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GOVERNANCE

Strategy and Governance

'Write the vision and make it plain'



by Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference



(recorded in Genesis 3), a divine strategic plan was in place, as 1 Peter 1:20 says of Jesus: 'God chose him for this purpose long before the world began' (TLB). Think for a moment about Creation: by the sixth day, when God created Adam and Eve, He had already provided everything that they needed for their physical and spiritual well-being. When you look closely, you see that purpose, objectives, outputs, and desired outcomes are woven throughout the plan of salvation.

Introducing the BUC Strategic Plan

Planning was at the heart of the BUC Executive Committee when they voted the BUC Strategic Plan 2023-2026 at our September meeting. The new strategic plan considers the successes of the past and seeks a future built on collaboration with all entities in its territory, in order to fulfil its God-given mission, adhere to its charitable responsibilities, and demonstrate wise stewardship in its business dealings as a corporate organisation. You can read the outline of the strategic plan in the centre pages of this issue of *MESSENGER*.

Since the vote of the Executive Committee, I have met with all the departmental directors of the BUC, institutional heads, and support staff to share our vision for the next four years. Each department and institution has key performance indicators that will guide departmental initiatives,

Once upon a time, there was a man who decided that he wanted to go on a journey. He had never been on a journey before.

'Where are you going?' a friend asked.

'I have no idea.'

'So how will you know when you've arrived?'

'I don't know.'

The friend was puzzled, so he continued to ask questions.

'Is anyone going with you?'

'Nope; I've not invited anyone.'

'Forgive me for asking, but why would someone who had never gone on a journey before decide to go alone to an unknown place without any guidance?'

'Because everyone seems to be coming and going, and I thought maybe I should too!'

It's a ridiculous fable, but too often, as organisations, we begin 'journeys' – often expensive, time-consuming and people-damaging journeys – without a plan, simply because another entity was undertaking the activity and we felt excluded. So, with limited data, insufficient funds and no real purpose, but with the desire to 'do something', we start on an unknown journey that isn't fully birthed.¹

Divine strategic plans

God is the Master Strategic Planner; so, with the fall of humanity

support resource creation, review our key messaging, support the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and help us to mature into a loving people prepared for the coming Kingdom.

Conclusion

The prophet Habakkuk has an interesting relationship with God. In the first chapter of the three-chapter book, he complains about the pain and suffering of his people, the oppression of the Chaldeans, and the apparent inaction of God. Afterwards, in chapter 2, he opens with a sense of despair and resignation, saying: 'I will stand my watch . . . and watch to see what He will say to me' (verse 1, NKJV). Then the Lord replies, 'Write the vision, and make it plain . . . that he may run that readeth it' (verse 2, KJV).

As the President of the BUC, I have interceded with God about the state of our church. I cry out for the young people who no longer feel an affinity to us. I weep for those who are hurt and broken. I sigh for the discouraged. I sob for the elderly who have served the church faithfully for many years, and I plead with God for the souls of the masses in our world.

Similar to Habakkuk, I believe that, in answer to my groanings, God has inspired us with this strategic plan. Please pray that we at the British Union Conference and our Executive Committee will continue to be led by God as we run with His vision.

¹<https://hbr.org/2022/10/strategic-planning-should-be-a-strategic-exercise>



From the editor . . .

Julian Thompson,

Editor

Dear Reader,

It's that time of the year when many of us find ourselves engaged with the corporate life of the church in the form of the nominating committee. Having sat on and chaired many such committees myself, I recognise the opportunities and challenges that electing people to local church office can bring. With this in mind, I approached a number of individuals across the BUC to share some Spirit-filled nuggets of wisdom on various aspects of church governance and leadership. As Pastor Don McFarlane reminds us in his article, 'Eleven things I learnt while in church administration', 'Our core values and beliefs are based solidly on God's Word and should not change, but methods, structures, delivery style, language and nurturing approaches need to change with the times, in order to ensure that the Gospel remains Present Truth.'

Over the past few months, you will have noticed that BUC President Pastor Eglan Brooks has shared various aspects of a new strategic plan and future direction for the Union. On 15 September, after careful consideration, the BUC Executive Committee voted to approve the British Union Conference Strategic Plan, a document consisting of twelve revolving priorities. This document is available for you to view on pages 12-13. As Pastor Brooks noted at the time, the most important factor

for bringing about the Church's objectives is a positive organisational culture.

I am pleased to present you with the October edition of *MESSENGER*. In these times of economic hardship, let us not forget to whom the cattle upon a thousand hills belong (Ps. 50:10). As the Divine Shepherd provides for our needs, let us be a part of extending His blessings to others.



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The Church, creativity, and innovation

by Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook, SEC Community Services Director

I want to start this article by doing something a little different – perhaps a bit more practical. Let’s play a game. Below, there are nine dots. Take a pencil and draw four straight lines through the middle of all the dots **without** taking your pencil off the page. If you’re reading this online, you can draw this out on a piece of paper and complete the task that way.*

How did you do? Did you manage it? This classic nine-dot box puzzle is designed to encourage ‘outside-the-box’ thinking and to highlight the importance of creativity. Creativity plays a vital role in finding solutions for our most challenging problems.

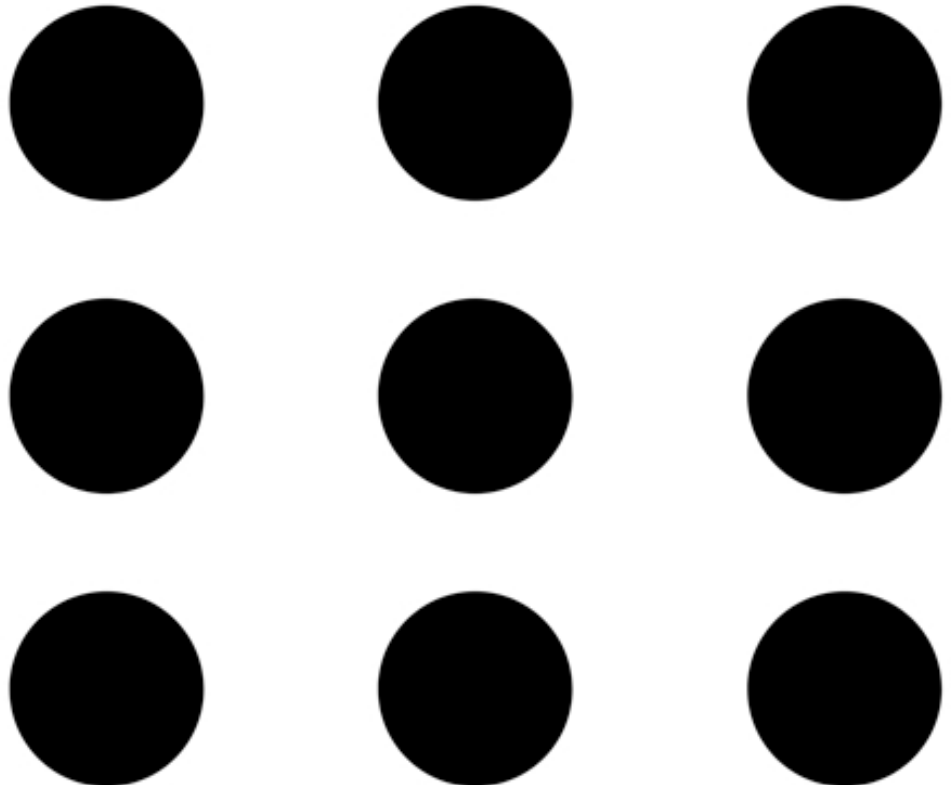
I would suggest that there is nothing more biblical than expressing creativity and outside-the-box thinking. Nowhere do we see this more than in Genesis 1, the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible. Yet, even though we serve a creative Creator God, it can often be very difficult to exercise creativity within our church spaces.

I’m sure I’m not the only one who has experienced how the church is crying out for the sort of change that can only be brought about through creative solutions. During the nominating committee season, clarion calls for new ways to address some of the pressing issues of our church are met with suggestions such as creating intergenerational worship services, implementing new strategies to help retain our young people, and greater support for our senior members . . . only to find, after the initial buzz and excitement, that we are left with the status quo.

If we want to see creative expression and sustainable change blossom within our churches, then there are three things that we need to know:

1. Creativity is only part of the equation.

Creativity by itself is not enough, as we can always come up with great ideas. However, without successful implementation, they will remain just that – ideas. Creativity + implementation = innovation. Once we have explored ideas that could radically impact our church, we must figure out what to do to make that happen. What gifts and talents do we need? Who within our church has them? Can we bring them on board?



- 2. Everyone can be creative.** There is a misconception that people are born creative, that it is not something that can be learnt or taught. As a result, many of us disengage from creative activities, including brainstorming, because we believe this is not our gift. Recent research is beginning to show that this is not true. There is now a plethora of exercises used to help people harness their creativity. For example, you can ask members of your team to write a six-word story without using the letter ‘e’!

- 3. Allow space for the creative process.** Once we understand that creativity is an inclusive activity, allow room for creativity to spark ideas. As a suggestion, you could use the following process:

Prepare: Ask yourself the most crucial

problem your church needs to solve this year.

