

Messenger

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

Established 1902

Balancing faith and fitness
A legacy of compassion
Faith and Mental Health
Conference in Parliament
Embrace a meaningful season
Fun Zone
The Welsh Mission
Day of Fellowship
News, notices & baptisms

24 November 2023 • Volume 128 • 11

+ BUC Youth Day 2023: 'God Restores'

Show me the money

Our spending demonstrates
our priorities



Strategic Priority (11) – Finance

Aim:

- Rationale for the use of income and the need for expenditure should be based 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.

Objectives:

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



Show me the money

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,
President of the British Union Conference

Dr James Frick, a former vice-president of public relations at the University of Notre Dame, said, 'Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money, and I'll tell you what they are.' Matthew 6:21 states, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (KJV).

As I reflect on the quote and the accompanying scripture, I've asked myself the following questions:

- How are the strategic priorities of the British Union Conference evident through the use of its finances?
- In what ways is our use of income and the need for expenditure based on enhancing the mission of the church and fulfilling our charity requirements to demonstrate ongoing public benefit?
- Are we consistent in applying sound business principles to all our financial decisions?

Financial jurisprudence

One of the strengths of the British Union Conference is that our Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Wederly Aguir, is cognisant that there are the *three faces of Adventist identity* for the BUC: charity, church, and corporation (see his 29 September *MESSENGER* article). In addition to this, under his leadership the Treasury team has been restructured and is working to review policies and introduce more stringent procedures and guidelines for the use of finances.

Wederly is writing a monthly column for *MESSENGER* called 'Faith and Finances' where he provides insight not only into the figures and data, but into the management decisions that underpin the use of the finances.

In addition to this, under the guidance of the BUC Executive Committee, we need to create a sustainability plan to support the operations of the British Union Conference. This complements the current BUC strategic priorities.

Innovation and creativity

Since taking up the reins in December 2021, I have spent much time in prayer and reflection about the members, governance and role of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Our book membership is approximately 42,000.

If the Gospel Commission is our primary focus, shouldn't this be reflected in how we spend our finances? Evangelism in the twenty-first century requires a different set of tools. As part of our *Reflecting Hope* initiative, 150 people were trained to use their mobile phones as digital evangelists. Dedicated adverts were placed on Facebook to reach a contemporary audience.

As part of that initiative, the Scottish Mission conducted a two-week bike ride through the Shetland Islands, an unentered territory, with more than sixty-eight contacts interested in the Adventist faith. These are only two of the numerous ways in which finances are used in our mission and witness.

Appreciation

Despite the cost-of-living crisis, I thank God for the continued faithfulness of our members who consistently give to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in this territory. From willing hearts, they provide much-needed funds for the work of the Lord. I am reminded of the old hymn by John Greenleaf Whittier:

All things are Thine: no gift have we,
Lord of all gifts, to offer Thee;
And hence with grateful hearts today
Thine own before Thy feet we lay.

Editorial

by Dusanka Rancic,
Editor

EDITORIAL

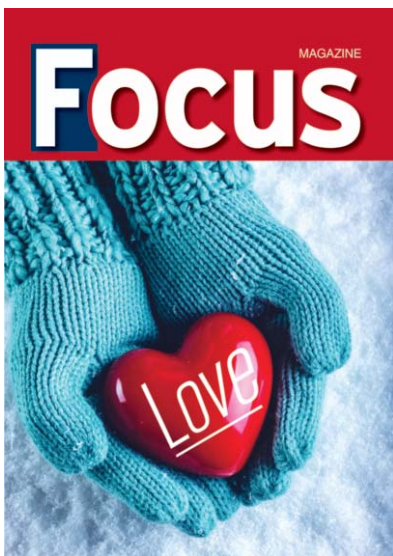


Dear reader,
I love autumn.

To be honest, I try to appreciate each season. There are few things that are more enjoyable than soaking in the sun on warm summer days, watching the trees and flowers bloom in the spring, taking in the stunning hues of autumn, or hoping for a little snowfall this winter so we can play outside with our children.

This world, which has been impacted by sin for so long, is still breath-takenly beautiful and frequently leaves us in awe.

And, as I watch autumn fading away and winter drawing near, there is this special atmosphere of anticipation that the end of the year brings. December is just around the corner, and we cannot help but notice that people have already started to prepare for Christmas.



So how do you feel about it? Are you about to start making preparations as well, or will you try to distance yourself from Christmas as much as possible? I would love to encourage you to find a connection with someone who is indifferent to or unaware of the true meaning of Christmas. But do not spend time explaining to them that Jesus was not actually born on 25 December; instead, share your convictions about Him. Share the story about the baby who 'was created of a mother whom He had created . . . was carried by hands that He had formed . . . cried in the manger in wordless infancy: He, the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute' (Augustine).

Also, share your story. Tell them how this baby, the King of Heaven, changed your life; how Jesus was the greatest gift of all; and how 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above' (James 1:17, NKJV).

People are more receptive to discussing spiritual matters and listening to the story of Jesus during the Christmas season. Present them with the latest edition of *Focus*, which tells what Christmas is all about. You can inspire them to do good and show kindness, like Jesus did.

Let's embrace the opportunity to bring out the real meaning of Christmas and introduce the real Jesus to people – not only during this festive season, but every day of the year.

CONTENTS



6-7 – **A legacy of compassion**



14-15 – **BUC Youth Day 2023: 'God Restores'**

10 – **Faith and Mental Health Conference in Parliament**



16-23 – **News, notices & baptisms**



Balancing faith and fitness – a closer look at Adventists' health in the UK

by Hezron Ottey

As a lifetime member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have always been inspired by its teachings and beliefs, particularly its profound commitment to holistic well-being. It was this deep connection to my faith that ignited my passion for research, leading me on a remarkable journey to explore how Adventist beliefs intersect with physical activity (PA) and exercise. This journey included two consecutive scholarships at Loma Linda University in California. Loma Linda is considered the epicentre and pioneer of Adventist research.

My doctoral research, titled 'The Impact of Seventh-day Adventist Structures, Beliefs, and Practices on the Willingness of Members to Engage in PA or Exercise', delved into an aspect of Adventist life that is often overshadowed by other overt teachings and habits, such as dietary practices. Yet, as I discovered in my research, the Adventist approach to PA holds valuable lessons for everyone, transcending religious boundaries and offering insights that can benefit us all.

In the following articles, my objective is to share the deep insights I gained on physical health and well-being among UK Adventists during my research journey. We will explore the context – the broader essence of the church's health teachings and promotions – as well as the unique aspects of Adventist beliefs that influence the willingness of members to engage in PA or exercise.

This exploration is not only informative, but also deeply inspiring, as it highlights how faith and wellness can harmoniously coexist, enriching our lives in unexpected ways.

The globally recognised approach to health among Adventists can be attributed to the significant contributions of Ellen G. White. She played a pivotal role in structuring the health message, defining its nature, purpose, content, practices, applications, methodologies for promotion, contextualisation, and exceptions. Her influence extended to outlining how the principles of the Adventist health message are applied to contemporary times, aligning with the practices, habits, and lifestyles of the modern world through a careful analysis and evaluation in the light of biblical principles.

As we explore the rich tapestry of Adventist beliefs, one remarkable thread stands out – Adventists' unwavering commitment to health. This commitment has not only been a cornerstone of the Adventist lifestyle, but has also made members subjects of fascinating population health studies. These studies have revealed a profound connection between faith and longevity.

One such study, known as the Adventist Health Study, conducted with more than 90,000 Adventists at Loma Linda (a recognised Blue Zone) in the United States, yielded astonishing findings. It revealed that Adventist men enjoy an average lifespan that exceeds the national average by a staggering 7.3 years, while Adventist women outlive their non-Adventist counterparts by an impressive 4.4 years (Butler et al., 2008; Leibow et al., 2021).

These statistics, while remarkable, offer just a glimpse into the powerful impact of Adventist beliefs on health and well-being. They raise a fundamental question. What is it about the Adventist beliefs that contributes to such impressive longevity?

One key factor is Adventists' commitment to a healthy lifestyle that is not limited to a plant-based diet, or vegetarianism, but also includes regular exercise and avoidance of harmful habits like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. These and other health practices are deeply rooted in the Adventist faith, and the scientific community is increasingly acknowledging the positive impact that this has on health.

As we delve into the Adventist beliefs and their profound impact on health, it is essential to recognise that the journey towards well-being is not uniform across the global Adventist community. My research (conducted between 2020 and 2023), which focused on viewing the correlation between religious practice and PA levels among Adventists in the UK, unveiled fascinating insights that shed light on this unique aspect of an Adventist's lifestyle.

In my comprehensive analysis of the church population in the UK, a crucial finding emerged. Although most of the participants (55%) reported participating in some form of regular PA or exercise, with common choices including running and walking, only 30% met the Government's recommended guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA (MVPA) per week. This discovery underscores the importance of understanding the intersection between faith and



physical well-being within the context of the Adventist Church.

However, when viewed from a correlational perspective, the study revealed a possible disparity between the religiosity of the participants and their levels of PA. This clear recognition of the limited connection between religiosity and increased PA levels among the Adventists in the study emphasises the necessity for additional exploration and understanding of the specific factors and interventions that can genuinely promote PA within the SDA Church.

