

Messenger

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Member retention – Top of General Conference agenda

'Do you think you'll still be an Adventist by age 40?' asked Scottish Mission president Paul Tompkins to an 18-year-old a few years ago.

'I hope I'll still be an Adventist by age 40,' she answered, 'but I'm not so sure about next year.'

Tompkins, a presenter at the 2019 Nurture and Retention Summit at the Adventist Church headquarters on 7 April, 2019, used this exchange to illustrate how young people often relate to time. 'Turning 40 seems far off,' he said. 'They are more worried about the here and now.'

Tompkins said that an evaluation of risks in the region he serves has identified their number-one risk: children and young adults not buying into Adventism.

'Why are they leaving?' Tompkins asked. Answering his own question, he said that, even though some reasons are difficult to articulate, there are some things any church and church region can do to slow down and even prevent this disengagement process. He was among scores of other church leaders from around the world

who met in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, for the three-day event, and also shared what they are doing to reverse the trend.

Tompkins' contribution to the event followed 15 years of youth leadership across the Trans-European Division, during which time he completed a doctorate in nurture and retention, as well as working closely with his counterparts in the Inter-European Division in the development of the intergenerational Churches of Refugee concept (iCOR).

The key idea is that the church should be 'a safe haven that provides protection, mediation, justice, and long-term nurturing care'. At the same time, the initiative seeks to include 'all generations, all cultures, and all social classes'.

Meaningful relationships and discipleship

Several presenters emphasised that staying in church often has more to do with the positive experiences in the local church than with specific church

doctrines. 'When it comes to remaining an Adventist, the experience in the local church is much more significant,' Tompkins said. 'They need a spiritual home to which they feel they belong.' The question, then, is, 'How can we help our church become a spiritual home for young people?'

Tompkins and others believe an intentional discipleship programme can help. 'Every person should have an age-specific Bible study by age 14,' he said. 'We also need key programmes targeting 14-17-year-olds, and discipleship groups for 18-25s.'

The Trans-European Division, a church region that encompasses 22 European countries, is working to create safe spaces where children and youth can interact with leaders, according to its executive secretary, Audrey Andersson. 'And we are creating resources for discipleship, mentoring, and conflict resolution,' she said.

However, it is more than a youth and children problem. With migration from those

post-communist countries that now have the freedom to 'live the dream', and the challenges of living in sophisticated secularised societies where people may have spiritual needs but don't see the answer in formal religion, Andersson recognised that much of the answer lies around areas of belonging and seeking fulfilment in the mission of the church.

Adventist Church associate youth director Pako Mokgwane presented on the importance of iCOR for young member retention. 'In most local churches participation is skewed towards adults, but the participation of young people in decision-making processes, leadership, mission and worship heightens the feeling of belonging,' he said. 'iCOR offers ten values that foster healthy relationships, and healthy relationships beget healthy churches that keep members and attract more people.'

Other TED participants included British Union Conference Nurture and Retention expert, Dr Kirk Thomas, who has provided an open platform within his territory



Sleep and wellbeing – Part 4

Chronotypes & sleep behaviour

In this final episode of our sleep series, we present conclusions on how your sleep behaviour impacts your wellbeing, both generally and in specific areas.

Sleep researchers use the term 'chronotype' to refer to the usual time people retire to bed in the evening and wake up in the morning.

Sleepscore gives some insight:¹

'When it comes to chronotypes, most people fall in the middle, meaning not completely an early riser and not completely a night owl. There's also some natural change over the human lifespan.'

Perhaps you have found that your sleep behaviour changes when your usual routine is upset in some way. The Sleep Foundation gives some key advice when this occurs:²

'Your circadian rhythm works best when you have regular sleep habits, like going to bed at night and waking up in the morning around the same times from day to day (including weekends). When things get in the way, like jet lag, daylight savings time, or a compelling sporting event on TV that keeps you up into the wee hours of the morning, you can disrupt your circadian rhythm, which makes you feel out of sorts and can make it harder to pay attention.'

A couple's chronotype also impacts their sexual behaviour.

An article published in *Psychology Today*, titled 'Are You a Morning Lark or a Night Owl? How your chronotype affects your most intimate relationship', by David Ludden PhD, gives some interesting insights into sexual intimacy relating to a couple's sleep patterns.³ Find out

more at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/talking-apes/201805/are-you-morning-lark-or-night-owl>.

Assessing general wellbeing, Dr Ludden concludes:

'Overall, health outcomes are better for larks than owls. Morning-types experience fewer health issues and less incidence of depression, and report higher levels of subjective wellbeing. So apparently there's some truth to the saying, "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."'

Sleepscore gives some final advice:⁴

- Keep a consistent bedtime and wake-up time that allow for plenty of sleep.
- Try to get some sunshine in the morning and throughout the day.
- Before bedtime, limit use of electronics and exposure to artificial light.
- Consider a wake-up light or light therapy glasses to make it easier to get out of bed in the morning if you're a night owl.
- You can incorporate blue light-blocking glasses into your routine or use lightbulbs that emit zero or very low levels of blue light in areas where you spend time in the evening.

Good health!

¹<https://www.sleepscore.com/how-your-chronotype-impacts-your-sleep/> ²<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/what-circadian-rhythm> ³<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/talking-apes/201805/are-you-morning-lark-or-night-owl> ⁴<https://www.sleepscore.com/how-your-chronotype-impacts-your-sleep/>



One size doesn't fit all

Most of the time KPMG, the global auditing and financial services company, reports about others. In June 2017 they released a report, 'Meet the Millennials', about their own workers and those in their subsidiary companies. In their own words they explain the problem:

'Despite every company's best efforts, bolstering that employee satisfaction score continues to be an issue. So what's been going wrong? It's the question on every leader's lips, the worry on every HR function's mind.'

'Welcome to a new era of the human capital workforce. For the first time in history, we're seeing five generations in the workplace at the same time, each bringing a unique set of priorities and expectations. With companies leveraging the same blanket techniques to attract, engage and retain them, it's no wonder that these generations are struggling to co-exist.'

Recognising that one size doesn't fit all is critical, and the time to act is now!¹

As much as this describes the KPMG challenge, it's the same challenge we face – in our church. The challenge is the same, but for one critical difference – **we're not having that conversation.**

If there is a line in those two short paragraphs that jumps off the page for me, it's the final one. While we share KPMG's concern about millennials, we've yet to see what they've seen – **'one size doesn't fit all'** (their emphasis) – and nor are we prepared to act.

Some will quickly dismiss this comparison. 'We're a church, not a financial services company!'

'Not good enough,' is my response, because lives are at stake!

There are many definitions for the term 'millennials', but common to all is that they are the generation born in the years between 1985 and 2000. The first to be born with computers and electronic gadgets galore, they're also the first generation to grow up with the internet and the world-wide web. The KPMG report describes them as having six core features: they are curious, job-hopping, tech-savvy, all-accepting and all-embracing, in need of a work-life balance, and not afraid to challenge the norm.²

The KPMG report goes on further to point out that they have a strong sense of community, both local and global, which in turn sharpens their sense of social justice. Gender equality, sexual equality, racial equality, and economic equality greatly matter to them.

Emotional and economic wellbeing

Emotionally they seem pessimistic. How do we know? By the songs they sing. Researchers from the University of California, Irving, examined half a million UK songs released over the last 30 years. They found that, for popular songs today, there's 'a clear downward trend in "happiness" and "brightness" as well as a slight upward trend in sadness'. Could a contributing factor be the millions of HD digital images displaying the need for perfection? I must not only look good: I must be perfect in every way. For millennials, 'without spot or blemish' is a literal matter. As Julian Hibbert reported in this column just a few weeks ago, if you are not 'perfect', cyberbullying can easily follow, with tragic consequences.

And we could go on to talk about their economic prospects – many have a university degree, but work in Starbucks. We could talk in detail about their many relationships – some intimate, but often superficial and transient.

What about the Truth Question?

In short, they are sceptical about it. Nothing new there, you might suggest. But imagine the information they continually receive every moment. The average millennial checks their smartphone over 150 times a day. Of the information they see, how do they know if it is true or false, or where it's from? The result, according to *Forbes* magazine, is that 'many will only pay attention to what agrees with them'. But here's what's really significant for our context: *'To them, communication is always attached to emotions and opinions, so understanding the individual is vital to hearing their message.'*³

Back in the 1990s Tony Campolo predicted that Christianity in the twenty-first century would be emotion-centred. How true that is. To you and me, Truth with a capital 'T' still matters – big time. It has to, because of the Word of God revealed in Christ. But for this generation, I'm hearing that there's no truth with a capital 'T'.

What to do?

'Have mercy' – literally! That's our starting point: to give our children and youth some slack, to permit them to express their faith in ways they find meaningful. I am passionate about being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian,

but I know that my children have discovered truth in a different context and a different time. I cannot demand that they understand God in exactly the same way I see Him. As KPMG found out to their cost, one size really does not fit all.

The cost to KPMG – some disgruntled employees. If they don't like the conditions, they can move on. If you and I don't understand what the real cost to the kingdom of God is, it's time for us to read over and over again – until we get it – the parables Jesus taught in Luke 15.

When Ellen White wrote these words she knew nothing of millennials, but they remain as relevant as ever:

'Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same. There are no two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light are to another most difficult and perplexing.'

*'So frail, so ignorant, so liable to misconception is human nature, that each should be careful in the estimate he places upon another. We little know the bearing of our acts upon the experience of others. What we do or say may seem to us of little moment, when, could our eyes be opened, we should see that upon it depended the most important results for good or for evil.'*⁴

It's time for us to have this conversation. We won't solve this problem in one editorial, one conversation, or even one summit. But thank the Lord that 'retention' has risen to the top of the GC agenda. Nowhere is this a more critical issue than for parents who 'pray without ceasing' for the faith of our children (me included): but prayer leads to action, changing you and me. It changes my local church, our Conference, our Union, our Division and, yes, it also requires change from the General Conference.

Is anybody listening? (*To be continued...*)

¹KPMG – *Meet the Millennials*, June 2017, page 1 ²KPMG – *Meet the Millennials*, June 2017, pages 5 & 6 ³How Do We Navigate a Post-truth World? <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlmoore/2017/09/07/how-do-we-navigate-a-post-truth-world-follow-the-millennials/#2ea0dad7072> ⁴Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 483



ADRA-UK is looking for a Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

ADRA-UK is a UK-based humanitarian organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that demonstrates God's love and compassion. ADRA-UK is a member of the ADRA global network and works with people in poverty and distress to create just and positive change through empowering partnerships and responsible action.