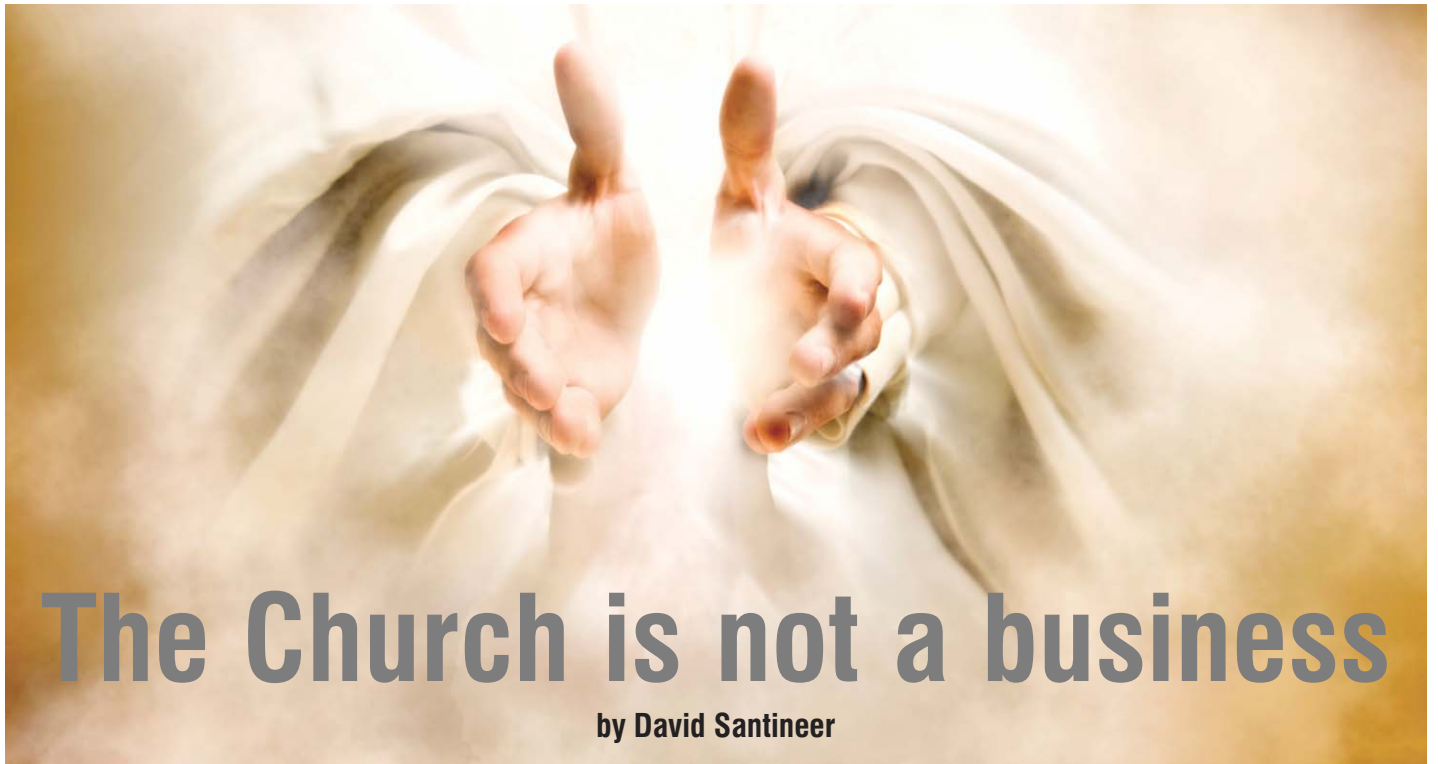
Incubate: Allow time for others to process the chosen issue and see what possible solutions come to mind.

Illuminate: Once you start discussing your ideas, one or two begin to emerge as potential contenders. Identify them and develop them.

Pilot: Test your idea in a small way and see what results occur. If it is a viable solution, seek to develop further.

God has given us the gift of creativity, which is needed now more than ever. Embracing creativity could present an opportunity to progress your church’s mission in 2023.

*For the answer to the puzzle, go to page 23.



The Church is not a business

by David Santineer

When was the last time you heard that phrase, 'The Church is not a business'? Perhaps it was at a church board or nominating committee? Maybe in a meeting at Area, Conference, Union, Division or even General Conference level? I agree that God's work, and His teams, are not a 'business': they're way more important than that! God does not need us! He could do it all Himself. But He invites us in as junior members of the family to learn, experience and grow; to build trust, capability and testimony, for now and for eternity. He does this because He loves us, likes us and enjoys being with us! In this article, I'll share two principles that we see at work in God's style of leadership and governance (decision-making).

The first principle is the need for **godly ambition**. We have many warnings against 'selfish ambition' in God's word (2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 2:3; James 3:14-16). Yet we don't hear much about godly ambition, which appears to be one of God's hallmarks (Gen. 1:31; Heb. 12:1-3; Eph. 3:20, 21; Rom. 15:20).

Like the 'one-talent' servant in Matthew 25, we can decide to 'play to protect' rather than having greater trust and higher ambition for the Lord in what He can achieve through us individually and collectively.

For me, lack of godly ambition is like taking care of someone's baby for several years without any vision, expectations or work for progress. Imagine the parents' surprise if, four years later, they returned to find their now-grown child still in baby clothes! Surely that is an example of being an unfaithful servant! If you've ever had to be part of a team lacking in ambition, you'll know how demoralising it can be. We can't belittle God's ambitions simply

because we can't see a way forward or have no human pressure to drive us (Eph. 3:20, 21). This would be a tragedy (Deut. 28:13) and a serious matter if we wish to hear the words, 'Well done!' from Jesus! The danger with having a lack of godly ambition is that we achieve little because we attempt little.

Here are some questions I believe we should be asking ourselves:

- What gifts has God given us?
- Given these gifts, how should we be serving?
- What techniques should we use to be efficient and effective in using those gifts and avoid burnout?
- How do we put in time smartly to develop and deploy those gifts under God's leading?
- How can we put God at the centre of all, trust Him to open and close doors, and not get stressed or frustrated?

The second principle is the need for **transparency (of motives and process)**. Have you ever had cause to doubt what someone on your leadership team has told you? Have you ever found yourself questioning what they're doing or their motives? While 'seeing through a glass darkly' is part of our human journey now, it's not part of God's plan for teamwork and trust building! Following God's principle of not letting the sun go down while we're still angry, it's also a good principle not to let the sun go down while there is any scope for confusion, doubt or ambiguity in the air between church team members. Do not give the devil a foothold (Ephesians 4:27)!

Here are some ideas I believe can help:

1. Agree and make organisational structures, roles and responsibilities clear and visible to all.

For example, using a RACI matrix¹ provides four main 'transparency' benefits to build trust and effectiveness:

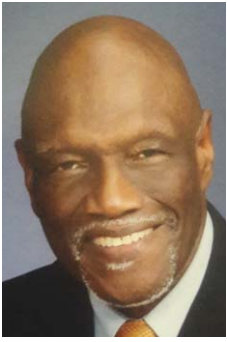
- We can disclose who is doing what to reduce feelings of unfairness in work distribution.
- We can identify gaps or confusion in what we're all trying to get done.
- We can engage others as we invite ideas for improvement to plans and roles.

2. Invite in new and emerging leaders of all ages and types to take their place on God's teams.

This reminds me of a quote I read recently in Ellen G. White's book *The Adventist Home*: 'There every power will be developed, every capability increased. The grandest enterprises will be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations will be reached, the highest ambitions realised. And still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul' (p. 549). God calls our students, youth, and children to be leaders in their peer groups within and beyond the church family, not to be forever waiting until they are 'older'. Jesus invites each one of us to join His family today and to take the place He has reserved for us.

He who promised is faithful. Let us not grow weary or frustrated, but, like Jesus Himself, let us anchor ourselves in the joy to come. God's family is His business – the most important business of all!

¹What Is a RACI Matrix? Here's Everything You Need to Know': <https://slidemodel.com/what-is-a-raci-matrix/>



Eleven things I learnt while in church administration

by Pastor Don McFarlane, former BUC president

After fifty years of ministry, twenty-seven of which were spent in church administration, I am able to look back reflectively and analytically. Some memories produce a warm and fuzzy feeling; some are nightmare-inducing; while some elicit responses such as: 'Only the Lord got me through that.' Along the way, I learnt a few things about church leadership – some I wish I had learnt earlier rather than later. In this article, I will briefly share eleven things that I learnt about church administration and leadership, using somewhat prosaic sub-headings.

Fly in a helicopter!

Let me be quick to disabuse you of any notion that Adventist Church administrators routinely fly in helicopters, though that might prove helpful in certain large territories. The church administrator/leader needs to have what is usually described as a 'helicopter view' of the organisation or department they are leading. While others are concentrating on the tasks in their assigned areas of responsibility, the administrator/leader needs to take a panoramic view of the organisation to see where emphasis needs to be placed and where changes are required for greater effectiveness.

Put it all on the brethren!

From time to time, administrators are tempted to make promises that they are not able to keep, or that might place the organisation they lead in a difficult position. A conference treasurer or president may be invited by the elders of a church to meet with them after the worship service. In that meeting, the administrator is told, 'We have found a building for £1 million. We have £500,000 in hand and are asking the conference to help us with £500,000.' The administrator would be unwise to make a promise in such a situation, other than to share the request 'with the brethren'. In so doing, the administrator moves the responsibility to respond to the request from themselves to the shoulders of 'the brethren' – fellow administrators and the Executive Committee. **The administrator must be careful not to make promises that they are not in a position to fulfil on their own.**

It's not yours!

I am always bemused when a pastor introduces himself or herself by saying, 'My name is Pastor So-and-So.' Did they change

their name by deed poll or a similar process? 'I am Pastor So-and-So' is the acceptable form of introduction. Similarly, a church administrator's name is not President, Secretary, Treasurer, Director or Manager. They don't own the position, but serve at the will of the constituency, and are accountable to the constituency. **It is good practice for an elected leader of the church to pack away their personal belongings that are kept in the church office at the end of the term for which they have been elected, in readiness for the newly elected person to move in following a session. It should never be assumed that one will be re-elected to office.**

Someone has to do it!

When a pastor is invited to work as an administrator or a department director, is that considered a promotion? Fully understood, there is no promotion beyond the calling to be a pastor. No work in the church is of greater importance than that of bringing souls to Christ and nurturing them in their endeavour to reflect Christ's character. Nevertheless, **someone has to provide leadership in various aspects of church work, and, from time to time, pastors are invited to those roles. Someone has to do it! A pastor becoming an administrator or department director is given wider responsibilities, as opposed to being promoted.**

The Holy Spirit does not fall on institutions!

I was once of the view that our schools, hospitals, colleges, -food factories, and publishing houses enjoyed divine favour, and consequently had an edge over their secular counterparts. That myth was shattered by the reality of falling student enrolment in our educational institutions, the closure of health facilities, and falling demand for products from our health-food establishments and publishing houses. The truth, which is often uncomfortable for some church leaders, is that **Adventist institutions, if they are to succeed, must offer quality products and services that are on a par with or superior to those offered by the external competition.** Ellen White said that the Holy Spirit does not anoint programmes and plans, but men and women. The same is true of our institutions.

