

Messenger

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

Are you quiet quitting on God?
ADRA emergency appeal
for Syria and Turkey
Toxic masculinity
Faith leaders discuss
the cost-of-living
crisis in Parliament
Meet Pastor Connie Tsang

24 February 2023 • Volume 128 • 2

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Not just a church

We are a charity
and we are a business



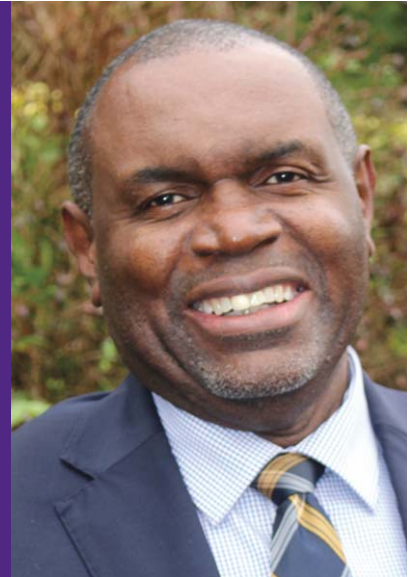
Strategic Priority (2) – Asset Management

Aim:

- Manage all our assets with robust governance, informed decision-making, openness, and transparency.

Objectives:

- Restructure the Seventh-day Adventist Association (SDAA) and Seventh-day Adventist Trust Services (SDAT).
- Set up an investment advisory team.
- Support each department and institution to take responsibility and be accountable for all its assets, however small.



Not just a church

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,

President of the British Union Conference

‘Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. What is the first thing you will do? Won’t you sit down and figure out how much it will cost and if you have enough money to pay for it? Otherwise, you will start building the tower, but not be able to finish. Then everyone who sees what is happening will laugh at you. They will say, “You started building, but could not finish the job.”’

(Luke 14:28-30, CEV)

It was an ‘Aha!’ moment when we met at the British Union Conference (BUC) Executive Committee (ExCom) in May of 2022 as we began to look at the church with a view to formulate the BUC Strategic Plan. The BUC residential ExCom provided a credible opportunity for me to bring to the attention of the committee my understanding of where we are as a group of Christ believers, and to share with them the groundwork to unveil the

growing priorities for the new BUC Strategic Plan.

If only you could have been a fly on the wall! You would have seen the expression on the faces of some of the committee members when the reality hit them: **we are not just a church . . . we are a charity and we are a business.** Yes, you heard me right. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the British Union Conference is a church, a charity, and a corporate business.

As a group of believers, we have in our care 41,000-plus precious members from divergent multicultural backgrounds, over 300 churches, and 115 companies that we know of; we employ more than 425 people, including 215 ministers; we must provide an adequate pension for 400 retirees; unnumbered volunteers faithfully support the weekly management of our church services with diverse skills and abilities; we have approximately eleven registered companies in our portfolio; and we have houses dotted around the British Union Conference (BUC) territory, just to name a few of our assets.

As a denomination, we are entrusted with a spiritual obligation to undertake biblical governance of our members. This includes matters such as ensuring that our members understand the responsibility of being stewards of the spiritual proclamation of a message of hope, the capacity to create an environment for the spiritual growth of our members, and an opportunity to encourage our 41,000-plus members to be stewards of the character of Christ. As a charity, we have an obligation to the public to ensure we comply with reasonable charitable governance of the organisation. Meeting best practice and ensuring our long-term survival as both a charity and a corporate organisation, we have a legal obligation to comply with government legislation in the management and safeguarding of our business.

While we have the daunting task of providing spiritual care and nurture of our members, we must comply with charity regulations and adhere to changing government legislation. We must revisit the management of our assets that sit under the umbrella of SDAA, and must strengthen the capacity of SDAT, and we just might need to restructure, develop the BUC property portfolio, and employ property investors. We need to get investment guidance to ensure our survival; we need a documented risk log and a ‘lessons learned’ log based on past decisions. Why have we lost some schools? How can we ensure our schools do not follow the sound of the ‘pied piper’ and march themselves along a similar path of destruction? We must explore the viability of a retirement home, or at least consider providing care for our ailing members.

These changes to the organisation should not come simply from creative officers and a snazzy ExCom. These forays must come through setting up new advisory committees in key departments with skilled members who are at the forefront of their field, and a census or survey that provides evidence to guide the decisions we will need to make.

Editorial

by Julian Thompson,
Editor



Dear reader,
As you've probably noticed, we've made some changes to *MESSENGER*. Recently, while continuing to work through the implications of the BUC's vision for this publication, I found myself reflecting on the question asked by Pastor Nathan Stickland in the January issue of *MESSENGER*: 'Is change too strange?' Drawing from Josh Linkner's book, *The Road to Reinvention*, Stickland notes that we should 'never be complacent and always strive for improvement'. This is the approach we are taking here at *MESSENGER*. We live in an ever-changing world, and understand that continuous improvement and adaptation are essential to the ebb and flow of contemporary society and the church.



We recognise that change can sometimes result in a sense of loss; but, as Stickland observed, it is also true that change brings the opportunity for something new. As a team, we would like to thank those of you who have already taken the time to share your feedback. We have received many positive responses, as well as constructive feedback on how our offering can be further enhanced. We are listening, and we want to elicit your support in continuing to build a publication that serves the entire Union. You can write to us at: editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk.

By the way, did you know that you can have a printed copy of *MESSENGER* delivered direct to your home every month for FREE? For more information, scan the QR code opposite or visit our subscription advert on page 21.



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REFLECTING *hope*



Forty Days of Hope and Reflecting Hope one day at a time

by Catherine Anthony
Boldeau & Christian Salcianu

He came up out of the water, dripping from head to toe. The immersion by His cousin John was followed by the affirmation, ‘This is my Son, chosen and marked by my love, delight of my life’ (Matthew 3:17, *The Message*) as ‘the heavens were opened . . . and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove’ (Matthew 3:16, KJV).

What an amazing experience! However, there was no party following the baptism. Being led by the Spirit, Jesus retired into the wilderness to fast and commune with His Father.

- Forty days without food;
- Forty days in solitude;
- Forty days living in the desert.

‘When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. . . . He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He must travel. . . .’¹

At the end of these forty days, when Jesus was at His weakest physically, three temptations were placed before Him: provision, presumption, and power. But Jesus resisted these temptations and ‘was strengthened with food, comforted with the message of His Father’s love and the assurance that all heaven triumphed in His victory’.²

- Forty days of nurture;
- Forty days of empowerment;
- Forty days of hope.

We invite you to join us for *Forty Days of Hope*, a spiritual journey of reflection and engagement. Follow us at [Facebook.com/reflectinghopenow](https://www.facebook.com/reflectinghopenow) and [Instagram.com/reflectinghopenow](https://www.instagram.com/reflectinghopenow). Each day you will be given a Bible passage, a short reading, a life story, and an inspiring news item from the fields. You’re invited to pray, share the word of hope, and participate in activities where appropriate.

We hope and trust that this initiative will help to strengthen your faith, inspire you, and help you in your desire to reflect Christ to your neighbours.

¹Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 114
²*Ibid.*, p. 131

hope

REFLECTINGHOPE.ORG

On 22 February, the British Union Conference (BUC) formally launched its *Reflecting Hope* initiative (see: www.reflectinghope.org). In the January edition of *MESSENGER*, the BUC President, Pastor Eglan Brooks, introduced the programme to the membership: ‘At the General Conference

(GC) Autumn Council the British Union Conference was presented with the wonderful opportunity to be involved in an evangelistic initiative called ‘Christ for Europe’. This initiative will be run throughout the Trans-European Division (TED) and Inter-European Division (EUD), and is spearheaded by the GC, Adventist World Radio (AWR) and Total Member Involvement (TMI).

‘*Reflecting Hope* is the BUC’s response to this initiative. This was voted by the Executive Committee in early December as a three-year programme. It is an intentional, innovative, and impactful evangelistic project to connect the contemporary ‘European’ mindset with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Reflecting Hope* will be launched as a pilot this year – 2023 – in several regions across the territory of the BUC, and during 2024/2025 we will endeavour to roll out the full programme to all church congregations.’

A huge project

by Reinder Bruinsma

'So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. . . . The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. . . . And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.'

Genesis 6:14, 15; 7:5, NIV



We do not need to turn many pages in the book of Genesis before we encounter the story of the building of the ark. We do not know how much time Noah needed for this huge project. It has often been suggested that Noah worked on his boat for one hundred and twenty years, based on Genesis 6:3, but in fact this statement does not refer to the actual beginning of the work of building the

ark. However, we can clearly infer from the Genesis account that it took at least several decades – perhaps as much as between seventy and eighty years – to complete the project. We also have no information about the size of Noah's workforce. The scope of the project was beyond the possibilities of one man, and no doubt he also needed people with skills he did not have himself.

