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Messenger

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in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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Open Letter from **Christian Leaders** to the **Prime Minister** Concerning **Vaccine Passport Proposal**

see: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56781724>

<https://vaccinepassportletter.wordpress.com/>

See page 7 for comment



To: The Prime Minister Boris Johnson

April 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

As Christian leaders across a range of denominations, we continue to pray at this time for your government “and all in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:2).

However, we write to you concerning an area of the most serious concern, namely the potential introduction into our society of so-called “vaccine passports” which have also been referred to as “COVID-status certificates” and “freedom passes”. We are wholly opposed to this suggestion and wish to make three points about the potential consideration of any scheme of this type.

Firstly, to make vaccination the basis of whether someone is allowed entry to a venue, or participation in an activity, makes no logical sense in terms of protecting others. If the vaccines are highly effective in preventing significant disease, as seems to be the evidence from trial results to date, then those who have been vaccinated have already received protection; there is no benefit to them of other people being vaccinated. Further, since vaccines do not prevent infection per se even a vaccinated person could in theory carry and potentially pass on the virus, so to decide someone’s “safe non-spreader” status on the basis of proof of their immunity to disease is spurious.

Secondly, the introduction of vaccine passports would constitute an unethical form of coercion and violation of the principle of informed consent. People may have various reasons for being unable or unwilling to receive vaccines currently available including, for some Christians, serious issues of conscience related to the ethics of vaccine manufacture or testing. We risk creating a two-tier society, a medical apartheid in which an underclass of people who decline vaccination are excluded from significant areas of public life. There is also a legitimate fear that this scheme would be the thin end of the wedge leading to a permanent state of affairs in which COVID vaccine status could be expanded to encompass other forms of medical treatment and perhaps even other criteria beyond that. This scheme has the potential to bring about the end of liberal democracy as we know it and to create a surveillance state in which the government uses technology to control certain aspects of citizens’ lives. As such, this constitutes one of the most dangerous policy proposals ever to be made in the history of British politics.

Finally, as Christian leaders we wish to state that we envisage no circumstances in which we could close our doors to those who do not have a vaccine passport, negative test certificate, or any other “proof of health”. For the Church of Jesus Christ to shut out those deemed by the state to be social undesirables would be anathema to us and a denial of the truth of the Gospel. The message we preach is given by God for all people and consists in nothing other than the free gift of grace offered in Christ Jesus, with the universal call to repentance and faith in him. To deny people entry to hear this life-giving message and to receive this life-giving ministry would be a fundamental betrayal of Christ and the Gospel. Sincere Christian churches and organisations could not do this, and as Christian leaders we would be compelled to resist any such Act of Parliament vigorously.

We draw your attention to the recent Judicial Review overturning the Scottish Government’s ban on public worship, which demonstrates that such disproportionate prevention of the right to worship is a clear infringement under Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights. We cannot see how any attempt to prevent people gathering for worship on the basis of either testing or non-vaccination would not similarly be ruled to be a breach. We agree with those members of Parliament who have already voiced opposition to this proposal: that it would be divisive, discriminatory and destructive to introduce any such mandatory health certification into British society. We call on the government to assert strongly and clearly that it will not contemplate this illiberal and dangerous plan, not now and not ever.

Yours sincerely,

UK Christian Leaders (1,533 Signatories)



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'We pledge unconditionally to accept people'

by Pastor Emanuel Bran,
President of the Welsh Mission

Seventh-day Adventists entered Wales in 1902. In 1909 Walter E. Read (later, the head of research at the General Conference) moved from Newport to work in North Wales, and in 1911 two English counties (Hereford and Shropshire) were added to the Welsh Conference. Since 1928, although reorganised as the Welsh Mission (WM), the territory has stayed the same, and today 18 churches, companies and groups are served by eight pastors, four lay sponsors and the BUC administration.

Since 2016, our mission statement has been: 'Seeking and serving to make God known', and all our programmes and activities have been driven by our values statement: 'The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wales and the border counties places people first, because of the revelation of God we see in Jesus Christ. As a diverse and united community, we pledge to unconditionally accept people, respecting their diversity, encouraging them to grow in communion with God and with each other, through inspiring peace, joy, hope and sacrifice.'

Our passion is to become deeply involved in the local community, making a difference not just with the Gospel of truth, but by loving those who are in need, whatever their circumstances. Integration may not be the strongest asset of our church in the British Isles, yet we believe this is essential in a twenty-first-century society where people care more about the impact we make – the sermon we preach with our life.

To this end every church has adopted the iCOR (Intergenerational Church of Refuge) holistic values: connecting, caring, participating, worshipping, teaching, serving, reconciling, mentoring, training and leading. At the end of 2019 we adopted the GROW strategy, which empowers local congregations to invest their resources in evangelism

with five intentional goals: *prepare* the soil of the heart with friendship and service; *plant* the seed with spiritual conversation, literature and media; *cultivate* spiritual interest with Bible studies; *harvest* decisions to follow Christ; and *preserve* the harvest with ongoing discipleship.

In partnership with ADRA-UK, at the start of the pandemic, we provided aid during a national shortage of PPE, food and essentials. Most recently, the Barclays grant allowed us to support the needy. Now churches in Cardiff, Hereford, Newport, Swansea and Telford are official ADRA-UK hubs that work hard to make a difference in the community. Since the start of the pandemic, among other things, in Swansea we have prepared and delivered thousands of meals with the hard work of the Year in Mission volunteers, church members and a growing working relationship with the local council. Read more on the success of our Children's Ministries and Community Services departments on pages 6 & 7.

After two world wars, significant economic and social uncertainty and a world-stopper pandemic, where is the church today? It has grown stronger and wiser, although there is more to learn and implement. By God's grace, the love and faithfulness of our members has increased. I earnestly wish everyone to continually renew their passion to serve God as we welcome new opportunities to represent Jesus Christ.

In closing, I leave you with the words of Paul, who challenges us to live by example. 'But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful' (Colossians 3:14, 15, NKJV).

For more info on iCOR and GROW, visit: <https://icor.church/> and <https://grow.adventist.org/>.

MESSENGER by post

Over the last few months thousands of our members have been receiving the *MESSENGER* magazine by post. During the COVID-19 lockdowns and the closure of our churches the *MESSENGER* has provided a lifeline to those who may be feeling isolated and cut off from their church family. The initial mailings were targeted fairly randomly, based on just a sample of the membership data that we have. This was partly to keep costs down, but also because we didn't want to annoy people who were already receiving it by other means – web or email, for example.

We therefore tried to target only those who didn't have email addresses and also tried to make sure that we didn't send two magazines to any one house. After running the data through a commercial data cleansing process we also discovered that a lot of the addresses we had on record were not accurate. So, rather than sending the magazines to those addresses and risking paying double the postage when they were returned, we simply removed them from the mailing list.

The system is now changing. From now on, we will only be sending the *MESSENGER* by post to those who have actively opted in to receiving it. Cards were included with the first mailings for people to complete and return, and many people have done so. Now, though, **anyone who wants to receive the *MESSENGER* by post can simply notify their church clerk and ask to be included.** And this is where we need your help. There may be many of our members who would like to receive the *MESSENGER* by post but are not aware of the provision. If you know of such a person, please ask them if they'd like to receive it and then let your church clerk know. The church clerk will quickly 'tag' the person's record in ACMS (the membership database system) and they will be included in the next mailing.

Alternatively – and as a back-up to this new subscription method – you can still subscribe for the *MESSENGER* by post or by email at: msubs@stanboroughpress.org.uk.

JOHN SURRIDGE





David Neal, Editor

Sharing Jesus – with the 92

When it comes to sharing our faith, what do we mean? Is it about the Bible? The Second Coming? The seventh-day Sabbath? The great controversy? Or Jesus? Here's what I think – when it comes to sharing our faith, I wonder at times if Jesus has gone missing, particularly in the way we share literature.

I applaud every member, every small group, every church which seeks to share Jesus through literature distribution. Criticism is not my aim here, but to invite us to grow and learn from each other so that we use the right literature, in the right place, at the right time, for the right person – and with the Jesus story foremost.

Context is crucial

In the context of the British Union Conference, our mission is to share Christ with a UK population of 67 million.¹ The 2021 Census is expected to show 48% of the population still identifying as 'Christian'.² But, when it comes to projected UK church membership, the total by 2025 is expected to be 8.4% of the population,³ which by that year could be about 5,770,800 people. That would leave a staggering 62.93 million people unreached with the Gospel of Christ.⁴

Of the 5.77 million church members, the statistics show an increasingly 'ageing' church, with 45% of members expected to be aged 65+ by 2030, due to the haemorrhaging of young people who left the church between 1980 and 2000.⁵

Here's the reality – for every 100 UK people, 92 are secular, belong to another 'world faith', or are still on the journey to faith. As we share our literature, knowing how those 92 think in terms of faith is a critical issue.

What does each marker on the scale below mean?

Secular (-10 to -7)

For unchurched Bill and Kate, they experience life without God, and know nothing about Him, nor about Christ. Likely to be biblically illiterate, they are not 'unspiritual': because, as Paul suggests in his sermon in Athens, there



is a God-shaped hole in every one of us (Acts 17:22-27). While we are concerned about what is true, Mary and Harry are most probably not. Pointing out 'error' is not a big deal for them. Of more concern to them is relevance.