Wear a bullet-proof vest!

Criticism of a leader/administrator is

inevitable. 'A leader is there to be shot at,' someone once said to me! While they did not mean it literally, it is true that, at times, criticism of church administrators is warranted. They are not going to get everything right. However, if they are to function effectively, in general the response to criticism should be the same as that to compliments – they are not to get to one's head. **While constructive feedback should be taken seriously and processed in a manner that is of benefit to the leader, focusing on criticism has the potential to stress one out and make one ineffective.** Neither should compliments and commendation be taken to heart and regarded as evidence of success.

Keep good company!

At no stage in my many years in church administration did I consider myself the cleverest person in the room. **I learnt early on that it was important to surround myself with people who were smarter than me. Success in leadership is built upon discussion and embracing of ideas, collaboration, and consensus.** So it's always a plus to have smart people at the table who have a love for the organisation and a passion for its advancement. In addition, it is crucial to have team members who disagree with the administrator/leader in certain matters. This should be preferred to having 'yes-persons' whose sole aim is to gain the administrator/leader's favour and protect their position.

Maintaining the status quo keeps the boat steady, but seldom takes us to our desired destination!

If today I were to return to the Handsworth/Newtown district in Birmingham, where we baptised more than 100 people in 1979, and employed the same evangelistic strategies that we used then, it is doubtful that even 10 percent of that number would be baptised today. In the 1950s, a period described as 'the Age of Large Things' in the British Seventh-day Adventist Church, more than 10,000 attended the first night of George Vandeman's evangelistic campaign in London. Hundreds came to Christ as a result of his ministry. In the 1980s, Vandeman was brought back to conduct a campaign in the NEC, resulting in fewer than three people getting baptised, despite the large sum of money that was spent on this endeavour. **Our core values and**

beliefs are based solidly on God's Word and should not change, but methods, structures, delivery style, language and nurturing approaches need to change with the times in order to ensure that the Gospel remains Present Truth.

Embrace every opportunity to celebrate!

Whether it was their liberation from Egypt, their deliverance from Haman's murderous plot, or the arrival of harvest time, the Jews never missed an opportunity to celebrate God's goodness in their lives. Celebration kept before them the mercies and promises of God and the hope of a glorious future. **The church must also embrace every opportunity to celebrate God's guidance and blessings. This reinforces faith, strengthens resolve, and conveys to the next generation the passion of our relationship with Christ.** On the eve of the year 2000, the SEC hired the Royal Albert Hall to celebrate 2,000 years of Christianity. That event still resonates warmly with many who attended. Celebratory events, such as camp meetings and days of fellowship, have a similar effect.

Do not despise the little red fox!

In a legendary story, the owl was approved by the majority of animals in a forest as their new king. The only dissenting voice was that of a little red fox. The fox told his fellow animals that it wasn't a good idea to have the owl as their king, because he could not see clearly in daylight. He was shouted down and chased away. Delighted with their choice of a new king, the animals visited the owl at his home and shared their decision with him. The owl was delighted, and accepted their invitation to lead them on a march. The procession finally arrived at a highway. To the amazement of the other animals, the owl started walking down the middle of the highway, but they deferred to his celebrated wisdom and joined him. A lorry soon came down the highway and crushed them all to death. The only survivor was the little red fox. As he surveyed the carnage, he kept repeating, 'I told them that he couldn't see clearly in daylight, but they did not listen to me.' **Often, the member in a church or on a committee who is the most diffident and the least lettered is the one in whom the greatest wisdom resides.**

Keep the end in view!

Church administration involves many moving parts – management of employees, oversight of institutions, formulating strategic plans, being engaged in pastoral and evangelistic work, planning and leading events, chairing or attending a plethora of committees, dealing with emergency matters or unexpected situations that have arisen, interfacing with the general public, responding to members' queries and complaints. A typical working week for a conference president could easily be up to eighty hours. **It is easy to become so engrossed with the day-to-day tasks associated with one's role in the church that the administrator loses sight of the fact that**

he or she is involved with a divinely appointed enterprise through which God is working to restore humanity to its rightful

place in the cosmos. When this is kept in mind, the administrator is likely to find immense joy and fulfilment in his or her work.



This thing called convenience

This message was preached by
Pastor Patrick Herbert at
Coventry Central SDA Church
on 24 September 2022.

'The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that it takes so long to begin it.'



The sermon begins at 1:13:40 and can be found on the Coventry Central Church YouTube channel under the title: 'The Time Is Now Series Finale'.

Scan the QR code above to see Dr Patrick Herbert preach.

Take my wife's name out of your mouth

by Pastor Sophia Peart

A defining moment of 2022 was the 94th Academy Awards Ceremony. The Hollywood actor Will Smith calmly rose from his seat, walked onto the stage, approached the comedian Chris Rock and slapped him in the face. He then returned to his front-row seat, sat next to his wife and shouted, 'Take my wife's name out of your mouth!'

It was shocking; we had never ever seen anything like this happen at an awards ceremony before. Was it staged? Was it real? The more Will Smith continued to yell at Chris Rock, the more we came to realise that this was not a joke. It was real. What was evident was that Will Smith was angry and hurt. His upset was triggered by how someone had spoken about his wife publicly on a world platform.

The days and weeks that followed sparked conversations about the shocking response of the actor and whether the way he reacted was in any way justifiable. Now, I'm not condoning his response, or physical violence of any kind – but this incident did cause me to think about what we say about someone's wife publicly on world platforms, in our day-to-day conversations, and even in our churches.

I asked a couple of husbands how they would feel if someone talked about their wives publicly the way Chris Rock did. Would they be OK with it? Would they participate by sharing their upset with their wives on social media or in their everyday conversations with strangers? Would they add to a discourse of bitterness against her when around the dinner table, speaking on a podcast or radio, or even during a Bible study? Would they be

comfortable to share what their wives are doing or not doing well at home with those who don't care for them? Or would they, like Will Smith, be stirred with anger by what they hear and tell them to 'take their wives' names out of their mouths'? You can guess their response . . . they would not allow it.

Their responses caused me to think about the way we talk about someone else's bride – the bride of Christ – namely, the church. I began to wonder why we are so comfortable talking about the bride of Christ publicly in a particular way.

Nowadays, we – that is, church folks – seem comfortable talking about the faults, failures and indiscretions of the global church on social media and in other forums: whether it is something the church has done or has not done, what the church has talked about or has not talked about. We are comfortable talking about our discontent with the Church – anytime, anywhere, for everyone to hear. Sometimes it's as though we have become used to 'talking trash' about the church with very little concern about the impact it has on those listening.

Now, to be clear, I'm not ignoring or seeking to dismiss those unpleasant experiences that people may have had. I am not saying that people in the church have not been hurt at the hands of church leaders, administrators and members who should know better. I want to acknowledge that many people have been injured and damaged in this faith community called 'the church'. We can't cover up the numerous unrighteous incidents that have happened at the hands of so-called 'church folk'. These things should never happen.

What I am saying is that, with all its faults and failures, we must still remember in our discourse on the public platforms that the church is still precious and dear to the heart of God. The church is the vehicle that God has chosen to use to redeem His people, composed of those globally who believe in Jesus Christ and have accepted Him as Lord and Saviour of their lives. It is described in Scripture as the bride prepared to meet her Groom, Jesus Christ.

Both the Old and the New Testament are full of illustrations of God's people, the church, being His bride. In the Old Testament, 'God is seen as a faithful husband who pursues and wins back His bride time and time again, whose steadfast love is strong and lasting.'¹ In the New Testament, this metaphor continues with Christ depicted as the Bridegroom. Paul beautifully compares the love of a husband for his wife to that of Christ for His church in Ephesians 5:22-32.

This mystery is characterised by Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension. Jesus is the ideal Bridegroom and faithful Husband, who was willing to give up His life for the one He loved – the world (John 3:16). Through Christ's sacrifice, loving intimacy with the Father can be restored and sins can be forgiven. Through Christ's atonement, we are presented to God with the purity of a virgin on her wedding day (2 Corinthians 11:2).

Jessica Udall identifies two main characteristics of the church as the bride of Christ. Firstly, the church is beloved by God. 'Just as a bridegroom loves his bride, God adores His church. He hasn't merely professed His love in words, but also shown it through sacrificial actions: "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, ESV). . . . And, just as a good husband acts, God's actions towards the church are always full of love. He nourishes and cherishes her in everything. She is not left alone (Matt. 28:20). He has her back (Isa. 58:8). He provides for and protects her in all things (Phil. 4:19; 2 Thess. 3:3).'² Secondly, the church is radiantly beautiful: 'Just like a glowing bride dressed in a white gown on her wedding day, the church is portrayed in the Bible as washed and splendidly pure because of the work of Christ.'³

As members of the church, we live in a tension that exists between the church full of imperfect people serving a perfect God, and God's perfect love for an imperfect church. This tension will often feel uncomfortable, but I believe that it will exist until Jesus comes. While the church is made up of sinful people, redemption is a powerful restorative force that also looks forward to the glorious time when everything wrong will be made right. When God sees His church, He sees her made whole and holy, glorious and graciously freed from the stains of sin, and shining in the light of His love.

Christ doesn't respond like Will Smith, by slapping anyone who speaks about His church in the face – but does this mean that He's not hurt? Christ loves His bride with an unconditional love. Scripture teaches us He will come back again for His beloved bride to take her back to the place He has prepared for her, so she can be together with Him forever, into eternity. This is how precious His bride is to Him. So let's think carefully about how we talk about His bride in public.



Will Smith with his wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, at the 94th Annual Academy Awards, 27 March 2022
(Inset: comedian, Chris Rock)

¹Jessica Udall, 'Who Is the Bride of Christ?' – www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/who-is-the-bride-of-christ.html ²ibid. ³ibid.

We'll meet again

by Pastor Nathan Stickland



Does anybody here remember Dame Vera Lynn? It's a rhetorical question as I ponder an album song from the early 1980s. That song asks us to 'remember how she said that we would meet again some sunny day'. The short lyrics of this song reflect on what has become of Vera, with the juxtaposition of what has become of her promise.