It's important to recognise that Adventist beliefs, which emphasise health as a central tenet of our faith, transcend geographical boundaries. However, the interpretation and practice of these beliefs can vary from region to region. The results of my study reflect not only the commitment of Adventists in the UK to health, but also the unique challenges they face in achieving the recommended levels of PA.

This revelation presents an opportunity for growth and transformation within the church. It calls for a closer examination of the factors that influence PA levels and the development of strategies to promote, encourage, and support healthier lifestyles. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of

dialogue and collaboration between the church and public health organisations to promote overall well-being.

It's crucial to recognise that Adventist beliefs are deeply rooted in biblical foundations. The Bible serves as the cornerstone of the Adventist health message. The Bible not only emphasises the value of life and the body as a divine gift, but also provides profound wisdom on how to care for it. Its teachings on health and self-discipline have guided generations of Adventists towards a path of holistic well-being, serving as the spiritual underpinning of our approach to health.

In 2021, I had the privilege of interviewing an Adventist who featured in Dan Buettner's *Blue Zone* episode and John Snow's documentary *How to Live to 100*, the late Dorothy Zane. She strongly advocated that regular PA was a key component to her longevity. Her life story exemplified the profound connection between faith, fitness, and the remarkable gift of a long and vibrant life.

Jesus Christ, during His earthly ministry, led a physically active life. He and His disciples, in essence, formed a 'walking group', journeying on foot to share the Gospel. This aligns with our current Sabbath School theme, 'God's Mission to Us',

highlighting how Jesus kept the early church physically active as they fulfilled their mission. It's a powerful reminder that a spiritually and physically active church is essential for an effective mission.

Recognising the holistic essence of the health message is paramount, encompassing the well-being of individuals and the entire community. Assessing the application of these health principles necessitates the cultivation of awareness and their effective promotion. This is best achieved through an ongoing and reciprocal dialogue involving three integral pillars within the church: the pastor, the health leader, and general members. Together, they form a cohesive force, working towards a healthier and more spiritually connected congregation.

Effective promotion of health principles is not just a task for one group; it is a collective effort that involves the entire church community. The pastor plays a crucial role in setting the tone and encouraging members to embrace a healthy lifestyle that is in line with their faith. The health leader or department serves as a valuable resource for information, guidance, and organisation of health-related initiatives. And, most importantly, it's the members who are the heart and soul of the church, making individual choices that collectively contribute to the well-being of the entire congregation.

In the articles to come, we will delve deeper into these aspects and explore the ways in which faith and health intersect within the Adventist context. We will also shed light on practical strategies to promote PA, make healthy choices, and nurture a harmonious relationship between faith and wellness. It is my hope that these discussions will inspire and empower our church community to live out the principles of holistic well-being, enhancing not only our spiritual journey, but also our physical vitality.

As we embark on this series, let us remember that health is not just an individual pursuit, but a collective endeavour – a reflection of our shared commitment to fulfilling God's mission, not only in word, but also in action.



A legacy of compassion

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau

It's the end of an era. After eighteen years as ADRA-UK's CEO, Pastor Bert Smit will retire. One of his accomplishments was increasing strategic partnerships with government agencies, which significantly increased the charity's funding. These collaborations allowed ADRA-UK to deliver aid to more communities worldwide through disaster relief and long-term development projects addressing food security, access to clean water, education, and healthcare.

Ian Sweeney, a long-serving chair of the ADRA-UK board, said, 'I began serving in the role of ADRA-UK chair in 2011, and, thanks to Pastor Bert, my knowledge and appreciation of the work of ADRA and its network across the globe grew. Bert invited me to see and film the work of three projects that ADRA-UK was involved with,* an eye-opener to the impact of ADRA in easily overlooked communities. I also witnessed Bert's love for people and desire to improve lives and communities. Pastor Bert will be missed, but his retirement is well deserved.'

Bert's dedication to accountability and transparency resulted in rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes, ensuring that donor funds were used effectively. This earned ADRA-UK the trust of donors and supporters, resulting in increased financial support. Bert is an innovator who

introduced several digital fundraising platforms to raise both awareness and income.

Tristan Simmonds, a trustee, says: 'Bert was on a quest to revolutionise ADRA-UK's fundraising capabilities, and extended a compelling invitation to me – to become a member of the board of trustees. One initial directive he provided was an invitation to venture into the field and witness ADRA in action. This led me to Ghana, where I observed our support for local communities in refining their farming techniques. I vividly recall the countless miles and hours spent going from one project site to another over several days. The distinctive ADRA signs showcased projects in progress. The immense geographical reach of ADRA's programmes was astounding. I've been humbled to assist ADRA-UK by expanding its footprint and transforming lives.

'Bert has been instrumental in keeping ADRA-UK relevant in an ever-evolving landscape, including by adapting our fundraising strategies. Over the past decade, the Annual Appeal has dwindled in significance and novel fundraising methods have proved critical. Door-to-door appeals came to an end with COVID-19, and the direct debit scheme has provided alternative income. Bert has consistently championed these innovative ideas.

'Today, ADRA-UK is vastly different to how it was when I joined fifteen years ago. Bert's pivotal leadership has ensured the organisation's relevance both nationally and abroad. He leaves behind a remarkable legacy and a dedicated team that have benefited millions around the globe.'

Bert also strengthened ADRA-UK's advocacy, understanding that

lasting change required us to address the root causes of poverty and inequality. Another trustee, Jennifer Phillips, says: 'Bert is a progressive thinker, which made him very personable and easy to engage with. My fondest memories of Bert are from the trip to Nepal in 2017, where I got to know his spiritual and social side, which helped me enjoy my role and believe in the work.' Under his guidance, ADRA-UK engaged in meaningful advocacy campaigns, pushing for policies and practices that supported social justice, gender equality, and sustainable development.

Howa Avan-Nomayo, Chief Programmes Officer, recalls how this was demonstrated: 'Bert never failed to take an interest in those whom others might overlook, from his unwavering commitment to the team in Chad and its people to the profound friendship he forged with the chief of a small village in Bazèga, Burkina Faso. His enduring connection and genuine concern for his family's journey long after his visit reminded us of the vital importance of truly seeing and valuing individuals amid the busyness of projects, funding challenges, and regional or geopolitical hurdles. This taught us to prioritise individuals and their life journeys, even as we work diligently to secure resources for funding numerous projects that reach hundreds of thousands of people globally. We must prioritise compassion and love for all. This will be one of his lasting legacies.'

Furthermore, Smit's ability to inspire and lead was remarkable. He fostered a culture of dedication and compassion, ensuring that everyone shared his commitment to serving the less fortunate. This made it possible for ADRA-UK to



consistently deliver high-impact projects and maintain its lead in the humanitarian sector. Helia Mateus, Chief Finance Officer, said, 'Bert is a caring and capable manager. He navigated ADRA-UK for almost two decades, sometimes behind the scenes, listening and giving the opportunity for his team to take the lead and develop. He has an eye for a good story and can bring it to life in pictures and video like no one else. A lot of the pictures and images that have touched your hearts and minds over the years on the ADRA-UK website, promotional materials, and videos have originated with Bert.'

As Bert prepares to retire at the end of the year, he leaves behind an indelible mark on ADRA-UK. His

career testifies to the power of dedication, innovation, and compassion. Dr Helen Rodd, an ADRA-UK trustee, said: 'It has been an absolute privilege to work as an ADRA trustee under Bert's wonderful leadership. He never failed to inspire and encourage everyone he met, and his commitment to improving the lives of others has been truly outstanding. His voice of reason, insight and knowledge of the world will be very much missed. I wish him all the very best in his retirement, and I know he will continue to hold the ADRA mission very close to his heart.'

Under his leadership, ADRA-UK has transformed countless lives, providing hope and assistance to

those in need. Dr Steve Logan tells a moving story: 'After several days of travelling in the African heat, I recall sitting with Bert on a rock, watching a dozen or so incredibly fast and skilful teenagers play some very impressive football in the evening light. We were in Tamale, Ghana, and it was my first overseas trip as an ADRA trustee. We'd seen all sorts of things and experienced first-hand the enormous impact of ADRA. All those committee meetings in rainy Watford seemed very far away. Bert said, "This is why we do it!" and I knew exactly what he meant. It was so foreign and yet so familiar.'

Bert's legacy is one of unwavering commitment to the most vulnerable in our global community. As he passes on the torch, ADRA-UK remains poised to continue its mission, building on past successes and embracing future challenges. Smit's impact on ADRA-UK and the countless lives it touches will endure for years to come.

**Burkina Faso, Nepal and Sri Lanka*



The use of tithe: what happens to my tithe?

by Wederly Aguiar, *BUC Treasurer*



When members faithfully return their tithe, they may be curious about its use. While certain assumptions might exist about the handling of tithe, in this article, as part of our commitment to being more transparent, the actual process from the moment you return your tithe will be clarified.

Before we say how tithe is used, it is good to establish the purpose of tithe. Numbers 18:21 (NIRV) states: 'The Israelites will give me a tenth of everything they produce. And I will give it to the Levites. They serve at the tent of meeting. I will give them the tenth for the work they do there.'

God's intention for introducing tithe suggests a special bond between Him and us. We return to God what is rightfully His in gratitude for the blessings we have received (Deuteronomy 12:5, 6). He wants the act of returning tithe to be a blessing in two ways: firstly, it's a way of showing kindness and compassion that can be especially meaningful to those who face life's challenges; secondly, it has far-reaching benefits for those on the receiving end. This connection is about sharing the good news and helping people find salvation.

