

North England Conference ordinations

by Lungani Sibanda, NEC Communication Director

On 27 October last year three men were ordained to the Gospel ministry in the Leicester Central church: Pastors Isaac Amofa, Samuel Gardner and Jonathan Holder. They were supported by pastor friends, relatives and members from the churches they serve in the North England Conference.

According to Pastor Dan Majaducon the gathering, while formal, family-focused and very sober, was also a time of worship. An ordination, according to Conference President, Pastor Richard Jackson, is 'a confirmation of leadership and the recognition of the spiritual gifts God bestows on those He has called'. That call was defined by Pastor George Kumi, Conference Ministerial Association leader, as being both to pastors and their families to serve and equip congregations to serve a world in need.

The three candidates were introduced by their sponsors. Isaac Amofa, according to Pastor Fred Mapp, specialises in friendship evangelism. Coming to the North England Conference from the South England Conference, but hailing originally from Ghana, his team has grown the Piccadilly church from a handful of original members to more than 190 in a few short years. We learned that for this man 'Bible studies come first'!

Sam Gardner was introduced by Pastor Paul Liburd as 'genuinely willing', 'keen and excited to work'. Although he at first resisted God's call to pastoral ministry, this computer student changed direction and headed for Newbold to prepare for ministry. Pastor Liburd assured the congregation that Newbold had not stifled 'the fire in his belly', but had added competence to the fire. Now serving in the Leeds district, Sam Gardner has been growing those churches under his care.

Jonathan Holder, introduced by Pastor Patrick Herbert, is a son of the North England Conference, who came to the ordination service with Sophie, his wife of just 27 days! The son of a pastor, Orlando Holder, Jonathan was described as a man who goes where God sends him 'even though there seems no road at all'.

Pastor Ian Sweeney's address to the ordinands, under the heading, 'You really haven't got what it takes', was a close examination of Mark 9, where Jesus' disciples failed to cast out a demon. The congregation and the called men were reminded that growth in competence comes as long as our lives are under the guidance of God. The Lord, we were told, may indeed humble our self-importance because ministry 'isn't about us'. The advice then was for each man to empty himself and be filled with the power of God. Our men were reminded that they were to go back to their congregations and be able to say, 'Follow me, even as I follow Christ'.

The ordination was led by Pastor Patrick Johnson, Trans-European Division Ministerial Association Director, who called for the men to be 'first and foremost followers of God, to be shepherds of the flock and to be under-shepherds of God'.

The three men were then welcomed as newly ordained pastors in the North England Conference. Pastor Holder expressed his gratitude to God like this: 'In this service I saw an opportunity for God to re-affirm His call to me to continue to serve Him.' Pastor Amofa was 'excited at God's call to him as a pastor set aside to do God's will'. A more formal response was given by Pastor Gardner in a short and meaningful address which thrilled the congregation. 'Woe to me if I don't preach the Gospel', was Pastor Sam's call on behalf of himself and his three colleagues. 'God', we heard, 'has done the unthinkable in taking us men of clay as those He wants to use as God's ministers under His calling.'

The whole congregation was reminded that these men are entitled to expect the support of their members in ministry; the support and guidance of their colleagues; and the support and sound leadership from their leaders at the Conference, Union and Division. Then we heard the pledge: 'We will preach in good times and in bad times . . . no matter how bad things will get, we will always preach at God's call.'

Friends, family, colleagues and leaders then congratulated the newly ordained pastors and their families.



To all our readers:

May 2019 be a year of hope and trust in Jesus.



The therapeutic benefits of kindness – Part 1

We commence this new year in positive mode with a mini-series analysing the holistic benefits of kindness. Several scriptures point to the impact kindness has on well-being. Here are a few:

'Kind words are like honey – sweet to the soul and healthy for the body' (*Proverbs 16:24, NLT*).

'Anxiety weighs down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up' (*Proverbs 12:25, NIV*).

'A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself' (*Proverbs 11:17, ESV*).

Current research highlights various therapeutic outcomes of kindness for both the recipients and the individuals who are being kind. Over the next few issues, we will examine the physiological, psychological and spiritual impact of kindness.

Let's commence with analysing some general health outcomes.

Health benefits overview

Allan Luks, former executive director of the Institute for the Advancement of Health, undertook rigorous studies on the impact of kindness. His findings are documented in his book, *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*. Following the results of a survey of more than 3,000 volunteers, he states: 'Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders serious and minor, psychological and physical.'¹

The volunteers varied in age and were drawn from over 30 organisations nationally. They were invited to complete a survey to ascertain how they felt when they engaged in a kind act. In explaining the survey results, Luks reports:

'A rush of euphoria, followed by a longer period of calm, after

performing a kind act is often referred to as a "helper's high". It involves physical sensations and the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. This initial rush is then followed by a longer-lasting period of calm and improved emotional well-being.'

In their analysis on the benefits of kindness, *Psychology Today* published an article titled: 'Why Random Acts of Kindness Matter to Your Well-being'.² In highlighting the therapeutic responses, they listed the following:

- It can release neurochemicals that result in a sense of well-being.
- Dopamine, serotonin and endogenous opioids are released, causing a reduction in pain.
- Kindness enhances the release of oxytocin, which heightens bonding between those individuals being kind to each other.
- Physical and mental health are enhanced through kindness. Many physical ailments are either precipitated by or aggravated by stress. Kindness reduces stress.

Activity: Over the next two weeks be intentional about being kind. Think of kind acts that you can engage in, noting both the recipient's response and your feelings.

Good health!

¹ <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/inspirational/health-benefits-of-kindness.html>
² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/emotional-nourishment/201711/why-random-acts-kindness-matter-your-wellbeing>

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Julian Hibbert, Editor

No one can take this away

I recently bought an international best seller, *The Choice*, by Edith Eger.¹ It is the well-crafted, moving story of a woman who was trucked from Hungary to Auschwitz in 1944. There, at the age of sixteen, she suffers the brutal indignity of death-camp life.

But it all started years before when this promising young gymnast and ballet dancer was suddenly forced to wear a yellow star on her coat sleeve – along with every other Jew in her town. Later her family are forced out of their flat to less comfortable accommodation. She and her sisters are cursed and spat at in the street. Their only offence: the yellow star.

Then came the day her hopes of gymnastic greatness were crushed by her coach: 'Edith. This isn't my choice. But I must be the one to tell you that your place on the Olympic training team will go to someone else.'

Her voice choking with emotion, Edith asks: 'What did I do? I don't understand.'

The coach's answer is cruel: 'The simple truth is that because of your background, you are no longer qualified.' The yellow star was at work again.

They came at night . . .

They came at night to evict her family – armed soldiers, who give them a few chaotic minutes to dress, pack one suitcase between four of them, then stumble onto the street where trucks are waiting.

At the Jakab brickworks on the edge of town they join nearly 12,000 fellow Jews in the roofless drying sheds. They bed down on the floor, wrapped in their coats, huddled for warmth. Rations are meagre. Water scarce. Escape impossible.

Impossible?

That's what Edith wrote. Escape was impossible. Hear it in her own words:

'Inside the brick factory we can hear the streetcars trundle past. They are within reach. But anyone who comes close to the outer fence is shot without warning. A girl only a little older than me tries to run. They hang her body in the middle of the camp as an example.'²

No one escapes the curse of the yellow star. A mother nearby is struggling to feed her newborn baby. She moans to any who will listen: 'What will I do when my milk is gone? My baby just cries and cries!' The crying eventually stops.

Edith moves on . . .

After about a month at the brickworks three thousand of the yellow stars are on the move again . . . to the cattle trucks at the railway siding. Then, with a hundred occupants to each truck, standing room only, they clatter their way slowly into Poland. Edith's description is poignant:

'There is one loaf of bread for eight people to share. One bucket of water. One bucket for our bodily waste . . . People die on the way. We all sleep upright, leaning against our family members, shouldering aside the dead.'³

During that dreadful journey Edith remembers one sustaining comment from her mother, shared in the dead of night:

'We don't know where we're going. We don't know what's going to happen. Just remember, no one can take away from you what you've put in your mind.'⁴

The journey comes to an end. Doors crash open and those yellow stars shuffle down the platform towards the iron gates with this sign above them: ARBEIT MACHT FREI. The family is separated by the tap of a cane. Those over forty, those under fourteen, and mothers with babies move off to the left. 'Don't worry about them – they're going for a shower,' says the guard. The rest file into the camp, women in one line, men in another.

Edith meets a thin woman in a striped dress and asks: 'When will I see my mother? I was told I'd see her soon.'

'She points to the smoke rising up from one of the chimneys in the distance. "Your mother is burning in there," she says.'⁵ The horror of Auschwitz has begun for Edith and her sister, Magda.

Against all odds . . .