What was the secret of Noah's success? He must have possessed considerable leadership skills in order to make the preparations for the work, to plan its various stages and to manage the actual construction work. The real secret, however, was that he believed in his mission. God had given him a job, and that realisation kept him going.



The conviction that God had called him for a specific task gave him the perseverance he needed.

Perseverance is a major element in working on long-term projects. This is especially true in our twenty-first century. In the Middle Ages people often built their cathedrals over several centuries, but nowadays we do not have that kind of patience. Today we want to see quick results. When building a new home, many do not want to start a garden from scratch, but get a gardening firm to plant grown trees and to roll out the strips of turf.

And it often proves difficult to motivate people to be involved with a project that will go on for many years. Postmodern people are reluctant when it comes to making

long-term commitments. Yet the conviction that God has called us should help us to persevere, even when we get tired and find that the enthusiasm of many has waned.

Help me, God, to persevere, even when the work You have given me proceeds at a slow pace, and when no end seems in sight.

Reinder Bruinsma is now retired and has been a leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for over forty years. He has served as a pastor and as a teacher, but also as the head of institutions and as part of the leadership team at national and international administrative levels of the church.



An Intelligent Designer

by Pastor Wilfred Masih

'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.'

Psalm 19:1, ESV



Intelligent Design is a theory which provides an explanation for the beginnings of life. It argues that only the existence of an Intelligent Designer can satisfactorily explain the extremely complex biological structures that exist in nature and the enormous amounts of information they contain.

Some scientists claim that life began on earth suddenly by a process called abiogenesis; however, living organisms cannot easily be explained by chance or natural processes alone.

In 2004, Anthony Flew, who up until that point had been a leading atheist, announced he was no longer an atheist. One of the reasons he gave was the incredibly complex information implanted in the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) molecule. Even assuming that the nucleotides that make up DNA were formed in a 'primordial soup', how could they arrange themselves randomly to form a highly complex and encrypted molecule such as DNA?

Enzymes are chemicals that speed up chemical reactions in living organisms. Specific enzymes called DNA polymerases play an important

role in building DNA. It is problematic to explain how primordial conditions which 'knew' nothing of DNA structure could facilitate the formation of DNA utilising DNA polymerases. When we reflect on this problem, another fundamental question is raised as to where and how the DNA polymerases originated?

DNA plays an important biological function as a carrier of information, especially across generations of reproducing organisms. DNA can be compared to an instruction manual from which living organisms are constructed, and many people, quite naturally, find it unlikely that an instruction manual could alter itself to create something new.

Bold statements are often made on the back of experiments, claiming how life could possibly have originated. However, the origin of the information that is encoded in DNA has no plausible explanation that can be provided by Darwin's theory of evolution. Information is transferred to matter, which is secondary, but the information itself is primary, and the source of the

original information has never been explained. Chance and necessity seem to fall very short as a plausible explanation from a scientific point of view.

In the last half-century, DNA structure has been unravelled and genetic engineering now allows manipulation of DNA, but, to date, all inorganic chemicals remain incapable of assembling by themselves to form even a simple single living cell. Scientists, despite huge technological advances, have not been able to successfully create a simple living cell, although artificial cells have been attempted. There is no evidence to show that molecules have a 'mind' that guided them thousands of years ago to form complex biological molecules like DNA, let alone a simple living cell.

It can be concluded, therefore, that, with closer examination and in the absence of any expert scientific explanation about the origin of life, there appears to be strong and plausible scientific evidence for an Intelligent Designer.

For more information on this topic, contact Pastor Wilfred Masih: wilfred@adventist.scot.

The rise of the quiet quitters

by Clive Malcolm



Can the spread of ‘quiet quitting’ affect your commitment to God and serving your community? The *New Yorker* magazine quoted the young engineer Zaid Khan’s TikTok post where he said, ‘I recently learned about this term called “quiet quitting”, where you’re not outright quitting your job, but you’re quitting the idea of going above and beyond. You’re still performing your duties, but you’re no longer subscribing to the hustle-culture mentality that work has to be your life.’¹

Quiet quitting refers to an increasing number of employees deciding they will not put more effort into their jobs than is necessary. They only meet the minimum requirement of their jobs, which means no more turning up early for work or staying late. Nobody can say for sure whether the quiet quitting phenomenon is here to stay, but it is a term that’s already being associated with people’s lives outside the workplace.

If we pause for a moment to think about our churches and quiet quitting, we can’t avoid the question:

are people quiet quitting church? Are there people within congregations who have made up their minds to do the bare minimum for God?

We’re at the start of the year when many church members, having ‘volunteered’ to take up new positions in various church ministry programmes, have begun working within their departments. As is often the case, some become less involved as the year progresses, and their absence does not go unnoticed, especially by those left to run departments alone.

The truth is that there are quiet quitters in all walks of life. There will always be people who convince themselves not to do more than a job is worth: not for their employer, not for family, friends, church, or, sad to say, even God.

However, there are times when you have to know when to quit or at least take a break from your duties at church, especially if you’re in danger of burnout. Such was the case for New Zealand’s prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, who announced her resignation in January. Ardern decided to quit her job, but not

quietly. She announced her decision to the world: ‘I no longer have enough in the tank to do the job justice.’

We know that ‘God loves a cheerful giver’ (2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV), but He doesn’t want any of His children running on an empty tank. So, if you need a rest, take one!

‘We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose’ (Romans 8:28, KJV). God’s work will continue. The important thing is that when we serve the Lord, we serve Him with all our heart (Deuteronomy 10:12).

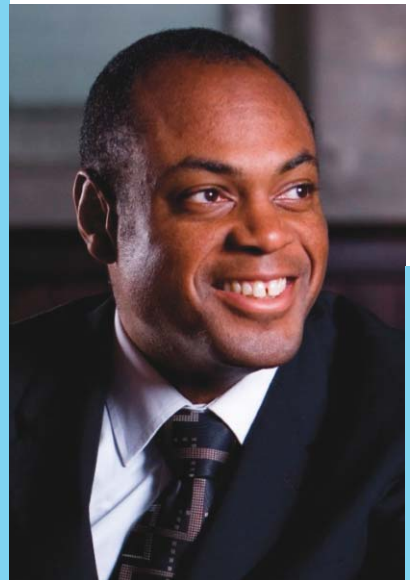
¹Carl Newport, ‘The Year in Quiet Quitting’, published in *The New Yorker*, 29 December 2022: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/2022-in-review/the-year-in-quiet-quitting>

Clive Malcolm is a writer and editor producing content for social media, websites and magazines. He has previously served as editor of *The Newboldian*, an alumni magazine published by Newbold College of Higher Education.



Toxic masculinity

Pastor Andrew Rashford-Hewitt,
NEC Men's Ministries Director



So, what is masculinity?



Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan arrived in handcuffs at the Bucharest Court of Appeal for their appeal against the 30-day arrest for human trafficking, 10 January 2023

Oxford Dictionary defines it as a collection of attributes that are considered to be characteristic of men or boys. Now, if you were to gather three Sabbath school classes together to give their definition of what those attributes are, I am sure you would get differing ideas. However, two core elements might be physical strength, and male gender (having both X and Y chromosomes). We might then list qualities such as courage, leadership and assertiveness. However, I am wondering if there now exists another form of masculinity – known as toxic masculinity – that is often unchallenged and is influencing how boys and men are beginning to view themselves and enact their relationships.

Toxic masculinity can be described as a set of views, cultural or societal, that influence men to behave in ways that have a negative impact on themselves, others, or society. Such attitudes or behaviours include the abuse of power leading to domination, aggression, negative attitudes towards women, a sense of sexual entitlement, emotional illiteracy, and a disowning of one's emotional needs, as these are seen as signs of weakness. Such ideas are often presented in the film industry, on social media, from some social influencers, within some forms of music, and within certain groupings.

The recent news regarding the behaviour of the well-known social influencer Andrew Tate is an example of the impact social

As I engaged in the NEC Men's Day of Fellowship last November, I became curious about the question I posed to myself, which was, *How have the African, Caribbean, European, Asian, Pacific and biblical views of masculinity shaped us as men, including myself?*

Having attended a 'stop abuse against women' event last year, where my wife Andrea was singing, I was disturbed as the names of eighty-one women were read out who had been

murdered by men in the nine months following the death of Sarah Everard in March 2021. Thus, I wondered: How is our societal view of masculinity affecting each of us? How are ideas about masculinity contributing to the increase in domestic violence, or the high rate of male suicide, or the high number of male incarcerations here in the UK? Now, as we enter 2023, I wonder if masculinity is in crisis.

So, what is masculinity? The

influencers can have in influencing the minds of young people, especially young boys, with misogynistic attitudes towards women.¹ A recent report from UK Fostering found that young people tend to trust social media platforms to provide them

society or online, for it is indeed possible that similar forms of masculinity may occur in the church, but in less overt ways. For we should be mindful that history teaches that where men are afforded privileges based on gender and patriarchy, this can become a basis for oppressive forms of masculinity. This may be one of the contributing factors to the occurrence of domestic violence within church and faith communities.