Malachi 3:10 instructs us to 'bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house' (ESV). It must be used in the way God intended. Stringent policies ensure that tithe is managed effectively on a global scale. It is also important to remember that freewill offerings play a huge role in

supporting different functions at each level of our church.

These are the main uses of tithe:

- The support of evangelists, pastors and frontline workers: this is the primary use of tithe; it accounts for salaries, allowances, benefits and expenses of individuals involved in direct ministry.
- The support of personnel who provide administrative leadership and services for the evangelistic outreach and nurturing ministries of the church: to ensure that the work on the front line is being done effectively, a support team is needed to oversee their efforts.
- The expenses necessary to undergird the evangelistic outreach and nurturing ministries of the church, such as education, which receives a proportion of tithe funds, though the majority is funded through non-tithe funds.
- The support of functions considered essential to the evangelistic outreach and nurturing ministries of the church.

Following Malachi 3:10, the Adventist Church has appointed local conferences and missions to be storehouses, and the General Conference establishes the framework of how tithe may be used and distributed, based on biblical principles. When you return tithe at your local church, it is counted by your church treasurer, receipted and remitted to your local conference or mission. For individuals who return their tithe through the internet (PayPal, bank transfers, etc.), the tithe will go directly to the conference (or mission).

Once the conference or mission receives the tithe, it forwards a percentage of it to the Union. The percentages that are forwarded to different organisations within the church are usually determined by the Division, depending on the needs

within the field. Currently 16% of tithe from the conferences is forwarded to the Union, of which 25-30% is given through appropriations back to organisations within the Union.

The Union will then forward on a percentage of the total tithe received to the Division, up to a maximum of 20% for the Division's operations. Currently only 5% of tithe is sent to the Trans-European Division, of which 45%-50% is given back to different organisations to support programmes within its territory.

Divisions then forward a percentage of the total tithe from their territory on to the General Conference, which in turn allocates this tithe through appropriations to divisions and other institutions that support global programmes and areas around the world where there wouldn't be a significant Adventist presence if it weren't for this principle of sharing tithe. At the time of writing, the Trans-European Division forwards 2.3% of all tithe received within its territory to the General Conference, which in turn uses the majority of it (75-80%) in appropriations to spread the Gospel worldwide.

The church has received many blessings in this way. Like the poor widow of Luke 21:1-4, everyone can be blessed when they contribute to the work.

Cancer: reducing risks

Part 3 – weight management and physical activity

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,

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

An overview

In their outline highlighting the impact of weight and physical activity on cancer risk, the Mayo Clinic staff make the following statements: 'Being at a healthy weight might lower the risk of some types of cancer. These include cancer of the breast, prostate, lung, colon and kidney. Physical activity counts, too. Besides helping control weight, physical activity on its own might lower the risk of breast cancer and colon cancer.'¹

Weight matters

Cancer Research UK provide key information in their answer to the question: 'How does obesity cause cancer?'² They highlight the following:

- Overweight and obesity is the second biggest cause of cancer in the UK – causing more than 1 in 20 cancer cases.
- The risk is higher the more overweight you are and the longer you are overweight for.
- Keeping a healthy weight reduces the risk of 13 different types of cancer.

A further explanation states: 'Extra fat in the body doesn't just sit there: it's active and sends out signals to the rest of your body. These signals can tell cells in our body to divide more often, which can lead to cancer.' Breaking down the process of how cancer can occur, Cancer Research UK give additional details of how the signals released by fat cells can affect various body processes. This they outline as follows:

- **Growth hormones** – Excess body fat can cause levels of growth hormones to rise, which tells cells to divide more often. This raises the chance that cancer cells will develop.
- **Inflammation** – Immune cells gravitate to areas of the body where there are large quantities of fat cells. This can lead to inflammation, which causes cells to divide more quickly. Over time, this can increase the risk of cancer.
- **Sex hormones** – Post-menopause, fat cells produce the hormone oestrogen. This hormone can make cells in the breast and womb divide more often, which increases the risk of cancer developing.

Physical activity impact

Analysing the impact of physical activity in relation to reducing cancer risk is an area of ongoing research. One result of such research is a comprehensive report by the World Cancer Research Fund (2018).³ Among the varied outcomes of their study were findings relating to specific cancers. Their study found the following:

'There is strong evidence that . . .

- Being physically active decreases the risk of cancers of the colon, breast (post-menopause) and endometrium.
- Undertaking physical activity of vigorous intensity decreases the risk of pre- and post-menopausal breast cancer.'

Cancer Research UK's findings, in their update 'What are the benefits of exercise?'⁴ identify similar findings, adding: 'Being active can help you keep a healthy weight, which reduces the risk of 13 different types of cancer. . . . This includes two of the most common types of cancer (breast and bowel) and three of the hardest to treat cancers (pancreatic, oesophageal and gallbladder).' Being active has many benefits – it keeps your body and mind healthy. The more you can do, the better!

On the NHS website, under the caption 'Physical activity guidelines for



adults aged 19-64',⁵ the NHS highlight some guidelines for improving activity. These they state as:

- Do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity a week.
- Spread exercise evenly over 4 to 5 days a week, or every day.
- Reduce time spent sitting or lying down, and break up long periods of not moving with some activity.

You will find more information on types of exercise for specific age groups at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults-aged-19-to-64/>.

Good health!

¹<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/cancer-prevention/art-20044816>

²<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/bodyweight-and-cancer/how-does-obesity-cause-cancer>

³<https://www.wcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Physical-activity.pdf>

⁴<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/physical-activity-and-cancer/what-are-the-benefits-of-exercise>

⁵<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults-aged-19-to-64/>





Faith and Mental Health Conference in Parliament

by Pastor Sam Davies, *BUC Communication & Media Director*

Faith leaders gathered at Westminster on Monday 4 September to deliberate on the role of faith in addressing mental health. The MP for Watford, Mr Dean Russell, enabled the meeting, organised by the One Vision charity based in Watford.

Inter-faith leaders and health professionals discussed faith and mental health on a panel. Enoch Kanagaraj, the CEO of One Vision, said faith provides guidance and support to many individuals, adding that the conference aimed to encourage collaboration in addressing mental health issues.

Five key themes included the impact of faith on belief systems; challenging ideologies limiting access to healthcare; engaging faith leaders in supporting service users' recovery; encouraging positive religious expression and practice; and prayer and healing – getting the balance right.

Representing the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the panel was the British Union Conference Director for Health, Adventist Community Services, and Women's Ministries, Sharon Platt-McDonald. She

spoke on varying aspects of faith and its mental well-being impact by outlining three key elements: destigmatisation; education; and protection, including signposting and accessing support and intervention services. She addressed the three points by sharing that she had produced a mental wellness handbook for churches, which supports churches in raising mental health awareness and encouraging emotional healing and well-being. She has trained numerous individuals on the Mental Health First Aid Course and facilitated training on Suicide First Aid: Intervention & Prevention.

In partnership with One Vision, Sharon leads a mental well-being project with the Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust. She has developed the Four Pillars Framework addressing faith, culture, diet and exercise as vital interventions for supporting individuals from African-Caribbean backgrounds and the clinicians caring for their mental health needs.

Dean Russell MP supported the event, stating, 'Faith plays a significant role in the lives of many, and it can profoundly impact mental health and well-being. By bringing together faith leaders and experts in mental health, we hope to foster

understanding, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue.'

Enoch Kanagaraj said, 'We are delighted to bring faith leaders together in the Houses of Parliament along with Dean Russell MP. People who struggle with mental health disorders are frequently reluctant to speak up or ask for help because they are worried about the stigma associated with their condition. . . . this event is undoubtedly focused on helping the vulnerable.'

Other participants and attendees included Mariam Hassam (Assistant Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain); Rabbi Mordechai Chalk (Watford Synagogue); Rumit D. Shah (President, Jain religion OAK); Harmeet Singh Gill (General Secretary, Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall); Ajahn Amaro Bhikkhu (Amaravati Buddhist Monastery); Archbishop Angaelos (Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London); representatives of the Hindu faith; and Josh Turner (Spiritual Care Lead, Hertfordshire Partnerships Foundation NHS Trust, Public Health Director). Also present were the Adventist Muslim Relations Director of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Dr Petras Bahadur, and Drs Augustus Lawrence and Jude Jeanville from the South England Conference.





Embrace a meaningful season

Celebrating as a family with creativity and purpose

by Caroline Zagara

Encouraging and maintaining core beliefs in the Christian home is not always easy for some, especially during festive seasons, due to constant exposure to attractive and fun traditions that don't necessarily coincide with our own convictions. With December just around the corner, we want our families to connect with the true meaning of Christmas – the celebration of Jesus' birth.

The value of celebrating Christmas as a Christian family

Celebrating any occasion as a family strengthens relationships, promotes harmony, and creates a space for belonging. And, although we know that Jesus wasn't born on 25 December, Christmas is an especially appropriate time for Christian families to pass on their faith-based values and beliefs. Spending time together to remember the message of love, hope, and salvation that the birth of Jesus represents develops our own individual relationship with God as well as our unity with each other. We should encourage each other to celebrate this message in a way that is appealing not only to our children, but also to those around us. With a little creativity, we can plan activities that generate happy and lasting memories for our families while never forgetting the true meaning of Christmas.