Yes, against all odds these sisters survive Auschwitz. But they are moved on through a succession of work camps and forced marches. Here is how Edith remembers their last stop:

'There is always a worse hell. That is our reward for living. When we stop marching we are at Gunkirchen Lager . . . a few wooden buildings in a marshy forest near a village . . . It is not a death camp. There are no gas chambers here, no crematoria. But there is no doubt that we have been sent to die here.'⁶ The camp is wired with

dynamite. It's only a matter of time before the 18,000 emaciated inmates suffer a fiery end.

Fortunately, time stood still . . .

Fortunately, for both Edith and Magda, time stood still long enough for them to hear that feeble cry, 'The Americans are here! The Americans are here!'⁷

Why have I let Edith Eger tell her story briefly at the start of this new year? To make you sad? Depressed? No! I have done this because of the miracle that follows, in her own words:

'It is terrible to lose, to have lost, all the known things: mother, father, sister, boyfriend, country, home. Why do I have to lose the things I don't know, too? Why do I have to lose the future? My potential? The children I'll never mother? . . . I don't want this to be my last thought. I should think about God.

'I try to picture an immovable power. Magda has lost her faith. She and many others. "I can't believe in a God who would let this happen," they say. I understand what they mean. And yet I've never found it difficult to see that it isn't God who is killing us in gas chambers, . . . God doesn't run the death camps. People do. . .'⁸

We must admit, Edith's faith in God had every reason to fail – but it didn't. She is proof that nothing 2019 can hurl at you need destroy your trust in God. Remember what her mother said in the dead of night:

'We don't know where we're going. We don't know what's going to happen. Just remember, no one can take away from you what you've put in your mind.'⁹

Editor's note: There is much more about Edith's full life in The Choice than I have touched on here. She is an internationally acclaimed psychologist whose patients include survivors of abuse and soldiers suffering from PTSD. Her maiden name was Elefant.

¹ *The Choice*, by Edith Eger, Rider (UK) 2017 ² *Ibid.*, p. 42 ³ *Ibid.*, p. 43 ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44 ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47 ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85 ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81 ⁸ *Ibid.* ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44





God thanks you for giving Him your hearts!

by Pastor Ian Sweeney, British Union Conference President

At this time of year, all around the world, our denomination's local churches, conferences, unions and divisions will be focusing upon their plans and budgets for the year ahead in order to meet their missional aspirations.

Recently, Earl Ramharacksingh (British Union Conference Treasurer) reported that the tithe projection for 2019 is expected to be over £23 million pounds across the British Union. This is a tremendous amount of money, but it reflects only some of the giving we expect from our 40,000 members for the year ahead. It does not include local church and mission offerings, or place a monetary value on the time that is volunteered by our members on a weekly basis. With this in mind, and on behalf of the British Union administration, I extend our sincerest thanks and gratitude for your loyal support so far, and for that which lies ahead this year.

However, when we think about giving, this question may easily come to mind: 'Could we give more?'

While John 3:16 may well be the most popular and well-known Bible passage in Christendom, possibly the most frequently read scripture among Seventh-day Adventists worldwide on a Sabbath morning is Malachi 3:8-12, which reads (NKJV):

"Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
'In what way have we robbed You?'
In tithes and offerings.
You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.
Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.
"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"
Says the LORD of hosts;
"And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be a delightful land,"
Says the LORD of hosts."

Apart from the Sabbath, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and our health message, if there is anything that Seventh-day Adventists are known for, it is money. In September 2016, 'The General Conference, the administrative body of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, announced to its employees that it was facing budgetary constraints amid global economic uncertainty and would review its operations in an effort to reduce costs.'

The Treasurer, Dr Juan Prestol-Puesán, said that the General Conference income was actually under budget as of August (2016) and went on to state, 'It is unclear how long global economic uncertainty will last, and it could continue until Jesus' Second Coming.'

The *Adventist News Network* reported that the General Conference had 'taken steps to nurture Christian stewardship. . . Each of the 13 divisions of the world church has been encouraged to appoint dedicated stewardship directors, with the General Conference providing additional funding for the position.'

As a child, while reading *Your Bible and You* by Arthur Maxwell, I remember reading the chapter that dealt with tithing. It was exciting and stirred something in me that brought an appreciation and love for tithing. Maxwell spoke about prominent tithe returners such as Rockefeller, Heinz and Colgate, who all became exceptionally rich in their businesses. This is not a critique of the book, but my young and impressionable mind made a connection between tithe and prosperity.

It might be that our frequent quoting of Malachi 3 on Sabbath mornings has resulted in the prophet only being known for his comments on tithing. It must be said, however, that through this prophet God sought to communicate a far more expansive and

comprehensive message than just the importance of faithful tithing. God begins His message to and through Malachi with the following words (Malachi 1:2, GNT): 'I have always loved you.'

Love is the principal, overriding emotion of God in His dealings with His people – past, present and future – but they are quick to question the evidences of His love.

The motivation behind God's attitude and actions towards us is **love**, and our response to Him should likewise be motivated by our love, no matter how imperfect it may be. God is love, and He lives in the hope that we will reciprocate His love to us.

As Seventh-day Adventists we do not espouse a prosperity gospel. Our weekly reading of Malachi 3:8-12 is done so as to encourage tithe returning and the giving of generous freewill offerings. However, could it be that some of us may be giving to avoid what we perceive as a veiled threat or curse – that if we don't, Heaven's windows will close on us?

In the book *Tithing Practices Among*

Seventh-day Adventists: A Study of Tithe Demographics and Motives in Australia, Brazil, England, Kenya and the United States, Robert McIver states, 'The overwhelming majority of those who tithe 8% or more of their income believe that "God has blessed them because they tithe"' (page 21).

Arthur Maxwell in *Your Bible and You* told the fantastic story of a farmer who was a practising tither. In his area a beetle of some kind was rampant, destroying the crops while they were still in the field. But this tithe-returning farmer prayed earnestly, after which blackbirds swooped down and ate all the devouring insects in his field. His crops were spared while all of his neighbours had theirs destroyed.

Stories about God's blessing to tithe returners should be told, but such stories should be shared **as evidence of God's presence in our lives, not as a motive for giving!** We give because we love God, not in the expectation of some material return!

It appears that the people of Malachi's day were robbing God by not returning their tithes

and offerings in their full or honest amount. However, our giving and returning does not end with money! As Isaiah (29:13) put it, ' . . . "These people come near to me with their mouth and honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me . . ." ' (NIV-UK).

God wants more than our money in the year ahead – He wants our hearts, our lives, our attitudes, our love. Jesus expressed this thought in Matthew 23:23 when He told faithful tithe returners, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone' (KJV).

The book of Malachi opens with the statement that God loves us, and has always loved us.

God desires more than our money: He desires our hearts.

The British Union thanks you for the giving of your money, talents and time – God thanks you for giving Him your hearts!



Have confidence in God!

by Dr Emmanuel Osei, South England Conference President

2018 has been an eventful year for all of us, with much happening both here and abroad. There was the royal wedding; the political struggles between our politicians over the Brexit deal; and the growing threat to our children posed by transgenderism and how it will affect sex education in schools. We have also watched those horrific images of 'killer' wildfires sweeping across parts of California; mass shootings in different places; the streets of London transformed into war zones by gun and knife crime that has claimed the lives of many youth, including the children of our own members – and the list goes on.

As a church we have had our own challenges. While the world church leaders met at our annual council and struggled with the whole issue of 'compliance', we at the South England Conference had 'Reclamation' as our theme for 2018. We began the year by encouraging each of our churches to form a Reclamation Ministries team and do a membership audit. We wanted to get a true and up-to-the-minute picture of our church, and it turned out to be a painful exercise for some congregations who discovered that many deceased members were still on our books, with many others missing or no longer in attendance.

The Reclamation Ministries teams in local churches were tasked to prayerfully seek to reconnect with these lapsed members, beginning a dialogue with them that would hopefully rekindle a meaningful relationship with the church. Thanks be to God, some churches have been successful in this ministry, with precious non-attending and former members being won to Jesus Christ.

We are grateful to God for the faithfulness of our members. They have given liberally of their finances and we have realised a healthy increase in the tithe – to God be the glory! We are also grateful to God for our numerical growth. This year we in the South England Conference crossed the 25,000-membership mark! It is my prayer that we will also grow spiritually. I want to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their commitment and dedication to the Lord. Your sacrifice and service to the church often goes unnoticed by many. However, it is comforting to know that the Lord who sees and reads our very motives is the One who rewards all our efforts.

Ellen White wrote, 'We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history' (*Life Sketches*, page 196). So, as we look back through 2018 and see how the Lord has led us, I am encouraged that the presence of the

Lord will be with the SEC in 2019. As we count down to Brexit, and people debate the various related issues and questions – 'Deal or no deal?'; 'Another referendum or not?'; 'What will happen to our economy in 2019?' – we can face the future confidently and without fear because the Lord has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. The future of our church in the SEC lies in the hands of our great God. This is His church. He is our Leader, Provider and Sustainer. Therefore, we will face the future with confidence. I wish you all a blessed 2019.