Sadly, when toxic ideas of masculinity are espoused and not challenged, men may feel emboldened by a culture of power and dominance.

When these ideas are internalised, it can cause a man to become a very poor representation of what it means to be a man. This was what occurred recently, when, as a pastor and as the Men's Ministry sponsor, I was invited to support a couple where there had been an incident of domestic abuse.

What I've described is one side of the pendulum regarding masculinity, for on the other side you have what some describe as the emasculation of masculinity. This refers to the idea that masculinity has now become more feminine, sensitive, considerate of others, less focused on power and domination, and more in tune with one's emotions. For some, this position appeals to a more humane view of masculinity, while for others it repels them, and they want to exonerate more traditional and sometimes even misogynistic views of masculinity based on power and status. Between these two positions about masculinity, older and younger men have to figure out where they are to position themselves. Sadly, this situation means that masculinity no longer holds a clear or secure defining role for older and younger men. As a result, it seems that masculinity is in crisis. I therefore believe it is necessary to consider what it means to be a man and what masculinity means from a biblical perspective.

For this, let's go to Genesis 1:26, 27 (KJV), where the Lord says, 'Let us make man in our image,' and where we are told, 'God created man in his own image, in the image of

God created he him; male and female created he them.'

To be created in the image of God means that, as humans and as men, we have been created to reflect who God is and what He is like. Being created in God's image means that we have been endowed with qualities that are intrinsic to the nature of God, qualities that define our masculinity, such as inspired intelligence, emotional balance and empathy, kindness, compassion, courage, strength, resilience, a healthy curiosity and creativity, wisdom, spiritual alertness, humble yet bold assertiveness, loving leadership, firmness, a heightened sense of responsibility and accountability for those things and persons within one's domain of influence, and an awareness of one's role as a steward under God and as a representative of God. This is what being created in God's image is to mean for men.

Now, I understand that sin has distorted our view of God and of what it means to be a man, yet this is the very reason why men's ministry is needed – to redefine masculinity according to God's ideal, and to engage in conversations that will help to create a new narrative of what it means to be a man.

The number of men in our churches remains lower than that of our women; the rate of teenage boys leaving the church remains significant; the number of boys dropping out of education is still high; the confusion of what kind of a man young men and older men should be remains an ongoing issue in our ever-changing society where gender roles are fluid; and the very basis of gender is now being challenged. Therefore, I believe it's time for us to take back the ground that has been lost, and begin to talk and teach about what masculinity really means, as men who have been created in the image of an amazing God. If we don't, the trend will continue. But, by being intentional about redefining masculinity according to God's word, by God's grace we can enable both older and younger men to become the men God created them to be.

¹See for example Chris Stokel-Walker, 'The toxic "alpha males" turning Britain's teenage boys against women' (26/01/23): <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/01/26/andrew-tate-influencers-toxic-masculinity-teenagers-misogyny/>

... a report by the BBC in 2022 found that more young people between the ages of 11 and 16 trusted social influencers than they did politicians.

with truthful information, while a report by the BBC in 2022 found that more young people between the ages of 11 and 16 trusted social influencers than they did politicians. This may not be too surprising, as most people may say that their trust in politicians is not too great, but the serious issue is that social influencers hold a very powerful position to influence and shape attitudes and behaviour. The report indicated that some young minds may be at risk of being manipulated by the messages and images that are portrayed by social influencers. This is all the more alarming, as not all young males or females or older persons possess the ability to critique the information that may seem so powerfully convincing within the social media context of social influencers.

It is for this reason, following the arrest of Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan in Romania on 29 December, that UK schools are holding classes and assemblies to deconstruct and challenge the quotations, messages and lifestyle espoused by Mr Tate and others like him, which portray glitz, glamour, money and sex. The danger of such influencers is that young males may then begin to model such ultra-macho, sexist and disrespectful attitudes towards others in their own lives and thus perpetuate a form of toxic masculinity.

But we should be careful not to think that such forms of toxic masculinity only occur in the wider

Let's go . . . wherever, whenever!

by Elder Alison Awuku,

lay member, Trans-European Division (TED) and General Conference (GC) Executive Committee member



Many people are searching for true meaning and purpose, and as Seventh-day Adventist believers we are gifted with deep understanding of biblical truths that can help many people understand their purpose and meaning through knowing Christ intimately and experiencing the love and freedom such a special relationship offers. That we are members of God's family, regardless of our background and culture, means that God has equipped us through His Spirit with the resources and opportunities to draw others close to Him. Either by just sowing a seed through a thought/idea or an act of kindness, being diligent in our work, or showing integrity in whatever we do, we are doing the much-needed work this world needs to encourage others to come to the knowledge of God and grow in Him.

As lay members in the church, we have the privilege to see many of the struggles people in our various spheres are experiencing. The question is: how can we minister to those around us in our workplaces, in our social settings, in our educational settings, and so on? Our General Conference and Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists is focused on the simple but powerful theme: 'I Will Go – Engaged in Mission'. This theme has been broken down into three strategic pillars as illustrated in the graphic.

I love the simplicity of the three strategic pillars, because they allow for creativity and flexibility of our work in making disciples. It strikes me that feeling loved and having a sense of belonging are things that we

all crave as humans, regardless of our background and culture. As lay members, we have much to offer those who are seeking true meaning and direction in life. We also have opportunities to learn from each



other and share our experiences in how we are making a difference in big and small ways in our various communities.

As one large family, whether as lay members or as employees and ministers within the church's organisational structure, we are more effective when we are united in the work. We are better together. This was evident when both laity and church workers congregated in Montenegro in November 2022 for the annual TED year-end meetings. As lay members, we shared our enthusiasm on the church's vision and strategic objectives and our awe at God's love for each one of our communities, and the difference we are making and can make as a community of believers. Lay members of the TED Executive Committee shared their impression of the work we are doing together as a church in the YouTube video at the following link: <https://youtu.be/dwvIGY5ElhA>.

As lay members, we may face limitations in terms of how much time we can dedicate to administrative or practical services within the church. But God multiplies and uses our efforts to make a difference in growing our church and healing our world. So, whatever you do and wherever you are, whatever your hand finds to do for God and for the growth of the family of believers, do it diligently to the glory of God. Wherever the Spirit of God leads you, go and trust that He is with you, and He will never leave you nor forsake you. And remember . . . you matter in this great work of loving the whole person, growing lifelong disciples, and multiplying communities. You have a unique and important role in God's vineyard. Shalom!

Alison is keen to hear from lay members what they are doing in their communities to spread the Good News and God's love for us, and how they are extending love, growing lifelong disciples, and growing communities within the British Isles. This will be shared at the TED Executive Committee meetings, and examples from other regions will be shared as well. Also, ideas of how our strategic objectives might be implemented are welcome. You can contact her at: aliawuku@gmail.com.



Let's 'do good' in 2023

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,
Chair of the Board of ADRA-UK

Seventh-day Adventist Christians are known for their justice, compassion, and love – as individuals, but also on a corporate level. The work of ADRA is highly respected around the world, as it operates in more than 130 countries around the world. Not only do ADRA staff act as emergency responders in humanitarian disasters, but as a charity ADRA also implements development projects focusing primarily on education, health, and livelihoods.

Advocacy, community engagement, church partnerships and development education support the two main arms of the agency.

As the Chair of ADRA-UK, I am very excited about the work that is done here by our small team of seven staff, four of whom work part-time. Currently, we have livelihood projects in Nepal and Zambia, and in South Sudan and Myanmar we are implementing education projects. COVID-19 response projects (health) are being conducted in Sri Lanka and Ghana, and we also implement a migrant rights project in Thailand.

It is only because of your consistent financial support that we can implement these projects and help some of the world's most vulnerable people.

Last year, the ADRA-UK board voted that, as an agency, we would no longer run a national door-to-door appeal as we did prior to the pandemic. While this may be disappointing for some of our members, it was a decision that was taken prayerfully and was based on the current fundraising climate.

We will, however, maintain our ADRA emphasis from 18 March to 1 April 2023, but would encourage you to support ADRA-UK for all 52 weeks of the year. Our fundraising target for 2023 is £300,000, and our team members are working with the Personal Ministries departments at the Conferences and Missions to re-introduce local church targets. We



invite you once again to DO GOOD in 2023.

To assist us in our new direction, ADRA-UK has also introduced an ADRA Ambassador initiative to raise the profile of ADRA's work in our local churches and schools. Our first ambassadors will soon be officially appointed.

As you offer prayers in your churches, we would invite you to offer prayers for ADRA-UK's work. Every part of the organisation has its challenges, but ADRA staff often work in extremely volatile situations in conflict-worn countries. While refugees in Ukraine flee the conflict in their territory, ADRA remains to support those suffering on the ground. When the monsoon rains flood parts of India, when the cameras leave but the devastation remains, ADRA's emergency response teams are there.



Jesus said, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me – you did it to me' (Matthew 25:40, MSG).