Searching for Jesus (-6 to -3)

Bill and Kate have begun a journey of discovery, perhaps due to a life-changing event, or someone has stirred them to think about matters beyond the material. Perhaps an Adventist friend, over a cuppa in a café, has turned an ordinary conversation into a spiritual one, and given away a *FOCUS* magazine. They wonder: *Who is Jesus? Can we trust the claims of the Bible? Is it an irrelevant ancient document? If not, what does 'inspired' mean?*

Commitment (-2 to 0)

By this stage, Bill and Kate may own a Bible for the first time, and be most interested in what it teaches. As they study with a trusted Adventist friend, join a small group, or attend an enquirer's Sabbath School class, they gradually experience the significance of Christ's life, death and resurrection – and how their lives can significantly change for the better. They like what and **who** they find. They find the kindness of Jesus, shown in word and deed through the new community they've found – the church. They don't yet believe all 'the beliefs' of the church, but they like their

new community and feel they belong. They are on the verge of being 'born again'.

The Cross (0)

'Christ crucified – talk it, pray it, sing it, and it will break and win hearts. This is the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ' (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 67).

Is it possible for people to become Adventists without first becoming Christian? I heard a former *MESSENGER* editor, David Marshall, once say, 'Before we introduce the Revelation of John, we need to share the Gospel of John.'

Don't we need to make sure that our 'witness' is about 'Jesus', first, last, and in-between whatever else we feel compelled to share about Scripture? Where but the Cross are lives changed and saved for eternity? Where is it that lost people are found? Is it at the Cross that Bill and Kate find Jesus!

Growing in Christ (0 to 3)

Bill and Kate are now on their discipleship journey. With a teachable spirit they are eager to learn about their new-found Saviour and Friend. They struggle with the spiritual disciplines. Their new Adventist friends continue to give them much to read! And finding their way around the Bible is particularly difficult. Sometimes they still feel like 'outsiders', particularly when groups of members talk 'in-house' using 'group-speak' terms they don't understand.

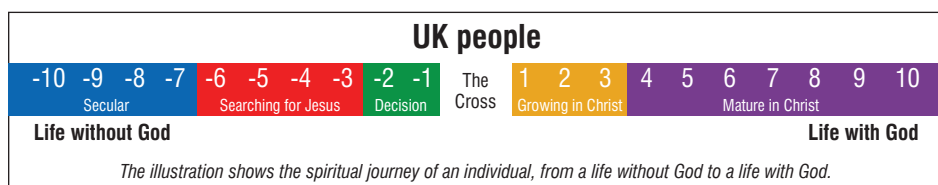
Mature in Christ (4 to 10)

By this stage Bill and Kate are active in church life, forever growing in the grace and mercy of Christ. They stay teachable, open-minded and open-hearted towards others who think and behave differently. They know they are not authentic disciples without making new disciples. The fruit of the Spirit they seek to live (Galatians 5:22, 23); the gifts of the Spirit they desire (1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Building up the Kingdom of God is their priority (Matthew 5-7).

When seeking to witness for the first time with one of the '92', which item of literature below do you think would be most effective?

- An easy-to-read edition of the gospel of Mark, or of John
- *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*
- A modern translation of the Bible
- *The Great Controversy*
- A *FOCUS* magazine
- *The Desire of Ages*

Remember – context is everything when it comes to introducing Jesus to the 92. Would you not agree?



¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

²<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/mar/20/less-than-half-of-britons-expected-to-tick-christian-in-uk-census>

³<https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html>

⁴We should not forget a further 5 million people in Republic of Ireland. ⁵Where is the Church Going? – <https://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/where-is-the-church-going>

Hope amid devastation

Over the past few weeks no one could have missed the scenes of devastation on the island of St Vincent in the Caribbean as the volcano, La Soufrière, began to erupt, belching clouds of black ash into the air. Families in the surrounding area fled their homes and possessions, taking only their family members. Immediately, the government declared a state of emergency. It was at that moment that the Seventh-day Adventist Church stepped into action.

As soon as the emergency was declared, Pastor Dermoth Baptiste gave instructions for all Adventist churches to open as centres of refuge for displaced families. Local church members began to donate food, water, clothes, and hygiene supplies to those in need. Under the leadership of Pastor Ian William, SVG Community Services Director, church members were organised so that supplies could reach even the most remote places.

However, it soon became apparent that the challenges of this emergency were greater than the local church leadership and members combined could meet.

Bert Smit, CEO of ADRA-UK, immediately organised a donations page on the ADRA website, and the process of supporting the Adventist church members in St Vincent began – and churches across the UK were mobilised to meet this urgent need. The High Wycombe churches were among the first to become hubs for receiving water, dry foods, clothing, and hygiene supplies.

The miracle of friendship was experienced as church members, through kindness and concern for their neighbours during the period of COVID-19 lockdown, began to respond by donating to the emergency.

Vaughn, from the Reading West church, reports that the situation in St Vincent took a turn for the worse on Thursday 29 April with torrential rainfall. This caused the volcanic ash to form a sludge, which in turn caused landslides across the island.

Joel, from the Amersham church, reports that his elderly mother, Louise (89), who lives in the 'green zone' away from the volcano, says that the air is heavy with the volcanic ash, which is up to 2 feet thick on the ground, and of course makes it difficult for her to breathe. Joel says that the ash mixes with water and then dries like cement everywhere; also, ash is contaminating the water supply, which has become the major concern for the islanders.

Joel says that his mother thanks God for His protection over all His people, and particularly ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church for 'blessing the people of St Vincent by providing food and medical supplies to the hungry and homeless'.

St Vincent is still in need of help! Although this has not been headline news in UK media of late, the people of St Vincent remain in need of humanitarian relief.

Alicia and Dereck Charles, from the Grays church, opened their doors this weekend to collect relief supplies. They praise God for all the donations that were made from all quarters of the church and the wider community. Their shipment of goods left yesterday for Mount Moriah Adventist Church, where Pastor Kerry Kerr is housing up to 100 adults



and children.

Dereck says that at times like these we all have to pull together for the glory of God. We may all have come from different parts of the world, but the Adventist Church is one family in Jesus.

I am aware that a number of Adventist churches are open to receive relief supplies, such as Willesden and both churches in High Wycombe, with whom Pastor Kirk, BUC Personal Ministries Director, is working to ship these supplies to St Vincent Adventist churches.

The role of the Adventist Church is greatly appreciated by all the people of St Vincent. Jesus helped and healed people, and it was due to His loving kindness that they recognised Him as the Son of God and the Saviour of humanity. As Adventists, we believe that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord. It is my belief that, as we work together with compassion for those who are in need, they in turn will see Jesus in our acts of kindness and accept Him as their personal Friend and Saviour.

PASTOR TREVOR THOMAS



Hassan's story

'I am now making life again. Thank you, ADRA; thank you all,' exclaimed Hassan Saleh Salem.

Hassan is an elderly man who lives in the rural and mountainous village of Hariz. Hariz is located in the Wusab As Safil district, Dhamar governorate. Hassan is married and has two daughters and three sons. His family is one of the poorest rural families in this village. He is unable to build a house for his family, so he was living in his uncle's house with his children, and the house of his wife, who suffers from psychosis.

Despite his challenging living conditions in extreme poverty, Hassan never gave up. And a glimmer of hope appeared when Hassan found work in the Taiz governorate, in the third-largest city in Yemen. Hassan was so happy that he had found work and would now have money to provide food for his family and cover some of expenses related to his wife's medication.

However, in 2015, when the war broke out in Yemen, Hassan lost his job and was no longer able to care financially for his family. Over time, and due to the tough conditions, Hassan began suffering from a psychological disorder that was exacerbated on a daily basis. This finally led to separation from his wife, and subsequently to the displacement of his family. His daughters and their younger brother went to live with one of his relatives.

Hassan and his other two sons continued to live in the open air, under the shade of the trees, until the villagers helped them by building a small room without a door as their home.

In February 2021, the ADRA ICI project team reached the Wusab district. One of the team members, speaking about Hassan, said, 'We found him on the side of the road. He and his two children were waiting

to see if someone might provide them with a piece of bread or some food.'

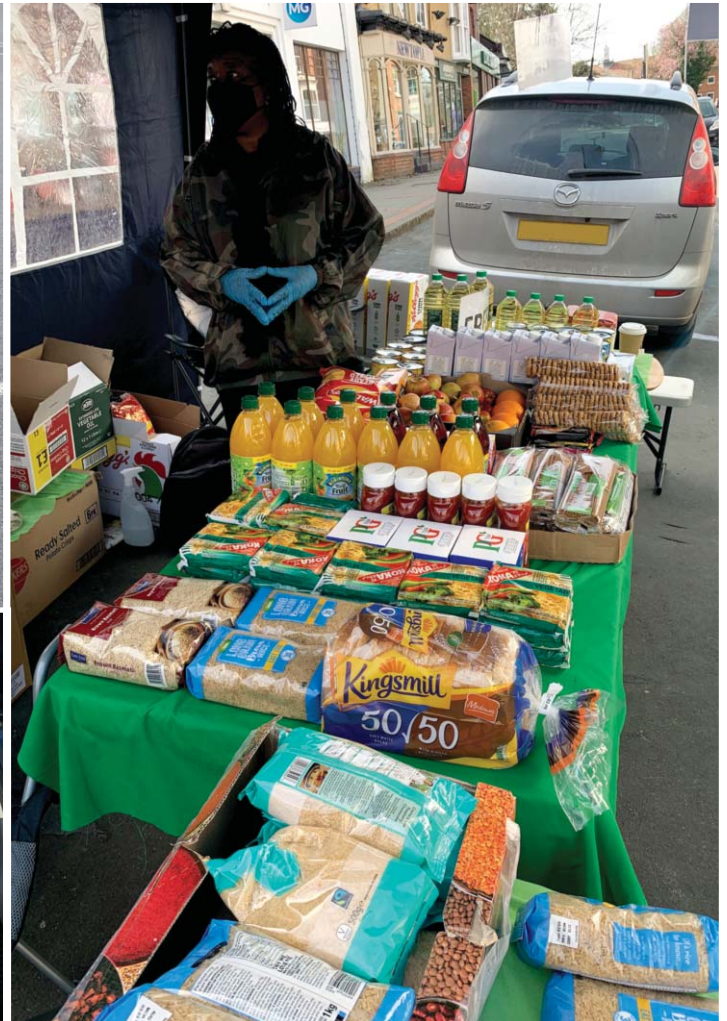
After the verification process, Hassan was accepted and included in the beneficiaries' list by the ICI/ADRA team. On hearing this, he burst into tears. By the end of March 2021, Hassan had received three payments of cash assistance, each valued at YER 45,000 (approximately £129).