Therefore, the value of embracing this season within our Christian homes is based on seizing the opportunity for a deeper connection

with God and with others, where we can create lasting memories with a positive faith-based foundation.

A meaningful celebration of Christmas

There is no doubt that the traditional Christian Christmas activities, such as reading the Nativity story and engaging in acts of kindness, can deepen the spiritual aspects of Christmas.

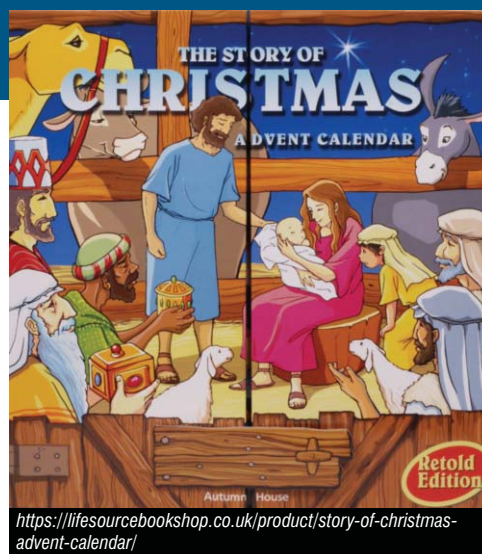
The challenge is developing ideas that are unique, special, and meaningful to bring out the best results for your family. It's simply a question of adding some creativity and out-of-the-box thinking while maintaining those important values that sustain our beliefs.

I particularly enjoy the idea of a countdown to the true meaning of Christmas with a personalised Christian advent calendar for families (for one example that you can read together in your family, see: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/story-of-christmas-advent-calendar/>).

In my experience, the anticipation of participating in a special daily activity brings visible joy to my young children. In the past, we've enjoyed discovering the Nativity story bit by bit with finger puppets that the children can interact with while learning about Jesus' birth. On another occasion we celebrated Jesus in our hearts with activities of arts and crafts to give away and spread joy. Other ideas include a secret prayer friend advent calendar, where we can spend time praying for someone else and finding ways to secretly reach out to them regularly, before the big reveal at the end of the countdown.

How to create the perfect celebration for your family

- **Research ideas** online or find



people who are willing to share theirs.

- **Get excited** and inspired by people and things around you. Pray about it and tell God all your ideas.
- **Identify core values** and beliefs for your family. This way you focus on your specific family needs and goals. These can be different every year and adapted accordingly.
- **Choose a suitable activity** that will work for your family. Think of something that will maintain everyone's interest throughout.
- **Include all family members**, especially children, in the process, depending on their age and ability. On the other hand, if you know they love surprises, just make sure they know a surprise is on the way so they can enjoy the excitement of anticipation.

Conclusion

Whatever ideas you may have for your family at Christmas, remember to focus on the birth of Jesus and the message of love, hope, and salvation that it represents. Tailor your activities to this message and to your family's beliefs and values, making the holiday a time of togetherness and spiritual reflection. And don't forget the fun! Your challenge is to create something this season that is unique, exciting, meaningful, and full of purpose for your family.

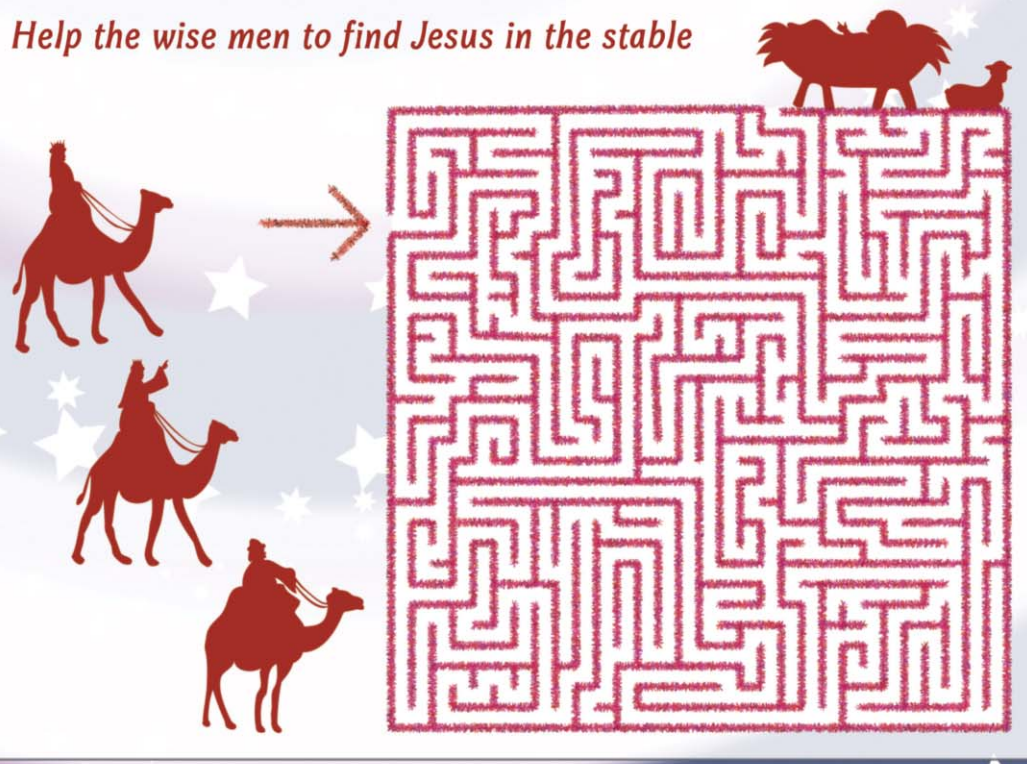


Wonderful Little Stars!

When the weather is cold and it gets dark early, we begin to plan to celebrate the birth of Jesus. You may have a baby in your family. You would have been excited to see the baby for the first time and enjoyed the special meal after the baby's dedication service. The baby would have been at the centre of everything your family would do – like shopping for clothes, feeding in the day and night, and making sure the baby would always be safe.

There is a big difference between your baby and baby Jesus. Jesus is God as well as human. He came as a baby to understand what it is like to be like you. This meant Jesus would know the best way to rescue you from Satan's wicked plan. This is why we sing praise songs and carols at Christmas time. You could write a carol about how special Jesus is to you or draw a praise picture. Put your name at the top of the paper and draw a picture of yourself. Draw a big circle in the centre and write the name Jesus. On your hands, feet, hair, mouth and so on, write a sentence to praise God. Every day of the year Jesus can become the centre of your praise.

Help the wise men to find Jesus in the stable



Wordmaker:

How many words can you make from the letters in this Christmas message from Luke 2:14? Start with one-letter words, then two-letter words and so on. What is the longest word you can make?

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Jesus in the manger

Make a Christmas card sharing the news of the Saviour's birth.

You will need:

A sheet of card folded in half, one star shape, one large brown paper rectangle and two small brown paper rectangles to make the crib, one large semicircle for the baby's body and a smaller semicircle for the baby's head, and lots of yellow paper strips for the straw.

How to make it:

Glue the large brown rectangle half-way down the card. Glue the two small rectangles below it to make the crib legs. Glue the yellow strips at the top of the crib; you can bend some over to give it a 3D effect. Then glue the semicircles on the straw to make it look like a baby lying in the crib. You can draw hair, eyes and a nose and mouth on the small semicircle. Glue the star in the top corner of the card. Write a special message or Bible verse inside the card. Give the card to a neighbour in your street who seems lonely.



Find the special memory text on the Christmas tree.



Shine brightly Christian stars! Just as the star led the wise men and shepherds to Jesus, may your light lead your friends to Jesus too. The Good News is that Jesus came for all!

BUC Youth Day 2023: 'God Restores'

by Pastor Kevin Johns, *BUC Youth Director*,
and Dr Simon A. Facey



August 19, 2023 was a beautiful Sabbath morning. The sunshine, blue sky, delightful warmth and comforting breeze brought smiles to all who attended the British Union Conference (BUC) Youth Day of Fellowship. More than 2,500 people descended upon the Bethel Convention Centre, West Bromwich, West Midlands, from all territories of the BUC as well as the Netherlands Union Conference (NUC), including Pastor Gabriel Kwayie, the NUC Youth and Families Ministries Director, and alumni from Oakwood University, USA.

This was a Spirit-filled Union Youth Day, with the theme, 'God Restores'.

It was time to worship and to give God the glory. With preparations completed, Pastor Kevin Johns, the BUC Youth Ministries Director, and his team welcomed all the youth from across the Union. The morning started with an exuberant introduction to the day by Pastor Johns, while asking God to bless and restore all attending.

Rousing praise and worship led by youth from across the BUC set the tone as attendees lifted their voices with joy to sing 'Jesus is all the world to me'. Accompanied by the stage band and string quartet, their



resounding melodies and harmonies gave praise and worship to God.

This was followed by the investiture of youth leaders, having completed the Senior Youth Leaders training programme from the SEC and the NEC. Recognising the challenging times that youth leaders face, as many are appointed with little or no experience, this programme ensures that adequate training meets the challenging paradigms of youth ministries. The investiture service was led by directors from the Union and conferences.

The SEC Youth Director, Pastor Antony Fuller, reminded all youth and those invested of the important charge they are to uphold, quoting E. G. White: 'With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world' (*Education*, page 271). He further encouraged other young people who have a desire to work with the young people in our church to register and join the programme so they too can be better trained to meet the challenges of youth ministry.