Role

The Chief Finance Officer position is a pivotal leadership role within the growing not-for-profit organisation. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and acting as a member of the senior management team, you will lead, coordinate and ensure the high-quality implementation of all activities in the Finance Department, as well as ensuring timely reporting and compliance with donor rules and regulations.

The CFO will play a key role in strategic planning, new business development and operational management, ensuring performance is monitored against the strategic plan and helping to shape the organisation's future strategic objectives. You will have overall control and responsibility for all financial aspects of the organisation strategy.

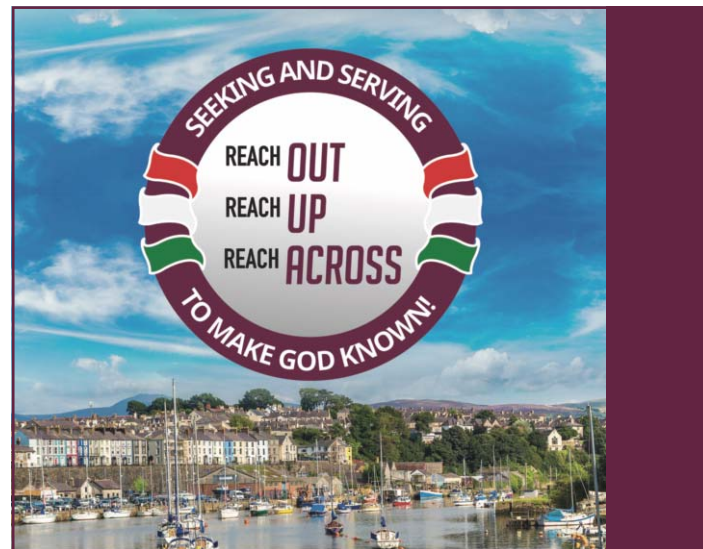
Person

You will have the equivalent of an MBA degree in Accounting and Finance or Management, preferably with ACA, ACCA or CIMA accreditation and evidence of experience working in a related field. You will demonstrate considerable experience in the leadership of strategic financial and business planning processes and be able to manage budgets, risk management processes, business analysis, and information systems.

This role will operate at a strategic level, managing key relationships with internal and external stakeholders while also remaining hands-on as and when required. You will need exceptional capacity for managing and leading people, as well as a successful track record of building and managing a financially sustainable organisation. Importantly, you must be passionate about and committed to supporting the mission of ADRA-UK.

For more information, download our application pack on our website: <http://adra.org.uk/contact/work-adra/>.

Deadline for applications is Wednesday 15 May.



Notice of the Triennial Session of the Welsh Mission of Seventh-day Adventists

Notice is hereby given of the Triennial Business Session of the Welsh Mission of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, scheduled for 2 June, 2019 at the Cardiff Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wales. Delegates will receive reports; elect departmental sponsors and members of the executive committee; submit plans and recommendations; and transact any other business as stipulated in the operating policy of the Welsh Mission of Seventh-day Adventists. The session will start at 9am.

Emanuel Bran, President
Jacques Venter, Executive Secretary



Welsh Mission of Seventh-day Adventists



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to discuss such important issues. He also published a paper on the subject in the April 2019 issue of *Ministry* magazine. Paul Lockham, former BUC executive secretary, was also present as a member of the 2013 committee.

Pooling resources

Church leaders reported that they are pooling resources from various church ministries to support efforts to keep members – especially young people – engaged and involved in church life.

‘Several church departments – Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Ministerial, Women’s Ministries – are working together with a discipleship emphasis,’ said Inter-American Division (IAD) executive secretary, Leonard Johnson. Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) Personal Ministries and Sabbath School director, Richard Sabuin, had a similar comment. ‘We are combining the assistance of the Children’s, Family, and Education departments,’ he said of the church union region based in Korea. ‘In that way we cover all areas – school, home, and church,’ he emphasised.

For Adventist Church education director, Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, it makes sense to call on education, since Christian education has shown itself to be a strong predictor of young people staying in church beyond their teenage years. In a joint presentation with education associate director, John Wesley Taylor V, Beardsley-Hardy explained that research demonstrates that students who attend an Adventist school are much more likely to be baptised and to remain Seventh-day Adventist.

‘They are also more likely to marry a Seventh-day Adventist and to financially support the church through tithes,’ she said. ‘Primary education has the greatest positive impact, followed by secondary and then tertiary education. The longer the years in Adventist education, the greater the likelihood of becoming and remaining a Seventh-day Adventist with a mature faith.’

Church members’ auditing

On a more technical note, most church leaders believe a thorough auditing process of members – going over rolls to certify active,

missing, or dead members – can have a positive effect on retaining members. ‘The more information about the members pastors have, the better pastoral care they can provide,’ said South Brazilian Union Conference executive secretary, Charles Rampanelli. In a breakout session on 7 April, Rampanelli shared the system Adventist leaders have implemented in his region and the results they are getting.

Rampanelli particularly noted that a specially appointed committee in local churches is dividing members into five categories, from those who regularly attend church to those who have stopped attending. It is something, he said, that allows pastors and local leaders to define what type of service and care should be provided to each. ‘It can also help to see trends,’ he added, ‘and make necessary adjustments.’

Involved in mission

Beyond specific tools, most leaders agree that an antidote against member losses is finding a place where every member can serve. It is a strong component, for instance, of the NSD SEEK 2020

initiative that looks to Search, Encourage, Empower, and Keep members. Sabouin explained, ‘When you empower members for service, it’s easier [for them to] decide to stay.’

Adventist Church president, Ted Wilson, agreed. ‘The greatest vaccination against people leaving the church is getting people involved in what the mission of the church is about,’ he said during closing remarks on 7 April.

It is something that demands not only vision, but also willingness to accommodate, Tompkins emphasised, especially when members return to church. ‘People often come back with tangled lives,’ he said as he shared the story of Becky, an Adventist-born troubled teenager who, after years away from church, decided to return.

‘She was embraced and rebaptised, and now has a ministry to help other troubled teenagers,’ he said.

The original version of this article, by Marcos Paseggi, appeared in *Adventist Review*: ‘How to Stop the Adventist Church Membership Bleeding’. This version has been edited by Pastor Victor Hulbert for *TED News*.

As a humanitarian agency, our remit is to demonstrate the justice, compassion and love that Jesus showed while He was here on earth through our very work.

As director of ADRA-UK, I have been blessed to be able to serve the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK by leading in humanitarian outreach. ADRA seeks to redress the imbalance in society by designing programmes along with our partner offices that combat poverty and its surrounding challenges.

Justice.

I have seen the injustice in the lives of many of the poor and oppressed in our world today; but I am thankful that ADRA as a network is able to create justice where injustice has prevailed in the lives of millions of people every year.

Compassion.

But I am also grateful for the fundraising initiatives that go on across the British Union territory on behalf of ADRA-UK, not only during the Appeal season, but throughout the year. Those who go door-to-door collecting, those who raise funds by organising bake-offs and concerts, those who participate in sporting initiatives, and those who give a one-off donation or donate through direct debits are fulfilling the command of Jesus to ‘love your neighbour’.

Love.

I am blessed to be part of a worldwide agency that believes in justice. I am blessed to be part of a national organisation that is compassionate. I am blessed to be part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, where members demonstrate their love for God through giving to those who are less fortunate than themselves.



Justice, compassion, love

An ancient message for the twenty-first century

by Pastor Bert Smit

We live in a world that is selfish. The rise of such devices as smartphones and tablets places an emphasis on ‘me’, on ‘my needs’, on ‘my wants’ and on ‘my desires’. Social media has gifted us with ‘followers’, and we can now ‘buy’ friends and ‘likes’ and ‘boost our posts’ to increase our influence.

Selfishness not only ‘struts its stuff’ in private; it has been evident in the halls of power as Brexit has been negotiated both at home and in Brussels. The ‘us and them’ culture currently in the UK has given rise to xenophobia. Across the water, our American cousins are debating the construction of a wall to keep their southern neighbours out at a colossal cost to their nation.

So, how do we combat selfishness in the twenty-first century? How do we become more outward-looking instead of simply living for ourselves? In an age dominated by the ‘cult of me’, what can I do to live out the values of unselfish behaviour?

In Micah 6:8 (NKJV), the prophet states, ‘He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?’

Ancient words. An old message, but a timely one for the world today.

It’s a message that speaks of justice, which means being fair and equitable. It talks about mercy, which can be translated as compassion, and it also speaks of humility, which is one of the true demonstrations of love.

Justice. Compassion. Love.

The ADRA network has adopted this as its motto for the next five years.



Pastor Raafat Kamal

The Lord of the Gift

Reflecting on God’s power to do the impossible, I love reading stories about missionaries who committed their lives to God’s service. During one of my readings, I came across this inspiring story.

In the early 1900s, a church in Stockholm, Sweden sent two missionary couples to Zaire. David and Svea, along with the Ericksons, macheted their way through the jungle to establish a mission station. During their first year, they did not see a single convert. The villages were resistant to the Gospel because they were afraid of offending their tribal gods. But this did not keep Svea from sharing the love of Jesus with a twelve-year-old boy who delivered fresh eggs to their back door every day.

Svea became pregnant not long after arriving, but she was sick during much of the pregnancy, battling malaria. Although she gave birth to a baby girl, Aina, on 13 April 1923, Svea died seventeen days later.

David made a casket and buried his twenty-seven-year-old wife on the mountainside overlooking the village. Grief, then bitterness, flooded his heart. David gave his daughter, Aina, to the Ericksons and returned to Sweden, broken-hearted.

He then spent the next five decades of his life trying to drown his sorrows with alcohol. He warned those he knew never to mention God’s name in his presence.

The Ericksons raised Aina until she was a toddler, but both of them died within three days of each other when the villagers poisoned them to death. Aina was then given to an American missionary couple, the Bergs, who eventually returned to the States to pastor a church.

After high school Aina enrolled in her local Bible college, where she met and married a fellow student. On their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the college where they both worked gave Aina and her husband a wedding anniversary gift – a trip to Sweden. It was Aina’s wish to find her

biological father, who had abandoned her 50 years before. They searched Stockholm for five days without a trace. Then, two days before departure, they got a tip which led to the third floor of an old building. They found Aina’s dad, who was on his deathbed with a failing liver.