During the third distribution, the ADRA team visited Hassan's village . . . but the team did not find Hassan and his two children in the place where he used to beg by the side of the road. The team was told, 'Hassan is at work.'

The team found Hassan at work, sewing mawaz (traditional Yemeni clothes). Hassan's situation has improved. He said, 'When I received the first payment, the first thing I did was to buy a door for the house, together with food and mattresses. When I received the second and third payments, I bought a sewing machine. Now my family and I can eat and live. I did not expect my living conditions to improve this way. I am very happy that I could see my family reunited again; I am now making my life again. Thank you, ADRA; thank you all.'

ADRA-UK is currently working in Yemen. The Integrated Cash Intervention (ICI) project aims to increase the food security of communities in Al-Jawf, Sana'a, Adhale'e, Abyan and Aden through the provision of cash assistance to meet the basic food needs of 4,300 households.

Your donation to ADRA-UK will help to support people like Hassan and his family. Please donate at www.adra.org/donate.



Welsh Mission – greater community involvement

'The social gospel' is a term often used by Christians who believe that one must choose between social and religious commitment, and that the two do not go together (although, of course, they must). One cannot deny that the message found in the Bible is very clear – the true followers of Jesus will have a beneficial effect on the environment in which they are placed.

Donald Guthrie, one of the most renowned British New Testament scholars, once wrote: 'In a world which is essentially self-centred, the concerns of others cannot be expected to be given prior importance. This is not, of course, to affirm that altruism cannot exist in the non-Christian world, but it is certainly rare in a highly industrialised society.'¹ The teaching of Jesus and Paul clearly indicates how important and urgent social involvement is (Matthew 11:2-6; 25:35-46; Mark 9:41; Luke 4:16-21; 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33).

This social involvement is the approach churches in the Welsh Mission are slowly adopting. We are blessed with members who have spent their whole lives serving the community, but over the last few months we have intentionally created six local hubs for this purpose. With the funds received from ADRA-UK, each of these hubs has organised community projects, helping people cope with the effects the pandemic has had on their lives.

The Newport, Hereford, Swansea, Port Talbot, Telford Central and Telford Ghana hubs have worked with local councils and social

services, and have helped local refugee councils, providing safe houses with much-needed toiletries.

Combined, we have been able to make provision for schools – supporting disadvantaged children and their families, including a breakfast club serving free food (when rules allowed). In addition, food has been provided for the elderly, and hampers have been delivered to local GPs, dentists, pharmacists, and carers working in the local care homes, not forgetting support for a Congolese refugee community. Some of our members have given hands-on help at food banks, and we've also had opportunity to support a weekend away for children in care.

Although this list is impressive considering the membership of the Welsh Mission, even more impressive is that most projects are still ongoing, even after all the money from ADRA-UK has been spent. Local councils and businesses have recognised our passion to help local communities, and have started funding these projects and giving us food to deliver to those in need.

I cannot end this report without mentioning a Swansea member, Eduardo Jesus, who has raised £25,000 over the last few years by cycling for local children who needed special medical treatments, and disabled people in need of expensive equipment to help improve their condition. Eduardo, who enjoys 'extreme challenges', cycled from Swansea to London and back in two days, and around Wales, again in two days. His latest trip has been to cycle 5,560 miles in 112 days (equivalent to the distance from Wales to Brazil).

This is the beginning of the Welsh Mission – organised community involvement. We ask you to pray that we can continue this work and do even more for our local communities, meeting their needs, and sharing hope and the Good News!

PASTOR JOVAN ADAMOVIC (WM COMMUNITY SERVICES SPONSOR)

¹Donald Guthrie, 'The New Testament Approach to Social Responsibility', *Vox Evangelica* 8 (1973):43

Acts of love

A few weeks before Christmas, ten churches across Wales bought gifts for children in the communities around our churches, using £1,000 received from ADRA. The Children's Ministries leaders and their teams had impressive knowledge about the needs in the community, and they decided how the money would be spent.

Telford Ghana donated food and gifts to the Salvation Army in Oakengates, Ystrad Mynach donated to a children's residential care home, and Telford delivered toys, books, and food parcels to three schools. The members also contributed money to the project.

Carmarthen delivered presents to a domestic abuse shelter, and also to their local food bank. Newtown contacted a key worker in the community who was happy to introduce us to five families. We gave them vouchers and gifts.

While Cardiff North presented a gift to a mum with a child who has autism, Swansea gave gifts to three families, and the children also made lovely cards. Cardiff donated to the charity, Safe Families Wales; Wrexham donated £100 to a local primary school; and Newport purchased coats and gifts for seven children.

I want to thank the Children's Ministries leaders and their teams across Wales, and also ADRA and President Bran, for making this project possible. Only God knows how many lives were touched.

EILEEN MCKENZIE, WELSH MISSION CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES SPONSOR



'the approved', would be permitted to enter doesn't quite add up, given that a vaccinated person may still carry and spread the virus asymptotically. While the evidence shows that vaccinated people are less likely to transmit the virus, at this stage the science suggests that a small proportion might.

A further concern about the proposed passport is the lack of allowance it makes for those who 'conscientiously object' to taking the vaccine (for whatever reason).

We should pray for the Government and its leaders. They have difficult choices to make. The proposal is a genuine attempt to protect people. We need to stress that at the time of writing it is still only a proposal. May the Lord give our leaders the discernment to make the right decision.

Dr Philip shared his concerns in an interview on Premier Radio. Click on the link to listen to it: <https://premierchristian.news/en/news/article/one-of-the-most-dangerous-policy-proposals-in-the-history-of-british-politics-hundreds-of-uk-christian-leaders-urge-pm-to-axe-idea-of-vaccine-passports>.

EDITOR

continued from front cover

The Church sends a letter to the Prime Minister

The open letter reproduced on the front cover, signed by 1,533 Christian leaders and addressed to the Prime Minister, is an example of the Church using its prophetic voice. Concerned about the consequences of introducing a 'vaccine passport' once lockdown ends, in an attempt to resolve a problem, they warn the Government that it might create another – on the significant matter of freedom to worship.

A co-author of the letter is the Rev. Dr William J. U. Philip, who believes that such a measure would encourage 'discrimination against people' by creating a 'medical

apartheid'. He invited church leaders to take a stand on this matter, because 'we believe it would be a betrayal of the Gospel'.

In our own context, imagine arriving at church, and a deacon or deaconess requests to see your 'vaccine passport'. If you hold one and show it, you can be permitted to enter for worship.

The heart of the Gospel message is 'come as you are' – including on the practical level. Our doors are open – and must continue to be so – and free from discrimination – without exception.

The consequence that only 'the healthy', or



At a glance . . .