The day saw further greetings brought by Pastor Gabriel Kwayie (NUC), where he and Pastor Johns shared information regarding the next youth congress, to take place between 22 and 27 July 2024 in Holland. When the information comes out, they advised, book early!

More promotions and information were brought from partners of the Union, such as Newbold College of Higher Education, regarding such programmes as ministry, mission, and leadership. Also, the Stanborough Press shared the relationship it has with the BUC, and

showcased the literature that the youth can engage with and share among their families, friends and communities. ADRA provided an appeal for training youth in their 'ADRA Ambassador' programme.

The Divine Service started with a rendition from the first ever BUC Youth Mass Choir, entitled 'The Sanctuary', as Pathfinders from the NEC led the ceremonial procession bringing in the United Kingdom flag and the flags of the countries of the British Union. The praise team then led the congregation into worship through songs. This was lively, with all participating. They sang three songs – culminating with the final appeal at the end of the sermon titled 'God restores' (as originally sung by Dynamic Praise).

The message was presented by Dr Richard D. Martin, a native of the USA but resident in Bermuda. He did not come on his own, but was supported by his wife Kyla, a published author; his parents, Pastor and Sister Martin; and his two sisters and nephew. In his opening statement, he emphasised, 'God's mercy endures forever,' and that 'we should be glad to be a part of the family of God,' before he led into the Word, focusing on the restorative narrative in the Bible.

The catch line and the title of the sermon, 'Lord, fix my face,' served as a reminder that we all have a face that reveals when trials, problems, concerns, and issues are upon us. The framework of the sermon focused on chapter 1 of 1 Samuel, building the scene between the relationships and characters, before moving to the importance of prayer and faith in God. Hannah's prayer for a child she would dedicate to the Lord reminded us to bring all our trials and all we have to God. Hannah's beautiful patience and faith in God reflect where we need to be today: we need to ask the Lord to change us. He has a better place awaiting all who choose Him.

Most of our challenging issues occur in the home, but God can restore us when placed in the centre. Pastor Martin reminded us that our relations with each other are important and precious. He said to all, 'Stay in God's church; your relationship with God is more

important than all, as it is a gift, and the grounding for learning His truth.' The Lord wants His youth to stand today for Him and His truth. We were reminded from Ephesians 6 that putting on the armour of God will enable us to withstand the evils of the world as we share His truth. Pastor Martin closed with an appeal for all who wished to accept Jesus Christ, His blood, and His sacrifice and to restore their relationship with God to come forward. More than a thousand youth responded to the call for prayer, with a further nineteen responding in person or online by completing the appeal card requesting baptism and further Bible studies.

An emotional and beautiful scene of grace was displayed as the choir continued to sing 'God restores', and our visiting pastors and elders from across the BUC and NUC prayed with the youth.

The afternoon service displayed the talents across the BUC, as participants praised God through a concert interspersed with presentations following the theme. Helen Diaz spoke about 'Brokenness'; Ambrose Dawson spoke about 'Healing'; Pastor Micah Campbell spoke about 'Restoration'; and Sacha Gillin spoke about the 'Joy of restoration'.

Several testimonies were shared by youth from around the Union, along with performances from the GACUK Choir, a string duo, and skits expressing the experiences and understanding of how God can fix our failed outcomes and issues, accentuating the day's theme that all we have to do is to repent, submit to God, and ask Him to lead us and restore our path.

In concluding the day, Pastor Johns thanked his family and his team for their hard work and support in the work of the Youth Ministries Department at the BUC, and for the Spirit-filled day we all had. He encouraged all those who had requested prayer, baptism, and Bible studies to see their local pastors.

Let us all remember that 'God restores'.

Please click on the QR code and complete the form to express your interest in attending the BUC/NUC Youth Congress Netherlands 2024 (22-27 July).

The Welsh Mission Day of Fellowship

by Timothy Mertens



Brass band

On 30 September the Welsh Mission came together for their Day of Fellowship. Attendees travelled from all parts of Wales (and some parts of England too) to Llandrindod Wells. The theme for the day was 'The Power of Us', and the guest speaker for the day, Pastor Anthony WagenerSmith, Director of Mission for the TED, encouraged us all to work together for Christ's mission, explaining that God's faithfulness to us should compel us also to be faithful in doing the work of evangelism. Pastor Anthony then led an interactive session where local churches got into groups and discussed their future plans in this context. As well as the main presentation, there were also presentations on the new 7me app and a look back at the great work being done around the Welsh Mission.

In the afternoon, there were two main activities for those who stayed. The children had a health expo, while the adults enjoyed a concert. The expo provided children with health-related information in a fun and interactive setting. The information they learnt will serve them well into the future. The concert consisted of several musical items interspersed with congregational singing led by the praise team from Cardiff Church. The items included a soloist; not one, but two church choirs; a brass band; a father-and-daughter duet; and a family playing the bells! We're all looking forward to coming together again next year, God willing.



Pastor Anthony WagenerSmith



Children's choir

It happened on Sabbath

For decades, Coventry Central Seventh-day Adventist Church has been in the same location, trying to make a difference in the community. What happened on Sabbath 30 September was unprecedented. The afternoon programme started just before 4pm, as usual. However, members noticed a faint smell of smoke pervading the church a few minutes into the programme. No one took any notice, as the church is situated a few metres from a row of houses, since it's located in the heart of a community. Unfortunately, 'there's no smoke without fire.'

Moments later, a fire engine could be heard, so a deacon, Terry, went outside to investigate. A couple of moments later, an elder was called to step outside. By this time, the congregation could sense something was wrong. The elder returned to the sanctuary, explained what was happening, and called the church to prayer. The season of prayer having ended, the whole church went out to show their support. Smoke and flames were seen from the blaze on the eleventh floor of the nearby sixteen-storey block of flats.

Within minutes, ten fire engines, 4x4 response vehicles, a hydraulic aerial platform, numerous police cars, several ambulances and Cadent Gas vehicles soon lined up outside the church. The once-quiet afternoon was filled with the sound of sirens. All roads leading into St Nicholas Street – the street the church is on – were blocked off, except for emergency vehicles.

The fire services wasted no time evacuating residents, with individuals of all ages rushing towards the fire assembly point, less than 20 metres from the church. Some residents were curious to see what was happening, while others were visibly shaken.

It was as if the Lord had prepared the church for this unfortunate event and had set the right people in place to help. The church was quickly opened for anyone who needed shelter. Soon people came into the sanctuary and the youth hall. Everyone was made comfortable and given warm refreshments. We witnessed a miracle of multiplication of cookies, biscuits, toast and Swiss rolls from the church's social supermarket, and people of all ages, colours and creeds were holding mugs while conversing with total strangers, brought together by adversity. Friendships and commitments were made by many, hopefully for eternity.

The highlight for me was to see a work colleague whose daughter was one of those affected who had sought shelter in the church. My colleague was so grateful, and on Monday she said, 'I just wanted to thank you and your church for helping everyone on Saturday; it was so kind of you all to open your church to help everyone. My daughter was able to go back into her flat on Sunday. You are a star; thank you.'

By 8pm the fire service allowed residents of the first five floors to re-enter the building, and by 9pm around 30 people were left in the church, so the church ordered pizza for everyone. Finally, around 10.30pm, the housing association found accommodation for those who could not go back into the building.

Having been kept informed while attending the NEC ordination, Dr Patrick Herbert was pleased with his

church's hospitality to all those in our neighbourhood. He said, 'Coventry Central is by nature a church with the community at heart . . . ready, willing, and available to assist at short notice. God be praised.'

The church's community aid was so newsworthy that a local BBC reporter wrote a piece for the media. What a day that was! God enables those whom He calls.

EDITH MOKADA





Appointment of Adventist member as Deputy Lieutenant of West Sussex

Sister Marilyn LeFeuvre is a devoted member of Gatwick Seventh-day Adventist Church. She had always carried a sense of duty in her heart, a desire to serve her community in any way she could. As the years went by, her dedication and commitment did not go unnoticed.

Marilyn LeFeuvre has been appointed as the Deputy Lieutenant of West Sussex. This prestigious title came as a recognition of her unwavering dedication and her tireless efforts in making our town a better place.

Marilyn's journey has been a long and fulfilling one. She has dedicated countless hours to her church, tirelessly working to open its doors to the public, making it a place of solace and community for everyone in our area. Her warm smile and welcoming spirit have touched the hearts of many, and her tireless work has brought our church into the public eye.

PASTOR WILSON D. LAGOS

'Look UP' arts x mental health weekend: 'The Rewind'

A celebration of creativity and well-being

In life's overwhelming hustle and bustle, with the routine of the everyday on an endless loop of monotony, it is important to have the Sabbath day of rest. But, even then, we can often find ourselves doing the same thing, week in, week out. Wimbledon International's very own artist Laurent Grisel and the Health Ministries team, led by Namooya Muzyamba, conceived the idea of the 'Look UP' arts x mental health weekend. The aim: to exhibit how faith, creativity and wellness are connected.