Vera Lynn was a singer noted for her World War 2 songs. One of her acclaimed songs is 'We'll meet again', which suggests that the meeting will take place at an unknown location and time, but heralds the certainty that the meeting will take place on a sunny day.

Much has been made of Queen Elizabeth

II's Diamond Jubilee and death this year. I've pondered before on her faith: a faith that she referenced in her speech to the nation during the pandemic in 2020. Talking in the context of legislation to isolate, and the impact of distance and separation on everyone, the Queen made a reference to the spirit of resilience during the Second World War with a hinted reference to the Vera Lynn song. 'Better days will return,' said the Queen. 'We will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.'

At her funeral ceremony in Westminster Abbey, Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, picked up on this 'meeting again' theme in his address. In his closing thoughts,

Welby referenced the final judgement before God, and then went on to say, 'Service in life, hope in death: all who follow the Queen's example, and inspiration of trust and faith in God, can with her say: "We will meet again."'

Regardless of what you think of the songwriters' sentiments, or the Royal Family and what they represent, I put it to you that this hope of 'meeting again' should motivate us to consider who it is that we will meet again. To explain my thoughts further, I put it to you that if Vera Lynn sang about a hope of meeting people again on a sunny day, and the Queen encouraged people that better days will return when we will meet again, and Welby referenced the idea of meeting again through faithfulness to God, why not use this as a time to reflect on our faithfulness to God, and encourage people to trust in God's promise of return?

You might be familiar with Jesus' words recorded in John 14. Jesus said that, after the events of the subsequent days, He would be leaving earth, preparing a place for us, and returning to us so we could be with Him; that He will meet us again. This is our hope: that we will meet again, after a time of troubles and struggles, after a time of judgement – in a place made new for those who accept His gracious gift of forgiveness and put their faith in God.

So, whom would you like to meet again? Certainly, we would all like to meet family and friends – but what about those we hardly know? Wouldn't it be good to inform others of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, so that, when we meet again in heaven, they will express the importance of the influence we had on their decision to follow Jesus?

According to Jesus' promise, we will meet again: we **do** know where, but we **don't** know when. For those I desire to meet again, I should ask if I have done all I can to invite them, sharing with them who else will be there, and that it will certainly be a sunny day.

According to Jesus' promise, we will meet again:
we **do** know where, but we **don't** know when.



Thriving in challenging times

Living through challenging times is being researched for its impact on well-being.¹

Nick Glozier, a professor of psychological medicine at the University of Sydney, conducted a study on the emotional well-being and life satisfaction of 14,000 individuals over a period of sixteen years. Study participants experienced common life events, such as deaths, health problems, family adjustments, financial fluctuations, job changes and criminal events. Team researcher Glozier states: 'Our lives are full and varied, and have numerous things that go on, some of which are devastating. We were trying to assess some of that complexity.'²

Whatever challenges life may bring, we must remember that there is always hope, because the preserving power of God is ever with us. As Psalm 46:1 says: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble' (NKJV).

The Centre for Thriving Places³ presents a three-part formula for boosting well-being during challenging times:

- **BE** – This is how you feel about yourself and your life.
- **DO** – These are actions you take in your day-to-day life that support your well-being and happiness.
- **CONNECT** – This relates to your relationships, including the quality and frequency of your connections with others.

So what do these segments entail?

BE comprises:

- Satisfaction with your mental and physical health
- Feeling that your contribution is worthwhile and that you are useful
- Possessing a sense of purpose and meaning in the things you do
- Having hope and optimism
- Being able to relax and feel safe
- The ability to bounce back after difficulties
- Thinking clearly in order to influence your life

DO includes:

- Physical activity
- Spending time in nature
- Cultural activity
- Learning – professionally or casually
- Trying new things
- Observing & appreciating the good things in life
- Awareness of the world around you
- Ability to laugh and enjoy pleasurable moments or experiences
- Resting or relaxing

CONNECT involves:

- Feeling close to an inner circle of people with whom you can share
- A sense of belonging to a wider group – neighbourhood, community, etc.
- Regular social contact with friends/family/colleagues (even if not in person)
- Helping others around you, such as friends and neighbours
- Volunteering in your community
- Having contact with people of a different generation or background to you

'Every Mind Matters' is an NHS organisation established to help individuals look after their mental health. When giving advice on how to deal with life's challenges, they state:

'We all go through difficult times, and it can be a healthy reaction to feel negative emotions when facing

*challenges. There's no single "right way" to react, and some of us are more deeply affected by events than others. Everyone is different. Our genes, life experiences, upbringing and environment all affect our mental health and influence how we think and respond to situations. It can also depend on how well other parts of our life are going or how supported we feel. Being aware of these factors may make it easier to understand when we, or someone we care about, are struggling.'*⁴

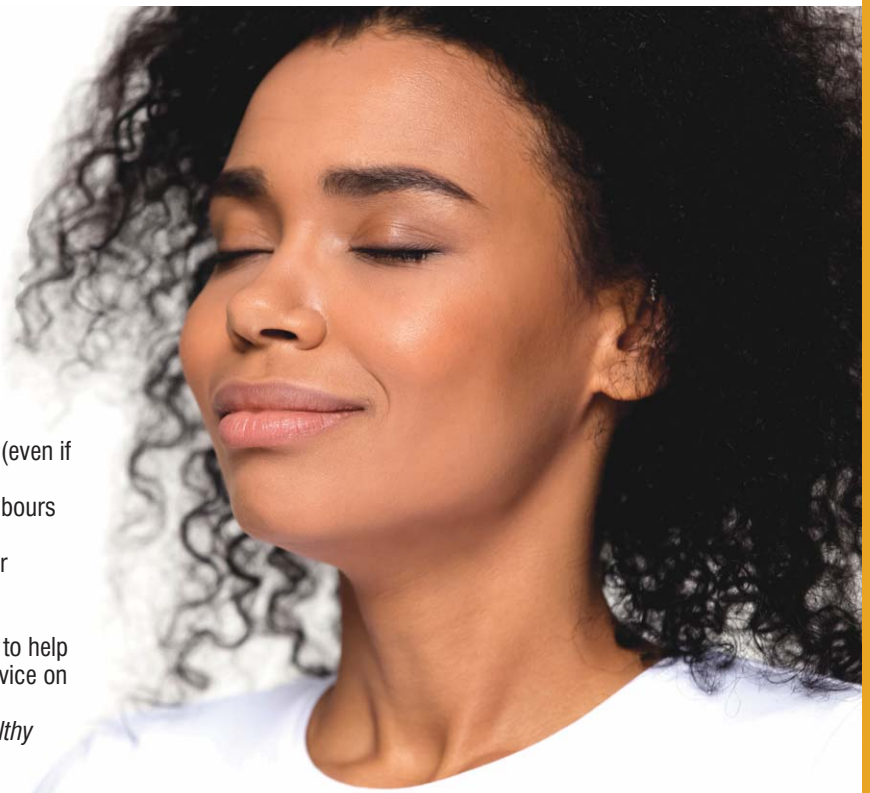
The Centre for Thriving Places has written 'The Little Book of WINS' where they outline five factors that enhance well-being. They state: 'Well-being In Novel Situations (WINS) involves five areas of well-being that can help to boost your well-being and happiness during difficult times.'⁵

The five WINS are:

- **Connect** – Speak with someone every day.
- **Learn** – Try something new, like a recipe or musical instrument.
- **Be active** – Increase movement both outdoors and indoors to improve your daily step count.
- **Notice** – Pause to observe and be present, enjoying the moment. This increases calmness and releases tension.
- **Give** – Lend a helping hand and give time to others. Call someone to find out how they are doing.
- **Additional information:** If you want to find out more about WINS workshops or well-being training, contact the following email address: hello@centreforthrivingplaces.org or visit: www.centreforthrivingplaces.org.

Good health!

¹How major life events impact our long-term well-being – BBC Worklife ²Kettlewell et al., 2020, 'The differential impact of major life events on cognitive and affective well-being' (Science Direct.com) ³Boosting your well-being in challenging circumstances' – Centre for Thriving Places 'Every Mind Matters – NHS (www.nhs.uk) ⁵WINS2020.pdf (centreforthrivingplaces.org)





**‘Do nothing from selfish ambition
or conceit, but in humility regard
others as better than yourselves.’**

Philippians 2:3 (NRSV)

British Union Conference Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Prepared by the Office of the President
Owned by the BUC Executive Committee, September 2022

Preface

Through the introduction of this strategic plan, we are seeking to ensure that we are intentional about the management of the church, charity, and corporation. This is our first deep dive into how we can fully embrace our God-given mission while recognising that the BUC is the governing body of the five geographical territories alongside several institutions, and has charitable accountabilities and corporate responsibilities.

This strategic plan provides us room to create a legacy of competence, creating a pathway of efficacy and effectiveness while driving the ability to keep track of our intentions and identify risks before they occur, not waiting until the end of our term to document data and correct mistakes. It will guide our business as the Executive Committee throughout our tenure. This strategic plan is an iterative working document and is subject to changes, amendments and tweaks in line with changes in GC policy and strategic vision, charity law and best business practice. *(At first glance, it might appear that an objective should be classified as a key performance indicator: it speaks to our intentions and urgency to prepare for the next development.)*

As a result of the rapidly changing needs of society, Strategic Priority 12 is intentionally evolving.

As the Executive Committee, we will hold the head office accountable for the delivery of these priorities, working together to achieve a sustainable impact.

Vision

Cultivating a healthy organisation that drives our mission towards preparing people for the Kingdom.

Values

- Trust & accountability
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Servant leadership
- Valuing people
- Inspiring hope
- Transforming lives

Organisational culture

Throughout the British Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

- We will be accountable to each other, and for each other.

- We will value integrity, transparency, truth, and accountability.
- We will commit to operating with integrity.
- We will engage with each other respectfully.
- We will operate from a position of trust and servant leadership.

Strategic priorities

1. Reflecting Christ

- Aim:** Christlike values in all areas and territories of the BUC.
- Objectives:**
 - Adapt the GC's 'I Will Go' missional strategy.
 - Ensure that the execution of our charitable purpose is based on Christ-centred principles.
 - Demonstrate Christian values in our institutions, structures, processes, and people management.