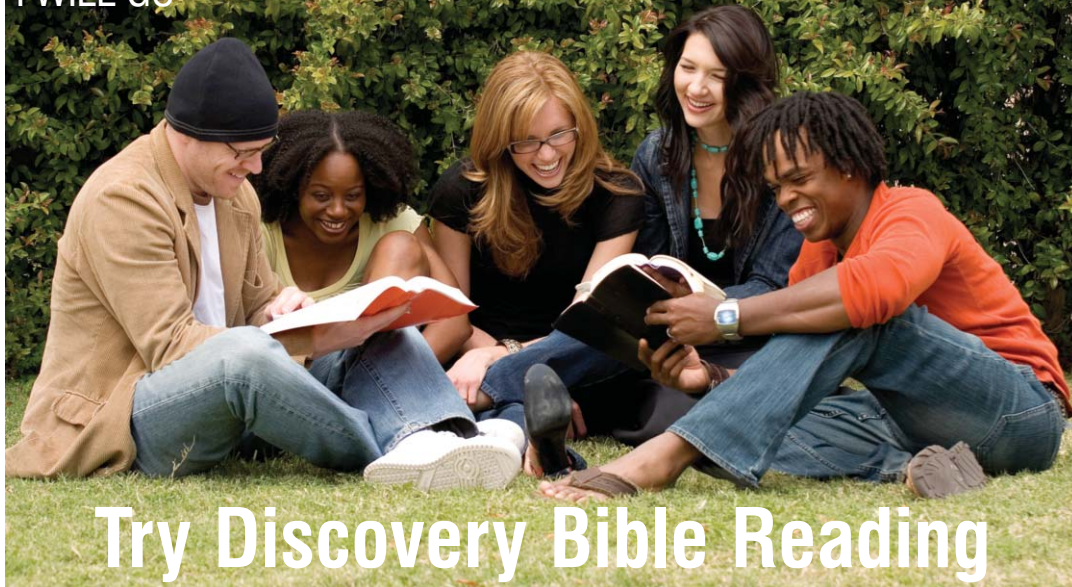
- **Seven new leaders have been elected to serve in the North American Division**, according to the *Adventist Review*, including Calvin Watkins Sr, the incoming NAD vice president for evangelism and regional liaison, who is said to have baptised more than 6,000 people during his evangelistic endeavours – a truly astonishing figure! We trust that God will put his talents to good use in the wider field, along with those of all his new colleagues.
- **ADRA is ramping up its efforts to fight COVID-19 in India, which may be exacerbated by air pollution**, according to *Time* magazine (Justin Worland, 'The Climate and COVID-19 Connection'). In order to help COVID-19 patients breathe better, ADRA is donating an oxygen-generation plant. 'We are . . . speeding up our emergency efforts to bring immediate relief to the most affected communities,' says ADRA's president, Michael Kruger, quoted by the Adventist News Network. He also describes ADRA's donors as 'vital partners in our fight against COVID-19 around the world'.
- **A new book on compelling evidence for design in nature and a global flood has been published** by Andrews University Press. *Design and Catastrophe: 51 Scientists Explore Evidence in Nature* has been released in partnership with the Geoscience Research Institute in Loma Linda, California. The scientists have a range of specialties, including geology, palaeontology, biology, chemistry, botany, genetics, computer science, medicine, physics, astronomy,

engineering and mathematics, but the book is accessibly written with non-specialists in mind. The book is available from Amazon as well as Andrews University Press.

- **Church leaders from seven denominations in the UK have written a statement** following the Government's integrated review of foreign and defence policies. Commenting on the Government's decision to 'increase the number of Trident nuclear warheads the UK can stockpile by more than 40 percent', the church leaders describe it as 'a retrograde step that will not make any of us safer'. Signatories include the General Secretary of Churches Together, the Archbishop of York, and leaders among the Quakers, Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed churches.
- **Pablo Carreño, treasurer for the East Venezuela Union, tragically passed away due to COVID-19 complications** on 22 April, leaving behind a wife and two children, along with a church that deeply misses his talents and friendship. He was only 45 years old. The president of the East Venezuela Union, Jorge Atalido, is quoted in the *Adventist Review* as saying, 'He was a modern Joseph when it came to finances, a model husband, always attentive to his wife, and a great father.'

'At a glance . . .' provides a roundup of news in a regular column for MESSENGER, keeping our readers informed of events in other Christian denominations in the UK and Ireland, as well as the wider Adventist Church across the globe.

ANDREW PUCKERING



Try Discovery Bible Reading

by Peter Roennfeldt

In this third and final article Dr Roennfeldt shares the principles and methods of *Discovery Bible Reading*, which allows the Holy Spirit to be our primary teacher, and helps our friends discover God's Word for themselves.

When I was a boy we were taught *Bible Marking*. In the front cover of our Bibles we had a list of doctrinal subjects with codes – such as 'SC' for Second Coming, and 'Sab' for Sabbath – and, beside that, the first verse in a chain that would take us through the selected subject. There were also colour codes for highlighting the verses for each theme, and even stick-it tabs that we could put in the margins of our Bibles to guide us to the next text in the sequence.

It was great as long as you didn't lose your place halfway through the sequence, for if you did there was no real alternative other than starting again in the cover of your Bible with the first verse in the chain, and following through until you were back on track.

I still mark my Bible, but that method didn't seem that easy.

On entering ministry, I was given a great internship with an older pastor who was a smalltime public evangelist but an avid visitor. I spent for or five days a week with him, for 10-12 hours each day – with 25 to 30 Bible studies each week. Bible studies followed the flow of the three angels' messages.

Starting with subjects of common interest (the context), we would move to:

- The good news of Jesus ('the everlasting gospel' – Revelation 14:6, KJV).
- Practical living – how to pray and read the Bible ('fear God' – Revelation 14:7, KJV).
- Distinctive doctrines, including judgement and the Sabbath (Revelation 14:7).
- The heavy prophecies of Daniel and Revelation (Revelation 14:8-11).

And as we went we equipped new believers as disciple-makers – often by taking them with

us to other homes (Revelation 14:12).

I used this approach for decades – giving thousands of Bible studies, equipping elders and pastors to do the same.

But two things troubled me!

First, if I was called away for a week or two for another necessary appointment, the interest withered. Jesus said that when the seed is sown the plant would grow 'all by itself' (Mark 4:26-29), but that was not happening using this Bible study method – even with very *good soil*. Most people did not develop the practice of Bible reading.

Then, secondly, it troubled me that when interests exclaimed, 'You really know your Bible!' they would follow-up with: 'We could never do what you do!' For most, giving Bible studies was not something they could readily do.

By contrast, Jesus' method of connecting, sharing faith and making disciples was simple and easily reproducible – something anyone could do, at no cost.

Learning from our past

Early Adventism had its roots in one of the most significant revival movements since the early church – Methodism. The 'keystone' to that revival was a very simple process of weekly Bible reading, prayer and fellowship which John Wesley called 'class meetings'.¹

These small weekly relational groups multiplied easily, for (1) they were neighbourhood-based, (2) they were led by ordinary people from their communities, and (3) they used a simple process of Bible reading with standard questions for discussion and application that anyone could use and follow. A similar process is being used today in the underground

movements in China and Iran.

This has been adapted, and we call it *Discovery Bible Reading*. It is simple, and anyone can use it – on the paths of life where people live and work.

Discovery Bible Reading – rather than Bible studies

You may have noticed that barriers often go up when you offer Bible studies to a neighbour, friend or colleague. Perhaps they fear being cornered, preached at, or even manipulated. And it is challenging for you as well, for as the teacher it will be expected that you have all the answers.

However, the suggestion of *Discovery Bible Reading* is different. It engenders the idea of exploring and discovering together. But when is the appropriate time to suggest doing this? How could we get started? And what does this approach involve?

First, start with Jesus' method of connecting with others – His three-step process:

- *Eat* their food – and listen to their stories. Learn their needs.
- *Heal* or meet their needs – and briefly share your experience with God.

Your one-sentence story of life with Jesus is like a bridge for you to offer to pray with them, opening the opportunity to:

- *Tell* God's story: 'The Kingdom of God is near you now' (Luke 10:8, 9, NLT).

Then, let them experience God. This is not time to prove anything. Most know little or nothing about Jesus. When meeting needs – for example, providing food, encouragement or counsel, or taking them to a medical appointment – tell them, 'God cares about you.' And offer to share: 'I would like you to experience what God is like.'

This is where you could suggest, 'You would enjoy getting to know God by reading stories of Jesus in the gospels. We call it *Discovery Bible Reading*.'

Experiencing what Jesus is really like

Few know much about Jesus today, and we have learnt that the Gospel of Mark is a good place for people to start. It opens the way for them to learn of Jesus. It is the shortest gospel – just 20 pages, easy to read and interesting.

If, as you connect (eating, meeting needs and healing), there is some receptivity towards God, perhaps impressed upon them by their need and your prayer for them, you could encourage getting together with friends or family to experience what Jesus is like by reading the Gospel of Mark in an easy-to-read translation.²

Suggest downloading a Bible to their

smartphone or tablet, or help them go online or to a physical store to purchase one. At each step, encourage participation – in acquiring a Bible and inviting others in their relational streams to join them. In this way your friends will themselves be learning to share their faith.

What is *Discovery Bible Reading*?³

It is a very simple process – one that you can also download free in bookmark form.⁴ Get together with two or three friends:

- First, pray: *Dear God, guide us as we read Your Word. Thank You. Amen.*
- Then, start to read at the beginning of the Gospel of Mark. This is how it was written to be read.
- Read one story at a time. In most translations you will find the first story in Mark 1:1-8 – or you could read to verse 13.
- One will read the story aloud.
- Another will read the same story – even in a different translation.
- Then one tells the story in their own words without looking at the text.

Together, the small group is then ready to discuss the story. We use the same five discussion questions for each Bible story. These are direct questions – not religious – which people relate to easily. You could give a bookmark to each person in the group and encourage different people to ask the questions each time. In this way, each one in the group is learning and experiencing the process of sharing faith.

The five discussion questions:

- What is new to us?
- What surprises us?
- What do we not understand?
- What will we each apply or obey this week?
- Who will we share with, and what will we share, this week?

If there is something that you do not understand, do not argue – and don't try to answer every question. Simply suggest, 'Let's keep reading.' If someone asks a difficult question, do not conjecture or guess. Simply respond, 'I don't know. Let's keep exploring.'

Be careful to respect the time constraints agreed upon. Colleagues gathering during lunch-breaks may have just 20-30 minutes, while in a home the group may gather for 45-60 minutes. Before you end, pray for each other – perhaps using this prayer on the bookmark: *Dear God, thank You for Your Word. Help us to follow You. Amen.*

Tell others of this Bible reading plan. Invite others to join. Give each person a bookmark, and encourage them to form other groups. Plan the time to read again; and, when you meet, ask each other: (1) How did we go obeying? and (2) How did we go sharing? Then, next time, follow the same process for the next story – until you have finished Mark.