Saturday 12 August was filled with expressive performances and the Word, showcasing the amazing range of ways we can express worship, gratitude and love for God through music, poetry, mime and song, but also an art exhibition. Art in its different forms promotes mindfulness, providing respite from anxiety and stress. All the art was diligently and beautifully created by Laurent Grisel. The paintings vividly depicted the galaxy, with swirling nebulas and distant stars, with utmost intricacy; still-lives of luscious fruits with remarkable detail, their vibrant colours and textures seemingly touchable; a display of the sky in tranquil hues of blue and white; and the strikingly grand and thought-provoking statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. All this testified of the boundless breadth of beauty God created, showed what an amazing artist He is, and that we can only draw inspiration from what He has made. The exhibit invites all to embark on a visual voyage that traverses the universe, contemplates the divine, and revels in the wonders of the world around us.

The afternoon programme involved a panel of mental health experts, who led the discussion exploring the intersection of faith and mental well-being. This was followed by the audience sharing their ways of expressing creativity, including gardening, vlogging, writing and more. Counsellor Rajitha Cruz ended the discussion by kindly offering a free counselling session.

The event continued on

Sunday 13 August, focusing on physical well-being. As our enthusiastic volunteers handed out fruit and leaflets, sixty people from the community came to benefit from free health screenings. Our team of nurses provided expert advice and guidance, and there were also engaging cooking demonstrations and healthy refreshments. Finally, attendees could join the 'Wake Up & Work Out' sessions, ensuring they left with a spring in their step.

This extraordinary weekend transcended conventional boundaries. One attendee said that due to her ill health she had given up on God, but she could now see there was a denomination that not only cared about people, but had the true health message. The weekend offered attendees a unique chance to deepen their spiritual connection, nurture their mental and physical well-being, and revel in the incredible impact of creativity, inspiring them to use it to give God glory.

CZARINA AMOR NERCUA





Wallington Food Hub

Have you ever seen sixty people queueing to get into an evangelistic campaign? Me neither! But, each week, members of the Wallington Seventh-day Adventist church witness up to sixty local residents queueing to get into the Food Hub.

The cost-of-living crisis has impacted every corner of the UK, with rising food, fuel and energy prices pushing inflation to 6% and increasing mortgage payments creating pressure on families. Understanding this pressure, Wallington Church, with an enthusiastic leadership team, set about collecting 'use by' food items from major retailers, including Tesco, Waitrose, Asda, KFC and Nando's.

While this project is born out of necessity, it is beautiful to see our community come together. I have never seen so much volunteer involvement, from collection and distribution of food each week to follow-up calls and onward referrals for those who need support. Many volunteers work full-time and collect food after work or at weekends, doing their part. Other volunteers are residents who queued for food themselves at one point, but now want to help and contribute to the development of the project.

Volunteers collect food from retailers throughout the week, storing them in a venue donated by the local housing trust. We now collect on average 700kg of food each week, going to seventy homes, approximately 100 adults and 250 children. Volunteers also collect food for deliveries to those who are unable to leave their homes.

But the most exciting part of this work is not the delicious food distributed to families, reducing food waste and authentically meeting needs. The most exciting part is the people: those seventy households have brought into real focus how and why we evangelise. Residents of all ages attend, from 14 to 70+, working, unemployed, including

those with complex mental health issues and addictions. Loneliness is a common theme across all ages, with a 21-year-old commenting, 'I never talked to anyone on this estate until I came to the Food Hub,' and others commenting, 'There is a real community spirit here.' I've witnessed residents' pure generosity while they queue for food. They bring things that they can pass on, such as clothes that don't fit or dog food that is not needed.

Each week we develop relationships, authentic friendships, as we care for people. We have prayed for residents whose families were caught in the recent Turkey earthquakes; offered support to those trying to remain sober; found cots and high chairs for those expecting new babies; and offered encouragement and smiles.

In all honesty, these residents are not banging down the doors of our church to get in on Sabbath morning. Many have attended Divine Service, although this is not necessarily our definition of 'success'. Success to us is that our church has become a real part of the community, and we are seeing our relationship with the community grow as they learn to trust and understand our commitment to them. Many residents are overwhelmed that volunteers take up their time to support them, and I've never seen such gratitude.

As an Adventist for over forty years, this is the most impactful and focused evangelistic work I have ever come across. Volunteering has enriched my soul, challenged my beliefs, and shaken my judgement of others. I have had to find patience and exercise compassion.

While things are going well, we of course could do with additional support, such as a van of our own (we currently borrow one), and support with fuel costs and other things. We would welcome any monetary support you could offer to continue this most impactful project in the middle of South London, helping us to help others while growing ourselves.

TRACEY DE-LISSER

Bristol district of churches collaborate at community event

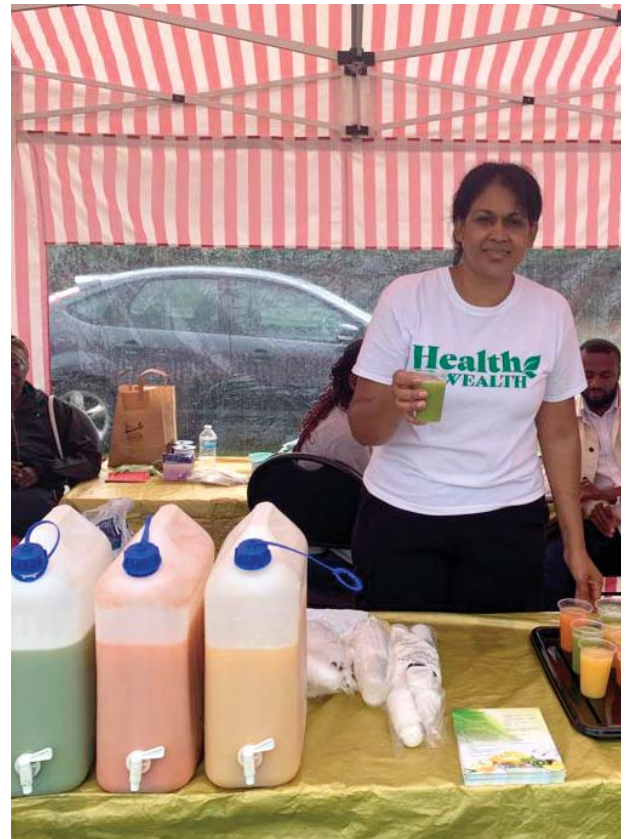
The vision for the Bristol district of churches to unite their skills and talents to impact the community has always been the best way forward. The Bristol Joint Evangelism Committee (BJEC), which started about a decade ago, has held several meetings to encourage the three churches to adopt this idea. Many past events have succeeded because of this joint effort. During the pandemic, many ideas were put on hold. However, more recently planning meetings have been held to continue the work.

The Community Health Department was invited to support a community fun day on Sunday 20 August at Bristol Civil Service Sports Club. All three churches were invited to be a part of the planning committee, and the event was organised by DET Entertainment, under the leadership of Trace, whose passion is to bring people and community groups together.

Community support was evident, and several organisations informed the participants of their role in the promotion of health and wellness. The team from the church, led by Mary Philip and Ingrid Anderson, provided practical advice on how to incorporate the NEWSTART principles in daily life.

Participants were welcomed to our stall and enjoyed the interactions, even in sharing the Scriptures. They were presented with fruit juices, fruit bowls and smoothies. Even police officers took advantage of the smoothie bike. Free blood pressure and glucose checks were given, and health magazines and spiritual books were handed out to many.

There was a real community spirit: very educational,



but also fun, with slides and bouncy castles. Trace thanked us for accepting the invitation and is looking forward to working with the church in future community events.

MARY PHILIP

Inauguration of GACU chapter and Day of Fellowship

August 25 was a day of great solemnity and rejoicing as the Southeast London Community, Elephant and Castle Community, and Southwest London Ghana district of churches gathered for their Day of Fellowship and the inauguration of their chapter of the Ghanaian Adventist Choirs Union (GACU).

The choirs were dedicated by the district pastor, Pastor Lewis Quaye, and charged by the GACU music director, Padmore Baffour-Awuah, to witness of the goodness of God. Speaking on the day's theme – 'United in Mission: I Will Go', which reflected the theme of the SEC: 'Making Disciples and Building Communities', Pastor Quaye drew inspiration from Philippians 1:27, 28, emphasising the importance of conducting ourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ. As the three choirs, accompanied by the youth choirs and the singing band, filled the air with harmonious melodies, the significance of unity, cooperation and shared purpose became palpable.

The story of Joseph forgiving his brothers and offering them a new life in Egypt (Genesis 45:9-24) also found a poignant place within the proceedings, reminding us of the unifying potential of reconciliation and forgiveness. Just as Joseph forgave his brothers, we were encouraged to embrace forgiveness and unity.

A shared lunch not only nourished the body, but also fostered deeper connections among the participants. In the afternoon, a gospel concert allowed attendees to connect with their spirituality through hymns and songs.

The event culminated with a sense of hope and purpose. The congregation expressed their heartfelt desire for more

such gatherings that nourish the soul and strengthen the bonds of community.

The GACU inauguration and Day of Fellowship not only brought three churches together, but also united hearts and souls in a common mission of love, forgiveness, and community-building.

PHYLLIS ARHIN



Share Your Story

Have you encountered God's extraordinary touch in your ordinary life? Have you found hope in unexpected ways through His grace?

At The Stanborough Press we believe each day, every thread, every experience, is a testament to God's favour of love and grace. Your story might be the very lifeline someone needs in their moment of doubt or despair.