Are you 'in' or 'out'?

by Pastor Richard Jackson,
North England Conference President

The Prime Minister's decision on 10 December to delay the parliamentary vote on her Brexit deal to avoid an embarrassing defeat for the Government sent sterling tumbling against the US dollar (1.3%) and the euro (1.1%). Business and other leaders may understand the political reasons for the delay, but the announcement will be viewed by many as another extension of the frustration and uncertainty surrounding Brexit.

The majority had voted for the UK to sever its ties with the European Union, but we don't seem to be in any hurry at all to 'exit'! And, ironically, there is now a vocal group expressing regret over the outcome of the first referendum and demanding that we hold a second one so that they can vote to stay in the EU 'fold'. Be that as it may, have we as Christians ever contemplated with gratitude the priceless benefits that we receive by simply being 'in Christ'?

The North England Conference, both administration and membership, have been prayerfully working to be 'in Christ' over the past 12 months, despite the many challenges we've had to face; for in Hebrews 13:5-6 there is that clear assurance that He will never leave us nor forsake us . . . never, never, never, ever! This text shows obedient Christians that God will

be with them and provide what they need. No matter what the challenge or the circumstances, those who are walking in accordance with God's directions will have the hand of the Almighty God upon them.

Who makes the promise? Our text says, ' . . . because God has said . . .' (NIV). In at least two places the New Testament says that God does not lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). Therefore, it is a 'Yes' and an 'Amen': for

when God says it, it goes down, it will be, and you may stake your life upon it.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews asks a powerful question: ' . . . What can man do to me?' (Hebrews 13:6, NKJV). According to the Bible, all people throughout history stand in some relationship to God, whether living in rebellion and disbelief, or living in acceptance and faith in the Lord. If we are in the latter group, we are under God's sovereignty irrespective of the circumstances. Therefore, the child of God, who is walking in the centre of God's will, need not fear any man, for all are under the power of the living God.

The God who makes this promise is the One who says, 'See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand!' (Deuteronomy 32:39, NIV).

Christians can walk in confidence because our God is self-existent. As John 1:1-3 (NIV) says, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.'

My hope and prayers are that as members of the North England Conference we will turn our hearts heavenward, feast on the Word of God, and, as we are revived by His Word, we will bask in His love and allow Him to direct and guide our lives. May we be a kinder, gentler, more considerate people, extending the love of Christ to one another. I wish for all of us many rich blessings from God and the prosperity that may have eluded us. May the love of Jesus Christ permeate our every thought and action. May God be with you!



The quest for certainty and the last days

by Pastor Dan Serb, Irish Mission President

One of the hardest things to do in communicating a message that's been around for as long as the Gospel has is to stay away from clichés. It is just as hard as it is not to give

in to a growing sense of impatience and desperation while preaching the hope-filled message of Christ's return.

We are at the end of another year, and, if we

are to be honest with ourselves, some form of personal and corporate review needs to take place. That's what usually happens – people draw a line and evaluate the progress, if any, of the investments they've made in both their personal lives and at their place of work or study. As a church we could easily focus once again on how the world is going from bad to worse, and how the Christian message could be the answer to the world's ills if people were just to embrace it and live it out.

Well, I believe that the situation in the world is as uncertain as ever, if not worse. But this is obvious, and focusing on it too much gets people annoyed and intolerant of anything religious. The reason why we sometimes zoom in on the negatives is because we tend to assume too much when communicating our message. Sam Neves, Associate Director of Communication for the General Conference, observes, 'Most of us pastors [and I believe it applies to us all], when we do evangelism, we try to deal with fear of volcanoes, wars, terrorists, school shootings, but most secular people aren't losing sleep over that. But they do lose sleep over other things.' Things which are common to all people, issues 'such as handling rejection from their children or grandchildren, struggling with work or with finances, or dealing with the uncertainty that death brings.'

Also, there is another tendency some people within the church exhibit, something I would call a nervous, impatient and somehow desperate desire to repack the message in more definite terms; an attempt to speed up the timetable of final events; a quest to bring about a renewed interest in prophetic relevance.

I would suggest that neither focusing on how badly things are going in the world (and implicitly getting bogged down in partisan politics and unnatural appeals to a religious solution) nor giving in to impatience and thus succumbing to speculative prophetic predictions is what we should be preoccupied with. I believe the need for now is much simpler: I suggest that we, **as people and as a people**, need to reflect on our *identity* and *self-awareness*.

In the midst of trouble and when humanity is challenged the way it is today, especially within the context of disconnected communities mainly due to technological advancement, it could be that **what would make the difference is strength of spirit, integrity, and a sense of unshakeable self-awareness rather than mere knowledge**. People tend to listen to those with a strong footing who let their lives do the talking.

Yes, I believe that the coming of the Lord is near (Hebrews 10:24, 25; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 3:11). Yes, I believe in the message and the mission of the church. I also believe that our message is peculiar, different. But we

need to embrace the discipline of being different without being weird. We know that the world is going to get worse with every passing year; but our message is not one of panic – it is one of hope, and we need to communicate it clearly.

Comedian Jim Carrey spoke thus of his quest for spiritual fulfilment: 'I have gone through a lot of changes in the last few years and a lot of realisations – and I guess you could say awakenings about things. Everything is touched by that; everything I am doing creatively right now seems to point to the awareness of a lack of self. What are we? Why

are we here? And the answer to both of those questions is: nothing, no reason, as far as I am concerned. It's just about playing with form.'² There needs to be an alternative to such resignation and purposelessness as expressed here by Jim Carrey, **and I know that a lived-out message of redemption gives such an alternative, an uplifting and grace-filled reason for being and for pressing on**.

As we are about to welcome in a new year I invite you to be calm, still in the Lord, anchored in the knowledge of who we are as a people, and let us seek to strengthen our understanding of who we need to be to the

world. Let us be focused on God and thus practise integrity, faithfulness, and assurance of salvation.

'Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving' (Colossians 2:6, 7, ESV).

¹<https://csp.globalmissioncenters.org/three-simple-practices-that-will-help-you-communicate-the-adventist-message-to-secular-people> ²<http://the-talks.com/interview/jim-carrey>



New Year's Message 2019

by Pastor Paul Tompkins, Scottish Mission President

Time is a wonderful gift. As we all know, 2019 will be made up of 365 twenty-four-hour segments, each comprising 1,440 minutes. This is God-given time that can be used by all of us in His service. Time can never be redeemed, but at the start of each new year we have the opportunity to choose to use our allotted time wisely.

In the Scottish Mission we have just held our tenth triennial session under the chosen theme of 'It's Time', supported by this motto: 'To be Devoted, Daring, Decisive – working together in making Him known in Scotland'. Both this theme and this motto will undergird our activities and plans for the next three years, and they are equally applicable for all parts of the British Union.

This past year, one of the quarterly Sabbath School lessons was on the book of Acts. It was inspiring to once again study the explosive way in which the everlasting Gospel spread throughout the many cities Paul and his helpers visited for Christ during their several missionary journeys. One of the highlights of this is found in Acts 17:11. Here we read of the Bereans, who 'were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true' (NIV). These Bereans 'searched the Scriptures every day', or 'daily', as it reads in the New King James Version. As Seventh-day Adventist Christians – who are proud to be called 'people of the Book' – we must also regularly read and study the Word of God. As one writer has said, 'We need to search the Scriptures not just during the Sabbath, not just when it is convenient for us; but we need to search the Scriptures daily, seven days a week.'

The Bereans' devotion to the study of the Word had a powerful effect on their community, as the next verse reveals (12): 'As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men' (NIV). Wouldn't it be wonderful if during this year many prominent men and women across the length and breadth of the British Isles were to do likewise!

We pray for this to happen in Scotland, and the good news is that there are people who are doing just that, as has been evidenced by a young man who has called the Scottish Mission office almost daily, seeking for Bible truth and further Christian literature. He is now fellowshiping with the local church, receiving nurture and enjoying a worship experience. I believe he is not alone.

I firmly believe that, although we live in a secular, materialistic and seemingly post-Christian society, God has not finished with Western Europe, Britain or indeed Scotland yet. A revival is coming, and we know that it will be brought about by the outpouring of the 'latter rain'. May we be ready and waiting to receive that second outpouring of God's Spirit. That's an exciting thought to lead us into the new year.

We all know that the world is in a very uncertain time. This is true both internationally and nationally, evidenced by what we see all around us. As I write, the turmoil around the Brexit debate is at its height. This is surely a sign of the times, and only the coming months will show the result. What is undoubtedly true, however, is that during times of great uncertainty people turn to where they can find certainty, hope and assurance – and this hope and assurance can only be found in God's Word.

May 2019 be a year when many people – each of us included – turn to the Word of God anew and, like the noble Bereans, examine the Scriptures daily. It's undoubtedly the time to do so. *May God bless you.*



Much-needed faith

by Pastor Emanuel Bran, Welsh Mission President

According to UK Census information, between 2001 and 2011 the number of Christians who had been born in Britain fell by 5.3 million – about 10,000 a week. If this rate of decline is sustained, the number of UK-born Christians will have reduced to zero by 2067. England appears to have the lowest population percentage attending church. In 2015 it was 4.7%, just below Wales at 4.8%, while in Scotland the figure was 8.9% (*Faith Survey* website).