Then where do we go?

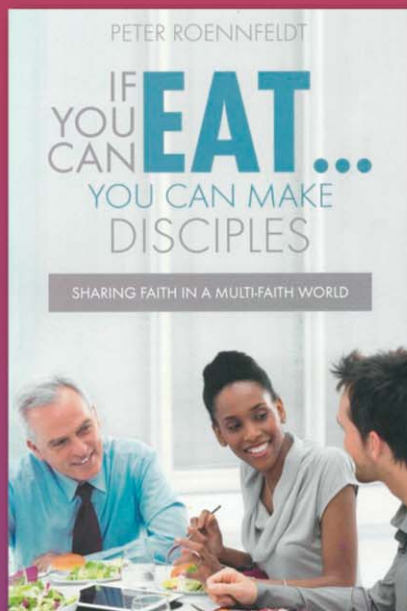
There are 66 Bible books to explore. After Mark, go to John's gospel for an introduction to all the fundamentals of the faith; and then Acts – the inspiring account of the early believers empowered by the Holy Spirit, multiplying disciples and churches to fulfil God's mission.

Discovery Bible Reading allows the Holy Spirit to be our primary teacher. Your friends will discover God's Word for themselves. They will experience what Jesus is really like, become believers in the fellowship of a small, supportive community of faith, and be able to share with others using this same simple process.

Try it! Your participation will strengthen and sharpen your experience of God, and refresh and revitalise your relationship with Him. It is necessary for your spiritual health.

¹Winfield Bevins, *Marks of a Movement: what the Church today can learn from the Wesleyan Revival*, Zondervan, 2019, pages 104-105 ²See Peter Roennfeldt, *Enjoy the Living Word* (Signs Publishing, 2021) for an overview of inspiration, manuscripts, how the books of the Bible were chosen, and the story of the various translations. ³See Peter Roennfeldt, *If You Can Eat . . . You Can Make Disciples* (Signs Publishing, 2018), chapter 9: 'Enjoy a Hermeneutic Community' for a detailed outline of this process and how to share God's full message. Also visit <https://www.following-jesus.com/resources/> for free downloads – a short training video and PDF explanation. ⁴Download a free *Discovery Bible Reading* bookmark from <https://www.following-jesus.com/resources/>.

Dr Peter Roennfeldt



If You Can Eat . . . You Can Make Disciples

What does it mean to be a Christian and share our faith in a multi-faith and no-faith world? In our complex post-Christian world, sharing our faith can seem equally complex. But consider how Jesus related to His multi-faith context, particularly His teaching in Luke 10:1-24. He engaged Jews, Samaritans, Roman Gentiles, peasants, fishermen, urbanites, religious leaders, soldiers, merchants and others in spiritual discussions. His compassion, insights, authority and methodology left people amazed. Drawing on this key teaching and the example of Jesus, this book suggests a simple, reproducible approach. It seeks to demystify evangelism, putting it within reach of every believer.

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Earth and soul 2

by David Wright



Spring 2021 - a redundant coal-fired power station, Willington, Derbyshire

‘This earth is precious to Him, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator.’

(Chief Seattle, 1854)

This month’s column was written during the week that marked the fifty-second annual Earth Day. As India was battling with a ‘triple mutant’ variant of COVID-19, dubbed by experts as ‘the world’s worst COVID-19 outbreak’ so far, UK headlines recorded the US President hosting a climate crisis meeting with 40 world leaders, the Prime Minister pledging to cut carbon emissions by 78% within 14 years, a London coroner implicating traffic air pollution in the death of a 9-year-old girl, and the BBC launching *39 Ways to Save the Planet*. As top musicians created a ‘Song for Nature’ concert for ‘the largest secular observance in the world’, over a billion people from 193 countries mobilised to change their behaviour and bring about global policy changes.

Having recognised that burning fossil fuels, destroying forests and farming livestock leads to global warming, it’s begun to dawn on everyone that over-population, habitat destruction and dietary choice also lead to



global pandemics. Back in 1995, in her book *The Coming Plague*, Laurie Garrett warned how biodiversity loss through land-use change, agricultural expansion, and deforestation accounted for the emergence of over 30% of all new diseases – and, with an out-of-balance world, that would only increase.

Ecology and environmental action have moved to the top of the agenda, and we must decide whether to be involved. As Adventists, is our job to continue talking about Revelation 14, or to start planting trees – or might it be both? The evangelical writer, John Stott, once wrote that the best biblical approach, when facing environmental problems, is to ask one basic question: ‘To whom does the earth belong?’

Revelation 14 clearly tells us to remind ‘every nation, tribe, language and people’ that

the ‘heavens, earth, seas and springs of water’ belong to God; and not only is it time that this was properly acknowledged, but He intends to do something about our ecological mess soon. As for planting trees, Martin Luther once wrote: ‘Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree,’ which suggests that thinking the world is going to end is no argument for accelerating its destruction. In the gospels, Jesus told many parables describing our relationship to the natural world as that of a household steward, farm manager, or shepherd – implying that the earth was created for humans on a leasehold, not freehold, basis.

Oh yes – my wife’s new fig tree in our garden has just revealed its first green shoots – summer is on its way. Now why does something in Matthew 24 come to mind?



by Sharon Platt-McDonald

How is your mental health?

The NHS calendar of health events in May was packed with diverse campaigns:

- 1-31 May – National Walking Month
- 5 May – Global Hand Hygiene Day
- 3-9 May – Deaf Awareness Week
- 3-9 May – Sun Awareness Week
- 10-16 May – Mental Health Awareness Week

We focus in this issue on ways to improve our mental health as we emerged from national lockdown, particularly noting what we have learned during Mental Health Awareness Week.

The Mental Health Foundation hosted Mental Health Awareness Week, choosing the caption: 'Nature' as its focus. I found it both fascinating and informative that this year's theme was on nature, and was delighted by the simple steps outlined to get outdoors more, to improve mental well-being.¹

Explaining why the theme was chosen, Mark Rowland, the chief executive, states:

'Our research on the mental health impact of the pandemic showed that going for walks outside was one of our top coping strategies, and 45% of us reported that being in green spaces had been vital for our mental health.'²

He continued by saying: 'Nature is so central to our psychological and emotional health that it's almost impossible to realise good mental health for all without a greater connection to the natural world.'

Sharing tips to improve mental well-being through nature, the Mental Health Foundation advises:

'Spending quality time in nature can reduce stress, balance your mood and help you feel more positive. The important thing is to switch on your senses and really connect – whether that's noticing nature on your daily jog, or listening to the birds on your woodland walk.'³

After the first national lockdown, the BUC Health Ministries



'Nature is so central to our psychological and emotional health that it's almost impossible to realise good mental health for all without a greater connection to the natural world.'

Department sent out a survey for members to register the impact of the pandemic on their well-being, and to assess the level of support they received. A second survey was undertaken, and the combined results identified significant levels of isolation, depression, fear and concern for the future. The evaluation of the survey will assist us in seeking how better to support our members, and to raise awareness of where they can receive help.

How was your mental health during the national lockdowns? The reflective questions in our BUC survey will help you decide. Visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7KCQQN7>.

Recently, I was encouraged to discover that the Mental Health Foundation is leading an ongoing, UK-wide, long-term study of how the pandemic is affecting people's mental health. Surveys were taken at each significant milestone during the pandemic, analysing how it impacted the nation's mental health. To view the research data, access the following website: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/coronavirus-mental-health-pandemic>.

For more mental well-being tips, visit: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/uok-quiz/health-wellbeing>.

Good health!

¹<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

²<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week/why-nature>

³<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/events/take-action-get-active>

Camp Hill Church hosts virtual health expo

The 25th of April 2021 was a beautiful spring Sunday; but, unlike previous health expos, this was not held in a park, church hall or community centre, but via the internet platform Zoom.

A number of planning meetings, fervent prayer for blessings on a new venture, and agreement on our preferred topics enabled eight presenters to share motivational talks using slides and personal style to bring important health messages to an audience of more than sixty participants.

The target audience primarily comprised individuals receiving food from the food bank run by Camp Hill Church and those from residences near the church and homes near one of the elders. Also welcomed were members and friends of the church. The poster was circulated via WhatsApp to contacts with an interest in health.

Conversations were hosted on nutrition (by James Decker – guest speaker and lively master of ceremonies), exercise (Azed Ng'ona) and water (Sharon Marney).

Adventist medics Dr Jacquie Halliday-Bell (sunshine) and Dr Pasi Gutti (temperance) brought messages pertinent to the COVID-19

pandemic and beyond. Former Health, Special Needs and Community Services director Grace Walsh ably spoke on air and pollution – stretching her commitment to service into her retirement. Fourth-year medical student James Bell presented on the topic of rest and adequate sleep, and highlighted the benefits of the Sabbath.

Explanations of the well-established evidence-based Adventist health message and the grace and well-being that trust in God can invoke in our lives were brought to us by Dr Beatrice Kastrati, the newly appointed NEC Health and Possibilities director.

Pastor Cyril Sweeney and the head elder, Vivia Salcedo, also supported the event.

Very positive feedback was received from the participants, who were encouraged to interact throughout the event. They indicated that the virtual health expo was 'excellent' and a 'blessing' to them.