The last words David ever expected to hear were, ‘Papa, it is Aina.’ And the first words out of his mouth were filled with remorse: ‘I never meant to give you away.’ When they embraced, a 50-year-old curse of bitterness was broken. A father and daughter were reconciled that day, and a father was reconciled with his heavenly Father for eternity.

When Aina landed in Seattle the next day, she received news that her father had passed away while they were in flight.

Now here is the rest of the story . . .

Five years later, Aina and her husband attended a Bible conference in London. One of the speakers on the opening night was Ruhigita Ndagora, one of the church leaders in Zaire. What caught Aina’s attention was the fact that Ruhigita was from the region where her parents had been missionaries half a century before.

After the message, Aina spoke to him; she asked if he knew of the village where she was born, and Ruhigita told her he had grown up in that village. She asked if he knew of missionaries by the names of David and Svea. He said, ‘Every day I would go to Svea’s back door with a basket of eggs, and she would tell me about Jesus. I do not know if she had a single convert in all of Africa besides me.’ Then he added, ‘Before Svea died she had a baby girl named Aina, and I have always wondered what happened to her.’

When Aina revealed to him that she was Svea’s daughter, Ruhigita started to sob. They embraced like siblings separated since birth. Then Ruhigita said, ‘Just a few months ago, I placed flowers on your mother’s grave. **On behalf of the hundreds of churches and hundreds of thousands of**

believers in Zaire, thank you for letting your mother die so that many of us could live!

Friends, we all serve the Lord of the Gift. David and Svea did not have a single convert that they knew of. They thought it was all for nothing. But one seed took root and bore fruit beyond belief. You never know which seed it will be.

We should never underestimate the ripple effect of one act of obedience to God’s will. It will never be all for nothing.

God wants to achieve His purpose in your life and mine, starting at home, here in your local church, in your community, and with your neighbours and colleagues at work. Your mission starts where you are, not where you think you should be.

Because . . .

- The Lord of the Gift can take five loaves of bread and two fish and feed thousands.
- The Lord of the Gift can take a

stuttering fugitive Moses and defy a world-power leader and his army.

- The Lord of the Gift, after dying on a blood-stained cross, can leave behind an empty tomb.
- The Lord of the Gift can take 12 followers and create a world community where, for every three people living on this planet, one professes that Jesus Christ is King.
- The Lord of the Gift can take a young Svea from Sweden to reach tens of thousands with the Gospel in Zaire.
- He can take what He has blessed you with and make a difference that matters for eternity.

Pastor Raafat Kamal serves as President of the Trans-European Division. He shared this story with Irish Mission members at their recent Mission-wide Day of Fellowship, Sabbath 16 March.



TED Bible Conference (16-20 June)

Join us for a five-day Bible conference, ‘Adventism for Twenty-first-century Europe: Rediscovering Adventist identity and mission in twenty-first-century Europe’, hosted in conjunction with the Trans-European Division (TED).

The event is ideal for Theology teachers, Union and Conference church administrators, select mission practitioners, presenters, guests and self-sponsored church employees and/or laity.

The week will focus on:

- Ecclesiology – Understanding the role and functions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in twenty-first-century Europe
- Adventist Identity – Understanding the biblical teaching and the historical applications of our identity throughout the times
- Mission – Practical issues in mission amid the challenges of the culture we live in (secularism, postmodernism, pluralism, scepticism)

Registration is now open.

- Register and find out more about the TED Bible Conference

‘Forgiveness and Community Building’ – The April Diversity lecture

In October 1984, Patrick Magee planted the IRA bomb that killed Jo Berry's father, the British politician Sir Antony Berry. That event created a relationship between Jo Berry and Patrick Magee which could have led to a lifelong hatred. Instead, the two have been on a journey together which has led to them sharing over 300 platforms around the world and promoting the idea that forgiving bridges between perpetrators and victims can be built.

At the April Diversity lecture, Jo Berry shared the story of her journey from being a young pacifist who, before the night of her father's murder, had 'felt like a free spirit'. These days she has a global career facilitating and teaching peace-making, reconciliation and restorative justice. Her talk and Q&A session were peppered with references to various acts of terror and atrocity – not just in Ireland, but also in

Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, in Norway with Anders Behring Breivik, in the UK with the murder of Jo Cox, and most recently in New Zealand. All these conflicts left behind lives full of pain, quickly ignored as media attention moves on to the next drama.

Jo began her journey of reconciliation entirely alone, with only curiosity about 'why the IRA used violence' and 'trusting that, somehow, life would give me experiences'. And it did. First she met an Irish taxi driver whose brother had been killed by 'her side' – a British soldier. The conversation gave her the belief that people who should have been enemies could communicate. She began to believe, 'I can build a bridge across the divide... the conversation made me feel I had done something.'

Subsequently she travelled to Northern Ireland, meeting others from 'victim' families on both sides and constantly trying to

understand terrorists – what do they think or feel as they murder others? Slowly the idea of meeting her father's murderer grew in her mind, and eventually the invitation was sent and rejected – three times. Eventually, 16 years after the bombing, came the chance to meet Patrick Magee. Jo was busy when the offer came, and her very human response was, 'I'm not sure I'm in the mood!'

But she went. A report like this cannot do justice to Jo's story of the meeting with her father's murderer – of the questions and thoughts that went through her mind. To hear that, you must join the hundreds of other people who have watched the talk for themselves on the Facebook page of Newbold College of Higher Education: https://www.facebook.com/newboldcollege/videos/357769264834262/?epa=SEARCH_BOX. There you will hear the description of a highly interpersonal drama as two strangers navigated the distances and barriers between them and came to recognise a measure of mutual humanity.

This was not a story minimising or cheapening the challenges of such a relationship. Both participants had stepped on to what Jo describes as an emotional rollercoaster. Patrick evidently went to a library to find a book about 'what you do when you meet the daughter of someone you have killed'. There are still times when Pat wants to go back and justify what he did, and Jo still finds it hard to listen to him do that. But they talk about it again. The progress of the relationship, the effects on Jo's children – all have been explored on the journey. Eventually Jo asked herself, 'If I had experienced everything Patrick has experienced, would I have made the same decision?' Her answer? 'Every time I suspend judgement, open my heart and become present to the other person, I see that I would make the same choice and there is nothing to forgive.' As she travels to Rwanda and other places, the coming to a recognition of common humanity in both sides of a reconciliation process has become a recurrent experience.

Jo made no claims that she is now incapable of getting angry and hurting people. 'It is hard. I still get angry and want to blame

someone else,' she said. It's about recognising anger and changing our response.

What about the place of feelings in forgiveness? Feeling anger at the injustice done to her and her family was a total part of Jo's journey. 'All feelings are understandable,' she says; 'what matters is what we do with them. ... Some people have to do a lot of emotional work ... it can be really hard.' She should know!

So has Jo Berry experienced forgiveness? She claims she is still learning. In fact, she has doubts about the use of the word 'forgiveness', which suggests a power imbalance between the 'forgiver' and the 'forgiven'. Her concern is for the development of a community which moves from having power *over* others to sharing and working *together*. She works for a community where all needs are met and people give up being what she calls 'righteous'. 'When people are righteous, they think they are right and blame others,' she says. In the world that Jo Berry dreams of, whether we are believers or not, everyone can find their own way to give up blaming and punishing people and learn to see people in their full humanity.

In conclusion, Jo came back to the real world: the world of Brexit disagreements; the world of knife crime, where kids she has met at London schools say they feel less safe. 'What we need are safe places around the country where people listen and offer dignity and respect to each other. What we need is "a policy of cups of tea with the other"', she said.

In the Q&A, Jo covered ideas about forgiveness on a personal and national scale, about not 'letting people walk all over us', about the effect of her work on her health, about the difficulties of owning and taking responsibility for our own feelings, and about prejudice that seems to be passed on from one generation to another. She responded to one question with one of her most memorable quotations: 'Revenge is like drinking poison and hoping someone else will die!' After the story she had told and the fortnight with the Forgiveness Project at Newbold Church and College, our hope is that Newbold people will be drinking tea together, not poison!

HELEN PEARSON

BUC celebrates International Women's Day 2019

On the afternoon of 13 March a large number of women and a few brave men assembled in the BUC loft at the beginning of an afternoon's programme to encourage, value and appreciate the role of women in society in general, and the church in particular, as well as thanking women who had made a significant contribution to their church or local communities.

The event was intended to celebrate International Women's Day and was hosted by the Development Education Department of ADRA-UK in partnership with Adventist Community Services and Women's Ministries Departments, both under the directorship of Sharon Platt-McDonald. It was, according to ADRA's Cathy Boldeau, intended 'to highlight the contribution of women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the wider community. Based on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) as prescribed by the United Nations for humanitarian organisations, the afternoon programme was a development education initiative to inform, inspire and hopefully change attitudes and opinions regarding gender issues.'

The programme began with a brief presentation showing how male and female gender roles were established in children's minds at an early age. A class was asked to draw a picture of a fighter pilot, a firefighter and a surgeon. Almost all drew pictures of men in those roles, and were surprised when their real counterparts who turned up to meet them were women.

The day is usually celebrated on 8 March but was altered to fit the diary of the principal speaker, Chief Inspector Alicia Shaw, Hertfordshire Constabulary's first woman from the black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community to hold that role. She gave an inspiring account of how she joined the police service and her rise through the ranks, in what was traditionally seen as a man's world, to her present role as a hostage negotiator, and of how she finds herself being called out at all times of the day and night dealing with potential suicides. She pointed out that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner is a woman, as is a Hertfordshire Constabulary assistant chief constable, in an organisation which has five male and five female chief inspectors.

Other inspiring talks by women were given by two firefighters: Christi Burling, who is currently a retained (part-time) firefighter hoping to be appointed to the service before too long; and Carley-Jo Rackley, District Community Safety Coordinator for the Watford & Three Rivers districts, both talking about their roles and

their experience in the local fire service – which was also traditionally seen as a man's world. They pointed out that a woman is currently in charge of London's fire service!

ADRA-UK's chief financial officer, Stha Nyamusara, spoke at length about the role of ADRA in making a contribution to the sustainable development of girls throughout the world, telling us of the hardships that many encountered as a result of their gender; also of her own inspiring rise, through education, from a childhood in an African country to becoming a chartered accountant and working for ADRA-UK.