Let's DO GOOD in 2023 with ADRA-UK, and fulfil the commission of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

www.adra.org.uk



The Goodwill Gang of Woodland Close

by Anne Pilmoor

'A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed' (Proverbs 11:25, NIV).

Twenty-six of us from Woodland Close, boys and girls, get on very well and used to enjoy playing together in the street. It was a quiet and safe street because it wasn't a through road.

The families in our street are friendly and nice. There are a few older people who live on their own, too. All the children like Mrs Chalmers the most. She's always smiling and friendly. Occasionally she has brought us some freshly baked cookies when we have been out playing. She talks to us often and asks us how we are doing at school. Whenever we kicked a ball into her garden, she either returned it to us or let us collect it.

Miss Cross lives on the opposite side at number 19. She was quite the opposite! George said she was 'Cross by name and cross by nature'! She used to get very angry when she saw us playing outside, and shouted at us to get into our houses and do something useful. She often snatched our balls. We tried to guess what she did with them. Perhaps she had made a ball pit for herself. There's a funny thought!

We talked about where we could find a place for us all to play. Eventually we settled on 'The Dell' next to George's house. We also agreed that we wanted to make a difference in our street. We wanted it to be a friendly, neighbourly place. That was when we decided to call our club 'The Goodwill Gang'.

We made a list of the good things we were going to do. We made flyers to let everyone in the neighbourhood know we were official and the little acts of kindness we were planning.

When it was Easter, we gave every neighbour an Easter egg. One week we gave each home a rose with a little note tied to it. We made bookmarks with a poem on them and pushed them through the letter boxes. Jack is brilliant at drawing cartoons. He spent ages drawing cartoons of each dad in the street, and we posted them in the letter boxes on Father's Day.

We washed cars, took out the wheelie bins for the elderly neighbours, and posted the Sunday newspapers through their letter boxes. It gave us a huge buzz. We were great friends before, but now we were inseparable!

One Sunday, when we came out of the dell onto our street, we thought we were in the wrong street!

There was bunting strung across the street from the lamp posts. There was a very long trestle table down the street, laden with delicious food, punch and desserts. This was going to be a feast!

'What's going on?' we asked. 'Whose birthday is it?'

'It's a secret!' the adults said.

Miss Cross was there, sitting next to the smiley Mrs Chalmers. Mrs Chalmers was doing a very good job with Miss Cross, because, for once, she was behaving herself this time!

We were all tucking into the cakes and desserts, when Charlie's dad stood up and banged his spoon on his glass.

'Attention everyone!' he called. We stopped talking.

'We just want you to know that this street party was secretly arranged by Mrs Chalmers in honour of the "Goodwill Gang". Thank you, Mrs Chalmers!' he said. Everyone clapped and cheered.

Mrs Chalmers beamed with pleasure as she spoke. 'We've always been a reasonably friendly street, but the Goodwill Gang has been such a good example to us all. Your little random acts of kindness have made our close an even better and nicer neighbourhood. Can you imagine, if every street in the entire world had a "Goodwill Gang", what a peaceful world this would be?'

'Hear! Hear! Three cheers for the Goodwill Gang,' the parents called. And then they all started singing, 'For they are jolly good fellows!' It was the best party ever!

And do you know? The next morning there were sixty-four balls on Miss Cross's front lawn with a sign inviting us to take them back.

Whoever would have thought it possible? Perhaps we were goodwill ambassadors after all!

Excerpted from chapter 6 of *Unforgettable Stories: 20 Stories for Teaching Children Values* (Autumn House, 2018)

1 JOHN 1

BEGINNING
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Environmental health – part 2

Protecting your living space

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,

BUC Director for Health, Adventist Community Services & Women's Ministries

This article looks at evidence-based ways to protect your home environment to safeguard well-being.

Medical News Today published an article on its website titled 'Living space and health: how urban design affects our well-being'.¹ The article went on to state: 'Researchers have shown that adequate housing has intimate links to a person's physical and mental well-being.' It further emphasised some specific health impacts: 'Insecure or unaffordable housing can exacerbate stress. Housing that is too hot or cold or exacerbates indoor air pollution can cause respiratory and cardiometabolic issues. Crowded housing or housing with a poor water supply can increase the spread of infectious diseases.'

Housing and health guidelines

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have produced guidance on maintaining a healthy home environment.² In their 'Housing and health guidelines' overview, they assert:

'Improved housing conditions can save lives, prevent disease, increase quality of life, reduce poverty, and help mitigate climate change. Housing is becoming increasingly important to health in light of urban growth, ageing populations and climate change.'³

The WHO guidelines provide recommendations on the following:

- Inadequate living space (crowding)
- Low and high indoor temperatures
- Injury hazards in the home
- Accessibility of housing for people with functional impairments
- Water quality
- Air quality
- Neighbourhood noise
- Asbestos
- Lead
- Tobacco smoke
- Radon

Tips for a more eco-friendly home

On their website, Biofriendly Planet posted an article titled: '12 small changes to make your home more eco-friendly'. Identifying single-use plastic and CO2 emissions as the major causes of pollution, they give suggestions for enabling a cleaner, healthier living space.

Prefacing their advice, Biofriendly Planet affirm: 'Not everybody can afford solar panels or Energy Star appliances, but we can all make smaller changes in our own homes. These changes are budget-friendly and they don't take a lot of time; they are, however, efficient and they can turn your home into an eco-friendly place.' Here are their 12 suggestions:

- **Wash your clothes in cold water** (if you are not dealing with stubborn stains).
- **Skip the dryer when possible** (dry clothes outside, or open your windows and use a dryer rack).
- **DIY instead of buying new** (visit <https://inspiredesignandcreate.com/> for cost-saving family projects).
- **Swap regular light bulbs for LED bulbs** (these use less electricity and are more environmentally friendly).
- **Use a programmable thermostat** (this monitors your heating and cooling systems, reducing the cost of utility bills, and also makes your home more eco-friendly).
- **Get a recycling bin and a compost bin** (a recycling bin encourages more conscious decisions about what should be recycled, and a compost bin makes best use of leftovers by using them as free fertiliser for plants). Both bins help reduce household waste.



- **Plant herbs** (create a herb garden space or grow herbs in small pots on your window sill. Fresh herbs are health-enhancing and improve the flavour of your dishes).
- **Decorate your home with plants** (potted plants are effective for indoor air cleaning, and they also make the home more welcoming).
- **Get window treatments** (adequate curtains and blinds help keep the heat and cold air outside, thereby helping to maintain room temperature).
- **Be smarter in the kitchen** (ovens use significant energy to warm up adequately: use other appliances for cooking quick items, such as toasting bread in a toaster instead of the oven).
- **Buy a water filter** (instead of buying bottled water in plastic bottles, use a water filter: it saves time and money, and helps reduce the amount of single-use plastic that ends up in landfill).
- **Use homemade natural cleaning products** (natural cleaning products are just as effective as the regular ones, without containing any harmful chemicals that are bad for the environment and your health; to reduce costs, make your own cleaning products using items like vinegar, baking soda, and lemon juice).

Good health!

¹<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/living-space-and-health-how-urban-design-affects-our-well-being> ²<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241550376> ³biofriendlyplanet.com/eco-friendly-tips/12-small-changes-to-make-your-home-more-eco-friendly/

Seventh-day Adventist leaders, Hertfordshire NHS & police collaborate on mental health

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

In a high-level strategy meeting held on Monday 16 January at the South England Conference office, Adventist leaders met with the Hertfordshire police force and NHS personnel to discuss the mental health agenda for communities within its region. Enoch Kanagaraj, founder & CEO of One Vision Charity, scheduled the meeting to give opportunity for the church to interface with leading community figures, bringing the faith and cultural element to their decision-making.

The mental health agenda

Sharon Platt-McDonald, who leads the Health, Adventist Community Services and Women's Ministries departments for our Adventist churches in the UK and Ireland, presented on the key elements of faith, culture, nutrition and exercise and their impact on mental well-being. She introduced the 'Community Connectors' that One Vision will be installing to lead on these four aspects of health, working in collaboration with Hertfordshire NHS to enhance the efficacy of their services in the black and Asian communities.

Daniel (Dan) Oyayoyi, Strategy Development Manager for Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, delivered an engaging and informative presentation spotlighting both achievements and deficits in their services, and the value of including faith leaders to assist their service development. Addressing the mental health strategy, Daniel acknowledged the positive impact that faith leaders could have in helping them to close current existing gaps and address the barriers that inhibit particular people groups from accessing their services. He raised the concern that less than 8% of people accessing their services are from faith groups, in spite of their mental health diagnosis.