This expo will be available online via YouTube soon (search for Camp Hill health expo 2021), so that other Health Ministries departments planning to run similar events

can get an idea of how we approached the challenge of reaching an audience in spite of COVID-19 restrictions. It also means that those who were not able to join the event can catch up on the valuable information.

Follow-up sessions for the audience are being considered for the coming few months: each to be run for 30 to 45 minutes on topics as wide-ranging as cooking, crafts and exercise. We hope to build a bridge to help people come to know Christ.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL



Playful fathers

by Pastor Richard Daly,
Communication Director, British Union Conference

An article written originally for *Ministry* magazine by Pastor Richard Daly, Communication Director for the British Union Conference, has been recognised for its ‘significance for intended audience, quality of writing, clarity, and economy of expression’. At the recent 2021 Associated Church Press awards it received an award of merit. If you are a dad it’s particularly worth taking note of Richard’s wisdom and experience.

My wife often said that she had four children in the house. (We have three.)

Becoming a child and frolicking with my children turned out to be one of my best stress releasers. I had permission to do silly things – roll around on the ground, play tag, and make funny sounds. All of this elicited the one thing I often neglected to do – laugh. So, for me, being a playful father was more therapeutic than anything else life had to offer. And the benefits for the child-father relationship were huge.

Today, my boys are all teenagers. Being a playful father requires a different type of playfulness now: but the building blocks of a firm relationship through fun and laughter and doing things together remain etched in their memory. One such memory occurred just last Christmas – visiting a theme park and riding on the roller coasters.

When the boys were younger, I would take them during the summer holidays, but they were too short to ride the roller coasters with me. Now well over the minimum height, they all wanted to go and insisted that I accompany them. ‘Come on, Dad,’ they said; ‘or are you afraid in your old age?’ Those words pricked me, so I rose to the challenge. Needless to say, I was all too glad when the ride was over. In the process, I discovered that I had now created a new breed of roller-coaster junkies who insisted that I experience the thrill with them on every ride.

The positive effects

An article in the *Belfast Telegraph*¹ reports that researchers from Imperial College London, King’s College London, and Oxford University examined how fathers interacted with their children and then measured cognitive development. Children whose fathers displayed more withdrawn and depressed behaviour when the children were three months old scored lower in brain tests that included recognising colours and shapes. ‘The clear message for new fathers here is to get stuck in and play with your baby.’² Many similar reports also seem to confirm that

playing with your child brings a wealth of future positive results that even far outweigh the present joyful experience.

The emotional effects

Being a playful father also greatly helps a child’s emotional development, a dynamic that, according to researchers Paul Roberts and Bill Moseley, ‘becomes more pronounced as father-child relationships enter their second and third years. When playing, fathers tend to be more physical with their toddlers – wrestling, playing tag, and so on – while mothers emphasise verbal exchanges and interacting with objects, like toys. In nearly all instances, . . . fathers are much more likely ‘to get children worked up, negatively or positively, with fear as well as delight, forcing them to learn to regulate their feelings’.

‘In a sense, then, fathers push children to cope with the world outside the mother-child bond. . . .

‘First, children learn how to “read” their father’s emotions via his facial expressions, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues, and respond accordingly. . . .

‘Second, children learn how to clearly communicate their own emotions to others,’³ such as by crying, not responding, or wandering off. ‘Finally, children learn how to “listen” to their own emotional state. For instance, a child soon learns that if he becomes too “worked up” and begins to cry, he may in effect drive his play partner away.

‘The consequences of such emotional mastery are far-reaching.’⁴ Therefore, there are links between the quality of father-child interactions and a child’s later development of certain life skills, including an ability to manage frustration, a willingness to explore new things and activities, and persistence in problem solving.

The social effects

Just as important as learning to regulate the emotional intensity of their interactions is children’s ability to develop interactive social communication. Roberts and Moseley maintain that ‘Kids who learn how to decode and encode emotions early on will be better off later when it comes to any social encounter.’⁵

They have also studied such benefits in the area of sibling relationships, concluding: ‘The emotion-management “lessons” learned by children from their fathers during play are later applied in interactions with siblings – and ultimately with people outside the family – and lead to more cooperation and less fighting.’⁶

The negative effects

The researchers found that, stereotypically, ‘while a mother’s more



intimate, need-related approach to parenting generally continues to cement her bond with her children, a father’s more playful and stimulating style steadily loses its appeal. By the age of eight or nine, a child may already be angry at his father’s teasing, or bored or annoyed by his I’m-gonna-gitcha style.

‘This discrepancy often becomes quite pronounced as children reach adolescence. Research suggests that preteens and teens of both sexes continue to rely on their mothers for intimacy and needs, and increasingly view her as the favoured parent in areas requiring sensitivity and trust. By contrast, . . . the joking, playful style that serves fathers so well during children’s first years may begin to alienate teens, giving them the impression that their father doesn’t take their thoughts and needs seriously.’⁷

Here are examples of practical play activities to strengthen the bond with your child:

- Blow on each other’s bellies.
- Give your child a piggyback or shoulder ride.
- Twirl, spin, or toss them. Such things can all be done any time, anywhere.
- Help them do a handstand, headstand,

cartwheel, or somersault.

- Pretend to be a horse (or another animal) and let your child ride on your back.
- Have a race! *Don't* let them win every time.
- Climb trees together.
- Roll down hills.
- Go sledging.
- Throw them up into the air and catch them.
- Play in the rain and jump in puddles.
- Play with a Hula-Hoop or skipping rope.
- Play some tennis, basketball, football, rugby, dodgeball, or volleyball.
- Throw a Frisbee around.

'It's hypothesised that fathers' less intimate interactive style may make it easier – although not more



Being a playful father also greatly helps a child's emotional development.

pleasant – for them to play the “heavy”. In any case, adolescents come to see their fathers as the harsher, more distant parent.⁸

'Clearly, the distance between fathers and adolescent children is not solely a result of fathers' playfulness earlier on. A central function of adolescence is a child's gradual movement towards emotional and physical autonomy from both parents.⁹

'Even the most dedicated dads quickly discover that the road to modern fatherhood is strewn with obstacles. . . . Jerrold Lee Shapiro, PhD, professor of psychology at Santa Clara University, says that understanding your relationship with your own father is the first step. If not, you're bound to automatically and unconsciously replicate things from your childhood.'¹⁰

Infuse fun

There is just something special about active play that creates happy, genuine feelings and memories. I have learned that creating fun activities does not require taking children to major events or spending a lot of money. It's the simple things – let them ride on your back, bounce them on your knee, race with them into shops, sing silly songs together. Take advantage of everyday things that you already

do, such as taking your kids to school, eating together, getting them ready for bed, and then imbue them with a bit of creative playfulness. Forget the to-do lists momentarily, and add some levity into your otherwise-stressful parenting.

Quality time

As a multichurch pastor, I constantly had to reevaluate my time. This became more apparent to me one evening when I was out on a pastoral visit. Halfway through the visit, the father asked to be excused, saying that he had to get his children ready for bed and tell them a bedtime story. After that visit, I determined to make significant changes to my pastoral schedule, keeping as many evenings free as possible for my family.

Many fathers assume that as long as they can get a few hours' quality time at the end of the week with their children, it will make up for the absent hours during the rest of the week. While such longer hours are a welcome treat, research has shown that shorter but more consistent periods each day with children have more rewarding results. When it comes to the question of whether quality or quantity time is better, then both would be just as important.

Too often, today, we have not only distant fathers, but also single mothers having to raise children with little or no fatherly support. Fathers who have no

other option than to be a father outside the child's home need a different approach to becoming that playful father. What's just as important for children when playful activities are limited is knowing that their father is present in their lives, whether through special days out or communicating through the many avenues of today's technology. The child's mind registers such efforts to reach out as significant acts of love and care.

A study published by The Academy of Management Perspectives in 2015 suggested that working fathers who spend more time with their children will have greater levels of job satisfaction than those who don't. The report went on to say that men who pay attention to their families will become less focused on their work, but not to the detriment of their careers.¹¹ In contrast, significant evidence indicates that the children of fatherless homes are more likely to have disciplinary issues in later life.

A study published in 2006 stated that, 'even from birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections with peers. These children are also less likely to get into

trouble at home, school, or in the neighborhood.'¹² Fathers who find themselves separated from their children, therefore, can still have a positive influence when they make efforts to stay involved with the children and make good use of the time that is spent with them.

Engaging play

How can fathers still engage and play with teenage children caught up in a whole new world of entertainment void of any fatherly necessity? One easy answer is simply to join them. One day my 14-year-old son was playing FIFA football. When I asked whether I could play against him, he greeted me with a joyful smile as if to say, 'You are welcome to come into my world.' I sensed excitement from my son just in his knowing that I had made an attempt to enter his realm and have a taste of what he finds captivating. Needless to say, I got thrashed, which gave him great pleasure: but for 15 minutes we were playing together and talking, which was a prized opportunity.

Getting into the world of our teenagers means understanding what things they enjoy doing. Your attempts to understand create a sense of appreciation and gratefulness. Though their peers and other interests may override the influence they received from us when younger, keeping a measured pace with them and not dropping back too far is the key. While the type of play may now be different, building a strong relationship with your teenager involves nothing more than being there.

Values transmission

Christ's willingness to make time for children, despite His busy schedule of teaching and reaching out to the sick and outcast, is a perfect example for us fathers. He not only reinforced the importance of children in the spectrum of God's kingdom, but also set a valuable lesson of what ought to be just as much a priority for fathers today, despite the pressures of time and demands of life.