2. Asset management

- Aim:** To manage all our assets with robust governance, informed decision-making, openness, and transparency.
- Objectives:**
 - Restructure the Seventh-day Adventist Association Ltd. (SDAA) & Seventh-day Adventist Trust Company Ltd.
 - Set up an investment advisory team.
 - Support each department and institution to take responsibility and be accountable for all their assets, however small.

3. Resources

- Aim:** To identify legacy-building opportunities to create relevant resources for our stakeholders and the wider community.
- Objectives:**
 - Review and evaluate the viability and relevance of all current resources.
 - Set up a resource-creation team to develop new resources in consultation with the departments and institutions.
 - Create specialised resources for key milestones.

4. People

- Aim:** To support the development of a holistically healthy business organisation that can adequately support the diverse needs of the current and retired staff, volunteers, and

potential employees.

b. Objectives:

- Review policy to ensure that it can support current staffing needs.
- Identify trends, risks and areas that need strengthening through detailed research.
- Ensure that well-being is key to staff support.

5. Education

- Aim:** To develop cohesive, excellent, and inspirational Adventist provisions.
- Objectives:**
 - Explore the value proposition of Adventist education in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.
 - Use current best practice and innovation in our educational institutions.
 - Cultivate a growth mentality that drives excellence, and raise educational standards and attainment in all our educational institutions.

6. Communication

- Aim:** To examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation's key messages to all its stakeholders.
- Objectives:**
 - Explore the evolving nature of creative storytelling.
 - Harness the power of data, analytics, and appropriate research in message creation.
 - Lead in the field of communication in the BUC, using the most appropriate media for our stakeholders.

7. Policy

- Aim:** To ensure that the BUC remains a hub for legislative developments relating to all stakeholders and partners.
- Objectives:**
 - Continue to implement relevant training packages for all staff and institutions around the key policy.
 - Explore the need to expand our organisational policies to cater for the changing needs in the territories.
 - Review our policy advisory committee, and invite industry professionals to assist us if appropriate.

8. Head office

- Aim:** To create a supportive, dynamic,

and impact-focused spiritual environment.

b. Objectives:

- i. Ensure all staff are fully supported and adequately trained to fulfil their roles.
- ii. Develop a culture of collaborative working and co-production.
- iii. Realign, deploy or second staff to fulfil the mission and purpose of the organisation as a church, charity, and corporation.

9. Safeguarding

- a. **Aim:** To evaluate our approach to the safeguarding of our children, young people and vulnerable adults, including the elderly.
- b. **Objectives:**
 - i. Create a safeguarding hub to support the work of the conferences, missions, and educational and other institutions.
 - ii. Establish/review a safeguarding advisory committee to keep abreast of changing legislation.
 - iii. Develop digital media safeguarding

strategies for the institution which address safeguarding and emerging technology.

10. Legal

- a. **Aim:** To reflect best practice based on sound business principles, compliance, and effective and timely reporting.
- b. **Objectives:**
 - i. Ensure all staff and trustees understand not only their rights, but also their legal obligations to the BUC.
 - ii. Ensure that all entities comply with legal, charitable and organisational policy guidelines.
 - iii. Embrace structures that would ensure we are legally compliant in how we operate.

11. Finance

- a. **Aim:** To base the rationale for the use of income and the need for expenditure on sound business principles that cater for the effective execution of our mission as a church, fulfil the requirements of a charity that can demonstrate ongoing

public benefit, and consider our status as a corporate organisation.

a. Objectives:

- i. Create a sustainability plan for the effective running of the organisation.
- ii. Continually review policies around the use of income and expenditure, and demonstrate jurisprudence in the handling of all finances.
- iii. Demonstrate innovation and creativity in the utilisation of cost-saving new initiatives, and demonstrate futureproofing.

12. Evolving strategic priority



Scan here for a video of the BUC Strategic Plan

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Interview date: TBC

Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 volunteers

by Pastor Obinnaya Iheoma

It was 'all hands on deck' as pastors, elders and members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the NEC joined hands with the workforce/volunteers to welcome and support seventy-two nations participating in the Commonwealth Games, which were hosted in Birmingham. Some of the volunteers and staff share their experiences.

Pastor Obi Iheoma

It was a privilege to be there for the athletes and to help lead them through a worship experience. Praying for the participants in the village before their events and praising God with them when they came back after the events to give thanks to God was a wonderful experience. Volunteering as a chaplain at the Games gave me a unique entrance into supporting the workforce in the athletes' village, which included the athletes' families, the police, and other volunteers. It was a great opportunity to mingle, make new friends and witness for Jesus. Lots of Bibles and literature relating to faith and God were given out to athletes and their families, who were seeking to understand the will of God in their lives.



Dr Emmanuel Babafemi

I had two roles during the Games.

My main role was as a Games Team Ambassador, which involved directing the citizens, spectators and tourists to where they needed to go.



My other role was as a volunteer for the West Midlands Police Accommodation Support Team. My duty was to welcome and support more than 2,000 police officers from across the UK to boost the security apparatus around the Commonwealth Games. I was in charge of helping with their accommodation throughout their stay. It was a rewarding experience, because the testimonials I received stated that my welcoming smile was infectious and made them happy. I made new friends among the co-volunteers, which is now helping me to share my faith and have Bible studies with some of them.

Chilaka Iheoma

During the stretch of the 2022 Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham, I volunteered to be part of the West Midlands Police Accommodation Support Team. We provided a dedicated 24/7 service, welcoming the officers, answering queries, signposting, handling the care of police equipment and liaising with the Logistics Operation Centre. It was a fulfilling experience, and I am thankful to have been able to play a role (no matter how small) within the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Inspector Clement Samuels

It was an amazing opportunity and experience to be involved in one of the largest policing operations we've ever had. Having the opportunity to mix with some of the world's greatest athletes and the many agencies and volunteers involved during the Games was a real blessing.



Russell Naguicnic

I am really grateful to have been part of the Commonwealth Games. In my role as a Medical Team volunteer, I met and worked with so many people from different backgrounds. It was also a unique opportunity to provide care and have interactions with multinational athletes, staff and officials. I have learnt so much and enjoyed every moment. It was truly an amazing experience.



Clem Morgan J. P.

I was an Ambassador and I witnessed to a fellow Ambassador who was also a Christian. He stated that he knew his Bible well, as his father was a preacher. On telling him about how God's Word is true because prophecy is a sure word, I explained to him Daniel's prophecy; it blew his mind. He said he had never heard of this, and would let his father and church know. We spoke for over three hours, sharing our faith.



Elizabeth Iheoma

This was a wonderful experience for me to support the police as a chaplain. My duties included working with other chaplains in providing drinks and fruit to officers out on duty at the various staff welfare hubs around the Birmingham area. I even got to meet Margo, a pup in training to be a police dog. It was important to be a cheery and friendly face to those on duty during the Games. Even more important was to be available to be a listening ear and to pray for those who needed it.





BUC launches annual revival campaigns with 'Deliverance '22'

by Divinia Reynolds

You don't hear about deliverance often, but attendees from

the British Union Conference (BUC) and beyond have experienced a seven-day campaign totally based on the theme. Annual revival meetings were launched with a week-long series entitled 'Deliverance '22' from 10 to 17 September. The event was made possible by a special collaboration between the organisers (the BUC Personal Ministries Department) and hosts (Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church in South London). From there, attendees heard impactful messages that challenged everyone to deeper authenticity in their worship.

As services were about to start, the congregation became accustomed to waiting in anticipation of a blessing. God certainly used the sermons delivered by the evangelist, Dr (Pastor) Ainsworth Morris, Assistant to the President of the North Eastern Conference, to inspire. They featured themes not usually thought of as relating to deliverance, as well as new takes and surprises often contained within the original languages of the Bible. This made for a powerful experience in which attendees connected personally with daily soul-searching messages that would be a blessing to anyone.

The week was jam-packed with special moments: other examples were seasons of prayer which took place after the service, ministry from various musicians, soloists, groups, and the Croydon Gospel Choir, and health spots on wholesome Christian living presented by a quartet of speakers. Here are some encouraging highlights:

While marriage breakdown is common in society, the top causes (growing apart, lack of attention and communication challenges) can be remedied, so seek support from pastors or a counsellor (Dr [Pastor] Augustus Lawrence, South England Conference [SEC] Family Ministries Director).

'We are hardwired for joy,' which can be 'hijacked by the enemy', causing negative habits and dependencies – but we can do something to address events of our youth, loss, heartbreak, and also the stories we tell ourselves about these things: 'Change the narrative, and life will begin to change' (Edith Samambwa, SEC Health Director).

'God is a boundary setter.¹ Boundaries are a 'necessity' for relationships and physical and psychological health. What atmosphere do you bring into your home? 'Sad tones (suit) undertakers: "If you would lead men to heaven, wear heaven on your face."² 'Whatever is done to the glory of God is to be

done with cheerfulness, not with sadness and gloom. There is nothing gloomy in the religion of Jesus'³ (Dr [Pastor] Leslie Ackie, BUC Director of Family, Children's and Possibilities Ministries).

'The number-one health principle' is love: 'When love goes up, stress goes down' and you eat less. Love is at the heart of forgiveness. We are to 'love each other, love ourselves, and, for everyone's sake, remember to love God' (Dr Chidi Ngwaba).

The highest point of the week was the baptism of three candidates whose friends and relatives shared amazing stories of how God had worked in their lives so they could be there that day.

The first, Jennifer St Aubyn Ibbetson, was supported by Bible workers Julia Gervais and Kim Reeves Fenn, who explained that Jennifer had planned to forget about Jesus before God used both a dream and a complete stranger in the supermarket to appeal to her not to do so!

The next baptismal candidate, Sandra Irving-Poyser, had become friends with considerate Croydon member Florence George one Sabbath after the church service was over. Sister George highlighted the importance of mingling after services, as this was how a divine connection had developed between herself and Sandra, whom she was able to encourage.

Elder Leslene Peat Brown described the third candidate, Sally Walters, as 'remarkable'. This was because she had survived so many challenges, including her home burning down and near-death experiences, which had caused her to realise that 'God was saving her life for a purpose'.

The candidates were baptised in the church pool by Pastor Wilfred Blake, and there was joy that three of God's children had come home.