It was heartening to see our Adventist pastors sitting in an advisory capacity with government agencies, extending their influence outside of the pulpit and contributing to the national agenda on well-being. As each pastor spoke, notes were taken by the attending health and police personnel, capturing the significant contributions made. Our Adventist pastors were Dr Jude Jeanville (Tottenham Lighthouse Adventist Church and Area 6A coordinator); Pastor Mohan Abbadasari (Grace Community and Hampstead Adventist churches); Dr Mario Phillip (Willesden Adventist Church); and Pastor Kwesi Moore (Holloway Adventist Church). In attendance from One Vision Charity was Enoch Kanagaraj (founder and CEO). Also attending were Eve Ricketts (CEO of Meeting Needs) and Sharon Platt-McDonald (a BUC director), along with several from the Watford Constabulary: Andy Wiseman (Chief Inspector of Police); Matt Langley (Inspector of Police); and Phil Smith (Police Sergeant).

Policing impact on mental well-being

The first segment of the meeting with members of the police force yielded much discussion around cultural

awareness and its impact on mental health. The attending policemen presented some of the challenges they encounter, the mistrust they see, and the areas of deficit they felt that faith groups were best placed to assist them with in their interactions with the community. Key discussions focused on community cohesion, communication barriers, and the significant part faith groups can play in unifying the community, stabilising tensions, reintroducing values and adding an element of hope.

Dr Mario Phillip emphasised the importance of collaborative working with external agencies on key issues impacting the community; Pastor Kwesi Moore highlighted the need for more work to help individuals reintegrate into society again following their mental illness diagnosis; and Pastor Mohan Abbadasari raised the sensitive issue of the dynamics between the police and the black and Asian communities. His question on how much training the police had in connecting with these communities revealed the fact that minimal training was given to the police. In a moving gesture, he requested that he pray for the police officers in their ongoing work, which they gratefully accepted.

Meeting reflections

Summarising the meeting outcomes and actions going forwards, Enoch Kanagaraj stated: 'It is not the responsibility of those with lived experiences to bring about the change. For faith leaders like us, receiving insights into these key issues is of great importance. The solution lies in a commitment to act, hear, listen, digest and react to the community we serve. I am delighted that today we went beyond conversation with the NHS to commit to action.'

Please continue to pray for our church administrators, leaders, pastors and members, as together we engage in collaborative outreach to diverse community groups, addressing their varied needs.



Faith leaders discuss cost-of-living crisis interventions in Parliament

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

Acknowledging the extent and impact of the cost-of-living crisis, Dean Russell, Watford MP, extended an invitation to faith leaders to attend a round-table discussion in Parliament. This key event was held in the Portcullis parliamentary building on Tuesday 13 December, where various faith group representatives were invited to present on the interventions they had undertaken to address the current crisis.

Among the invitees were Enoch Kanagaraj, CEO of One Vision Charity, who chaired the event; Harjit Singh, Chair of Watford Interfaith Association (WIFA), who gave the introduction to the meeting; Anthony Wagenersmith, from the Trans-European Division, who attended in an advisory capacity; and Sharon Platt-McDonald, who reported on some of her departmental outreach interventions.

Reflecting on the parliamentary visit, Dean Russell MP shared: 'It was a pleasure to host local faith leaders in Parliament, and to hear of the inspiring community initiatives that our local religious groups undertake, including the important interfaith activities and volunteering that happens every day. I look forward to further collaborative working to support the residents of Watford at this difficult time, and in the future.'

The meeting transpired as a rich collage of experiences, testimonials, sharing of ideas and charting the prospects for future interventions. Common to the discussion was the realisation that singular outreach can only reach so far, but collaborative efforts enhance the productivity and reach of the projects to a more diverse range of individuals.

Harjit Singh, DL, Chair of WIFA and Chair of the One Vision Charity Trustees, noted: 'During this crisis it is important that we are all equipped with useful resources to share with people in our organisations and neighbourhoods. When we all work together and build relationships with different faith communities, we can better help those in need.'

The aims of the round-table discussion with MP Dean Russell were as follows:

- Ascertain the sustainability of each faith group's initiative, and highlight areas in which they require extra support to maintain and develop their outreach.
- Establish a more integrative focus as faith groups come together to evaluate their own individual projects, and seek ways to expand the scope of their current work where necessary, or make their existing initiative more impactful.
- Seek ways to gather feedback from the recipients of their initiatives to establish efficacy, relevance and direction.
- Map the work of each faith group represented, to ascertain value-added aspects of their interventions.
- Look at ways in which a more coordinated approach can be undertaken to avoid duplication in local areas.

It was established that future meetings needed to be scheduled to explore the above aspects in detail, and to document a plan of action to forge the way ahead.¹

Following the meeting, individuals met and spoke with Labour leader Sir Kier Starmer and Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper. Later, in a tour undertaken by Dean Russell MP, Enoch Kanagaraj, a member of Stanborough Park Church, met with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, along with a few of the attending faith leaders.

Dr Jude Jeanville, the pastor of Tottenham Lighthouse SDA Church, attended as an invitee, via One Vision Charity, in view of his church's excellent outreach to its local community. Reflecting on the meeting, he shared: 'We have been called to be the salt of the earth: not to extricate ourselves from the real world, but to be involved in it, to permeate it, to mingle, minister, build relationships and win confidence; only so shall God's Kingdom come.'

Please continue to pray for our collaborative work with faith leaders as we reach out in practical and impactful ways, augmenting our interventions in order to meet the diverse needs of individuals in our communities – and, in so doing, reflecting Christ's love to all.

¹Attendees included: Harjit Singh, DL (Chair of WIFA & Chair of Trustees), Enoch Kanagaraj (Vice Chair of WIFA and CEO of One Vision), Sharon Platt-McDonald (Director of Adventist Community Services, BUC), Anthony Wagenersmith (Director of Adventist Mission, TED), Eve Ricketts (CEO of Meeting Needs), Judith Brunji (Executive Secretary of WIFA), Freddy Chester (Three Rivers Council), Shivani Dev (Three Rivers Council), Akhtar Zaman, DL (President of SAHA), Harwinder Singh (Watford Sikh Gurdwara), Alan Fisher (Watford Synagogue), Simon Cain (Bishop of Watford Latter-day Saints), Imam Shah (Watford Hospital Chaplain), Rev. Tony Rindl (St Mary's, Watford), Murabi Shazaib Athar (Watford Ahamadiya Muslims).



Changing lives, impacting communities

by Sharon Platt-McDonald & Pastor Sam Davies

An ITV News broadcast on Sunday 8 January 2023 featured the exceptional community outreach of the Tottenham Lighthouse Adventist church in their response to the cost-of-living crisis. Also interviewed was the church pastor, Dr Jude Jeanville, who shared the ethos for reaching out with tangible resources to those in need through their church's Food Hub.

The outreach

Realising the significant needs of individuals struggling to cope with soaring inflation, increased energy bills and rising fuel costs, Jeanville shared a vision with his church members, encouraging them to respond in practical ways that meet the daily needs of individuals unable to supply themselves and their families with essential items. Each week more than 250 community residents attend the Tottenham Lighthouse church to receive essential resources for their sustenance. Recipients of these generous donations receive fresh, dried and tinned foods and a range of household items, and have received cash to assist them in purchasing additional necessities on two occasions. The BUC Adventist Community Services donated 200 advent booklets in gift bags, distributed to attendees at the Food Hub on Sabbath 7 January. A cash donation (from the church) was enclosed in each booklet, making a total of £10,000 gifted to the community. This generous gesture was a focal point of the ITV News coverage.

The impact

Like many churches within the British Union Conference, Tottenham Lighthouse Church has been encouraged to be community-focused; and churches and individuals who have pursued this call have seen engagement from their community members and leaders, including politicians, who are often attracted to humanitarian efforts. Enoch Kanagaraj, who started a similar programme with the Stanborough Park church in Watford a few years ago, attended the Tottenham Lighthouse event to lend a hand. His efforts at the Stanborough Park church have also been a testament to attracting the attention of community leaders who favour humanitarian endeavours.

BUC Director Sharon Platt-McDonald stated: 'We saw, in that positive ITV News coverage, the British media broadcasting what they felt was a newsworthy report of interest and impact, important enough to share with the nation. The timely, compassionate, relational and consistent outreach of the Tottenham Lighthouse church is a wonderful example to the watching world, a



credit to our Seventh-day Adventist membership, and a witness of the power of the Gospel changing lives for the better in 2023.'

Community response

The BUC media team, represented by Kofi Osei-Owusu, attended on Sabbath, 7 January, to see Tottenham Lighthouse Church displaying love in action as they reached out to their community. Filming the interaction of church members and community attendees was a heart-warming experience. Recipients of the donated goods were thrilled to share their experiences with Kofi, with many sharing how the church's intervention had positively impacted their lives over the past two years. Many individuals accessing the Food Hub now also attend church services on Sabbath. One of these attendees is now a baptised member of the Tottenham Lighthouse church. This beautiful testimony demonstrates the power of love and truth to transform a life. May each of our churches become a lighthouse, shining out in the darkness of human need, bringing help, hope and healing to lives for restoration, and for God's glory.