The Chairman of Watford Borough Council, Councillor Rabi Martin, was the second main speaker of the day, speaking of how equality had progressed during his lifetime, although the women assembled wouldn't necessarily have agreed with all his views as seen from a male perspective! He cited three women prime ministers as being among those who had achieved the most during his lifetime: Mrs Indira Gandhi in his native India; Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who became the world's first female prime minister in her native Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1960; and Britain's Margaret Thatcher.

The celebration ended with a presentation of certificates to women across the age range who have quietly undertaken work for their local churches, communities or ADRA, giving

their time freely for no financial reward; and to those who have achieved a lot in areas traditionally seen as belonging to men. It was felt that they should be recognised and appreciated for their contribution during their lifetime, rather than, as so often happens, just at their funeral or in their obituary! The work they were recognised for was inspiring in each case, and it was clear that without them working quietly in the background many Adventist churches in this country would have a difficult job functioning as well as they do in their local communities.

Those recognised for their work were: Pat Walton, Audrey Balderstone, June Coombs, Pastor Lorraine Fontaine, Lynette Allcock, Margaret Anthony, Melvina Kirwan, Elsie Staple, Barbara Lawrence, June Thompson, Sonia Lee, Ruth Stewart, Hopieann Platt (in absentia), Pam Robertson (in absentia), Kristi Burling, Noreen Kydd-Sinclair, Elritha Sunderland, Janice Davis, Milimo Mumbo, Jill Bartley, Annalisa Buraglio Molteni, and – last but not least – Andrea Hayes (Community Liaison Officer for the Watford Labour Party) for her work with Watford's 'One Vision Project'.

In the words of Sharon Platt-McDonald, written nearly 30 years ago:

'So let's value our women
Let them know that we care
And appreciate and celebrate them
Whether they be far or near

'Then confirm us valuable as women
And you'll be sensible
Because in one word ...
We're just *indispensable!*



1. Our ability to forgive others is in direct proportion to the extent to which we feel Christ has forgiven us. What do you think?
2. What fears and feelings do we experience when we want to forgive those who have hurt us (sometimes deeply) but just can't bring ourselves to do so?
3. Does forgiving the other mean that justice flies out of the window?
4. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors' – familiar words from the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:12, ESV). What did Jesus mean?
5. We sometimes find it difficult to remember what we were doing last week, but remember clearly the time when a brother or sister (in Christ) speared us 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 years ago, and have still to let it go – and reconcile. True or false?

These questions are provided as a MESSENGER resource for personal reflection or small group study.



As *MESSENGER* partners with the South England Conference and the North England Conference in promoting their themes and speakers for this year's Camp Meeting season, we take a step back to explain why Camp Meeting is significant for our community of faith, and how it came about. To help us, we reference the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*.*

Camp Meeting

A series of meetings held for a number of days, generally in a rural or semirural setting, with provision for encampment on the grounds; a type of meeting now peculiar to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a few other denominations. Camp meetings are held in various sections of the world, usually annually, and at times when the weather is suitable for such occasions; customarily a camp meeting is conducted by a conference or an equivalent unit of church organisation.

History

Camp meetings originated among the Presbyterians in Kentucky in the early years of the nineteenth century and later flourished,

especially among the Methodists. Seventh-day Adventist camp meetings began in 1868, five years after the General Conference was incorporated in 1863. The background for the Seventh-day Adventist gatherings was in the Millerite camp meetings of 1842-1844, in which both James White and Joseph Bates, early leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, had participated, and in similar meetings held by the Methodist Church with notable success.

The subject of holding such meetings came up at the General Conference Session held at Battle Creek, Michigan, 12-18 May, 1868. The minutes of that meeting reported the following: 'Resolved, that this conference recommend to our people to hold a general camp meeting annually at the time of the sessions of our business associations.

*Resolved, that the Gen. Conf. Committee be

authorised, at their discretion, to carry this plan into execution' (*Review and Herald* 31:356 – 26 May, 1868).

Two months later, in an editorial, James White set the matter before the readers (*ibid.* 32:56, 57 – 14 July, 1868), and made a strong appeal for general camp meetings. He referred to the unsuitability of the business sessions of the General Conference and other business sessions for a spiritual feast.

'This is not a good time for a general gathering of our brethren and sisters to enjoy a spiritual feast. Not understanding this, many have come to our annual conferences, spent a week's time, and gone home disappointed. They had no special interest in the business sessions, thought they occupied too much time, and concluded that their brethren were becoming formal and backslidden.'

The issue of 25 August carried the announcement of 'Our First General Camp Meeting', to be 'held at Wright, Ottawa Co., Mich., 1-7 September'. This meeting (*ibid.* 32:172 – 15 September, 1868; 32:197 – 6 October, 1868), attended by as many as 2,000, was both a revival for the church members and an evangelistic series for the visitors. There were 22 tents, each housing the

group from one local church, and two large tents for meetings in case of rain. These were arranged in a circle around the outdoor meeting place, which had a preachers' stand and board benches. There was also a crude

stand where books and tracts were sold. Within a month other camp meetings were held at Clyde, Illinois, and Pilot Grove, Iowa (*ibid.* 32:196, 216 – 6, 20 October, 1868). From this small beginning camp meetings have

become a regular feature of Seventh-day Adventist church life in many countries. . . .

* *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 of the *Commentary Reference Series*, pages 281, 282

Watford hosts first ever UK camp meeting – really?

Abstrud, you might suggest – whoever heard of a camp meeting held in Watford? But, according to the late Pastor Mike Stickland, reporting for *MESSENGER* in November 1982, the first camp meeting to take place within the British Isles was in 1936, held in Watford and combined with the British Union Session of that year. Forty-six years later, as Pastor Stickland describes, it took 'the vision and determined planning of the (South England) Conference president, Dr Silburn M. Reid', to revive the Adventist Camp Meeting tradition.

Of Dr Reid he continued: 'His first-hand experience of similar events west of the Atlantic, coupled with that of other brethren seconded to the work in this county, meant that the doubtful "it cannot be done" became the celebratory "it has been done", and even the most atrocious weather (sustained heavy rain and high winds) could not dampen the spirit of unity and blessing we enjoyed together.'

As two trumpets sounded across the campground on the morning of 17 October 1982 at Rockley Sands, Poole, the Camp Meeting tradition that had lain dormant for so long was re-established. (*MESSENGER* vol. 87, no. 23/24 – 19 November 1982.)

And the rest is history. For both the South and North England Conferences, Camp Meeting in the UK has flourished ever since, its success due in part to the provision of a home-based holiday company, Pontins, which provides an ample supply of shelter come rain or shine.

For almost all Conference employees, Camp Meeting week is one where all hands are on deck to ensure that members have a great holiday combined with an inspiring spiritual retreat. While some workers preach (often from abroad), others immerse themselves in logistics (transportation, day trips, food services), while others lead out in children's, teens', and youth ministries. Members often describe the meetings as 'mountain-top' experiences, not least because of the inspirational singing. Who cannot be stirred and buoyed up by 1,500 worshippers singing 'Marvellous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt'? Many members regard the entire event as the spiritual highlight of their year.

The accompanying advertisements are designed to provide just a taster of this coming year's programme. Like the very first Michigan camp meeting, there's opportunity to purchase

books and tracts. But, unlike Michigan, it's reassuring to know that the Adventist Book Centre team's display will, as ever, be well beyond 'the crude stand where books and tracts were sold'.

When all is said and done, this year's camp

meetings provide an annual opportunity for the church to come together, study Scripture together, sing and pray together, and enjoy the pleasure of each other's company – the key word being 'together'.

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Children & Cradle Roll Programmes

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Brixton ordination

It was with anticipation that we took our seats in Brixton Church on the afternoon of Sabbath 23 February 2019 to witness the ordination of two elders and five deacons who dedicate their time and effort to forwarding the message in the ministries they have been called to.

Under the guidance of Pastor Keith Boldeau and the board of Brixton Church, these seven individuals were selected for ordination and had been in training and daily presenting themselves before Christ, asking for the infilling of the Holy Spirit for the work ahead.

In John 15:16 (KJV), Jesus refers to ordination in this way: 'I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.'

Brixton was blessed with the presence of elders from other churches who had also come to witness the ordination of their peers, and the occasion was opened with a trumpet fanfare and the hymn, 'The Church Has One Foundation', which was fitting as both these ministries are foundational to the day-to-day running of our church.

Pastor Cecil Perry gave the sermon, admonishing those ordained to walk circumspectly on their journey to the Promised Land; to be examples to those they serve; and to live the life of a good Christian.

All those ordained had the support of the church, their family and their friends, and under the leadership of Christ they will do great things as they work within the church, bringing the people together to form a united body, and also working outside of the church in their evangelistic endeavours.

The Bible says, in 1 John 2:14, NLT: 'I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ.' We pray their maturity will be like that of Moses and those he selected to lead the children of Israel on their journey to the place the Lord had prepared for them.

We know that the Lord will be with those set aside for His work, and that we will continue in unity to spread the good news of Christ's soon coming.

VALERIE MOODIE
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



Discovering hitherto unknown artistic talents

Church congregations in North London and Hertfordshire are enjoying floral arrangements now being created by some of their members who recently discovered that they had unknown talents for floral artistry.

During February and March a series of four workshops for complete beginners who wanted to develop the art of flower arranging were

conducted at The Stanborough Centre by Audrey Balderstone. Audrey has acquired a well-deserved reputation for her own flower-arranging skills, having been awarded both Gold and Silver Gilt medals for her displays at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show. Over the years she has organised flower festivals, given talks on floral artistry and delivered sermons using flowers to illustrate her points.

Starting with just five flowers in the first session, thanks to Audrey's excellent teaching, a group of more than a dozen ladies from across the age range (including two schoolgirls) changed from complete novices to competent flower arrangers in just four weeks.

For the final session the participants provided their own flowers, following guidance from Audrey, who provided the floral foam and dishes along with some greenery. The quality of their work in this fourth session belied the fact that they had no previous knowledge of arranging flowers, and bore witness to Audrey's skill as an instructor – an opinion which found unanimous agreement among the group, who were all keen to return for a more advanced course.

Pat Swan, who attended the workshop, clearly spoke for all attendees when she said, 'We've all learnt a lot. Audrey's a good teacher and we now understand a lot more about what goes into arrangements for church.'

Audrey clearly enjoyed running the workshop, which was the result of popular demand, having finally given in to pressure to run a beginner's course. She stated afterwards that she was willing to run another one for beginners if there is sufficient demand.

Anyone who would like to join a later workshop can register an interest by contacting Jefferson Araujo Nascimento: jef@stanboroughpark.org.

