty of nature, bird songs, sunrises and sunsets. She loved her garden and looked after it for as long as possible. She could often be seen with her sister Fay in one of the local garden centres; while plants were on the agenda, they could also be found in the café – at the cake counter!

A few years ago, her sister Beryl moved to be near Audrey. They cared for and supported each other, and it was a shock for all her friends when Audrey had a fall and broke her hip. On her return home from the hospital, she had to adapt to a much slower pace of life. Audrey appreciated all the kind words and thoughts and continued to remember everyone's birthday, despite her pain.

We know Audrey's faith in God was firm. Her sister Beryl shared that 'God was her constant friend and inspired her to be thoughtful, kind, caring and generous'.

Audrey had always kept in touch with her brother David, who lives in Australia, and spoke to him regularly. Beryl and David are her only remaining family, and we mourn their loss.

We hold on to the promise from our Friend Jesus, that He will come soon to collect His friends and family and take us all home. We shall see Audrey again because she trusted in His promises, and Jesus always keeps His promises.

WENDY BRADLEY, WINCHESTER CHURCH

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Aug 26	8.00	8.13	8.07	8.23	8.30
Sep 2	7.45	7.57	7.51	8.05	8.13
9	7.29	7.41	7.35	7.47	7.56
16	7.13	7.25	7.18	7.28	7.38
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