Introducing Pastor Connie Hon Ni Tsang

by Johnson Wong

Photos: Michael Cheung

A new chapter

In September 2022, a new and exciting chapter began in the South England Conference with



the arrival of Pastor Connie Hon Ni Tsang, called via Global Mission directly from the General Conference, to form a church catering to the needs of the Chinese community in the South England Conference. Pastor Connie came from the Hong Kong-Macao Conference in Kowloon, Hong Kong, where she pastored the Bible Auditorium church, which has more than 400 members. She has come to England with her husband, Michael; their four young children, Aidan Cheung, Cadan Cheung, Eidan Cheung and Gabbie Cheung; and her mother, Luo Yun Ping. Before her arrival, Pastor Connie conducted services via Zoom from Hong Kong with various Chinese-speaking Adventists in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the UK and China.

Since her arrival, Pastor Connie and her family have visited the Stanborough Park church in Watford and the Philippine International Church (PIC). Regular meetings have been held at a church hall next to the PIC, and these

services have been led mainly by Pin (from Malaysia) and her husband David (from Hong Kong), together with David & Ley Budit (from Malaysia). However, those attending come from far and near, including Bristol, Nottingham, Birmingham in the north, and even mainland China! Sabbath schools are conducted in both Cantonese and Mandarin. Each Sabbath, before the services, the hall has to be prepared by Michael, Connie's devoted husband, and their boys, who arrange the chairs and set up the communication system. They are still looking for a more permanent place for worship.

I will go . . . in LOVE

Around 30 Chinese Adventists and friends attended her first service on Sabbath, 17 September, and she spoke on the topic, 'I will go . . . in LOVE!' When interviewed, Pastor Connie said, 'I do realise that there are many obstacles and challenges with my new assignment here in a new country. It is a real new beginning for my family and me. We have indeed opened a new page in our lives. However, as called by God, I believe, by His grace, together with the support of all the members and friends, WE shall face our challenges and obstacles with LOVE!'

A baptism!

We are delighted to report that the first baptism for the first candidate took place on Sabbath, 17 December, at the PIC, and a second baptism is anticipated in the spring of 2023.

Please join us in offering Pastor Connie and her family a warm welcome. We earnestly pray they will enjoy a successful and Spirit-filled ministry here in this country.

If you would like more information, to join the services or to offer your best wishes to Pastor Connie, you can contact her at: ctsang@secadventist.org.uk.

A great Sabbath of ordination in Corby

Reflecting on last year, everyone at Wellingborough, Corby and Kettering churches would like to highlight the special ordination of our regional deacons, deaconesses and elders. On 20 August 2022, church members and visitors from as far as Stevenage came to support this special day. After an enriching Sabbath School, the Corby SDA Church Pathfinders and Adventurers Club opened the main service, led by the club flag bearers and accompanied by all the children who were in attendance. It was a joyous sight that set the scene for a worshipful ceremony. Then our area pastor, Paul Dhanaraj, gave an insightful message about maintaining the ministry of our churches before the ordinations.

Firstly, those appointed to our deaconship teams were presented for ordination. It was wonderful to see so many brothers and sisters

supporting our churches. Secondly, our elders, Peter Dube (Corby Church), Daniel Muhwati (Kettering Church) and Thulani Moyo (Corby Church) were introduced with their wives and presented for ordination. Pastor Paul Dhanaraj made a call for all ordained elders to gather around the three as he asked for the blessing of the Holy Spirit upon the new elders as they continue in the furtherance of Christ's ministry. It was a beautiful moment of fellowship and holiness that will stay a cherished memory by all who witnessed it. Then the elders were commended with their pins and certificates.

After a spiritual feast, it was time for the physical, and everyone shared a

delicious meal (provided by the area hospitality team) before enjoying a musical afternoon programme. God has blessed many of our members in this area with musical gifts, and it was wonderful to meditate on the words and harmonies performed throughout the day. We thank God and the organising teams for making such a special day possible after a long delay due to COVID-19. We also ask you to join us in praying for our church elders, deaconship, and members in Area 7 so we may continue to be a light in our communities in 2023. We look forward to seeing what God has planned for us next!

ARIANA BRYANT AND PATIENCE CHIKETERO





Selwyn Davies makes history

After being taught the game of snooker by his late father, Grantham church member and deacon, Selwyn Davies, has been playing the game for over 40 years, and for many years at one of the local Grantham snooker clubs.

Selwyn, who originates from Aberdare, Wales, suffers from deafness, and has as his other sporting 'loves' table tennis and bowls. For the first time in his club's competition's history, deaf players filled the two top spots in the Handicap Singles League, one of them being 76-year-old Selwyn, beating his 70-year-old playing friend by two points. Selwyn achieved a high break of 70!

Throughout the years in Grantham, he has always been willing to offer his carpentry and woodworking skills to Grantham members, and has often been called out at 'odd hours' if there have been emergencies needing his attention. Several projects in the church show evidence of his skilled handiwork.

We wish him and his wife Pam well as they continue their regular attendance at various events in the Grantham church, as well as Sabbath services.

MIKE COWEN



As we write this article, the death toll from the 7.8 magnitude earthquake that rocked Syria and Turkey on Monday 6 February is at 11,000 and is set to rise. Scores of thousands more are injured, and it is estimated that 23 million people will be affected.

ADRA-UK needs your help to support those who are currently suffering. Please donate at: <https://adrauk.donr.com/emergencies>.

We also solicit your prayers for not only for those suffering, but for the humanitarian response to this crisis.

HOW TO DONATE

Our donations page is currently active: follow the link on the left. You can also scan this QR code, which will take you to the donations page.





Camp Hill ADRA fundraising day

The ADRA Fundraising Day at Camp Hill SDA Church on 30 October 2022 took place in the multi-purpose room.

A number of stands filled the space. The stall holders had hired tables for a very reasonable fee. The table fees made up part of the total amount raised. The stalls included fancy hats, T-shirts, casual wear, healthy snacks, hot food boxes, bottled lamps, greetings cards and books.

Among the books were an autobiography by Sister Judith Asare and a childrens' book series from My Future Careers by Sisters Jacqueline Halliday-Bell and Vanessa Bell.

The highlight of the afternoon was an auction of toys, kitchen equipment and clothing.

The total raised was £359.59. The monies will help the less privileged and care for those affected by disasters in places such as Ukraine, Pakistan, St Vincent, Beirut, Yemen, Thailand, South Sudan, Albania, the Philippines, Zambia and Uganda.

The team were very organised and worked well together setting up and breaking down the event. Those that attended had an enjoyable experience, and the money was for worthy causes – to help brothers and sisters in crisis.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL



'Rise and Lead' SEC youth retreat

What a wonderful weekend! Young people gathered from across the SEC, as well as a few from the NEC and the Welsh Mission, at Hay's Wood Retreat for the SEC's winter youth retreat, 'Rise and Lead'.

Our main speaker was Pastor Benjamin Lundquist, who is currently serving as Young Adult Ministries Director for the Oregon Conference, and also serves as the Young Adult Ministries Coordinator for the North American Division. He also hosts the 'Rise and Lead'

podcast, currently being downloaded in well over 115 countries. The 'Rise and Lead' podcast is designed specifically to motivate and equip listeners to live their greatest life with maximum impact.

We had plenty of team-building ice-breakers organised by Taryll Viviers (host and SEC Student Ministries lead) and Pastor Anthony Fuller, who had everyone getting to know one another.

One of the key things that I took away from Pastor Benjamin's message was that 'the words we speak about our own lives matter.' He used the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) to illustrate that your identity, and who you say you are, has a real impact in your life. It was the prodigal son who devalued himself, but the father saw only the son that he loved, not his mistakes and failings, which is true of our Heavenly Father too. He highlighted four steps to live by:

- Steward the words you say about yourself.
- Write a positive declaration statement about yourself daily.
- Surround yourself with people who affirm and recognise what God has put around you.
- Affirm worth and value in others. 'Know who you are and whose you are!'

Pastor Anthony emphasised that we need to run our own race at our own pace, and that comparison can be a killer. Having run several marathons, he has noticed first-hand the physical and mental effects of trying to run someone else's race – for example, sprinting to pass someone, only to be overtaken several miles down the road because you've exhausted all your energy too quickly by trying to stay ahead of everyone else. Pastor Benjamin pointed out that 'we often compare our year one to others' year twenty.' Each of us has been called to greatness, and we need to focus on what God has put in front of us.

Pastor Benjamin took us through the key points of how to 'rise and lead' ourselves and others, drawing on key Bible characters like David, Nehemiah and the woman at the well for their humility and unwavering faith in God to follow the assignment He had given them. He also pointed out that it is God who gives us worth and value – no one else. Our first calling is to God, and the second is to have an impact on the world. We need to be faithful and fruitful to the assignment God has given us. Every assignment matters, so give 110%.

We are all leaders, and one of our key assignments is to develop others. God will expand our sphere of influence on the quality of our character. David led on the principle of serving, humbly obeying his father and his Heavenly Father, despite others, including his father, saying he wasn't good enough in three recorded events.