Like me, I am sure that you also acknowledge that in our generation faith in the Western world is in jeopardy, and that the words of Jesus are being fulfilled before our very eyes: 'Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man . . .' (Luke 17:26-30, NIV). We all have friends, colleagues or relatives who have detached themselves from faith in God.

This is all very sad, because faith is fundamental to our existence, to our success in life.

The Greek mathematician Archimedes once said: 'Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world.' At first glance this may sound like an impossible task, but we do have such a lever. We call it faith, and it rests upon a very strong pivot – Almighty God. With both lever and pivot in place, our human decisions for right and good can 'move mountains!' As St Augustine once put it: 'Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.'

How is it possible to believe in something that you have not seen or understood? Christians and non-Christians alike experience certain forms of faith each day. If you end up going to hospital for an operation, you have faith in the doctors that they will be able to perform the surgical procedure once you have been put under anaesthetic. Before the operation you have an X-ray, and, although you might not understand how the electromagnetic waves work, you trust the doctors who tell you that they need to intervene in order to save your life. You don't hesitate much because you have faith in the skill and the abilities of the doctors.

If we didn't have faith, we wouldn't drink a single glass of water, or feel safe to go to sleep at night, or drive our cars. You wouldn't accept a cheque if you didn't have faith in the bank's commitment to give you money in exchange for it. The logical conclusion is that, without faith, life would be very difficult to live. Therefore, if we can live each day trusting

each other, we should also be able to have faith regarding the spiritual aspects of our lives. Living faith is a spiritual matter because it has to do with relying on God, who is a spiritual, invisible Being. Faith doesn't come by exercising the five senses. In fact, faith is a confidence that you have in God even when your five senses tell you something different!

There are several outstanding examples of living faith recorded in the Bible:

Noah was 'moved with fear' after being warned by God 'of things not seen as yet' (Hebrews 11:7, KJV). There was no physical evidence to suggest a flood would eventually come and destroy mankind: yet Noah subjected himself to cruel mockery and ridicule for 120 years while building a massive ark on dry land! God said a flood would come, and Noah simply believed Him in faith.

Abraham was 75 years old when God told him to leave all that he had and travel to an unfamiliar, faraway place. God told him to go, and Abraham left in faith without knowing where he was going! Later, when God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, the Bible says that he rose early in the morning and left for the place God had told him to go (Genesis 22:1-3).

After God intervened to prevent Abraham from killing his son, He said, 'Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son' (verse 12, NIV). By this point, God knew that the only 'evidence' Abraham would ever need to carry out God's will was God's command! He had proved his faith!

As demonstrated in these two examples, faith does not require understanding – Noah was warned of things not seen; Abraham didn't know where he was going – yet their obedience didn't depend on God answering their every question.

My friend, as our journey into 2019 begins and we are confronted by challenging circumstances – both in the world and in the church – God expects us to 'come boldly to the throne of our gracious God' (Hebrews 4:16, NLT), professing our faith not just in word but in action too. Ellen White wrote this in *Faith and Works* (page 78): 'Now, brethren, you have educated yourselves so much in doubts and questionings that you have to educate your souls in the line of faith. You have to talk faith, you have to live faith, you have to act faith, that you may have an increase of faith. Exercising that living faith, you will grow to strong men and women in Christ Jesus.' Surely this is the testimony our generation needs, and the way we can best demonstrate our spiritual interpretation of Archimedes' theory.

^{*}https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/saint_augustine_121380



Pakistan Adventist Seminary and College (PASC) youth week of prayer and evangelistic outreach

For seven years the PASC leadership have asked me to come to their joint school and college to conduct a week of spiritual upliftment for their pupils. In stark contrast to this, my family and friends were not too excited by the prospect, and the UK Home Office said, 'Don't go.' The BUC Executive approved the request, however, and with the support and encouragement of Pastor Ian Sweeney plans were set in motion to travel.

With great excitement and slight trepidation, Dr Petras Bahadur (GC Adventist-Muslim Relations), Aftab Barki (translator for the event and BUC Senior Accountant) and I set off on the long journey to Pakistan. We landed in Lahore in wonder and awe at our surroundings and with great expectations on a warm and sunny Friday afternoon. However, unbeknown to us, Asia Bibi, a Christian woman, had just been released after eight years in prison. This sparked violent protests by hardliners who were calling for her execution and making threats on her life.

In and around Lahore, there were demonstrations, protest marches, fighting on the streets with the army who were trying to restore calm, and attacks on vehicles, resulting in burnt-out buses. The PASC leadership tried to make the normally one-hour-and-twenty-minutes journey to meet us in Lahore, but after seven hours of trying they finally gave up and returned to PASC. There were simply too many impassable roads in and around Lahore.

News of our plight got back to Britain and we give thanks for all the prayers that were sent up on our behalf. We spent Sabbath in the relatively protected confines of the Pakistan Union Conference compound, which is policed by armed security guards – a state requirement. That Sabbath I was able to preach in the relative calmness of the Union church, but we were fearful that we would not be able to get to PASC to minister there in the week ahead.

By the end of Sabbath the army had restored calm and peace to the districts in and around Lahore, and as we drove on the road to PASC we saw signs of the demonstrations of the preceding 48 hours. Burnt-out vehicles and army roadblocks were clear evidence of the violent protests that had taken place.

We finally arrived in Farooqabad, where PASC is located. The school/college is set in about 35 acres of beautiful scenic land surrounded completely by ten-foot-high walls and an additional two feet of barbed wire. This

The religious and political situation in Pakistan is usually portrayed as combustible, with incidents of terror and religious intolerance frequently in the news. This report by our British Union Treasurer, Earl Ramharacksingh, shows that God is at work in every situation.

is supported by 14 armed guards at various points around the perimeter. This may at first sound quite frightening, but after a while these security measures just blend into the surroundings.

As we entered the main gates, I was pleasantly surprised to see beautifully maintained lush green grounds, wonderfully manicured hedges and tree-lined paths and roads. The PASC leadership finally got to meet and greet us, but before too long it was 6pm and time for the first of the week's presentations with the students. PASC has about 650 pupils, of which about 350 board in the grounds. They range in age from seven to college-age students. The week-of-prayer presentations were primarily for the 350 boarders, most of whom are from Christian families. Most of the remaining 300 day pupils are from Muslim families.

That first evening, as I stood before the large student body, I prayed for God's intervention and guidance in that week's journey with these impressionable young people. He heard my humble prayer, and that week became one of the most fulfilling and Spirit-filled experiences of my life. Each morning and evening, after the daily presentations, the students would queue up in their groups to share with me their life journeys and wanted me to pray with them. Especially in the evenings, this prayer time would go on for nearly two hours, as group

after group waited patiently for me to talk and pray with them.

During the week I also took time to be with the business studies college students, teaching a class on financial accounting, and then one on socio-economics and how the world around us impacts our lives wherever we are. Dr Bahadur also spent time lecturing to the theology students. I felt saddened for PASC's one female theology student. She approached me during the week to discuss her future, which seems quite bleak within such a challenging culture.

The PASC leadership approached us in the months leading up to our visit to see if we could find donors to help support a project of installing solar panels at their institution. This would help with providing a consistent power supply (power cuts are a major problem),

drastically reduce their carbon footprint, increase the awareness among students of reusable energy forms and lower their energy costs. The £9,000 request seemed quite daunting, but, through the kindness of many organisations, churches and members in the UK and around the world, the project became a reality. We thank God for the kindness and generosity of so many people towards a financially weaker sister organisation. The staff and pupils are so appreciative of this kindness.

As we further explored the site, we came across a previously supported project. As we were admiring the wonderful technology building we noticed the commemorative plaque that read: 'Opened by Pastor Cecil Perry, BUC President, and Raafat Kamal from ADRA-UK'. ADRA had actually funded it.

The week of prayer came to an end all too quickly. The PASC leaders had requested

make a positive difference in so many lives in such a short period of time.

God has 'entrusted' to each and every one of us talents and skill sets. We are responsible to use those talents as God directs and

inspires us. As we move into a new year, I pray that we may ever seek to develop a closer relationship with God; that we will allow God to use us in a mighty way; that He will use us to make a difference to many lives in 2019.



whether we could also preach for a brief evangelistic campaign from the Thursday evening until Sabbath morning. Dr Bahadur was the main speaker and he preached to both the Christians and Muslims in the audience with much fervour and sensitivity in relating Abraham and the Bible to the Koran and Ishmael.

After the Sabbath morning service, this already amazing week finally came to a conclusion with the baptism of 107 precious souls, 40 of whom were from the student body. Pastor Bahadur was blessed to be able to participate in the actual baptism of many of these souls. We thank God for His leading and presence in such a challenging environment.