Pastor Ian Sweeney, former BUC president, expressed support for the revival campaign from the president and administration of the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of which he is now the Field Secretary. He highlighted that various groups 'need to be impacted with the love of God'.

Commenting retrospectively, Pastor Morris identified the thread that connected his messages as worship. He continued to say that while 'people have been trapped in COVID-19 mentality', we cannot go back to how things were, but must 'move forwards'. Deliverance is needed so we can 'do God's work'. 'Trust God to move against demonic forces. . . . God is in control.' 'The hour of judgement is come,' and willingness to 'surrender to God [in] genuine worship' is paramount. He added: 'When we are all synchronised, the work will be finished.'



Edith Samambwa, SEC Health Director

BUC Personal Ministries Director, Dr (Pastor) Kirk Thomas, thanked the numerous people who made 'Deliverance '22' possible. 'Everything begins with inspiration,' he stated, giving special thanks to God. The BUC revival campaigns are aimed at promoting a renewed focus on our spiritual lives and mission, kindling revival in the BUC. While this was the first event of its kind, Pastor Thomas announced that they will be a regular fixture for the church, as next year the revival campaigns will take place in various local churches throughout the month of September. After this initial experience, many are looking forward to it already.

'Deliverance '22' was broadcast via the Croydon Church, BUC News TV and SEC Media YouTube channels, where it garnered tens of thousands of views. Online, people sent greetings from various places such as the Bahamas, Bromley, Barbados and 'beautiful, hilly Wales'. Both online and in person, people praised God, responded to appeals, requested prayer and baptism, and were touched by the 'mighty Spirit here with us'.

¹Pastor Ackie referred to examples such as rules concerning the Tree of Life in Eden, the Ten Commandments, and Jesus driving money changers from the temple.

²Charles Haddon Spurgeon

³Ellen White in *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 88

A true story of God's blessings

by Tamara Sancho

When I left for work that morning, it seemed like a typical day – although the first thing that stood out to me when closing the front door was my grandma's blessing, 'May God keep you safe; God bless – safe travels.'

When I leave in the morning, I often don't see my grandma before I go. Occasionally she may say a one-liner, such as 'Safe travels' or 'May God keep you safe.' I'm usually not that observant, but the fact that she said three 'prayer statements' gave me pause for thought. As I turned the key in the ignition, I suddenly stopped myself and remembered what Grandma had said, and I too asked for God's protection.

I remembered that the previous night I had felt a bit uneasy when driving home, and that I had wanted to double-check my tyres. I decided against it, because I was already driving by that time and didn't want to be late. I also thought, *Well, I got home fine yesterday, so surely it would be fine today?* Boy, was I wrong!

Twenty minutes later, I was cruising along an A road, going at about 70 mph, when I heard a sound and got the same uneasy feeling that I had the night before. I tried to catch glances of other cars passing by to see if there was any obvious issue. I looked to see if anyone was flashing me or gesturing towards my car in any way, but no one did. Soon after this, I started hearing strange loud noises coming from my front left tyre; I felt a change in my steering and the urge to slow down to around 40mph.

Suddenly I heard an even louder sound, and, to my horror, the tyre flew off my car and rolled across to the other lane. Luckily it didn't hit anything and wedged itself in the bars of the central reservation. The road I was driving on didn't have a hard shoulder, so I just had to pull across to the left as much as possible.



A note to self: if you ever feel unsure about something with your car, always check it before making the journey

I'm so grateful to everyone who stopped and asked if I was okay. Thank you to those two men who came out offering to tow the car but then realised the car was missing a tyre and instead risked themselves on the busy road to push my car up onto the grass curb to the side of the A road. I'm grateful to my mum, who calmed me down when I started to panic and helped me get back in control to contact the roadside recovery. I'm thankful to God for keeping me safe in what felt like a very unsafe situation. And I'm so grateful to have a praying grandma who showers me with her prayers of protection and reminds me to ask for protection myself.

Life is so fleeting, and what starts as a typical day can very quickly change into an eventful one. I'm just grateful to be here, and that the situation was resolved so quickly. A note to self: if you ever feel unsure about something with your car, always check it before making the journey. You got home safe the day before, but that by itself doesn't necessarily mean you will tomorrow. We serve a mighty and merciful God.

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Adventist Youth Congress '22

by David Neal, TED Communication and Media Director

*'We were made **by** a community, **as** a community, **for** community.'*

Held in the city of Lahti, Finland, more than 2,500 youth from across the Trans-European Division (TED) and Inter-European Division (EUD) met together from 2 to 6 August with an invitation to 'plug in', to connect with God and each other. Keynote speaker Pastor David Asscherick of 'Arise Ministries', aware of issues facing today's youth now embedded in the third decade of the twenty-first century, hovered around this theme all week with this motif: *'We were made **by** a community, **as** a community, **for** community.'* Using an apologetic preaching style, connecting Scripture with philosophy, the Great Controversy narrative, and subtle insights from Ellen White, he connected well with his audience.

The very nature and attraction of a youth congress is the big event. Leaders are ever conscious that the majority of participants attend from local churches with fifty members or fewer. As Freddie Stoner-Redfern from St Albans explained, 'Instead of being back at home where being an Adventist is a minority experience, in this setting it is nearly the norm, which feels very nice and different to the reality back home.'

Meeting in an auditorium for worship is the defining difference from worship in most churches. There are no windows; it is dark, except for the lights on the stage (some brightly coloured). The backdrop features artwork depicting spiritual themes. Music is led by worship leaders and a band. 'Worship time' is extended, experiential and best described as multi-sensual – the genre this generation connect with. It was professionally led, controlled, prayerful, and (to this observer) Spirit-led, with Niklas Rantanen, a young Finnish professional, working hard to provide a 'variety of styles and genres' to connect with the diverse audience. The theme song, 'Source of Life', connected a narrative of love for God with the outcome of serving others.

Morning worship led by Dr Daniel Bosqued from Sagunto Adventist College focused on stories from John's gospel and was followed by 2,000 people huddling together in 200 small groups. TED Family Ministries Director Karen Holford described the scene as 'thousands of stories and ideas and reflections and fresh insights . . . sparked

around the auditorium as participants experienced the first small group discussions ever held during a youth congress in Europe'.

The workshop time provided opportunity to explore topics that might not be considered necessary back home in the local church. Theology, sexuality, disability and service were just a few of the areas considered – and they were all well attended by a teachable generation hungry to learn.

But meeting new like-minded friends was key: time to play, pray and even paint together; friendships made in small groups, in worship, around the football table, walking, eating – which could lead to forever-friendships.

The TED youth director, Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, and his EUD youth director colleague intentionally designed this congress to be a hybrid first. Held in person and streamed online for its totality, the intent was to expand the reach of congress. Supported by the largest media presence ever seen at a congress, could this be the way forward for every congress in future?

The BUC youth director, Pastor Kevin Johns, led the British delegation. During a round-table discussion with a representation of fellow Union youth directors on congress and the future of youth ministry, he implored members 'to listen to the young people's experience, let them share what happened to them here, let them share how the programme impacted their lives, and through dialogue and a shared understanding see if some elements of congress could be reproduced in the local church, such as participation, involvement and even the development of a small group ministry – but, whatever the innovation, listening is key.'

The newly elected TED president, Dr Daniel Duda, could not hide his joy at seeing young people together. It reminded him of his first congress experience while attending an EUD congress in 1978. It was there that he felt God's calling into ministry, which would result years later in becoming TED President. Assuring his audience, he went on to say, 'It won't take another 40 years before one of you is in my position, and it won't only be men: it will be women too.'

Unknowingly echoing the comment of Freddie Stoner-Redfern from St Albans, he went on to say, 'I think events such as these are so important, because they give a boost to



Three young women from the Czech Republic smile for the camera at the Exhibition of Nations

young people – that Jesus, Christianity, Adventism, has more to offer than what I see on a typical Sabbath morning in my local church, and I need to get this broader perspective.'

Marcos Paseggi, attending AYC22 to report for the *Adventist Review*, captured well the mood of this generation of European Adventists when he said, 'Young Adventists in Europe are a happy bunch, with an untiring desire to be a light and fulfil the dreams God has for each one of them. . . . There seems to be a glow around them as they chat, laugh and hug. They are a living testimony that a life with Jesus is neither miserable, nor lame, nor dull.' On Sabbath at congress, 12 were baptised.

As this report ends, it feels right to remember in prayer the young people we know: a son or daughter, a young person in our local church – one who is present or another who has left. Are we connected with them? If not, could we reconnect? 'Listening is key . . .' Kevin Johns reminds us. The first step is simply to listen. . . .

To discover more about AYC22, full coverage is available on the TED YouTube channel, including round-table discussions with David Asscherick and Dr Daniel Bosqued, an extended interview with Dr Daniel Duda, and more round-table discussions with representative Union presidents and Union youth directors – recorded live on location. And, for those who have attended a youth congress in times past, of special interest will be a conversation with former BUC and TED youth directors, Jim Huzzey and Paul Tompkins. All this and much more can be found at: <https://ted.adventist.org/media/ted-youtube-channel/>. To discover the huge library of pictures posted by the TED youth director, Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.442920111211278&type=3>.



18-24-year-olds' SEC Summer Youth Camp

by Jennie Hall

Youth enthusiastically gathered at Hay's Wood Retreat for the 18-24-year-olds' summer camp (22-26 August), a new experience for many of them. As there hadn't been a camp like this before, we were all excited to be part of the experience organised by Pastor Anthony Fuller and the area coordinator, Albert Gardiner. Our main speakers for the week were Pastor Eddie Hypolite and Clarence Jackson, familiar to many for their youth work throughout the SEC and further afield. Pastor Eddie led the evening worships, while Clarence led the morning messages. Stephen George hosted for the week and encouraged everyone to get to know each other with ice-breaker games.

Pastor Eddie highlighted how we need to make Scripture personal by inserting our names into it. For example, 'What then shall we say in response to these things? If God is for ME, who can be against ME?' (See Romans 8:31-39.) He also said that it's in our twenties that we need to nail down what we want to do and whom we want to be. We should always ask, 'Who am I? How am I? How do I? and Why?' in response to cultural identity and legacy.