After Pastor Benjamin shared on Sunday morning, Taryll spoke about being comfortable with being uncomfortable. He emphasised that we need to slow down and move at the pace of grace, live life with purpose, and sacrifice potential to get to purpose.

Many commented on the relaxing atmosphere of the retreat and praised the speakers for their inspirational words of encouragement. Always remember that you have survived 100% of your bad days, and you must believe in yourself the way God believes in you!

JENNIE HALL

British Union Conference
in Collaboration with, and hosted by: The South England Conference.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES EMPHASIS DAY 2023

DATE: 10 JUNE 2023 | TIME: 10AM

Speakers:
SHARON PLATT-MCDONALD
HEATHER DAWN SMALL
JACQUELINE OTOKPA

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DR RENE DRUMM

JURYS INN HINCKLEY
Watling St, Hinckley, LE10 3JA
United Kingdom

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,
I often read the *MESSENGER* online so as to know what goes on in our Christian denomination.

This week (13/01/2023) I read that the brethren think it justifiable to advise the members on what they eat – that is to say, vegan food. This advice is based on what the Bible in Genesis tells us God gave Adam and Eve as food. It is of no concern to me what people eat, or drink, for that matter. However, although just a mere retired mechanically trained person who has been machining metal bits and the like during his working life, I still try to think logically. So, to come to my point, if the brethren who are trained scholars in Bible matters advise us what to eat based on Genesis 1, I then wonder what they will advise next . . . perhaps what we should clothe ourselves with? I read in Genesis that God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins. This would biblically be correct, but in contradiction to the vegan ruling. This means that our reasoning is ill prepared and probably not correct.

I think that I will stick to advice from the Bible, and not that of men, as it is written: what goes into the mouth does not make man unclean, but what comes out of the mouth (Matthew 15:11).

COR SANDERS

SEC Ministerial Department

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Discipleship & Stewardship
11 & 12 March 2023 | Glasgow Seventh-day Adventist Church
Dr Kayle de Wool, the TED Education Director, holds a doctorate degree in New Testament from the University of Auckland. He has a vast amount of experience in pastoral and evangelistic mentoring. His research work includes study on discipleship and membership growth.

Culture, Worldview & Faith
22 April 2023 | Dundee Seventh-day Adventist Church
Dr Jeff Cousins holds a doctorate degree in Multicultural and Multiracial Mission and Ministry. The specific topic of his research was 'An Evangelism and Discipleship Pathway to Address the Cultural and Worldview Distance Between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Majority British Culture.'

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26 February	Hyland House	10am-2pm
5 March	SEC elders & deacons retreat – Windsor DeVere (3-5 March)	
12 March	Salford Church	10am-2pm
19 March	New ABC shop launch at Salisbury Hall, Newbold	11am-1pm

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

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Jessica stands in the middle with the gifts

Baptism at Central London

On Sabbath 3 December, a beautiful young lady called Jessica gave her heart to Jesus in baptism. With her Columbian family and friends looking on, and with her Central London Church family watching and witnessing the joy of her special Sabbath day, we all could imagine the happiness in Heaven as a child returned to the fold.

Jessica Castaneda grew up in CLC and attended with her family as a child, but recently felt impressed that now is the time to become serious in her faith; she felt the calling of God to secure her salvation, and was impressed that time was running out. She soon requested baptism and Bible studies. With the blessing of the leadership and the church board, the date was set for her to be baptised. Many members from Spanish-speaking congregations came to support her; and, with her daughter Jeyda reading her favourite Bible text, she was ready for her new life. We are all excited for the journey Jessica will take, and we know that her faith in God will keep her strong in Jesus. After the baptism, Jessica was officially welcomed into fellowship and presented with gifts from the church family.

COMMUNICATION TEAM

Baptism of a little angel

On 7 January 2023, Natalia Cervantes gave her heart to Jesus in baptism at the Central London church. Natalia, the daughter of Adventist parents Berenice and Julio, and the niece of a church elder, Keyla, was determined that she was ready for baptism when prepared for baptism by her parents and the pastor's wife, Patricia, and her extended family.

Natalia is only ten years old, but showed many signs of maturity on her Christian walk, and gave signs of eagerness and dedication to make her stand for Christ. Her family and friends joined her to witness this emotional service. There was not a dry eye in the church as she went down in the waters, coming up with newness of life.

All involved with preparing her agreed and were happy to submit her name for baptism, including the church board; all were full of joy, and happy for her decision.

Natalia is a prefect at her school, and we believe she will be a good example because of her faith in Christ. The whole church celebrated with her after the baptism, and she was officially received into fellowship. She was excited to receive her gifts, which were presented by local church elders and Pastor Colin. Please continue to pray for Natalia as she journeys on.

CLC COMMUNICATIONS



Natalia, holding her flowers while surrounded by her family and friends

Wellingborough Seventh-day Adventist Church begins the new year with five souls saved for God

What a way to begin the year! On 7 January 2023, the first Sabbath of the new year, Heaven celebrated with the Wellingborough Adventist church family as five souls were won for the Kingdom of God. The five candidates – Raina Elise Abacan, Rhys Erville Abacan, Lani Mokeira Bwamosa, Lenny Barongo Bwamosa, and Joshua Tavonga Nganunu – decided to embrace Christ wholeheartedly after some time of studying. In his stirring sermon, Pastor Paul Dhanaraj exhorted the audience to spread the Gospel and win souls for Christ.



Wellingborough's five new family members with Pastor Paul Dhanaraj

When he baptised them, Pastor Paul remarked, 'Two years ago we never dreamed of a church opening, but today we stand with five youth for Christ and thank the elders and church family for their service.' As

church members welcomed the candidates into fellowship, presents were given to each candidate at the conclusion of the baptismal service.

WELLINGBOROUGH COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Raymond (Ray) Wild (1922-2022) d. 23 March.

On Wednesday 23 March 2022 Ray Wild took his last breath, knowing that when he opened his eyes he would see his Friend Jesus. Born on 6 October 1922 in Stoke-on-Trent, Ray served in the 4th West Lancaster Regiment and 51st Highlanders Fusiliers as an artillery spotter, and saw battles in the well-known campaign of the battle of Nijmegen and the relief of Arnhem. He had an athletic build and played a number of sports in his youth, football being his favourite. His potential was clear to see: he had trials at Wolverhampton Wanderers and Stoke City, and often talked about his experience playing against the great Stanley Matthews, which he never forgot. But football wasn't as stable a career then as it is today, so Ray decided to become an elementary teacher and retired in this profession. Many of the thank-you letters and notes of appreciation are testament to his love and care for children. He was also a generous man who would do whatever it took to help anyone in need. I can remember as a young minister at Stoke I would feel a hand sneak into my jacket pocket and, looking around, see Ray walking away. Later, when I slipped my hand into my pocket, a smile would brighten my face as I held a £20 note.



It was an evangelistic campaign in 1947 by the late Pastor Dan Handysides that led Ray and his wife to surrender their lives to Christ, whom they grew to love over their many years serving the church. Ray was a committed elder and lay preacher for many years at the Stoke Seventh-day Adventist church, and was a kind, patient man who loved taking the Sabbath School class and helping members and visitors understand their Bibles better. Such was his love for people that he became integral in the planting of new churches in Cannock, Crewe, Northwich Stockton Brook, and Alsager. He was a soldier in the army of God, and leaves behind his children, Christopher and Patricia; six grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren, and will be sorely missed. May he now rest as he awaits the return of his Friend and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PASTOR CARLTON DOUGLAS

Winetha Windell Newsome (1933-2022) d. 29 November.

Winetha was born in Elderslie District, St Elizabeth, Jamaica, to Vincent Gentles and Jemima Gentles on 30 June 1933. Winetha was the second of four children, of which only one remains: Valen Brown, residing in the United Kingdom. She was brought up within the Baptist faith, but joined the Seventh-day Adventist faith in her early twenties, and it remained an integral part of her life throughout. She and Sylvester, her husband, ensured that all their children were taught of



the Lord, as daily family worship was an integral part of the Newsome household, with Sylvester leading.

Winetha was an energetic, jovial, and caring person. She loved cooking for her family and quietly sharing and giving, both at home and abroad, without any thought of reciprocation. Hospitality was her speciality, and she delighted in people visiting her home. As well as being a gentle wife and mother, Winetha loved her church and was actively involved, particularly in the diaconate and community services departments. One of Winetha's great loves was Ingathering, which she looked forward to every year. She received many acknowledgements for being the top collector in Edmonton, her local church.

Sylvester always longed to return to Jamaica, and this dream was realised in 1991 when, along with Winetha, he retired to Mount Salem, St James, where they both immersed themselves in church life in the Mount Salem Seventh-day Adventist church. Winetha returned to England in 2002, as Sylvester was ill, and she needed the support of her children to care for him. He fell asleep peacefully in the Lord at 10.15am on 25 May 2005.