We thank God for the opportunity to try to



Special days 2019

Special emphasis days and events

They may live and worship in far-flung places, but the 20.1 million Seventh-day Adventists worldwide are not only a faith community – they're a family.

But finding a sense of togetherness can be difficult. One way Adventists can promote community across time zones is by celebrating special emphasis days and events together. The Adventist Church's Calendar of Special Emphasis Days and Events not only encourages unity, but it also helps raise awareness of key issues, such as abuse prevention, family and religious freedom.

The Adventist Church leadership invites you and your church to join your global family in celebrating these emphasis days and events. For further details and resources, visit the following sites.*

January

- 5 January: **Day of Prayer and Fasting** – visit the *Revival and Reformation* website: (<http://www.revivalandreformation.org/prayer>).
- 9-19 January: **Ten Days of Prayer** – visit the *Ten Days of Prayer* website: (<http://www.tendaysofprayer.org/>).
- 12 January: **Health Ministries** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 19 January: **Religious Liberty Day** – contact the General Conference Department of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty: (<http://www.adventistliberty.org/religious-liberty-sabbath>).

February

- 2 February: **Reach the World: Personal Outreach** – contact the General Conference Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries: (<http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/special-sabbaths>).
- 9-16 February: **Christian Home and Marriage Week** – contact the General Conference Department of Family Ministries: (<https://family.adventist.org/FMplanbook>).

March

- 2 March: **Women's Day of Prayer** – contact the General Conference Department of Women's Ministries: (<http://adventistwomensministries.org/index.php?id=124>).
- 9 March: **Adventist World Radio** – contact Adventist World Radio: (<http://awr.org/offering>).
- 16-23 March: **Youth Week of Prayer** – contact the General Conference Department of Youth Ministries: (<http://gcyouthministries.org/MediaPublications/YouthWeekOfPrayer/tabid/100/Default.aspx>).
- 16 March: **Global Youth Day** – see the *Global Youth Day* website: (<http://gcyouthministries.org/SpecialEvents/GlobalYouthDayGYD/tabid/371/Default.aspx>).
- 16 March: **Global Children's Day** – see the General Conference Children's Ministries website: (<http://gcchildmin.org/>).
- 23 March: **Christian Education** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).

April

- 6 April: **Day of Fasting and Prayer** – view resources from the General Conference Ministerial Association: (<https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/prayer-and-fasting-days>).
- 6 April: **Youth Spiritual Commitment Celebration (Northern Hemisphere)** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 13 April: **Friends of Hope Day (Visitors' Day)** – contact the General Conference Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries: (<http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/special-sabbaths>).
- 13 April: **Hope Channel** – contact Hope Channel International: (<http://www.hopetv.org/>).
- 20-26 April: **Literature Evangelism Rally Week** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 20 April: **World Impact (Distribution) Day** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 27 April: **Special Needs Awareness Day** – view this website: (<http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/special-sabbaths>).

May

- 4-25 May: **Drug Awareness Month** – contact the General Conference Department of Health Ministries: (<http://healthministries.com/>).
- 4 May: **Reach the World: United by Our Mission**. Please use this presentation to share our mission with your congregation, institution or communication channel: (<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2bft38x6rlu2rra/AABzCaNuyZS5lhsYxYJrFU4Ta?dl=0>).
- 11 May: **Reach the World: In the Community, Disaster/Famine Relief** – please contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 25 May: **World Day of Prayer for Children at Risk** – view this PDF: (https://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/information/World_Day_of_Prayer_for_Children_at_Risk_2014.pdf).

June

- 1 June: **Reach the World – Bible Study: Sabbath School and Correspondence Courses** – view this website: General Conference Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries: (<http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/special-sabbaths>).
- 8 June: **Women's Ministries Emphasis Day** – contact the General Conference Department of Women's Ministries: (<http://adventistwomensministries.org/>).
- 15 June: **Reach the World – Reach Across: Nurture and Reclaiming** – contact the General Conference Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries: (<http://www.sabbathschoolpersonalministries.org/special-sabbaths>).
- 15 June: **Adventist Church World Refugee Sabbath** – downloadable resources available at: (<https://www.adventist.org/en/information/special-days/refugees/>).

July

- 6 July: **Day of Prayer and Fasting** – visit the resource from *Revival and Reformation*: (<https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/prayer-and-fasting-days>).
- 13 July: **Mission Promotion** – contact Adventist Mission: (<http://www.adventistmission.org/>).
- 20 July: **Reach the World: Media Ministry** – contact the General Conference Department of Communication at the following email address: (<mailto:info@contact.adventist.org>).
- 27 July: **Children's Sabbath** – visit the website for *Kids in Ministry Ideas*: (<http://kidsministryideas.org/>).

August

- 3 August: **Global Mission Evangelism** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 10 August: **Reach the World: Church Planting** – contact Adventist Mission: (<http://www.adventistmission.org/>).
- 17 August: **Education Day** – contact the General Conference Department of Education: (<http://education.gc.adventist.org/>).
- 24 August: **enditnow Day** – contact the General Conference Department of Women's Ministries: (<http://adventistwomensministries.org/index.php?id=125>).
- 24 August: **Lay Evangelism** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).

September

- 7 September: **Youth Spiritual Commitment Celebration (Southern Hemisphere)** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 8-14 September: **Family Togetherness Week** – see resources available from the General Conference Department of Family Ministries: (<http://family.adventist.org/FM-planbook.html>).
- 14 September: **Mission Promotion** – contact Adventist Mission: (<http://www.adventistmission.org/>).

October

- 21 September: **Pathfinder Day** – for more information please visit the Pathfinders website: (<https://youth.adventist.org/Ministries/Pathfinders>).
- 28 September: **Sabbath School Guest Day** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 5 October: **Day of Prayer and Fasting** – find more resources at *Revival and Reformation*: (<https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/prayer-and-fasting-days>).
- 5 October: **Adventist Review Subscription Promotion** – contact the *Adventist Review*: (<http://www.adventistreview.org>).
- 12 October: **Pastor Appreciation Day** – visit the *Elder's Digest* website: (<http://eldersdigest.org/pastorsday>).
- 19 October: **Spirit of Prophecy and Adventist Heritage** – view the Ellen G. White Estate website: (http://ellenwhite.org/content/file/2017-sop-day?numFound=69&collection=true&curr=0&szid=1054430528&f%5b0%5d=bundle%3Afiles&f%5b1%5d=im_file_collection%3A1/).
- 18-20 October: **Global Public Campus Ministries Weekend** – visit General Conference Public Campus Ministries website: (<https://pcm.adventist.org/>).
- 26 October: **Creation Sabbath** – view the *Creation Sabbath* website: (<http://creationsabbath.net/#why>).

November

- 2-9 November: **Week of Prayer** – view last year's *Adventist Review* readings (PDF): (https://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/content/AW-Week_of_Prayer-2018.pdf).
- 9-15 November: **e-Week of Prayer for Youth and Young Adults** – contact the General Conference Department of Youth Ministries: (<http://gcyouthministries.org/MediaPublications/YouthWeekOfPrayer/tabid/100/Default.aspx>).
- 9 November: **Annual Sacrifice Offering** – contact Adventist Mission: (<https://am.adventistmission.org/mission-offering> – see also: <https://www.adventistmission.org/search-results?c=002198611108475441832%3Agwmsmityvae&ie=UTF-8&term=annual+sacrifice+offering&sa+>).
- 16 November: **World Orphans/Vulnerable Children's Day** – contact the Special Needs Ministries: (<https://specialneeds.adventist.org/our-mission>).
- 30 November: **HIV/AIDS Awareness** – contact Adventist AIDS International Ministry: (<http://www.aidsministry.com/>).

December

- 7 December: **Stewardship** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).
- 14 December: **Health Emphasis** – contact your local division: (<https://www.adventist.org/world-church/>).

*See <https://www.adventist.org/en/information/special-days>



Others who were recognised were the Naz Project, which was represented by Paul Boldeau and Marian Wadibia, who reminded everyone that many of the youth struggle with sexual identity. Their charity provides love and support to those the church often rejects. Shaniqua Benjamin was recognised for creating spaces within the community for youth to express themselves through poetry evenings, as was Paul Frempong, who leads the *Boys to Men* ministry, which creates awareness about gangs, drugs and knife cultures. Vanessa Boachie-Appau was recognised for her work through *Inside Out*, which educates people about mental health.

The joint testimonies by real-life youth in leadership and mentoring, Laith Wallace and Andrew Fuller, affirmed the spirit of unity. They drew on their experience of the time Laith was unwell and struggling with addictions, and his church friends prayed for him. 'We believe that when we joined in prayer, God honoured our prayers,' Andrew said. 'We encourage you to make your church friends your friends during the week too; share your problems, your business ideas, and study the Word together,' Laith added. They reflected on Psalm 78:1-7: 'This psalm calls for the leadership of the church to tell the youth how God has been there for us; how we were in sin and God brought us back to Him. We need to stop presenting the church as perfect and for perfect people.' 'This would allow young people to feel accepted and relate to us,' added Andrew.