JUNE COOMBS



A baptism at London Ghana Church Youth Week of Prayer

This year's Youth Week of Prayer programme was given an international outlook as the church invited Pastor Paul Smith from Canada to deliver a week-long programme full of

inspiration and soul-searching in equal measure.

On Sabbath 23 March, the climax of the Youth Week of Prayer witnessed the baptism of one person, while five others responded to the pastor's call and gave their lives to Christ.

In all, Pastor Smith ministered to the youth on five occasions, showing them biblical truths that lead to a stronger relationship with God and the church.

Pastor Smith also had a message for parents: 'We have got to a point where we have made God seem so unobtainable and so lofty that people are often afraid to come to church; and, if they do come, it seems there are so many societal, traditional and cultural norms that put up barriers that make youth feel that they will not be able to respond to God's calling.'

'We need to create an organic experience; we need to bring them back to an Acts of the Apostles kind of situation, where people are really able to experience the Spirit. Once people are able to view God as a loving Father, it changes the way they worship Him.'

ROBERT KYEI-GYAU



Global Youth Day: 'Be the Sermon'

To mark Global Youth Day, Hackney's youth decided to 'Be the Sermon' as they went out into the local community and beyond, sharing the love of Jesus with everyone. Before heading out for the day, the youth had an inspiring prayer breakfast session with Pastor Joojo Bonnie and his wife. Testimonies were then shared of new jobs gained and examinations passed, but also of potential job redundancies and incidents of stabbings outside school premises. Elder Japheth Obese-Amankwah then led a time of prayer with Pastor Bonnie, to pray for the youth in light of the testimonies, and also for God to be with them as they ministered in the community.

With tracts, bookmarks and snack bags, it was off and out into the community to minister to the needs of the homeless, young and old.

DARELL J. PHILIP

Corrigenda

Tanya's surname, as the Bluebird Care Agency Carer of the Year, should have read 'Courtney', and not 'Wood', as reported on page 16 of the 22 March edition of *MESSENGER*.

The wedding anniversary report of David and Anita King on page 10 of the 5 April edition of *MESSENGER* was a celebration of their golden wedding, and not diamond, as stated.

The ADRA Annual Appeal banner on page 1 of the 5 April edition of *MESSENGER* should have read 2019, and not 2015.

We are sorry for these errors.

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Who needs friends anyway?

A few times in my childhood, my mum uttered the words, 'Show me your friends and I'll show you who you are!' This was usually in response to her experiencing a less-than-stellar quality in one of my peers, or because I displayed an unsavoury learned behaviour I had acquired from one of them. She also made a point of iterating that she could count the number of *friends* she had on one hand, whereas she had a numerous amount of *acquaintances*.

I quickly realised that her intuition was worth taking note of, and by the time I left primary school I had learned to become very selective about those I assigned to the exclusive category of 'friend' versus my ever-expanding group of 'acquaintances'. Though I didn't always get it right, one test I particularly appreciated was introducing my mum to each new potential friend to get her take on them (something I also did for potential suitors!).

It's a beautiful thing to have someone or a group of people to

laugh, cry, grow, celebrate, learn and even get in trouble with. The reality is, friendships can bring so much joy, but they also can bring pain. Like any worthwhile endeavour, they require effort and maintenance which can sometimes tire rather than inspire. In spite of this, we learn from the Bible that it's unwise to try to 'go it alone': 'You are better off having a friend than being all alone, because then you will get more enjoyment out of what you earn. If you fall, your friend can help you up. But if you fall without having a friend nearby, you are really in trouble.' Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, CEV-UK.

Loneliness is real. Each of us longs to be understood and to have meaningful connections with other humans in non-romantic ways.

If you or someone you know is in the market for some new or old-but-improved friendships, then perhaps these simple tips may be useful:



Pray: It's always a good idea to ask for God's wisdom before, during and after any venture. God desires for us to have *healthy* relationships with our companions.

Consider your own personality: Would *you* want to be friends with you? Do you listen well? Are you kind? Are you self-centred? Do you hurt others or build them up with your words and actions?

Branch out: Visit places other than your usual haunts and/or try different activities and social groups.

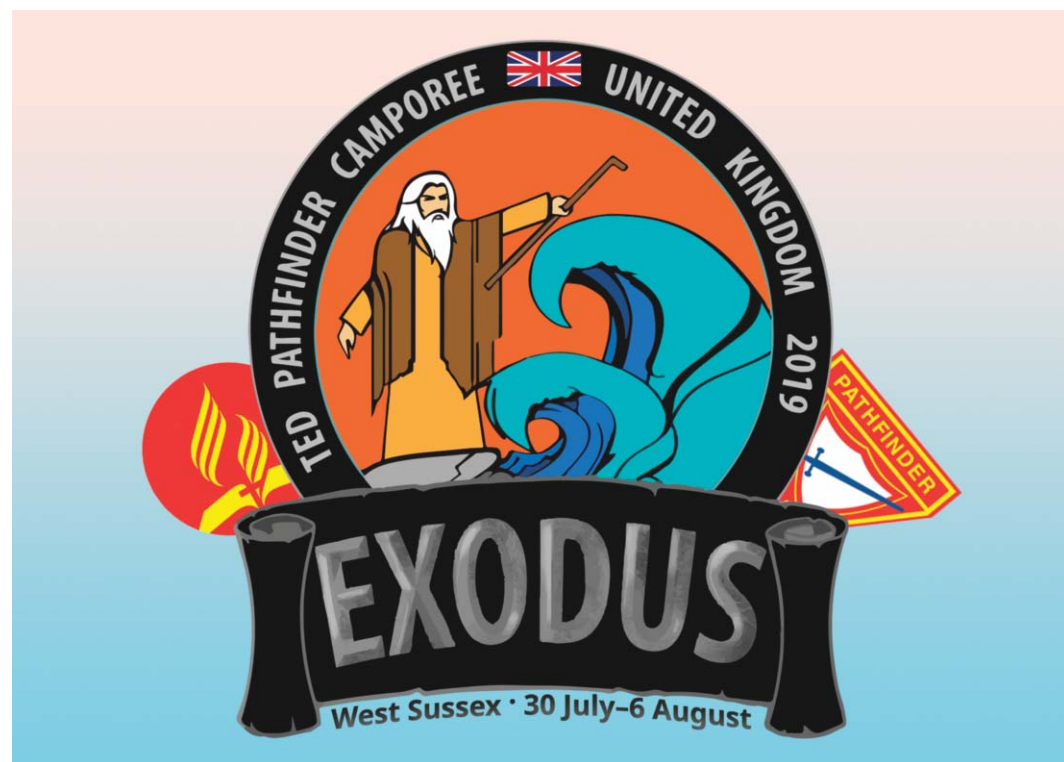
Do you have similar values and interests? It's easiest to connect when you have things in common which can lead to positive shared experiences. There's nothing quite like a friend who will lift you up in prayer or, like Job's friends, know when to sit in silence.

Look for desirable character traits: It's not fun, beneficial or safe to be in the presence of someone who will use you, be dishonest or laugh *at* you. Ultimately, those we spend time with rub off on us, so we should aim to surround ourselves with people whose traits we'd be happy to acquire.

This summer we are fortunate to have the Trans-European Division camporee in our backyard, which will be a fantastic opportunity for our Pathfinders, staff and volunteers to make new friends (and acquaintances) from among our 22 Division countries and further afield. I met most of my closest friends through the Pathfinder club – a sentiment that countless others can attest to.

Whether you have made, or will make, lifelong friends at school, church, in your neighbourhood, at the gym, on a plane, at a special interest group, or at the next Pathfinder camporee: my hope is that we all find the Jonathan to our David; the Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to our Daniel; or the Mary, Martha and Lazarus to our Jesus.

Sajitha Forde-Ralph is Marketing and Communications Assistant for the Trans-European Division



'Our Reason' – Wolverhampton revival series

By Joe Higgins

'Permit me to pause here...'
'Look for the clues... I think there I've found some...'

These were just a couple of engaging phrases that caught the ears of entranced listeners to God's Word during a week-long revival series entitled 'Our Reason'. This collaborative event brought together the talents and skills of the six churches in the Wolverhampton district (Bilston, Pendeford, The Vine, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton Central and Wolverhampton Great Brickkiln Street).

The thought underpinning the series was that it was time for the church members in the Wolverhampton district to reflect on and review not only 'Our Reason' for being Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Christians in this period of Earth's history; but, more directly, 'Our Reason' for being SDA Christians in our local community. The theme, 'Our Reason', was both a statement and a question. The statement manifested itself in the first instance through the theme song, sung each night by a joint praise team and written by Misheck Mtimbanyoka, a member of Wolverhampton Central Church. The poignant lyrics state:

'The Holy Scriptures prove to us
There's God, *Our Reason* we exist.
We believe that the Word of God is true,
Our Reason to praise and worship God.

Chorus
'*Our Reason* is Jesus, the Precious Lamb of God,
The Saviour of the world,
Our Reason why we sing –
We believe in the Trinity,
Creation and the Law –
He is coming again!'

In the second instance, the theme was reflected by supportive accounts of activities in the community via the various district churches, ranging from food bank services to a community gospel choir.

The 'Our Reason' question was answered by Dr D. Donaldson, Ministerial Director of the Allegheny East Conference, USA. Through curious and disturbing titles such as 'Guarding our shields', 'Living with a limp', 'Burn your ships' and 'The autobiography of a fool!' – just to name a few – the congregation could not escape the undeniable fact that progression in spiritual growth only happens if we keep looking forward. 'Our Reason' to be Adventists is wrapped up in the 28 Fundamental Beliefs, the central figure of which is the Person of Jesus Christ.

The concluding Sabbath's worship had many fabulous points – of particular note were the decorum and poise with which the junior members of the church conducted the Sabbath School. The children hosted and directed various sections, asking challenging and insightful questions upon subjects such as the judgement; what is represented by the mark and image of the beast in the Book of Revelation; and their own reasons for why they look forward to the second coming of Jesus.

A memorable segment of the day involved Pastor Dr Patrick Herbert surprising Pastor Samuel Appiah and his wife Winnie with the presentation of gifts and a commemorative plaque marking the end of his time as Area 6 Coordinator, as they will soon be relocating their ministry to the Birmingham area. Dr Herbert will be taking up the mantle.