We are inviting **you** to be part of an exciting inspirational Christian title to be published and shared with the world about the wonderful God we serve!

Why Share?

Connect: Join a community of believers, united in faith and testimony.

Inspire: Your journey could light the way for someone else.

Witness: There's no better way to share Christ's love than through personal experiences.

Submission Guidelines:

Authenticity: We value real, heartfelt narratives.

Length of story or article: 1,500-2,500 words.

Theme: How God has worked in your everyday life, challenges overcome through faith, or moments of divine intervention.

How to Submit?

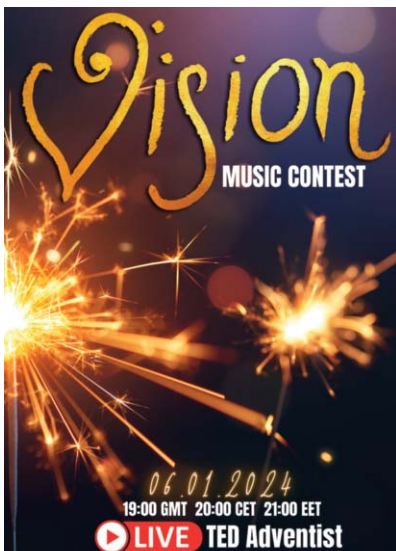
Send your articles to editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk with the subject 'Inspirational Submission'. Please include a brief bio and your contact information. Submissions from those wishing to remain anonymous are welcome. More than one story or article from the same individual is also welcome.

Deadline for Submissions: 30 June 2024

Don't let your story stay silent. Your testimony is a gift, not just for you, but also for the whole world to glorify the Lord.

"Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story..." Psalm 107:2 (NIV)

Together let us share the good news of Jesus to the whole world, one story at a time.



ASNA Fundraising Gospel Concert
 2/12/23, 6-8.30pm
 Newbold College, Salisbury Hall
 St Mark's Road, Bracknell RG42 4AN
 Stalls, music, spoken word and more!
Artists include:
 • Reading Community Gospel Choir • Inclusive Ministry • Croydon Praise Team • CJ Nicholls ... and much more!
 RSVP: www.asna.info/events
FREE ENTRY
 (donations will be collected)

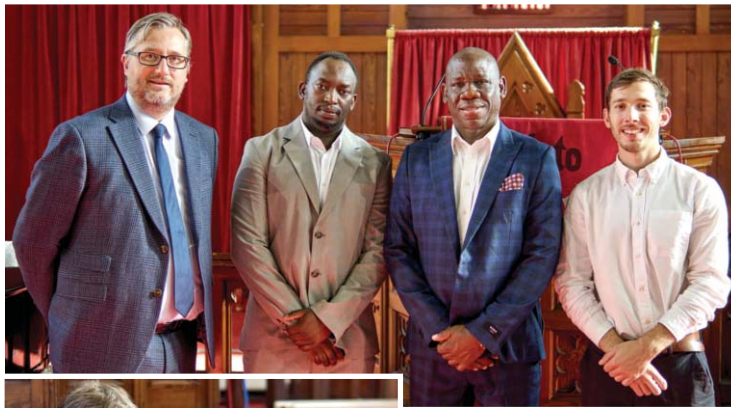


Stanborough Secondary School: volunteers required
 Stanborough Secondary School is seeking volunteers who wish to give 12-24 months in missionary service. This is the only Seventh-day Adventist secondary school in the British Union Conference. Last year eight of our students were baptised, and we hope that you can join us on the journey of educating for eternity.
Librarians 12-24 months, volunteer, full-time or part-time
Admin Assistants 12-24 months, volunteer, full-time or part-time
Garden and Maintenance Assistants 12-24 months, volunteer, full-time or part-time
Cleaner full-time or part-time
 Contact pokelo@stanboroughpark.herts.sch.uk for more details.
Stanborough Secondary School Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JT
 Telephone: 01923 673268
God is the Master of our school.

LifeSource book sales		
DATE	VENUE	TIME
25 Nov	Wolverhampton Central	After sunset
3 Dec	Hyland House	10am-2pm
9 Dec	Plaiستow	After sunset
10 Dec	Brixton	10am-2pm

Messenger
 Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland
 To receive the *Messenger*, delivered free to your home along with *Focus* magazine and *Adventist World* magazine, scan the QR code or email: msubs@stanboroughpress.org.uk





Cardiff's Sabbath of joy

Cardiff Church celebrated not one, not two, but three baptisms on 2 September as Pastor

David Rancic baptised Nesley Brown, Zenzo Maposa and Sam Jones. The smiles in the church were even brighter than the sun outside as the three men made a public commitment to our Lord and Saviour.

Each baptismal candidate had his own unique and personal reasons for baptism. Nesley had ties with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in his childhood, but stopped attending church later in life. Eight years ago, he began to feel that God was calling him to change and began attending church again; and after much searching he finally committed his life to Christ in baptism.

For Zenzo, it was a relative who introduced him to the Adventist faith and began studies with him. Zenzo moved to Cardiff for work, and a local church member from Birmingham made the journey with him to ensure he was introduced to the church in Cardiff and that his studies could continue until he made his decision for Christ. Sam had not grown up in a Christian family, and was introduced to the church through his girlfriend, initially thinking church was a waste of time. Eventually he took an interest and began Bible studies that led him to baptism. The month of September was especially blessed for Sam, as he not only celebrated his spiritual birth, but also married Suhasini, the girlfriend that introduced him to Christ!

TIMOTHY MERTENS

'Peace Restored: A Conference for Living'

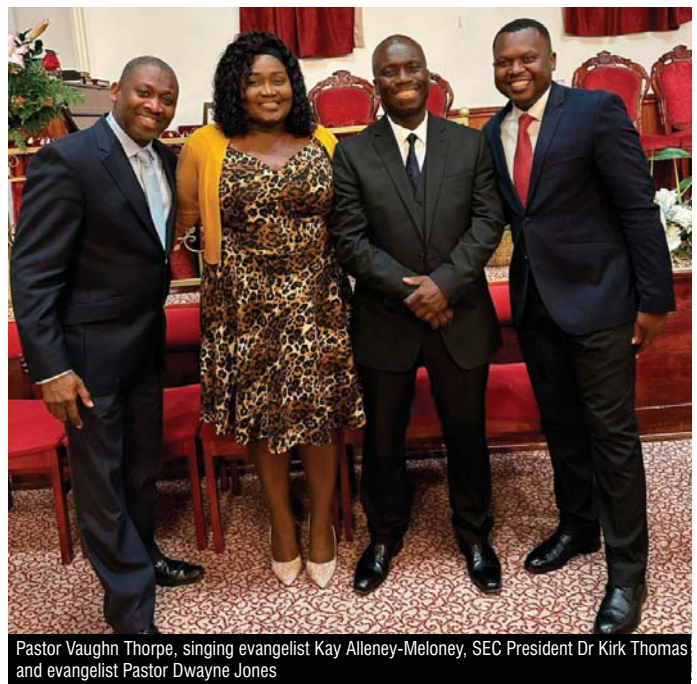
There was joy in heaven as two precious souls were baptised at the conclusion of a two-week evangelistic campaign held at the Hackney Seventh-day Adventist church. The 'Peace Restored: A Conference for Living' campaign, which took place from 16 to 30 September, came to a fitting end as the guest speaker, Pastor Dwayne Jones from St Elizabeth, Jamaica, baptised his 8-year-old daughter, Savannah Jones, and a previous regular visitor to the church, Grace Owori, during the final evening service on Sabbath 30 September.

The singing evangelist, Kay Alloney-Meloney, had travelled all the way from Trinidad, but suffered the loss of her mother during the first week of the campaign. However, Meloney remained faithful to her mission and encouraged the listeners in song.

A number of Conference directors were present during the campaign, including the SEC Women's Ministries Director and former Hackney elder, Jacqueline Otokpa; SEC Personal Ministries and Literature Evangelism Director, Pastor Royston Smith; and the newly elected SEC President, Dr Kirk Thomas. The Area 6C Prayer Ministries Coordinator, Alex Dhlakama, also came, as well as members from Hackney's sister church, Walthamstow, also under the leadership of Pastor Vaughn Thorpe. The Hackney praise team, led by Myrtle O'Keefe, led congregants and online participants in praise and worship each evening, and Hackney's prayer team under Eileen Philip were also active throughout the campaign.

The messages Pastor Jones delivered were soul-stirring and Spirit-filled, with personal testimonies of how God had intervened in his life. In his final sermon, Jones concluded that the battle has been won and the devil is defeated because Jesus Christ has overcome the grave, reconciling humanity with God, in whom we now find hope, joy and peace.

DARELL J. PHILIP



Pastor Vaughn Thorpe, singing evangelist Kay Alloney-Meloney, SEC President Dr Kirk Thomas and evangelist Pastor Dwayne Jones

Jai Ramdin (1946-2023) d. 1 September.

Jai Ramdin was born in Mauritius on 4 April 1946, the first of ten children in a Hindu household. At the age of 19 he made the decision to migrate to England, travelling via ship and train. He embarked on his nurse's training which he did at St Ebba's Hospital in Epsom, Surrey, completing his RMNS qualification (Registered Nurse in Mental Subnormality, as it was known then). Following the completion of his studies there, he went to Watford General Hospital to do his general nurse's training.