This is how Newbold theology student, Adriel Mingo, summed up the youth rally: 'What has struck me is the unorthodox way in which the team organised the programme. For me it is a great sign of things to come being different from the past. So, from the lunch and fellowship to the showcasing of people of faith who have done things to impact the community without waiting on the church to say, "Do this or that", to the interactive segment where volunteers were welcomed to participate in a Pathfinder drilling demonstration, it was a day of change and experimentation – which is exactly what we need going forwards!'

The day was full, with a warm atmosphere, soulful praise, worship, and even humour. 'This was such a powerful gathering and it made me feel that the leadership of our church really wants to connect and collaborate with us, the youth,' said another attendee. 'It just felt as if we were on the same page.'

Being on the 'same page' was evident in how the final prayer was conducted. Instead of being prayed for, everyone prayed in pairs, joining their hands together and lifting one another up to God.

'As a young generation of Adventists we have been struggling with our identity, but, for the first time, at this rally I got a sense of our identity – or, at least, of what it could be if we unite and join forces with God. I am eager to see how we will move forward,' said a London-based professional.

'This is the best-organised youth event I have been to: one that much thought was put into to engage the youth,' said one university student. 'I also liked how Pastor Fuller extended an invitation to help everyone who wants to get involved with youth ministry,' she added.

'Get in touch and let us know what help you need – be it finances, training, manpower – whatever you need to reach your God-given potential,' said Pastor Fuller.

JUDITH MAKANIANKHONDO NYIRENDA

Joining forces: London Youth Rally 2018

On Sabbath 27 October last year more than 700 people gathered at the Rock Tower in North London for the London youth rally, which was sponsored and organised by the South England Conference (SEC) Youth Ministries Department on behalf of the London Youth Federation. Titled 'Joining Forces', the rally was full of a spirit of oneness, enthusiasm and compassion which captured the hearts of young people. God was praised through the sharing of real-life experiences faced by the youth; a fresh look at Scripture; and a genuine desire to reach out to one another. There was also a recognition ceremony for those people who are doing independent youth work in London and beyond, celebrating what they have done and how they have joined forces with the SEC to minister to youth. The event was also an opportunity to launch the new SEC Youth Ministries uniform, which is a stepping stone to the General Conference Youth Ministries uniform.

The event began with a fellowship lunch, and SEC Youth Director, Pastor Anthony Fuller, warmly welcomed everyone and set the tone for the gathering: 'For us to reach out to the young people, there is a need to join forces – to join forces with the people out there in the field where work is already being done to elevate the well-being of our youth.' He expressed his pleasure that there are individuals who have not waited for the conference to send them out into a ministry but have acted on their own initiative, saying: 'We are all blessed with individual gifts and our unique experiences which allow us to reach out to a specific person who otherwise would not be reached.'

Pastor Fuller also commended those pastors who came from other areas to support the day, saying, 'Your attendance affirms the high value you have placed on our youth.' Among those pastors were Trans-European Division (TED) Youth Ministries Director, Zlatko Musija; South England Conference (SEC) Pathfinder Director, Pastor Kevin Johns; and BUC Youth Ministries Director, Pastor Dejan Stojkovic. Pastor Stojkovic spoke to the youth, saying that 'there is noise everywhere, in the church, at school, everywhere you go, but I encourage you to listen to the voice of Jesus and let it lead you.'

One of those recognised was Mark Prince for the work he is doing with young people through *The Kiyan Prince Foundation*. Catching the full attention of the youth with his moving testimony, Mark encouraged them to claim their rightful place as children of the King: 'You need to connect to where your power comes from; everything is going to feel empty, but, when you connect with God in your heart, life will have meaning; you will be safe under His wings.'

'Reflections of Ruth'

'Spiritually fulfilling!' This was the overwhelming view that summed up the experience of the attendees at the North England Conference Women's Ministries annual retreat held in October last year. The women arrived in their numbers from across the NEC. Among them were pastors' wives, including our president's wife, who always supports our events. A number of our sisters brought their friends and neighbours too, and this made the event even richer. The theme for this year was 'Reflections of Ruth' and the key aim was to explore and experience how to build relationships for eternity by reflecting on the life of Ruth and her relationship with her mother-in-law, Naomi. We wanted the women to take note of how, amid great challenges and loss, they forged a relationship that has stood as an example for all women of God since then.

Our main speaker for the weekend was Dr Nadine Collins (PhD), who came to us from the USA via the Caribbean. She is an international speaker who, from pre-school to PhD, has been educated in Adventist schools, colleges and universities. She has an impressive range of topics that she preaches and teaches on, particularly that of prayer. She has authored several books on prayer and we were delighted as she shared them with us.

Dr Collins inspired the women to dig deeper into the book of Ruth, helping them to see how much more there was to learn from Ruth and Naomi.

Some attendees were amazed at the depth in the book of Ruth and its significance for mother-daughter relationships and our spiritual development. Dr Collins' presentations met the objectives that were set by Beulah Plunkett, NEC Women's Ministries and Sabbath School Director, who wanted the women to:

1. Learn from Ruth how to build good, godly, sisterly relationships with each other and fulfil the laws of God.
2. Examine how to move forwards in Christian growth, as Naomi and Ruth did – despite their many struggles – to find what God had prepared for them.
3. Experience how to let God lead in every moment of their lives, by deciding never to face our experiences without Him to call on.
4. Get to know God's purpose for our lives, as Ruth did when she accepted Naomi's God.
5. Embark upon or continue our personal change programmes, which take time and effort at each stage. It is helpful to be aware of how you are progressing towards your goal and fulfilling your purpose.

The attendees were also blessed with a 'prayer room' in which Joan Saunders and her team created a real space where they could pray individually or as groups. They could ask for prayer or pray for themselves. A 'prayer tree' was created by the prayer team for the women to place their requests on; then prayers were said for all those requests over the weekend. It was a very moving experience.

The hymn says, 'There is singing up in heaven.' Well, we had singing here on earth and were truly blessed by Zena Taylor, our soloist for the weekend. She has been singing since childhood, and her depth of love for God is evident in the way she sings and praises Him.

We were also blessed by JoAnne Sibanda's beautiful clarinet music pieces and the support of her husband, Lungani, who is the NEC Communications Director. He and his team are always ready to provide excellent audio-visual services when required.

We had a banquet and mini-concert to end the Sabbath evening. The women dressed up and made the most of the occasion. We had our soloist, our clarinettist and volunteers singing, reciting poetry, playing music and making us laugh until we cried. There is great joy in the Lord, and we made sure of that!

So many women came to me and said what a blessing the retreat had been. We have too many lonely people in our

churches and we need to work extra hard to make them into places where people find real friendships and the reality of God's love. To help them do this we had workshops, stalls, a photographer, exercise, time to share and care, walks, discussion time, etc., all of which enabled the women to get the most out of the weekend at Forest Pine Hotel and Golf Resort in Scunthorpe. The facilities were excellent and the staff were truly exceptional. Some of the women ministered to the hotel staff, some of whom asked about our faith and were interested in how we worship. Two guests at the hotel were even invited to our banquet and they were very happy to spend the evening with us.

Some of the women who attended had left church, but came to the retreat to see if they could find their faith again. I spoke to two who said they will be going back to church.

I thank God for His goodness, my secretary Voahangy for her hard work, and all who helped.

BEULAH A. PLUNKETT



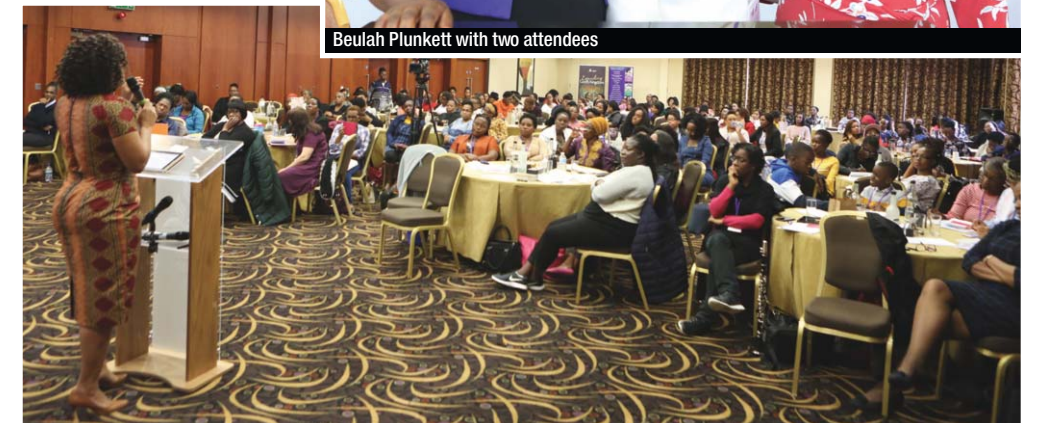
Joan Saunders, prayer leader



Singer, Zena Taylor



Beulah Plunkett with two attendees





Parenting emphasis day

To deliver a memorable and life-changing event or programme you need the right ingredients. On 22 September last year they were available when Pastor Patricia Douglas (NEC Children's Ministries Director) teamed up with Grace Walsh (Health Ministries, Community Services and Disability Ministries Director) and Pastor Les Ackie (BUC Family and Children's Ministries Director) to host a very

informative and life-changing parents' emphasis day programme at Leicester Central Church. For the North England Conference team this event was well-planned and well-executed, and benefited from a fantastic speaker from the North American Division, Dr Sung Kwon. Pastor Kwon's breadth of experience and riveting delivery had many on the edge of their seats.