Dr Donaldson's final sermon finished the series with no less power and urgency than his opening sermon: 'The God who breaks through!' His biblical message emphatically showed that prior recognition of God in praise guarantees God's breakthrough in the life of a true worshipper.



In conclusion, here is some minor rephrasing of a familiar statement from the pen of Ellen G. White to sum up the experience...

'In reviewing our past week, having listened to every point of admonition concerning our present standing, I can say, "Praise God!" As I see what the Lord has wrought (through Dr Donaldson and the collaborative efforts of the Wolverhampton churches), I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as Saviour/Leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led (continues to lead) us, and His teaching in our past history.' – *Life sketches of a worshipper*, 2-9 March 2019.



Family Seasons Sabbath School videos

The South Pacific Division has produced a series of 13 short videos for the current Family Seasons Sabbath School lessons. We are delighted with the quality of the stories that our four couples shared of their family seasons in these 3-5-minute videos. I am sure that members will be blessed and the discussion of the Sabbath School topics will be enhanced as they view these videos. For each lesson couples share their experience in connection with the lesson theme for the week.

Videos are available free and can be downloaded at:
<https://vimeo.com/spddiscipleship> or at:
<https://disciple.org.au/resources/family-seasons-q2-2019-Sabbath-School-guides/> – a great Sabbath School resource for introducing each week's study.



BUC President visits Dudley

Sabbath, 9 February was a memorable day for Dudley Church. It was Community Guests' Day, and the preacher on this occasion was Pastor Ian Sweeney, BUC President. He was welcomed and introduced by the host pastor, Rainford McIntosh. The church family were happy for him to grace us with his presence. He spent the entire day with us. In the afternoon, after a delicious and sumptuous lunch prepared by the catering committee of the church, he presented a topic on the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, followed by a Q&A period. The church was tremendously blessed.

DUDLEY COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT



Centre: BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney, and Pastor & Mrs McIntosh, surrounded by part of the Dudley Church membership



Newly baptised members, Mr Eric McLeod & Miss Violeta Popova, surrounded by Pastor & Mrs McIntosh and the Membership of Dudley Church



Revival first at West Bletchley

Not having your own church building can pose difficulties, one of which is not having access to the building for meetings out of contracted times, due to it being hired to someone else. However, on Friday evening, 22 February, we were graciously permitted use of West Bletchley Community Centre for our first revival in 'our own' building. It was a blessing to see members, visitors and friends attend in their numbers as if it were a Sabbath morning!

The speaker for the weekend meetings was Pastor Leon Curfs, who is currently on leave from ministry in Kenya. His sermons were candid and inspirational, causing the listener to catch a glimpse of how, many years ago, the Holy Spirit worked to convict him of Bible truths and Christlike living. The point was made that we don't have to be at rock-bottom to seek a Holy-Spirit revival – but the revival cannot stop there: it must be ongoing; and this was the challenge put to us all.

SYLVONIE NOEL (IMAGE AND ARTICLE)

Baptism at Dudley

A church building without a baptistery in the Seventh-day Adventist Church context of mission is like a hospital without beds or a health centre without medical doctors and nurses: such was the Dudley church for many years. The church at Dudley struggled for a while without its own baptistery.

On Sabbath, 30 March, two precious souls were immersed in the newly built baptistery. What a wonderful service of initiation for the church family. Special mention should be given to Brother Clive Ferguson, Elder Frederick Sajan, and other elders of the church who studied with these individuals. This was coordinated by the pastor and the head elder, Brother Matthias Siyapi and the Sabbath School Department. The baptismal rites were conducted by the host pastor, Rainford McIntosh; and the guest speaker was a son of Dudley, Pastor Obinnaya Iheoma, who presently serves as the district leader of the Bournville, Northfield & Halesowen churches and was recently elected Area 5 Coordinator. He spoke on the topic 'In Due Season'. His sermon was a challenge to all in attendance. We wish the new converts great success on their spiritual walk, and pray that the church will continue to be engaged in total membership involvement (TMI). This initiative will yield many more souls for the extension of God's Kingdom by nurturing each other and winning another.

DUDLEY COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT



Owen Paul Brocklehurst



Sarah Ncube



Pastor Milan Gugleta

Rugby baptism

On 9 March Rugby members experienced the joy of welcoming two new members to their church. Owen Paul Brocklehurst and Sarah Ncube, who have attended Rugby Church for many years, were baptised. The baptism service was led by Pastor Milan Gugleta, Elder John Gutu and Elder Sergio De Sousa.

DEBI DE SOUSA



'Come Dine with Me'

South England Conference Communications Director, Pastor Sam Davies, was guest speaker at Hackney Church on Sabbath 9 March 2019. Pastor Davies was highly complimentary of Hackney's community ministries and outreach endeavours, and of the coverage of these in the local press – notably the Anti-Knife and Gun Crime March in partnership with representatives from all of Hackney's diverse faith groups, along with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Hackney.

In his message – 'Come Dine with Me' – Pastor Davies illustrated through the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14) the ways in which Christ tries to reach us, and how we can often miss out

because of our misplaced priorities. He continued with a challenge: 'Without social mingling we cannot grow churches. For example, the UK's 'big lunch' initiative reaches out to people in the community, those who are alienated and considered the outcasts of society. Millions benefit. As a church we should be doing the same. If God came to save the good and the bad, we should not label anyone.'

Hackney's pastor – Joojo Bonnie, who was a Pathfinder under Pastor Davies' leadership and whose father (Pastor Bonnie Snr) was at one time Pastor Davies' church pastor – thanked the Communications Director for his ministry in and support of Hackney, and confessed that he looked up to the humble man of God as an older brother.

DARELL J. PHILIP

Welling celebrates its first baptism of 2019!

Sam Rocastle finally heeded the call from above after much deliberation and renewed his covenant with God, and was baptised on Sabbath 23 March 2019 by Pastor Israel Williams. It was an awesome occasion that was witnessed by family and friends, some from as far as Canada – and a supportive congregation. He was welcomed into the fellowship of Welling Church as its newest member (Welling is located in South-east London).

Congratulations, and welcome to the family, Sam!

ELIZABETH PICART



Manchester Southern Asia members run

Proverbs 28:27 (KJV) – 'He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.'

The children, youth and adults of Manchester Southern Asia Church participated in a 10k fun run/walk organised by the church ADRA team at Manchester Alexandra Park to raise funds for the 2019 ADRA Annual Appeal on Sunday 17 March 2019. Every participant will testify of the Lord's goodness and answered prayers, where the rains were spared on the day of the event, with most of the week until Saturday being wet days. It was a high day for the church, with good weather and great turnout of participants from both the church and the local community. The ADRA team recognised the first five quickest finishers by awarding them T-shirts, and all participants were given certificates. The church membership presently are busy raising funds, and have reported a positive response from donors due to the run/walk event. All glory and praise to God Almighty for a successful event.

DIAMOND SATHI



Ros and Colin Hopkins surrounded by church family

Huntingdon family celebrates anniversary

On 2 March, Huntingdon members were honoured to celebrate the forty-fifth wedding anniversary of Ros and Colin Hopkins, who have recently joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church and offered a special vegetarian buffet to the church family to celebrate their milestone. Also present were Earl and Jackie Ramharacksingh and Pastor Sven Ohman. Stanley Teixeira, the church pastor, and Elder Mark Baptiste gave thanks for the opportunity to share this moment together on behalf of the local church.

May the Lord bless them and keep their family for the years to come.

PASTOR STANLEY TEIXEIRA (PETERBOROUGH DISTRICT)



Chiswick youth campaign/baptism

The Chiswick youth campaign ran from 15 February to 2 March, and was titled 'Go Hard or Go Home (it's time to take God seriously!)'.

Evangelist for the campaign was Ray Patrick, who challenged attendees and those watching on live stream to facilitate the power of prayer for their debt problem and for healing. The buzz and high energy of Elder Ray Patrick was infectious, as were his openness and honesty with his personal struggles, as well as his sharing of the amazing miracles

God had performed in his life. It was almost as if the presence of the Holy Spirit was tangible as at adults, youth and children together connected with Elder Patrick's mighty messages.

Robert Wedderburn (standing next to Ray Patrick in the photo) was invited to the campaign by Tony Jeffrey, our music director. They have been work colleagues for many years, and last year, tragically, they both lost a brother. They provided a shoulder for each other through this difficult time,

supporting and empathising with each other through their loss. Each night Robert attended the campaign, he responded to the altar calls. He has a very endearing personality, which draws people to him. He was very enthusiastic to get baptised, and Pastor Everett Picart, the local minister, duly baptised him with the Lord's call: Shanel Nelson, Teyah Davis, Suraiya Jeffrey, Kadeer Cole, and Isaac MESAQUE. God truly blessed the

campaign and used the speaker, Elder Patrick, in a very powerful way! There were two anointing services, where some experienced immediate healing and others came back with powerful testimonies! Fourteen people requested baptism, six of whom were baptised in the first baptism on 23 February, with the further eight being prepared for the second baptism, to be held on 18 May. We thank our Lord for showing us His amazing power!

CHISWICK COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



'You Are Worthy' – Area 1 Teens Day

Last Sabbath (23 March) Area 1 ran its first Teens Day at Plymouth Church. The event was aimed at teenagers and parents in particular, but of course everyone was invited to attend. The church was full with people visiting from both Devon and Cornwall.

Being a teenager in a small church can be very difficult, especially when there are not many youth in a range of ages. Often we find that they'd rather be at football practice or hanging out with friends their own age elsewhere.

Growing up in the church I always felt that I should know more, that I should be able to recite hundreds of Bible texts from memory and know the answers to all the Sabbath School questions right away. I felt that I wasn't good enough to lead the lesson or tell my friends about God because I might say something wrong. Now my thinking has changed, but when I see the teenagers in church now I often wonder if they think the same as I did at that age, which led me to the day's topic of 'You Are Worthy'.

Our preacher, Pastor Jeremy Tremear, taught us not to be afraid of our shortcomings, but, like Peter, to wear our hearts on our sleeves. Peter was 'real' with God. Jesus could work with his doubts and shortcomings because he was authentic, not fake. Our worth is not to be dictated by human judgement. God's 'reckless love' is always with us, no matter what. Even when we showed Him our worst, He was still willing to sacrifice Himself for us.

After fellowship lunch the LIVE St Austell crew led worship, followed by activities for all, including a Bible discovery discussion time. The group engaged in some up-cycling crafty projects, turning worthless objects into treasured pieces of art. Bottles were turned into lamps with a string of lights inside and inspirational Bible verses painted on the outside, and bottle caps were transformed into key rings and badges with verses displayed.