Clarence's first morning thought was that we are wired with great potential, but Satan is doing everything he can to trap us, mentally and spiritually. The world needs us at our best, but Satan needs us at our worst. We are called to great things. Another of his sessions highlighted how we are God's children, and He has a calling in mind for all of us (Jeremiah 29:11-13). 'The worst movie you could ever see is one called "What You Could Have Been" by Jesus Christ.'

Our daily activities ranged from on-site sports and team games to trips to the beach. During the sports day, trainers were invited to lead out in sporting activities. The group was split up into four teams whose goal was to gain points throughout the day, and extra points were given for good sportsmanship and team playing. Two teams joined Des and Beth from Strong Soul Fitness, who took them through a few boxing moves. Meanwhile, the other two teams competed in team games, with Latoya and Steven leading out. On another day, we all piled into the coach for a trip to Great Yarmouth. Once there, we spent time at the beach before heading to the amusement park known as the 'Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach'. There was something for everyone, with the most daring going on the 'Pendulum', 'Sky-Drop' and the famous wooden roller coaster. Before we headed back to the site, we saw a fireworks display on the beach.

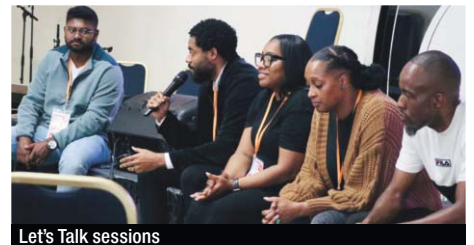
On the final full day, the group was joined by Andrew Fuller, Kristina Carridge and Rachel Burrell, who, along with Clarence, shared their personal testimonies, including their trials and difficulties in and outside

the church. When asked, 'If you had only one thing to share, what would it be?' Kristina's response was, 'It's OK to not be OK – we have grace to not be OK; to work things out.' Rachel's advice was, 'Build a tribe with people you don't have to hide from.' Andrew commented, 'The sooner you are honest with yourself, the sooner you will see growth in your life.' And Clarence said, 'Don't rely on others to label you: get to know you for you, and others will do the same.'

We also had opportunities to discuss sensitive topics such as sex, LGBTQ+, losing a child, saying no (protecting yourself), dress, and jewellery in small groups. The open session gave everyone a chance to ask questions and share experiences. This then led into one-to-one check-in sessions, and the specialised team gave their time to every attendee.

One of the most valuable parts of the programme was the prayer room. The Upper Room was decorated with lights, candles and foliage for a calming atmosphere. On offer were verses from promise jars, a prayer request box, and a prayer wall where people could put their prayer requests. There was also a quiet space for people to pick up a devotional. Not only this, but Clarence and Emma, both trained in mental health, counselling and mentoring, were available every morning, and they often had queues waiting to talk to them and to be prayed over. What a blessing their ministry was and continues to be.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the week and its activities. We could all feel that the group had bonded and formed relationships quickly. When it came to group activities, praise sessions and devotionals, everyone got involved and no one was left out or behind. All the staff commented on how it was a pleasure to serve these young people, and how blessed they felt by being involved in the programme.



Let's Talk sessions



Boxing tuition with Strong Soul Fitness

The under-24 crew





Irish Mission Youth Camp

Like most aspects of church life, COVID-19 impacted the activities of the Irish Mission Youth Department. This summer saw the first Irish Mission youth camp in three years, and Pastor Jefferson Melki's first major event since his employment as the Irish Mission Youth Sponsor.



On Sunday 7 August many of the pastoral team and church members arrived at Portlick Scout Centre in Athlone to set up tents and organise the campsite.

Then the real work began when children and teens from 9 to 17 years of age descended on the campsite, and the fun and excitement began too.

The guest speaker was Adam Best, a Theology student from Newbold College. Adam explored various aspects of Christ's character and how children and young people can connect with Christ on a deeper and more personal level. From the way he interacted with attendees, it was obvious that the love of Christ had deeply impacted him.

There were several excellent mental health sessions presented by Tara McCormac, a licensed mental health nurse. Each day the senior youth learnt about mental health self-awareness.

Plenty of activities were crammed into the week, including water sports, games, karting and quasar.

One activity that was planned fell through at the last minute – but, while the disappointment set in, an ice cream van rounded the corner, and everyone was delighted to receive an ice cream on such a hot day – we thanked God for this blessing and moved on to our next planned event.

The sun shone all week; this type of weather is usually unheard of at Summer Camp in Ireland. This resulted in us being able to eat our delicious meals outside and have worship by the lake.

It has been said that all good things must come to an end; but, while a few tears were shed, there was also excitement for the next youth event in November. Watch this space!

We thank God for the excellent summer camp staff who voluntarily gave their best for our young people and made the camp a safe and Spirit-filled experience: Adam Keough, Heather, Jasmine Andrasi, Cara McKee, Sheryl, Caroline, Kevin O'Brien, Emily Hanbidge, Emma Rothwell, Joel Lewis, Shannon, Aron, Dilon and Andile.

On behalf of the Youth Department, I would like to say a BIG thank-you to all those who made this summer camp possible; without our volunteers and financial support this event could not have run so smoothly. Lastly, a big thank-you to the parents who supported this event by sending their children and teens to camp: your children truly are a credit to you.

PASTOR JEFFERSON J. MELKI, IRISH MISSION YOUTH SPONSOR

Crieff Church youth group go litter-picking

A few weeks ago, under the leadership of Moyra Rodd, the Crieff Seventh-day Adventist Church youth group were challenged to do some work for the Crieff community.

They decided to go litter picking, because, sadly, this is needed in parts of Crieff. They decided to pick litter going from Aldi to the high school, as there is often litter on this route.

So, one fine afternoon, the group, with their new minister, went out armed with gloves, litter-pickers and rubbish bags. They tidied up the route as well as the area where the buses park. In total they collected three large bags of litter, including a child's bicycle helmet.

The children and young people actually seemed to enjoy doing it, and afterwards they stopped to survey their handiwork for the community. Let's hope that their example will encourage others to be more thoughtful.

PASTOR BOB RODD





Newark needs its own building to worship in!

The Newark company in Nottinghamshire is long established and heading towards its 70th anniversary. It began in 1954 when a Seventh-day Adventist family arrived from India, settling in the town. Not wanting to spend Sabbaths at home, the mother of that family of four children, Colleen Hossack, rented a hut on Winthorpe Road, where she established the original church group.

Colleen contacted the NEC office to pay her tithe, from whence Pastor Frederick Edwards and his family became involved, enabling the small church group to hold regular Sabbath services. Another Newark Adventist family, Robert and Christine Walls and their children, joined the Newark group, and thus the numbers began to swell. This first group became known as ‘the Newark Seventh-day Adventist company’. Then-NEC President, Pastor John Bayliss, and Pastor Eddie Foster officiated at the initiating meeting on Sabbath 4 January 1958.

Colleen’s friend, Susan Coblence, attended church and was baptised in 1958. At this time, others came to Newark from Calcutta, including

Middlesbrough Mela

The Son of God did not discriminate when He mingled with people. He had encounters with individuals and met their physical and mental health needs. With simple conversations, He won their hearts and showed them the love of the Most High God. On 13 and 14 August, Middlesbrough Seventh-day Adventist Church had the opportunity to spend time with the community of Middlesbrough at the annual Mela, a two-day multicultural festival. This year up to 50,000 people came to the event, and we were able to have excellent interactions with the community, promoting our health principles using the acronym CELEBRATIONS. The literature that was made available promoted such aspects of a healthy lifestyle as nutrition, exercise, mental health, and family life. We pray that our community here in Teesside will be touched by the love of God through the presence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

PASTOR COLIN WOODFORD



the Wollocombe family, and members from the Nottingham, Lincoln and Grantham churches transferred their memberships. With the now-established expanding group, a new worship place was needed. Just two months after the company was formed, from March 1958, Sabbath services were held in the Toc. H. Conservative rooms in Newark’s historic marketplace, ironically above a shop selling bacon and meat. The rent was ten shillings for the day!

The Adshead family, and others from Calcutta, settled in Newark and

soon took up posts of service in the company. The first church clerk, Robert Walls, supplied much of the information for this article. Other gems came from Heather Sayers (née Adshead), Barry Gresswell (our treasurer), and Marilyn Lunnon.

The Newark company went from strength to strength, with the Missionary Volunteer movement becoming active before the company was one year old.

The Church Building Fund was started, some of which was used to help other developing churches that needed financial support to purchase or improve their premises.

By 1990, there were only eleven members: Walter Crane, the Walls, the Adsheads, Rees, the Archers, and Sister Brackstone. The Building Fund struggled to grow.

When the Conservative Club moved, the church members took rooms with them. During the following years, the number of worshippers increased enough to warrant a move to larger premises until the Hawtonville Methodist rooms became available, and this is where the Newark church members have worshipped for the past twenty years – that is, until COVID-19 struck.

After meeting on Zoom for over two years, we were anxious to return to normal worship. Sister Vanessa heard that the Methodist congregation wanted the Adventists to return, so she arranged a meeting between the Methodist minister, Revd Falla, Pastor Solon Kyriacou, and herself. The outcome is that we can now use not only the main sanctuary, but also the large church hall for other meetings, and the smaller rooms for children’s Sabbath School and other activities. The Lord certainly answered our prayer in a big way!

That first church service back on 7 May 2022 was inspirational, refreshing, and a delight to the soul. It was as though that is where, after our almost seventy-year jagged journey, we are really meant to be, where we can welcome visitors without a squeeze and an apology, where we can meet together as God’s family, in unison and harmony. It was memorable! And, ever since, it just keeps getting better.

So, why are we, the Newark company, telling you about our history and present state of affairs? Well, we need our own premises to worship in, to welcome visitors and witness to those in our local community. We believe that the best way to do this is to own the premises and mark it clearly as Newark Seventh-day Adventist Church. Recently, we expressed our desire to purchase the Hawtonville Methodist rooms to the Methodist Church, and they responded positively.

While we do not yet have the necessary funds for this venture, our faith is in the Lord to provide. Being practical, we are asking you to join us in prayers, faith, and, if the Spirit of the Lord moves you, financially. Our trust is in the Lord.