In the words of Pastor Patricia Douglas: 'The parenting emphasis day is an annual event, co-hosted by both the Children's Ministries Department and the Health, Disabilities, and Community Services Department. Each year it zeros in on a different topic. Last year it was about disabilities, but this year Dr Kwon presented the necessity of outreach as a way of life. We want our children to be aware of the importance of letting their little lights shine to the glory of God, through a



smile, acts of kindness and so much more, so that others may see the light, be blessed by it and embrace Jesus as Lord and Saviour of their lives. Then they, too, may become light bearers in a dark world.'

In *Testimonies*, Volume 1, p. 400, Ellen White wrote: 'Children of eight, ten, or twelve years are old enough to be addressed on the subject of personal religion. Do not teach your children with reference to some future period when they shall be old enough to repent and believe the truth. If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of their state as sinners and of the way of salvation through Christ.' In *Reflecting Christ*, p. 373, the same author says: 'Those who love God should feel deeply interested in the children and youth. To them God can reveal His truth and salvation. Jesus calls the little ones that believe on Him the lambs of His flock. He has a special love for and interest in the children. . . . The most precious offering that the children can give to Jesus, is the freshness of their childhood.'

According to Grace Walsh, 'The day was brilliant from a community services point of view. Dr Kwon encouraged us to reach out to our community because we are here to serve it. In his book *Burst the Bubble* he points out that the only way the church can grow is by mingling with the community and meeting their needs.

It was truly an intergenerational worship experience, and in the afternoon the children unleashed their creativity as they created promise boxes, fans, pictures and so much more to share with others – because reaching out is to be a way of life.

LUNGANI SIBANDA

The green, green grass of Tottenham

Tottenham Church members ventured onto The Green, opposite the church, on Sunday 30 September to hold a community outreach day. The weather was dry but had an autumnal chill.

The music, a bubble machine and the colourful perimeter bunting drew the attention of those passing by.

There were various stalls, including craft and organic food stalls. The operators of the fresh juice stall prepared juice from fruits and vegetables while a crowd watched with interest. The steady stream of passers-by from the community kept the organisers and helpers busy. Meanwhile a bouncy castle, popcorn and two flavours of cold drinks (all free of charge) kept the children busy. The church children also distributed literature, advertised the fresh juice stall and made friends with visiting children.

A nurse was available to carry out blood pressure checks. He is not a church member but enjoyed helping with this initiative and said he would be glad to come again. As he left after a three-hour shift, another nurse happened to arrive – anyone watching would have thought that the exchange had been prearranged.

A passer-by was invited to have his blood pressure checked (body), after which he was offered a cup of fresh juice (fuel for the mind) and then given a book to lead him to spiritual thoughts (spirit). The man laughed



and said, 'You have thought of everything!'

J. MORRIS (COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT)



Dundee International Day

The lyrics of the song, 'There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole', comprised Pastor Paul Tompkins' opening quotation as he addressed the congregation in Dundee Church on 20 October while celebrating Dundee International Day. Yes, a large congregation gathered to express themselves colourfully while enjoying the diversity and unity of more than 25 different cultures and backgrounds.

More than 100 people watched as 25 flags were paraded around the church and up onto the stage, followed by greetings in each

language represented. Multicultural, inter-generational, multifaceted items followed one after the other to create a wonderful two-hour programme. These included songs from Zimbabwean and Ghana groups, a poem written by a Welshman, and a brilliant and humorous skit on humility performed by the teens and juniors. It felt fitting that a child dedication was included in the programme, emphasising how important our children are and our responsibility in bringing them to Christ.

When the programme ended, all were able to enjoy the food laid out in the



church hall under each flag – good food from all around the world. It was during lunch that conversations were heard about having international days more often.

After lunch the congregation listened to the youth, who arranged a very successful afternoon programme and conducted it professionally.

What a wonderful day it was . . . and to think that God has something much better than this waiting ahead for us!

PASTOR JIMMY BOTHA



Old boiler – new life!

'Bob the builder, can we fix it?' is a well-known children's song sung by many children. But who would have thought that Janet Buckle would have come to Christ through singing it? Janet was looking for someone to fix her boiler, which she thought might need replacing. She contacted a number of workmen but wasn't satisfied with their quotes. Then a friend of a friend suggested Ransford Reid, who they said was very fair and honest. The day Ransford called to assess the job and give a quote was the day Janet's life changed. Not only did she like Ransford, who had travelled from over 15 miles away, but he was also very fair in his assessment of the job. While conversing with Ransford, it came to light that he was a Christian. Janet then asked if they did Bible studies, something she had wanted to do. With much delight to both, Ransford agreed to give Janet Bible studies along with another friend, Gregory Campbell. Ransford and Gregory travelled over 30 miles every week to study with Janet. The Bible studies were a great blessing, and Janet decided she wanted to give her heart to Jesus. The local church leader nearest to where Janet lived was contacted, and earlier this year Janet was baptised and is now an active, enthusiastic ambassador for Christ at the New Life Community church in Hilltop, West Bromwich.

WINSOME BROWN-BAADJES



Pastor John Parker



Denise White, Amber Sapphire Pearl White and Lystra Alexis



Denise White baptised by Pastor Joojo Bonnie

Quality of photos as supplied

Baptism at Hackney

Three precious souls were baptised during a special service which took place after a week-long revival series at the Hackney church. The 'One Life: We Can Make a Difference' revival, which took place from 3 to 10 November last year, with Pastor John Parker as the guest speaker, certainly made a difference in the lives of all who attended.

Throughout the week gifts were given out to every visitor, while prayers were offered for those needing relief from some of life's struggles. Many of the singing evangelists were homegrown Hackney members – including Myrtle O'Keefe, Adrian Blake, Stephanie Charles and Michaela Mathieu-Marius. Saxophonist Michael Messiah made a profound impression on the congregation with his jazz-infused style of the gospel

classic, *Wade in the Water*. Yet, with all that took place during the week, it was the God-inspired messages from Pastor Parker which resonated most with everyone. He ministers in the New Heights church in Jackson, Mississippi, but is no stranger to Hackney Church, having spoken during a highly successful evangelistic outreach there some 11 years ago, which resulted in the baptism of some 24 individuals – a record which has yet to be surpassed.

Those precious souls who were baptised are mother and daughter, Denise and Amber White – along with Lystra Alexis. Local church pastor, Joojo Bonnie, did the baptising.

DARELL J. PHILIP (PR AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT)



Brixton outreach

We couldn't wait for Dr Fazadudin Hosein to arrive from the sunny isles of Trinidad and Tobago to conduct our Brixton outreach from 1 to 15 September last year. He did not disappoint us, keeping our attention with his balanced mixture of humour and life experience. Dr Faz, as we came to know him, was brought up as a Muslim, but at the age of 17 he became a Seventh-day Adventist. When he accepted the message he could not wait until the following Sabbath for baptism, but asked to be baptised the very next day. He now travels around the world, learning languages, in order to communicate the love of God to those who are seeking the knowledge of salvation.

Family Fest with Dr Faz was a celebration of family life for all our members and friends and was watched online by people in various countries. He was supported by a singing evangelist, Shurnell Spencer from Trinidad and Tobago, who sang every night.

He incorporated the resident Ackee Drama Group to present a sketch before the main message each night. He also held his daily 'Ask The Pastor' sessions, during which he answered questions from those attending the meetings.

At the end of the evangelistic meetings four souls chose to follow Christ.

VALERIE MOODIE (COMMUNICATIONS)



Photo quality as supplied

Baptism at Milton Keynes

The Milton Keynes church rejoiced on 13 October when Morayo Olumide-Diyan and Dean Murphy gave their lives to Christ. They had both diligently attended the Bible studies given by Pastor Michael Anim and the elders in preparation for baptism.

They were baptised by Pastor Anim in the presence of church members, joyous families and friends. As this happened their favourite hymns and scriptures filled the church; then Pastor Anim presented them with their baptismal certificates and gift books, before welcoming them into the Milton Keynes fellowship.