Here's what we learnt from being together: nobody is perfect; we all struggle and have experienced times when we felt we weren't good enough. Talking through these things and finding that others have felt and do feel the same encourages us to realise we are not alone.

Everyone had a great time and left the event feeling more positive about themselves, realising that we are worthy because Christ died for us, and through Him we are worthy.

JENNIE HALL

Stanborough Summer Camp Jobs



Do you enjoy working with kids? Are you hard-working and flexible? Spend this summer working at Stanborough Summer Camp. This is paid work experience that will look great on your CV. We are looking for an assistant coordinator, team leaders, team assistants, a chaplain/chaplain assistant and an IT assistant. Applicants must be 18+ and must have the right to work in the UK. Summer Camp will run from 14 July until 27 July. Application deadline is 31 May. For more information, contact Mrs Anna Papaioannou on apapaioannou@spsch.org.

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Balham Pathfinders and Adventurers meet the Mayor of Wandsworth

In November 2018, Director Eddie Musonda and joint-secretaries Trudian Francis and Natasha Sharmah received an award for their contribution to the London Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) and Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith. As a result of this they had an opportunity to meet the Mayor of Wandsworth.

He invited them and the members of the Balham Pathfinder and Adventurer Club to attend the council, and subsequently they agreed a time for this to happen, as it is also part of one of the Pathfinder Explorer class curriculum requirements.

The visit to the Mayor took place during the February half-term. Twenty-five Balham Adventurers, Pathfinders, Counsellors, parents, grandparents and an older brother went to visit the Mayor and Mayoress of Wandsworth at the Town Hall. The club were

told about the history of the council and received a tour of council chambers where major decisions affecting the people of Wandsworth are made. The children were challenged to find a number of objects and facts relating to the history of the country and Wandsworth Council, and were rewarded for their efforts with a special Wandsworth Coat of Arms pin to place on their sashes. At the end of the visit one of the leaders of the club, Jimmy



Musonda, accepted the Council's Coat of Arms plaque on behalf of the club.

NATASHA SHARMAH AND ERROL ANDERSON



Student sees Lineage video in class

Pastor Adam Ramdin with Clive Coutet and his team have spent several years developing the *Lineage Journey*



series of video programmes, which explores the background to the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and then covers the growth of the church itself. As the *Lineage* Facebook page points out, '*Lineage* is a multi-faceted educational tool that explores our spiritual heritage.'

Samppa Muchenagumbo was sitting at his desk at St Thomas More School in Blaydon, Gateshead, when his teacher announced that his RE class would be watching a short video to help illustrate the kind of lifestyle young people should aspire to. The teacher, himself an atheist, wanted his pupils to use ideas in the video to help them think about their attitude to the world.

Searching Google for a suitable video, he came across 'Holy Island and Aidan' on YouTube. The class were watching while young Samppa was itching to tell his teacher and his class, 'I know the speaker on that video! He's a pastor in my church!'

Sure enough, the video was one of the early *Lineage* videos about Holy Island and St Aidan. Samppa's school had chosen a quality Adventist video to illustrate how today's youth can adopt a deep concern for the poor with a practical faith based on the Gospel.

The *Lineage* video series can be used in many settings. They are very short, to the point, and cover church history in a lively manner.

For Samppa, daring to be different, wanting to be faithful to the God he trusts, this was a brief moment in time when he was rightly proud of his church and its values.

Episode 3 – Holy Island and Aidan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxUFn3aF6Rk>

'Transcendence'

Friends, family and members of the public were treated to an evening of inspirational spoken word poetry and performance in Shoreditch on Thursday 11 April 2019. In association with Final Call Productions (a Christian theatre company that seeks to inspire, engage, encourage and inform its audiences through drama, theatre, film and poetry), the poetic theme of 'Transcendence' brought together various Christian poets and spoken word artists who each gave their own interpretation of the theme through their poetry. The subject matter ranged from peer pressure and death to abuse and marriage. Among those in the packed audience were Mark Grey (playwright and director of the highly acclaimed stage play, *End the Silence*) and Matthew Herel (presenter of SEC Media's *A Life Less Ordinary* and Redhill International Seventh-day Adventist pastor).

Final Call Productions director, Jermaine Wong, was also one of the featured artists on the night. His poem – *Public Announcement* – addresses the great controversy, with a particular focus on the means and ways the enemy of our souls attacks our minds in an attempt to destabilise our spiritual walk with Christ. Such lines as '*I hold the title for the godfather of lies, and I never hide my trophies*'; '*Deception, he's my brother, and he's got truth in a throat squeeze*'; and '*Stifling him of his oxygen, righteousness could never approach me*' highlight the impact of the enemy in lives not fully yielded to or dependent upon the power to be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

For more information on Final Call Productions please visit: www.finalcallproductions.com.

DARELL J. PHILIP



Remembering Desmond Ford

by Gerhard Pfandl, for *Adventist Review*

During the 1980s Dr Desmond Ford became a familiar name among Seventh-day Adventists around the world. On 11 March of this year Dr Ford died, aged 90. As the article below from the *Adventist Review* shows, reported a few days after his death, on 15 March, his ministry and teachings stirred considerable controversy among Seventh-day Adventists. The questions he asked about the nature of salvation, and our prophetic understanding of Daniel and Revelation, continue to raise considerable discussion among members today.

From 1968 to 1970 I was a student at Avondale College in Australia, where Desmond Ford was head of the Theology Department. He was a charismatic preacher with a phenomenal memory. I spent many hours in his classroom and still consider him one of the best teachers I have ever had.

Ford was born into an Anglican family in Queensland, Australia. Early on he developed a love for books, and at age 14 he started working at a newspaper office in Sydney. One of his father's cousins was a Seventh-day Adventist who took an interest in Desmond. He was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1946 at age 17. A few months later he resigned from his job at the newspaper office, and at the beginning of 1947 he began his studies for the ministry at Avondale College. He was a brilliant student and graduated from the ministerial course in 1950. He began his ministry in North New South Wales. In 1952 he married his college sweetheart, Gwen Booth, with whom he had three children (Elénne, Paul, and Luke).

His articles in various church papers convinced leaders that Desmond Ford was a future college teacher. After Ford completed his BA in 1958, the family was sent to America, where he completed an MA at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and a PhD at Michigan State University. At the beginning of 1961 the family returned to Australia, and for the next ten years Ford taught theology at Avondale, wrote many articles, and was a sought-after preacher and camp-meeting speaker.

The 'righteousness by faith' controversy

Confronted with Robert Brinsmead's perfectionism, Ford began to emphasise the topic of righteousness by faith. He declared that righteousness by faith is the same as justification by faith. Justification, he explained, is Christ's work for us – on the cross. It happens outside of us; it is a change of status. Through justification we become children of God. Sanctification, on the other hand, is Christ's work in us through the Holy Spirit. Sanctification changes us into the likeness of Christ. This ran counter to the general Adventist understanding at that time, that righteousness by faith includes justification and sanctification.

In April 1970 his first wife, Gwen, lost her battle with breast cancer. After her death Ford applied for study leave, and was granted leave to go to the University of Manchester to begin a PhD in New Testament under F. F. Bruce. Prior to leaving for England in 1971, Ford married Gillian Wastell, a student at Avondale, who had helped look after Gwen.

After the family's return from England in 1973, opposition to Ford's teaching from some Australian evangelists and pastors led to a gathering called the Palmdale Conference in California, 23–30 April, 1976. At this conference, nineteen scholars and administrators from Australia and the United States discussed the definition of righteousness by faith. The official report of the Palmdale Conference, published in *Adventist Review*, contained a clear biblical statement on righteousness by faith, but also some ambiguous statements. Both sides, therefore, could claim that the statement supported their position. However, most Adventist scholars and

pastors today have accepted Ford's definition of righteousness by faith.

The sanctuary controversy

Because the complaints against Ford's teaching on righteousness by faith and on the nature of the sanctuary in heaven mounted, it was thought best to remove Ford temporarily from the Australian scene and have him spend some time at Pacific Union College, with which Avondale had an affiliation agreement.

Ford began teaching at PUC in the autumn of 1977, and on Saturday (Sabbath) afternoon, 27 October, 1979, he presented a lecture on the investigative judgement to the Angwin chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums, in which he denied any biblical support for this doctrine. The church's leadership responded by summoning Ford to a meeting of more than 100 theologians and church administrators at Glacier View Ranch in Colorado in August 1980 to evaluate his 991-page document, entitled 'Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgement'.

The Sanctuary Review Committee considered Ford's document, wrestled with its implications, and concluded that, while Ford was asking the right questions concerning the sanctuary teaching, his answers and conclusions were wrong.

His credentials as an Adventist teacher were removed. With the help of some Adventist friends, Ford established an independent ministry called Good News Unlimited with headquarters in Auburn, California. For about twenty years, until his retirement in 2000, Ford travelled the world, preaching and teaching. During his life he published more than twenty books and over one hundred articles. In 2000, he and Gillian returned to Australia to live near his daughter Elénne's home in Queensland. He passed away on 11 March, 2019, at the age of 90.

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor,
I noticed, with interest, the article by Carolyn Schulz in the latest edition of *MESSENGER*.

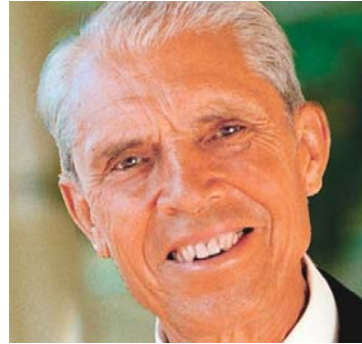
Eleven years ago the Weston-super-Mare church began a healthy eating cookery club by way of outreach, entitled 'Eating Better, Paying Less'. We still meet fortnightly. The programme includes a health talk, two demonstrations and a tasting session. We have a regular group of fifteen people attending from the community, many of whom have been coming for a number of years.

Six years ago we started a craft club as another outreach. Twenty ladies regularly attend on a Wednesday morning.

As a result of these two clubs our previous pastor, Wayne Erasmus, and our head elder, Len Sitton, have both been asked to conduct funeral services for the husbands of two of our attendees. We have been able to pray, as a whole group in Craft Club, for ladies who were going through a particularly tough time, as well as praying for individuals. Currently three of the ladies who attend these clubs regularly come to church on a Sabbath morning. When we have Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival services we can have at least a dozen attending.