Staying connected with your teenager will open new doors of fun activities that could range from going out for fast-food meals together to attending a sporting event or, dare I say, riding the biggest roller coasters. They are the imprints of fun activities that will remain with your growing child and shape how your teenager will transfer those practices – when it's their turn.

⁸Ella Pickover, 'Playful Dads "Have Babies Who Grow to Be Brainer"', *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 May, 2017, belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/playful-dads-have-babies-who-grow-to-be-brainer-35698415.html ⁹Ibid. ¹⁰Paul Roberts and Bill Moseley, 'Father's Time: Understanding the Challenges of Fatherhood', *Psychology Today*, 1 May 1996, psychologytoday.com/gb/articles/199605/fathers-time ¹¹Ibid. ¹²Ibid. ¹³Ibid. ¹⁴Ibid. ¹⁵Ibid. ¹⁶Nedune, 'Seven Reasons Why It's Essential Children Spend Time With Their Fathers', *Nairaland Forum*, 14 January 2016, nairaland.com/2864985/seven-reasons-why-essential-children ¹⁷Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children* (Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2006), childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/fatherhood.pdf



Why outdoor learning is an essential element in Newbold School's post-pandemic primary curriculum

by Jaki Chrissey (head teacher)

For over a year now, parents and children have been intermittently shut inside their homes, separated from friends and their school community, with only a virtual world to connect them and no idea of when it will end. It's not surprising that many people, even those who were not particularly interested in the great outdoors before the pandemic, have gained a greater appreciation of its value and are now turning to nature to seek healing and restoration. Discovering the strong connection between improved mental health and being out in nature provides unlimited free therapy – and, consequently, a better quality of life. Allowing children to make this discovery for themselves is one of the best educational gifts we can offer in this increasingly turbulent world.

Newbold School is privileged to have access to the woods and gardens around the church and college. We are very aware of how blessed we are to have this amazing resource at our school. The school has developed a growing interest in forest schools over the last couple of years, which has greatly enriched the curriculum. Mrs Vicky Stanborough, the school's forest school leader, has seen enormous benefits – not only for the children,

but also for the staff. She remarked: 'Everyone's mood lifts significantly after being outdoors, and this continues when we return to class. Consequently, the children are more engaged in their studies and show greater independence in their learning.' Clearly, not everyone lives near open countryside or forests, but most cities have designated parklands, which can also provide space for contemplation.

Of course, interest in the environment stems from many different philosophical and political viewpoints. As Seventh-day Adventists, Newbold presents a Christian perspective. It's no coincidence that the first people, Adam and Eve, lived in a garden; indeed, God designed the natural environment to provide the perfect setting for our happiness and well-being. While we do not expect people to abandon their homes and live in the woods, there is no doubt that spending more time outdoors – gardening, observing, listening and just allowing time for prayer and contemplation – is great medicine.

At Newbold School, our children are given opportunities to experience the awe and wonder of God's creation and learn the importance of our role in practising good

stewardship. Our children learn to plant and tend flowers and vegetables, and thoroughly enjoy themselves doing so. Consequently, when it comes to writing in class, their descriptions of nature are based on real-life experiences and are better for it. As Christians, teaching children to care about the environment is as important as maths and English. Christian kindness and consideration should not only apply to how we treat other human beings, but should also include respect for the forests, rivers, beaches, mountains and all living creatures therein.

During the first lockdown in 2020, after only a few weeks of human absence, wild animals ventured into the cities, pollution decreased, and birds could be heard singing – and people found they had enough time to notice this happening. The juxtaposition of a diseased world and the exceptional beauty of nature was painfully poignant. A walk outdoors became a lifeline, for parents and children alike, and even the smallest patch of garden became a refuge. We need time to process the awe and wonder of our world; but, once lockdown ends, it will become more difficult to do so, and we may find ourselves slotting back into our old ways – scurrying manically along. We want to teach our children these important lessons and encourage them to develop a lifelong love of God and His creation.

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Hackney and Wood Green Church evangelistic series: 'Lord, Empower Your People'

Darell J. Philip (Hackney) and Barbara Sommers (Wood Green) share a special report on the theme, 'Lord, Empower Your People', a joint ten-day health lecture and campaign which recently took place within their churches during 17-27 March 2021.



Going back to Eden

The right arm of the Gospel is the health message. How true that is in a time when many, a year on, are still being impacted by the global pandemic! In the build-up to soul-stirring messages presented by Pastor Robert Williams during the joint Hackney and Wood Green evangelistic series, 'Lord, Empower Your People', a series of timely health lectures was presented by the former South England Conference president and pastor of Hackney Church, Pastor Sam Davis.

Emphasising the importance of maintaining holistic health through implementing the principles of NEWSTART (Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust in God), Pastor Davis shared practical health gems to a 100-plus weekly audience with close to 200 attendees during the two consecutive Sabbaths. In addition to his emphasis on the importance of trust in God, he noted:

- Rest: 7-8 hours each night;
- Exercise: A regular exercise routine outdoors in the fresh air.

'Fresh air will prove far more beneficial to sick persons than medicine, and is far more essential to them than their food' (Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, 5 December, 1899).

About food matters, '*We are what we eat*' – and, with reference to Hippocrates (widely regarded as the father of modern medicine), Pastor Davis shared that most of the diseases we experience begin in the gut. Therefore, replacement of foods high in fat and sugar content by those with a higher nutritional value such as the Edenic plant-based diet could not be recommended enough. 'God's desire for us is that we prosper in all things and be in good health (3 John 2),' said Pastor Davis, who then added: 'Everything we need in order to live a healthy, well-balanced life has been provided for and is free, so why not make the necessary changes today to avoid the regrets of tomorrow, for prevention is always better than cure? Why? So that we can present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.'

And did our hearts burn

'Firstly, I want to pause for a moment and thank God for Zoom,' writes Barbara Sommers. I strongly believe that we have touched more souls on the Zoom platform than we would have if we were in our church buildings, and more so during our recent ten-day evangelistic outreach, 'Lord, Empower Your People'. Conducted usually in church buildings, such series can have the drawback that they are attended mainly by members, alongside a few visitors squeezing in at the back for the final sermon. In reality, is it not the already-fattened Adventist who is being fed again? In contrast, our series via Zoom attracted well over 100 regular attendees (both local and international) during the week, and almost 200 on each Sabbath: some of whom have now requested Bible studies and baptism. Might this be the way forward for future evangelistic outreach? It's food for thought!



Pastor Robert Williams

The guest speaker, Pastor Robert Williams, is from Jamaica. His unique feature is to blend 'old-time preaching' with 'now-time issues'. Such were the relevance of his sermons that, on some evenings, for me it felt as though this pastor had been listening to my daytime chats and crafted a sermon to suit them. Praise God for this man of God! We laughed and cried in equal measure as we ascended to our mountaintop spiritual experiences. Many of his testimonies were so like my own that I just wanted to fall on my knees and pray right there and then, both to thank God for His goodness and also to seek forgiveness. I was stirred, not having realised that I needed to be stirred!

But it was not just I who was moved and stirred by his words, as some of the comments below attest: '*Wood Green and Hackney were spiritually enriched and enthused by the powerful and timely messages of Pastor Robert Williams. . . . The excellent revival meetings could not have come at a better time. To God be the glory.*' (Tristan Cuniah)

'*This evangelistic series has led me to have a stronger determination of total dependence on God. I am now ready to serve Him, come what may, and I want to share Him with others in whatever way I can, while also never forgetting His love for me. Last but not least, I feel impressed to follow the laws of health more closely.*' (Anonymous)

'*With refreshing clarity, . . . Robert Williams delivered the bread of life to our hungry souls night after night. His final sermon, which was a personal testimony of how he walked again after medical professionals deemed him crippled for the rest of his life, touched my heart. I will . . . share with others what phenomenal power there is in prayer. My family and I were thoroughly blessed by this series. God be praised.*' (P. Grant)

'*The health lectures by Pastor Davis reminded us that we are obliged to take care of our bodies in the best way we can by being careful with what, when and how we eat. Although Pastor Williams' subjects contained some elements of the worldwide current situation, they were deeply spiritual and challenged those who had already committed their lives to Jesus to remain under His protective wings. It was truly inspirational.*' (E. Prince)

When things are desperate, the best person to turn to is God, as He is the only one who can find a way out of our desperation. We need to share the blessing of God with others through our testimonies and prayers. Many of us, myself included, are still smouldering from the rekindled fire that now burns within our hearts, and cannot wait for Pastor Robert Williams and Sam Davis's next visit.



Pastor Sam Davis



Grace Community Church participates in Co-op Food Share programme



Over eight million people in the UK are struggling to put food on the table. This number is set to increase as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic unfold.

The newly formed Grace Community Seventh-day Adventist church, made up of members from the former Palmers Green and Tottenham Holcombe Road churches, have put in place an initiative to try to do our part to help those in need, particularly those in our local community.

Grace Community has partnered with a number of Co-op stores through their food share programme, to collect food products that these stores traditionally would have thrown away, yet are still good to eat. Working alongside the members of the Ilford and Holloway churches, we collect these items and then distribute them to people in the local community. Of those we meet, many struggle and have to make choices most can only imagine – do I heat or eat? And some do not even have the choice to heat their home, as they find themselves sleeping rough.

We are grateful to the Seven King Co-op store, which not only provides the supplies for us to distribute, but has also kindly donated £200 towards the work we do.