While in Watford he met Aslaug Kristjansdottir, a young Icelandic woman who was also working in the hospital. As they spent time together and their friendship grew, Jai realised that her faith was very important to her, and so he decided to look into it. In his own words, 'I had no knowledge of the Bible, and God put me in touch with Aslaug, my future wife, and through study I gained faith in fulfilment of prophecy.' Jai always had a religious leaning, and now he studied this new faith system with a church member called Samuel and also completed the Voice of Prophecy lessons. It was the prophecies that initially sparked his interest; but, as he studied, he grew to love Jesus and the beauty of the Gospel. He was baptised at Stanborough Park Church by Pastor Ernest Logan in 1969.

They did not spend long there, and in

1972 they moved to Abingdon, where Jai worked as a district nurse. While there, he was a faithful member of the Oxford Seventh-day Adventist church, where many lifelong friends were made. Seven happy years were spent there before moving to work as a community psychiatric nurse in Leamington Spa and Warwick and living in Hatton.

Here he would spend the next forty-four years of his life, enjoying the rural setting and the many opportunities to get out in nature. He attended the vibrant Coventry Central church, serving in various capacities, including as an elder. He always loved to participate in the evangelistic efforts of the church, and was an avid door-to-door collector for ADRA for many years. Whenever a major evangelistic effort took place in Coventry, with pastors such as Jim Stevens and Graeme Bradford, he was always actively involved, and also got his children to assist in distributing thousands of flyers across Coventry! He also brought several families into the church through personal Bible study and literature evangelism, a passion he retained all the way to the end of his life. He believed fervently in the advent message, and loved to share it with others whenever he had the chance.

Following his retirement, he enjoyed six good years of health before being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease called pemphigus vulgaris, the chances of contracting which are 1 in 5 million. The symptoms are sores in the mouth and on the head and back, and it is usually treated with steroids. He bravely soldiered

on and learned to live with it and the additional health challenges that came with it, such as diabetes and reduced strength/ability to walk around easily in later months.

Sadly, in August he contracted covid pneumonitis; and, after getting admitted to hospital, he was discharged four days later with a seemingly clear bill of health – however, after another four days he was readmitted, and this time, sadly, he was unable to recover, passing away twelve days later on 1 September, surrounded by his five children and his wife. He leaves behind his wife, five children, fifteen grandchildren and eight siblings. He died at peace with Jesus, thankful for all that He had done for him, and in full hope and belief in the resurrection at the Second Coming.

ADAM RAMDIN

Volleyball fellowship

The 6th Annual Adventist Friends International (AFI) World Volleyball Championship was held in Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, UK from 7 to 9 July 2023. The nail-biter victory took place on Sunday 9 July. Manchester Stewards won as they did in 2016 and 2017, taking their tally to three victories, more than any other team. The annual championship is attended by family and friends from the UK, the USA, France, Scotland, and Ireland for a weekend of Christian fellowship, food, and volleyball. Eight teams competed this year.



Win or lose, we thank Christ for the ability to play and give all the glory to God, no matter the outcome. Adventist Friends International (AFI) aim to promote fellowship and sportsmanship, developing players for Christ. We thank the organisers for an amazing championship.

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters' (Colossians 3:23, NIV).

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, MANCHESTER SOUTHERN ASIA CHURCH

Messenger

Volume 128 • 11 – 24 November 2023

Editor: **Dusanka Rancic**
Design: **David Bell**

Proof reading: **Andrew Puckering**
Production and distribution: **Peter Oppong-Mensah**

COPY FOR No. 1 – 30 November 2023

Note to potential advertisers

It is important that those who submit adverts for display in *Messenger* ensure that they have **permission** (and a **paid licence** where required) to use any downloaded photographs or artwork that they incorporate into their adverts. It is also important that credit be given to the individual, organisation or company from which these have been obtained. For example, something like the following should appear within the advert: **@Joe Bloggs/StockPhoto.com**. Please be aware that images downloaded from **Google** may also be subject to permission and licensing. The Stanborough Press Ltd takes no responsibility for any downloaded images submitted to *Messenger* by contributors and reserves the right to decline adverts about which we have copyright concerns.

Permission relating to photography

Those who submit photographs of minors (persons under the age of 18) for publication must ensure that they have permission to do so from their parents, guardians or carers. We would like these submissions to be accompanied by the following statement: 'I have the permission of the parents, guardian or carer of the minors who appear in this/these photograph/s to submit them for publication in the *Messenger*.'

Copy should be sent to the Editor, *Messenger*, The Stanborough Press Limited, Alma Park, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 9SL. Tel: (01476) 591700. Fax No: (01476) 577144. Email: Editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk

Send high-resolution pictures to: dbell@stanboroughpress.org.uk

ABC Sales line: (01476) 591700 Mon-Thurs only, 8am-5.30pm.

www.stanboroughpress.org.uk

The Editor may alter, clarify, précis or expand articles sent to her if she 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.

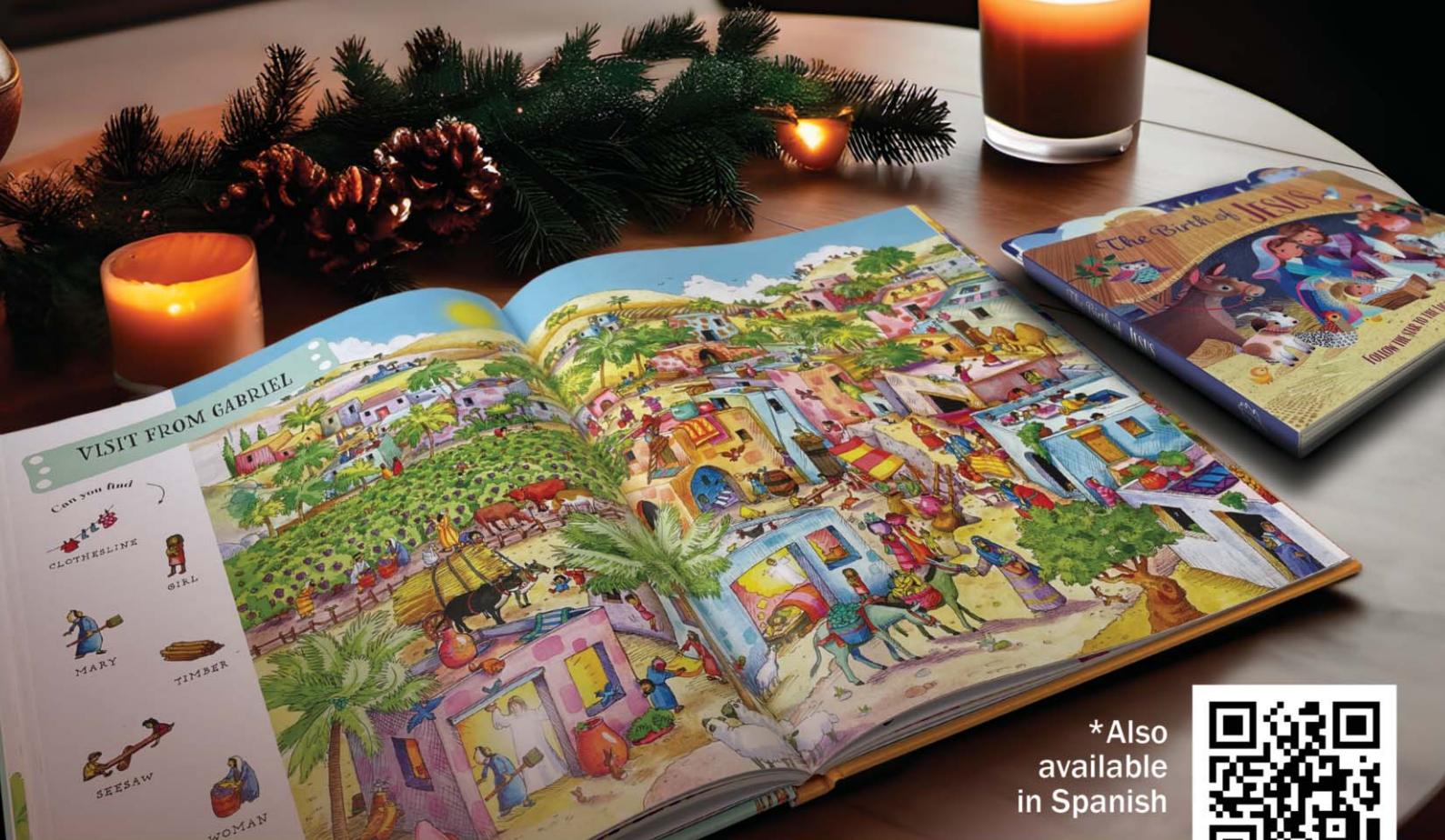
Visit the BUC website at: www.adventist.org.uk ISSN 0309-3654

Sunset

Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by HM Nautical Almanac Office.

	Lord	Card	Nott	Edin	Beif
Nov 24	4.01	4.13	3.59	3.52	4.10
Dec 1	3.55	4.08	3.52	3.44	4.03
8	3.52	4.04	3.49	3.40	3.59
15	3.52	4.04	3.48	3.38	3.58
22	3.54	4.06	3.50	3.40	4.00

***Be the first to get our newest publication,
The Great Explorer Bible,
and get a start on Christmas presents
by visiting our online shop.***



*Also
available
in Spanish