Just thought you and *MESSENGER* readers would be interested.

CYNTHIA SOUTHCOIT



Romola Combridge (1932-2019)
d. 19 February.

Romola Combridge was a woman of no mean repute. Born into a ministerial family in the pre-Second World War era, she knew from personal experience the meaning of the Great Second Advent Movement. Her father, Alfred Bird, was a minister who, in the periods between the two world wars, like most pastors of that time, was frequently on the move. At nine years of age Romola had moved home six times. Her happiness when the war began was to be in a church with boys and girls of her own age. This changed abruptly when her father died. Five years in the Derby church ended with moves to Bracknell, then Watford. In 1948, aged 16, she began to work in the British Union Conference as an office junior. Lack of adequate finance prevented Romola from fulfilling her dream of attending university with a view to becoming a journalist.

She married Brian Combridge on 27 March 1960, and out of this union two children were born: Nicholas and Melinda.

In 1953 she accepted a call to serve at the Trans-European

Division, located at that time in Edgware; and when the Division moved to St Albans in Hertfordshire she moved with it. Her aptitude, skill, and accuracy in figures led to her becoming Retirement Plan Coordinator for the Division. This responsibility involved working with overseas colleagues and also developing new friendships.

Her marriage to her husband led to a deep interest in music. There was a certain playful amusement in their individual interests, one in Bach and one in Beethoven.

As a newcomer to Stanborough Park Church, her interest in music was to involve her in playing the church organ. She was by inclination a pianist, but was church organist for more than fifty years. When the Stanborough Park choir director returned to Wales, his homeland, Romola was asked to fill the role. It is a truism that she, with her husband Brian, embellished the music of Stanborough Park Church for over half a century. They created, arranged and produced beautiful music to the glory of God.

Romola and Brian were devoted Seventh-day Adventists, and their love for their Saviour influenced all their service in the life of the church. This observation in no manner

reflects on others who faithfully served, and continue to do so, in music for the church.

Nicholas, speaking of his mother's life, observed that it was a triangle: church, music, and family. For the last few years Romola suffered with Parkinson's disease, which made certain aspects of her life difficult. When Brian had a stroke, her personal difficulties were put aside as she unselfishly cared for him. This weakened her strength, and when he died it was a great sorrow which most likely contributed to her own death.

Romola organised her own service, and the beautiful music by Mozart and Andrea Bocelli and the hymns she chose lifted the large congregation to heaven itself.

Romola is survived by her sister, Rowena Futcher, retired in Texas, USA. She is missed by her son, Nicholas; daughter, Melinda; and grandchildren, James, Kirsten, Oliver and Alex – plus a wide circle of Christian friends and members.

The service was conducted by Pastor James Huzzey, a long-time friend of the family. His sensitive and encouraging address was a comfort to the family and the congregation.

Printed on the back page of the order of service was an expression of Romola's

appreciation for God's loving care and mercy in her long life, and the joy her family brought to her and the friends and places she loved.

*'God gave His children memory
That in life's garden there
might be
June roses in December.'*

Her interment took place at North Watford Cemetery, where she rests until the Saviour she loved calls her and Brian to life everlasting and the joy of eternal love in the Kingdom of God.

PATRICK BOYLE

Messenger

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Sunset

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
May 10	8.38	8.50	8.48	9.09	9.14
17	8.49	9.01	8.59	9.22	9.26
24	8.58	9.11	9.10	9.35	9.37
31	9.07	9.19	9.19	9.45	9.47

Management team meet to vision

The Stanborough Press management team recently took time out to cast a vision for future operations. Under the excellent guidance of facilitator, Jim Cunningham, they discussed many matters. Not least was the consideration of the various markets, home and abroad. Some are strong; some are fragile. What do we have to do to ensure 'The Press' remains strong? Is our ministry still relevant, and how do we adapt? What about e-commerce and e-books?

Press Manager, Elisabeth Sangüesa, reflecting on the energy in the room, said, 'It was good to spend a day sharing ideas about the future. The Press faces many challenges; we are excited about how and where the Lord takes our ministry over the next few years.'

Stanborough Press meet friends from Inter-American Division Publishing Association

On Wednesday 26 March, the Stanborough Press and the Inter-American Division Publishing Association team met together. Led by their president, Daniel Ortiz, the aim was to strengthen the relationship between the two publishing houses. Blessed with her mother tongue of Spanish, Stanborough Press Manager, Elisabeth Sangüesa, used it to the full – and it worked in making our visitors feel welcome. Summing up the benefit of our time together, Elisabeth said: 'Today was about making relationships stronger through collaboration, which expands our area of influence. This will also help us better serve many of our BUC members who originate from that area. Forging stronger ties with other Division publishing houses places us in a stronger position to serve better.'



Left to right: Stephen Holden, Trevor Johnson, Victor Pilmoor, Jim Cunningham and Elisabeth Sangüesa



Daniel Ortiz (fourth from right) and his publishing team with the Press management team

BUC Youth Ministries Mission Trip 2019: The Dominican Republic

by Pastor Dejan Stojkovic,

Youth Ministries Director, British Union Conference

I remember sitting here in the boardroom of the British Union Conference office in Watford, waiting for the Teens, Pathfinder and Youth Advisory to start; and, as the regional directors and I were catching up with each other, we spoke about the terrible hurricane that had recently hit the Caribbean. Pastor Juan Carlos Patrick, Teens & Chaplaincy Director at the South England Conference, mentioned how, for some time, he had not been able to contact or locate some of his family members. We sympathised with him, of course, but there was a general feeling of wanting to do more. And this was the birth of the BUC Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic. After starting the meeting with prayer, it occurred to us that this was an additional point which should be added to the agenda, one which was more important perhaps than any of the others. Someone suggested that we could go to the DR and help Pastor Juan and the people living on that storm-damaged island.

Very quickly we started to develop strategies for fundraising, recruiting people, and how best to help once we arrived. Pastor Juan managed to get in touch with the Dominican Conference, and this year in 2019 we worked with the Dominican Union to establish how and where we could help the most. They were so nice to us and provided us with great accommodation and food, and they also assisted with our paperwork by sending a list of the volunteers to the local immigration office for speedier processing. This meant that, when we arrived at the airport in Santo Domingo, most of us received a stamp in our passport and were waved through with no delays.

During the February 2018 project we worked on five houses, and it was such a blessing for us to see that they had been completed during the 12 months between our visits. In February 2019 we worked on three houses, a mixture of wood and brick houses. Some had been destroyed by the wind during the storms, and others had been damaged by fallen trees and debris. The daily routine consisted mainly of four tasks: 1) carrying bricks, 2) mixing cement, 3) drinking a lot of water, and 4) having as much fun as we could with each other. Some parts of the work were more difficult than others, and they were bestowed with code words and nicknames which you will only be able to discover for yourselves if you join the project next year!

Some people thought that their skill set would not be good enough for this, but soon they realised that we were not there as specialist tradesmen or engineers, but mainly as labourers, and all that was needed was enthusiasm. And, as we carried the bricks, the cement, the sand and other items, people living

in the other houses around came to join us. It was so beautiful to meet so many local people, and it was wonderful that we as a team could grow to know and rely on each other; it was also so amazing to see that the happiness of the people living there was not determined by the latest iPhone or Samsung gadget, but rather through family, good food and whatever they had as a community.

As our experience grew, so did our roles while we were there. Many upgraded their tasks from just carrying bricks to laying bricks, from mixing cement to plastering walls, and it was not just wood stacking, but actually building roofs too – and the projects continued apace, so that we were able to take some time out on Thursday to view some of the sights of that lovely island.

Sabbath morning seemed to be like a typical Saturday morning – we went to the local church; some of us preached and some shared some songs . . . but what came afterwards was something that moved so many of us. The Dominican Conference representative, Fiordaliza Suero Herrera, organised a medical clinic. Straight after the service, the Pathfinders came out of the church and went out into the local community. People started pouring into the church for a chance to attend the free medical clinic that had been advertised. As in many other countries, medication is costly, and healthcare is not very accessible. When the clinic opened there were 300 or 400 people gathered around, waiting to enter the church. Sister Fiordaliza had arranged for several local Adventist doctors with different specialities to run a few clinics at the church to address the needs of the community. Our role was not a medical one, as we were not trained for this, but we were able to help carry and sort the medication once it had been dispensed by the medical staff, and to keep the clinic areas tidy and arranged.

The reason why this was so moving for many of us was because lack of finances meant that the local community did not have ready access to care and the necessary medicines. Some people had tears in their eyes as their child was given the help needed for his or her illness, and it was the same for others as they received medicines free of charge. And, as we observed these touching scenes, we realised how little we had contributed (financially and practically), but how much it meant to these people. That day, the organisers told me that the £450 we had contributed to run the clinic had helped around 650 people.



After the trip in 2018, SEC Treasurer, Fred Shone, who had been with us, visited several churches in his district and showed the video of the mission trip, including the story of the medical clinic. After the service in one church, one of the senior members went to see Brother Fred and asked him to accept £450 from her so that they could run another medical clinic. He sent the money to the Dominican Republic soon after, and this is exactly what happened. This year we were able to run yet another clinic while we were there also.

I heard somebody say, 'Life is better when you make something.' I guess it depends on what you are making, but when you can help make a house for someone who needs somewhere to live, then this statement is so true. And if you can help someone gain access to better healthcare and improve their condition, it is such a blessed project to be a part of. The people of the Dominican Republic have no idea how they truly blessed us! We grew together as a team, and at the same time we were reminded of the true value of life, family and health.

I would love it if you were able to join us next year. We are hoping to go to at least one more time to continue to make a small difference in that part of the world. Or, if you are unable to attend, but are able to raise and send £450, we have a secure way of sending this money to Sister Fiordaliza at the DR Conference office, and she will be able to organise another well-needed medical clinic to benefit the people living locally.

And finally, I would like to say a huge thank-you to the 2018 and 2019 teams who worked so hard to make a big difference. Thank you also to Pastor Juan, who helped to organise this trip, and others such as Fred Shone at the SEC Treasury Department, with whom we have worked so well in partnership along the way. And thank you also to all those who have already donated, and to those who are impressed to donate after hearing about the need there.

God bless you all as you do your bit to make the world that bit better.

For more information about next year's mission trip, please visit www.adventistyouth.org.uk. Please call Pastor Dejan Stojkovic at the British Union Youth Ministries office for information or to arrange a donation.