Winetha enjoyed good health and a full and active life until she became ill in 2019. Winetha loved listening to and singing the old songs of Zion. It was not unusual to hear her burst into singing at 2am, waking you out of your deep sleep! She maintained her humorous and calm disposition throughout her illness, and quietly and peacefully went to sleep at 4am on 29 November 2022.

Winetha leaves behind three sons: Waldron, Kingsley, and Dave; five daughters: Gen, Eugenie, Audrey, Kerralyn, and Sylvia; twenty-eight grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren; one sister, Valen Brown; and many nieces and nephews.

AUDREY BROOKS (DAUGHTER)

Rowena Bird Futcher (1925-2022) d. 12 December.

Rowena Bird Futcher was born in London in 1925 to Alfred Bird and Constance Baldwin Bird, and died in Temple, Texas, on 12 December 2022. As a child of a Seventh-day Adventist preacher, she moved many times in her childhood, living in various towns in England and Wales. In 1947, Rowena graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in London with her LRAM in piano. She got engaged on graduation day to Wilfred Futcher, getting married in 1948. Wilfred and Rowena lived in the Walford (England) area for several years, where Rowena taught music and piano at Stanborough School. They also spent two years in Nigeria and three years in Canada (Oshawa, Toronto). In 1969, Wilfred and Rowena settled at Andrews University, Michigan. Rowena worked in human resources, taught piano, and volunteered as a church musician.



During the 35 years she lived at Andrews University, she entertained many friends and students at her house with delicious food and great company, including many teachers and students who had come to Andrews from all over the world. She also enjoyed gardening and travelling, making memorable trips to England, Italy, Canada, Russia, and all over the States. Many of these trips involved Romola and Brian Combridge, her sister and brother-in-law (now deceased). Rowena is survived by her daughter, Beverley (Scheider), and son-in-law, David Scheider; three grandchildren: Jessica Stautberg, Brendan Scheider, and Kimberly Ayala; and eight great-grandchildren: Futcher, Ethan, Coen, William, Hattie, Owen, Emery, and Maddie, who all live in Texas. She is also survived by her bonus family: LuAnn and Walter Bermeo, their six children, and three grandchildren, who live in Michigan.

BEVERLEY SCHEIDER

Messenger

Volume 128 • 2 – 24 February 2023

Editor: Julian Thompson

Design: David Bell

Proof reading: Andrew Puckering

Production and distribution: Peter Oppong-Mensah

COPY FOR No. 4 – 30 March 2023

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The Editor may alter, clarify, précis or expand articles sent to him if he thinks it necessary.

Published monthly on Fridays by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For general enquiries, email: info@stanboroughpress.org.uk

Printed in the UK.

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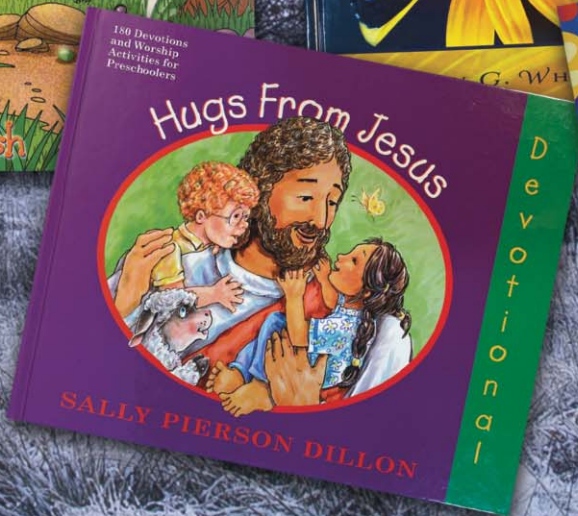
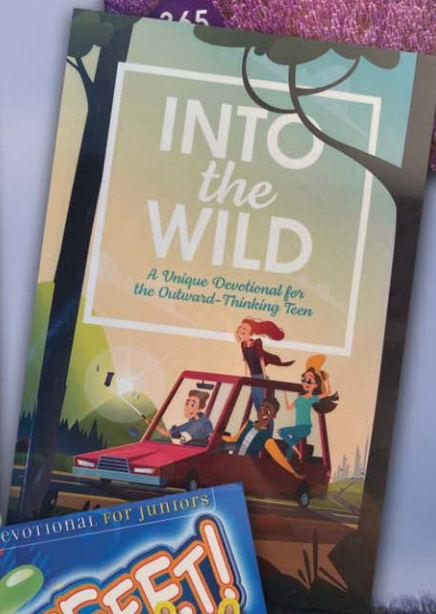
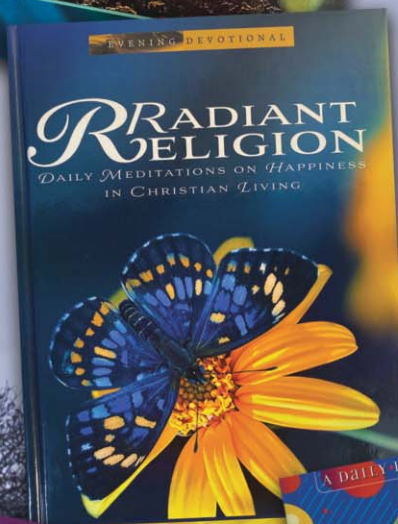
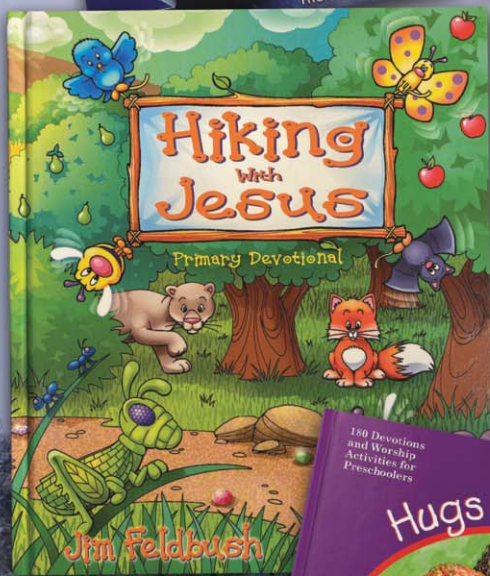
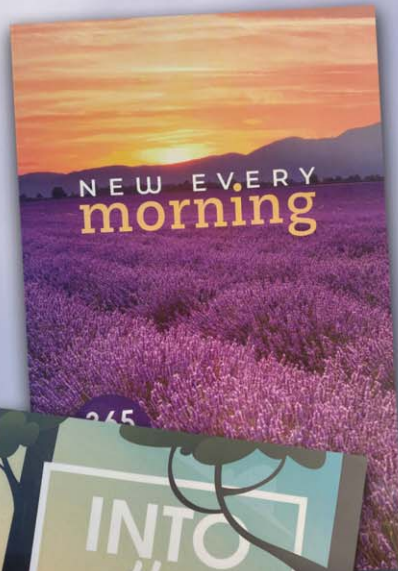
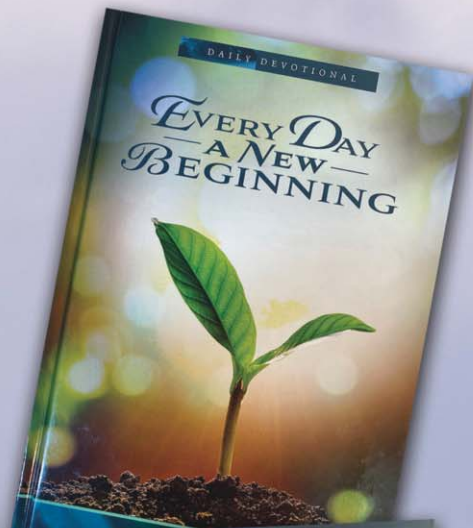
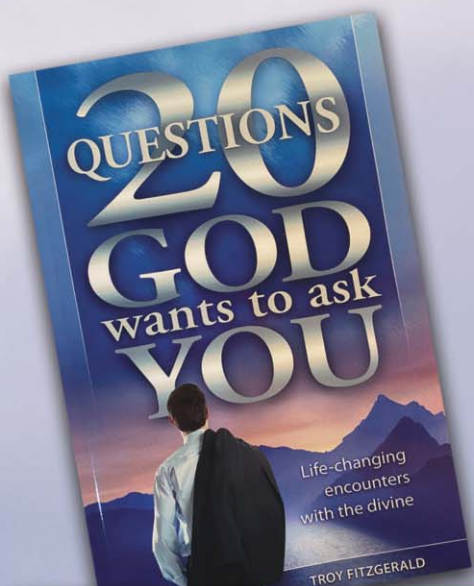
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Feb 24	5.31	5.44	5.33	5.36	5.49
Mar 3	5.44	5.56	5.46	5.51	6.03
10	5.56	6.08	5.59	6.05	6.17
17	6.08	6.20	6.12	6.20	6.31
24	6.20	6.32	6.25	6.34	6.44

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