FRANCESCA REIDER (COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT)

Florin's photo in focus

Florin Orășanu is an elder and the Personal Ministries coordinator at the Exeter church. He moved to Exmouth from Romania when he married Nicoleta Limbosanu, who was already a nurse in this country. Florin was a young minister in his own country, but, since living in England, he has had to take whatever work he can find. However, he has a missionary heart and is always trying to find ways to talk to his work colleagues about the love of Jesus.

Florin is a keen amateur landscape photographer and he recently submitted a photograph to East Devon *iWitness24* for publication. He was then contacted for an interview in the *Exmouth Journal*. He told the interviewer, 'I like to shoot vast landscapes and I love autumn colours and the beautiful light of sunrise and sunset. I'm also a Christian and I really believe God is the greatest



painter. Maybe one day I'll become a professional, but for now I do my best where I was called to serve.'

STELLA JEFFERY

Canterbury raises funds for the Alzheimer's Society

On 14 October last year, 17 members and friends of the Canterbury church took part in a charity walk in aid of the Alzheimer's Society. The walk commenced from the Canterbury church along the picturesque Elham Valley Way and ended in the village of Elham. The walk was approximately 14 miles.

The forecast was for rain that Sunday, but divine power appeared to intervene and the clouds and the rain were held back. Throughout the walk, we were blessed with dry and warm weather. The rain fell as soon as we arrived at our destination, which seemed like a miracle to everyone who walked that

day. Everyone was pleased that they had taken part in the walk in support of such a worthy cause. The walkers raised a total of £1,310 from both online and offline donations. Amen!

VIOLET NG



Community member, Emma

Summer fun

During the past summer holiday West Bletchley Community Church took to the field of an adjoining community centre to run a week of craft and sport activities for primary-age children.

With support from our teens, a core team led by Judith Murrell-McLean organised a selection of activities, including slime and puppet-making, and a finale sports day. All participants were presented with a small gift by which to remember us.

The events of the week so inspired Emma, one of the mothers who herself took part in a 3D paper rose activity, that she wants to be part of the planning team next year!

SYLVONIE NOEL (COMMUNICATION)



Making slime

Sack race

Quality of photos as supplied



Celebration at WGC

We love to celebrate birthdays at Welwyn Garden City Church (WGC), so when our congregation reached its fifteenth anniversary in this community we celebrated in style. Our special service on Sabbath 8 September last year was a true celebration of God's leading in this area, during which we contemplated Welwyn's past, present and future. During the event we 'borrowed' the Pathfinders and Adventurers from Stevenage Church to swell our own very small contingent and provide a guard of honour as the Mayor of Welwyn and Hatfield, Councillor Barbara Fitzsimon, arrived. We were further blessed to have two of our former pastors with us on this occasion. The service began with a wonderful praise time led by the group *Scripture Says*, who continued to bless us with further songs throughout the service. As Pastor Jacques Venter addressed our (much larger than usual) congregation he took us on a journey into *WGC's past*, reminding us of how we have grown, the obstacles we have overcome so far and

how he has valued the open friendliness of this church – the first he pastored in this country. Our present pastor, Max McKenzie-Cook, addressed *WGC's present*, highlighting some of the areas church members are involved in: chaplaincy; leaflet and magazine distribution; singing in care homes once a month; and health expos, to name just a few. He also reminded us of the challenges that still lie ahead. Pastor David Neal, our founding pastor, gave a stirring discourse on how things have changed over the years; how barriers have been broken down and how people come together in adversity. He challenged us to keep working in our community, to be involved with and to serve its members. The above was beautifully interspersed with great music and video messages from previous members and friends from Australia, Africa, and Brazil who had worshipped in WGC for several years while they worked or studied here. It was a blessing to hear how much they enjoyed their time with us. The service was followed by wonderful light refreshments and a tour around a lovely display of photographs of our church at work in the community and enjoying various social events. Above all, it was a reminder that a church is not a building, but a group of people directed by God to touch the lives of other people. This encapsulates Welwyn Garden City's mission statement: 'To be a living witness of God's love to the community in which everyone is welcomed, valued and nurtured'. We hope we can build on this for the future.

TRUDY YOUNG (ELDER)

Christianity . . . not guns or missiles

On 20 October last year Exeter Church again held their yearly health checks in St Stephen's Church, which is centrally situated in the High Street. Sixty-six people attended, which was fewer than last year; but, as it was a beautiful day, perhaps more people had vacated the city in favour of the moors or the coast. Those who attended were very appreciative and considered it an excellent service to the community, and there was a steady flow of participants through the day. Pastor Lorek was pleased that some people come year after year and are now at ease talking to our members. He also said how much he appreciated help from members of other churches, as without them it would have been difficult to man all the stations. Dr Dina Borges travelled down from Bournemouth, and Hannah and Louisa Jeffery from Birmingham. Verna Osorio is a nurse in Barnstaple but attends Exeter Church, and she was responsible for conducting the cholesterol and blood sugar tests. Bupe Kambashi did an excellent job of encouraging people on the street to come in. He said that he had some interesting talks with people of other faiths, and that some had heard of research concerning Seventh-day Adventists living longer and had adjusted their own diets accordingly. The last man to complete all the checks arrived almost at finishing time. He greatly appreciated the help he was given, and his parting words were that Christianity is the answer to the world's problems – not guns or missiles! We hope that everyone who attended caught the spirit of positive Christianity in St Stephen's Church that day.

STELLA JEFFERY



Dagenham's community date

On Sabbath and Sunday, 15 and 16 September last year, Dagenham Church had a date with the community of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. It began with Pathfinder activities on the Sabbath morning in tune with the Global Pathfinder Day, followed by members of the community led by the current mayor, Councillor Sanchia Alasia, and the Queen's representative, Deputy Lieutenant Ian Pittaway, arriving to grace the afternoon and evening programme. The induction of our young people into the various Pathfinder classes took place under the watch of Pathfinder leaders from the South England Conference and the local church. This was followed by an inspiring speech on identity by the mayor before leading out in the award ceremony alongside Lieutenant Pittaway and the Young Mayor of the Borough, Wesley Operaugo. Pastor Hezron Otieno Adingo of the Dagenham church prayed for the leaders of the borough and presented awards to them on behalf of the church. To crown the Sabbath evening programme, there was a lively discussion between a panel of professionals selected from among guests and church members on the subject of identity. On Sunday, the church ministered to the community in two ways. In the morning the Pathfinder club led a procession as part of an event organised by the council to celebrate young people and their efforts to make society a better place. The event brought together about 2,000 people with whom Dagenham's members were able to interact. The procession started at Barking Park and ended at Abbey Green Park in Barking, where Dagenham Church's *Health Is Wealth* programme took place. Our local nurses, working with their colleagues from our sister churches, pooled their skills together to offer health checks, advice, talks, and massages to members of the community. Members of the church also provided support in various ways, which included talking to the community about God and distributing spiritual literature. It was good to see a sweet synergy at work among God's mission-conscious people during the entire event.

PASTOR HEZRON OTIENO ADINGO (LOCAL MINISTER)

Lorenzo Shaw's hundredth birthday

On Sunday 4 November last year, Chiswick Church had a thanksgiving service to honour Lorenzo Shaw, who was celebrating his hundredth birthday. The service was conducted by the last four pastors who have served the church: Mike Hamilton, Michael Mbui, Keith Boldeau and Everett Picart (current). We learnt that Brother Shaw, originally from Jamaica, enjoys having food from his homeland such as ackee, salt fish with yam and breadfruit. He also likes walking, goes out regularly and loves being in the company of others. The latter was quite obvious when on the day he was surrounded by his family and friends during this joyous celebration of a life well lived.

LUDE-MIA AZARD



Messenger

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| Jan 11 | 4.15 | 4.27 | 4.12 | 4.04 | 4.22 |
| 18 | 4.25 | 4.38 | 4.23 | 4.16 | 4.34 |
| 25 | 4.37 | 4.49 | 4.35 | 4.31 | 4.48 |
| Feb 1 | 4.50 | 5.05 | 4.49 | 4.45 | 5.02 |

Newbold College Diversity Lectures Spring Semester 2019

Theme: Celebrating Diversity, Building Community

Tuesday 5 February
Lecturer: Chine McDonald,
Media Content and Public Relations lead at *Christian Aid*
Title: 'Being a black Christian woman in Brexit Britain'
Venue: Smith Centre, Salisbury Hall, Newbold College, RG42 4AN
Time: 7.30pm

Tuesday 5 March
Lecturer: Dave Bookless,
Director of Theology for the global Christian environmental organisation, *A Rocha International*
Title: 'Environmental threats – do Christians care? Should they?'
Venue: Smith Centre, Salisbury Hall, Newbold College, RG42 4AN
Time: 7.30pm

Tuesday 2 April
Lecturer: Jo Berry (founder),
Building Bridges for Peace
Title (working): 'Forgiveness and community building'
Venue: Smith Centre, Salisbury Hall, Newbold College, RG42 4AN
Time: 7.30pm

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For further information contact:
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Anthony Fuller youthministries@secadventist.org.uk

The British Union would like to thank the SEC Youth Department for hosting this day.

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