NEWARK CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

BAPTISMS

Cheltenham baptisms

In the past few weeks members of Cheltenham Church have had the opportunity to attend our local Sandford Lido swimming pool . . . not to swim, but to witness the baptism of five people at 9am on a Sunday!

On 29 May, Pastor James Shepley baptised his youngest daughter, Naomi, along with Rui and Catarina Fontoura.

Two weeks later, on 12 June, two more young people were baptised: Faakyewaa Afriyie (aged 15) and Oswin Dundas (aged 10) stepped into the water to give their lives to Jesus.

JILL SWAINSON



Oswin and Faakyewaa with Pastor James Shepley



Rui and Catarina Fontoura and Naomi

Four baptised during Hackney's Homecoming Day

There was joy in Hackney and up in heaven as four precious souls gave their lives to the Lord in baptism during a homecoming day at Hackney Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath 17 September. Among the four individuals baptised were the two sons of Hackney's pastor, Joojo Bonnie – Nana (aged 19) and Papa (aged 13) – in the presence of their mother and their sister, Keona, who, with tears of joy, told them both that their baptism was an inspiration to her and all young people. Also baptised was Laverne Greer, who decided to give her heart to the Lord after being ministered to for many years by her younger brother, Lenval Greer. The final person baptised was Sarah Salter, a member of the local community, who, after hearing singing and preaching from the church from outside her window, bravely made the decision to attend. All four individuals were baptised by Pastor Joojo Bonnie.

DARELL J. PHILIP (PR & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT, HACKNEY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH)



From left to right: Pastor Joojo Bonnie, Sarah Salter, Laverne Greer, Nana Bonnie and Papa Bonnie

A special North Sea baptism at Britain's best beach

After months of Bible studies and anticipation, four young people from South Shields Church were baptised on 10 September 2022 at South Shields' Sandhaven, which was recently named Britain's very best in the *Sunday Times* Beach of the Year competition 2022.

The weather looked bleak in the run-up to the baptism, with a chance of rain and high winds predicted; however, this did not stop Pastor Dan Majaducon from proceeding with the planned North Sea baptism of Arnold Joseph Fortuna and three brothers: Leano Lemuel Samwinga, Luendo Lehae Samwinga, and Levi Liron Samwinga. It was a very special moment to witness four young people choose to follow Jesus as their Master and Saviour.

Remarkably, the north-east weather did not disrupt the baptismal event; it only started raining again when church members got back to the church from the beach. It was such a welcome token of God's favour, power and grace.

LYNNE SESINYE-SAMWINGA



Pastor Dan Majaducon with the four very cold candidates



Syrene Bryan and Pastor Solon Kyriacou

Another baptism at Grantham

Though her mother was not an Adventist, Syrene Bryan was taken to Sabbath School by her faithful grandmother. The habit of church attendance was firmly established, and Syrene attended church when possible, even while she spent over ten years in the British Army! But it was on 1 October 2022 that she finally committed to Adventist church membership in the baptistry of Grantham Church. She was baptised by Pastor Solon Kyriacou.

MIKE COWEN

Kathleen (Kitty) Hocking (1931-2022) d. 20 May.

Family and friends gathered in Liskeard Seventh-day Adventist Church on 8 June to celebrate the life of one of its founder members.

Kathleen – or ‘Kitty’, as she was fondly known by family and close friends – was born into a Cornish farming family on 2 August 1931, near Liskeard. Kathleen was the elder sister of Jean and their brother David. Her working life after leaving school in Liskeard was spent working on Tuelmenna, the family farm. She loved working with the animals –

especially at lambing time, and caring for the chickens.

Kathleen’s first contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church was through the Whiting family, who lived in a neighbouring cottage. The Whitings invited the Hocking family into their home to hear Pastor Ronald Bonney’s Voice of Prophecy broadcast on Radio Luxembourg. Kathleen often quoted Pastor Bonney’s closing words after each broadcast: ‘Dear friends, have faith in God.’ Kathleen’s younger sister Jean found a VOP card in the family home and sent away for the lessons. Kathleen would

read them as well. Subsequently, both sisters were baptised in July 1954 in the Plymouth Adventist church by the then-SEC president, Pastor J. McMillan.

After the death of her father, Kathleen and her mother moved from the family farm into Liskeard, where she dutifully looked after her until her mother died just short of her 100th birthday. Kathleen enjoyed visits from her family, church members and pastors, especially when she was no longer able to attend church due to frailty. She loved to recall stories from her farming days, as well as to invite visitors to help complete her jigsaws! Kathleen spoke openly of her love for the ‘good Lord’, and longed for His second coming.

When Kathleen could no longer look after herself, she went into Kilmar House, a residential home in Liskeard in close proximity to the church. Family and church members continued to visit her there. Liskeard Church’s new minister, Pastor Daniel Amakye, made a special effort to visit Kathleen on his second Sabbath, when he read Scripture to her and conducted

prayer for her. His visit was greatly appreciated by Kathleen; and, even though she was not able to speak, her smile said it all.

After a short stay in Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, Kathleen peacefully fell asleep and now awaits her Saviour’s return. Her funeral was conducted by Pastors D. Amakye and F. Orasanu, and was attended by family and church members. Left to mourn are Kathleen’s sister, Jean; her brother, David; and many nephews and nieces, along with the Liskeard church members.

LISKEARD COMMUNICATION SECRETARY



Baptism in Fartown

Fartown Seventh-day Adventist Church in Huddersfield had a day of rejoicing on Sabbath 30 July when three precious souls were baptised in the afternoon. Following Bible studies, Ethan Shakes and Skye Goddard (both aged 12) and Kaya Goddard (aged 8) decided to accept Jesus as their Friend and Saviour. It was also a day of celebration, as it was the first baptism held in the Fartown church building since its purchase and subsequent renovation. The excited candidates were baptised by Pastor Steve McKenzie, who shared insights into the characteristics and gifts of each of the children. All candidates were welcomed into the membership of the church by the local minister, Pastor George Hamilton.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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29.10.22

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Lorraine McDonald
BUC Education Director SEND specialist.

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Time: 10 - 6pm
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Cost includes meals, resources packs, Carers gifts

Topics:

- SDA Education and Special Needs
- Carers HOLISTIC health and well being
- Who Cares When You Cannot Care Anymore?
- Featuring students from the ASNA Music and Art Academy.

CLOSING DATE:
23RD OCTOBER 2022

Contact: info@asna.info for more details or register on website www.asna.info

Answer for the puzzle on p. 4

Messenger

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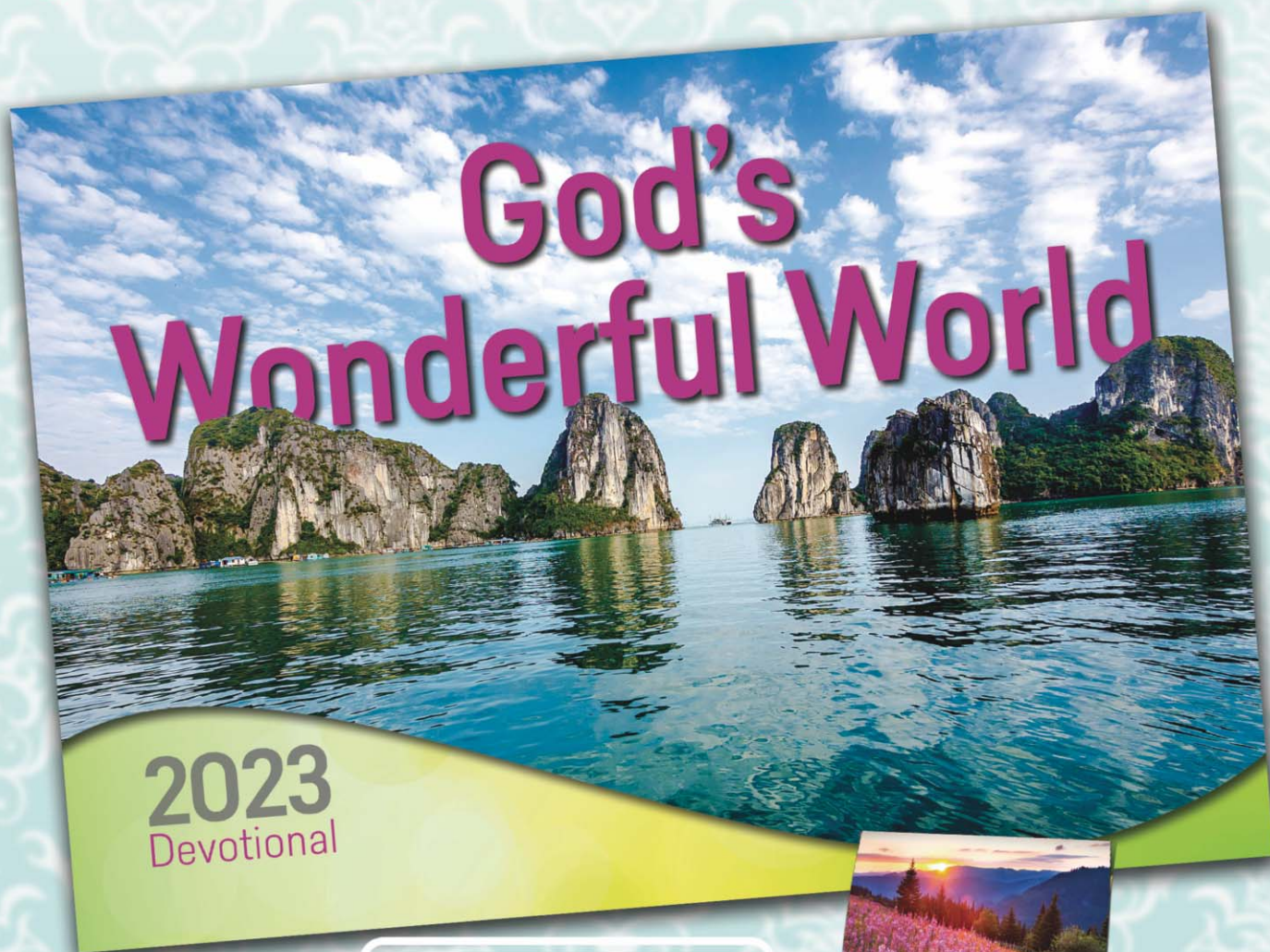
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