The Grace Community pastor, Kevin Johns, believes in this ministry for two reasons: 'First, this is a great initiative that preserves the environment by preventing food waste; second, it helps reach and feed those in need. I would encourage other churches to take part in the Co-op Food Share programme.'

COMMUNICATION SECRETARY

Community Ministries team member collecting cheque from the Co-op



A heart to serve

As an example of dedication to service, the Northfield members would like to thank one of our senior members and head deaconess, Olive May Hartley, who has successfully completed the 'Safer Food Handling Course', gaining the Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering. The Northfield minister, Pastor Obi, expressed it for us all when he said, 'Our sister, Olive Hartley, has a heart of gold. On hearing of the desire of members wanting wholemeal communion bread, she accepted the challenge to complete the course, ensuring the safe baking of the communion bread.'

L. TULLOCH (CHURCH CLERK & COMMUNICATIONS)

2021 BUC Session notification

Notice is hereby **confirmed** that the ninth quinquennial session of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will take place on Thursday 8 and Friday 9 July 2021, as first **notified** in the January 2021 edition of *MESSENGER*.

However, in order to maintain the highest possible safety standards regarding COVID-19, the decision was made to relocate the session from the De Vere Conference Centre in Staverton to a new venue called 'The Atrium' near Heathrow Airport.

Full details of the reason for this venue change may be found at: <https://adventist.uk/news/article/go/2021-04-28/buc-session-dates-confirmed/>.

PASTOR JOHN SURRIDGE
(EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE)





Biblical BHAGs

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

Maybe it's a distraction, or maybe a resource, but there are many church documents available online nowadays: from back issues of the *MESSENGER* (previously the *British Advent Messenger*) to the General Conference annual reports. I want to draw your attention to some statistics that I think are worth pondering over.

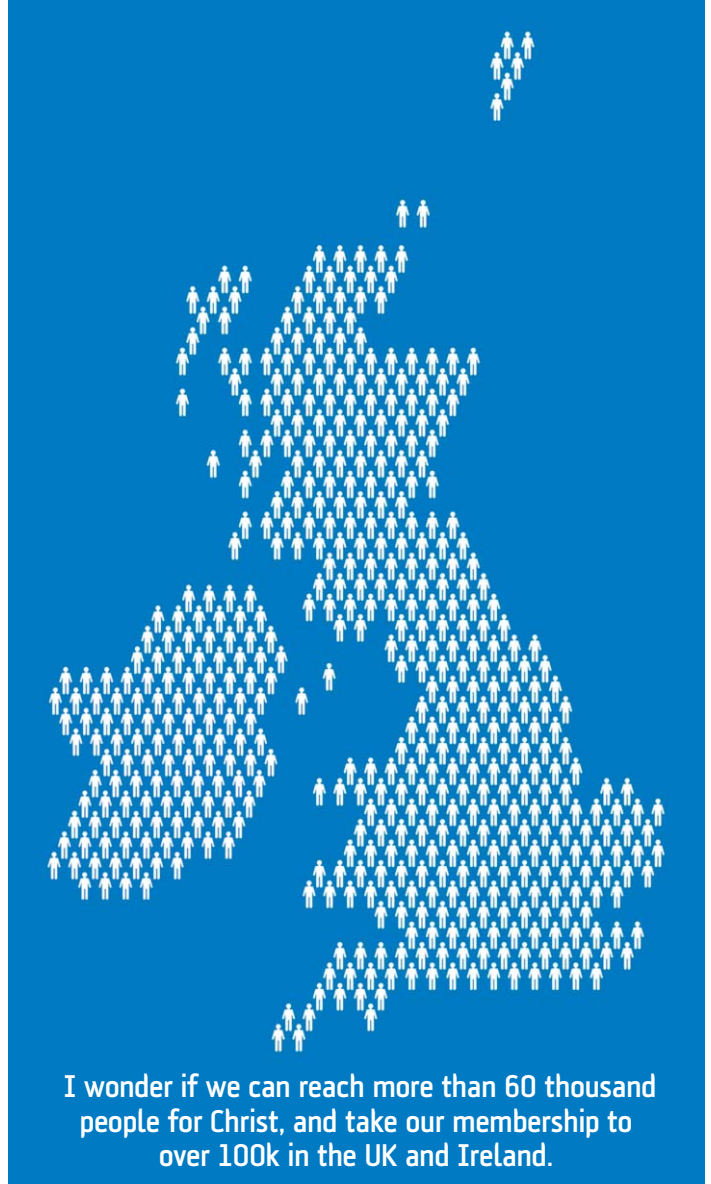
A quick jaunt through the English to British Union membership figures shows an amazing surge in the numbers of people becoming members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early decades, but a shearing decrease between the wars, then a small increase in the mid-twentieth century, followed by a slow decline, and at present showing a healthy leap.

I'm not suggesting any socio-economic reasons for the fluctuations, though it is interesting to note the lull in the 1920s between the wars, and the plateauing through the 1940s, understandable with the Second World War. We have a tendency to note the total figure gain, but ignore the rate of growth, and that is what I am reflecting on now.

What got me thinking was the report in the *British Advent Messenger*, 10 January 1936, where the South England Conference president, Pastor R. S. Joyce, said, 'The Lord had blessed us with our evangelistic objective of twenty-five per cent increase over 1934, i.e. 269 souls.' He noted some specific baptisms, and then heralded that the total for the year was '300 souls' (p. 6).

In the following magazine edition, Pastor G. D. King, the Welsh Mission president, also referenced the twenty-five per cent goal being reached. The previous highest annual number of baptisms had been in 1933, at forty-six, but in 1934 there were fifty-three baptisms.

I wonder if a clue in the reason for the high rate was the use of printed material. In the previously stated magazine is listed the voted Union committee action for printing a big enough print run of *Present Truth* for five copies per member, and a big enough print run of *Good Health* for 4.5 copies per member.



Again in this issue, the Union president stated that the previous annual baptism numbers were: 456 in 1933, 457 in 1934, and 490 in 1935. 'Ought we to go well over the 500 mark this year? Let us work and pray to that end' (vol. 4, no. 3, 11 February 1936, p. 3).

Jim Collins introduced the idea of BHAGs (pronounced bee-hags) to the business world. **A BHAG – a Big Hairy Audacious Goal** – is pretty much what you guess it to be.¹ It is considering the challenge and aligning yourself to be the biggest influence in that market with your

Year	Membership (Jan)	Membership (Dec)	Ministers (ordained and licensed)	Churches (later, not including companies)	Rate of growth (between decades)
1882	–	75	1	3	–
1891	–	199	Not listed	8	X2.6
1901	–	677	9	17	X3.4
1911	–	2,045	28	70	X3
1921	–	5,122	33	103	X2.5
1931	4,743	4,708	55	70	X-0.9
1941	–	5,955	94	185	X1.2
1951	–	6,797	112	195	X1.14
1961	–	9,561	132	112	X1.4
1971	12,145	12,313	127	153	X1.29
1981	14,569	14,738	209	187	X1.2
1991	17,739	17,864	153	212	X1.2
2001	20,637	21,137	Not listed	217	X1.18
2010	30,528	31,656	Not listed	299	X1.5
2020	39,591	39,970	Not listed	508	X1.26

Details of membership and growth in the British Union taken from documents at: <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FStatistics%2FASR&FolderCTID=0x01200095DE8DF0FA49904B9D652113284DE0C800ED657F7DABA3CF4D893EA744F14DA97B>

Moving towards a doctrine of spiritual gifts

by Dr George Knight

'The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple' (Psalm 119:130, KJV).



It was James White who highlighted the supremacy of the Bible as the teacher for Christians of their duties. According to him, the function of the gift of prophecy was not only to confirm the truths already gathered from the Bible and to help unify God's people on the Bible's teachings, but also to 'bring you back to the Bible' itself.

There is an important point here. One of the proper functions of spiritual gifts is to *bring people back to the Bible*. In making that point, James hit upon a crucial understanding. All too often, Adventists have failed to understand the correct role of spiritual gifts. Some have even gone so far as to spend more time and energy studying Ellen White's writings than the Bible.

Such a course flies in the face of the understanding of her work set forth by James and Ellen White and all the other pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism. From Ellen White's

perspective, such people have made the 'lesser light' into the 'greater light' by relegating the Bible to second place.

'The word of God [the Bible],' she penned, 'is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, *bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow*' (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 663, italics supplied).

Again, 'Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the *Testimonies* is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has

seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word' (ibid.). 'Little heed,' Ellen White wrote in another connection, 'is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light' (*Colporteur Ministry*, p.125).

The Adventist pioneers were consistently assertive in the role of Ellen White as being a pointer to the Bible, rather than being the source for doctrine. In fact, one reason I personally believe that she is a true prophet is that she continually directs her readers to Jesus as Saviour and to the Bible as *the light*. May we today follow her counsel.

This article is an excerpt from *Lest We Forget* by George R. Knight (published by Review and Herald), reprinted here with permission from the author and the publisher. You can purchase the devotional from the LifeSource website: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk>.

product. The footnote quoted references Boeing having entered the market of jet engine planes before any other commercial manufacturer; until then, they had only ever made propeller-driven bombers.

'Boeing Corporation is an excellent example of how highly visionary companies often use bold missions . . . as a particularly powerful mechanism to stimulate progress.' It seems to me that the BUC of the 1930s had a Big Hairy Audacious Goal: twenty-five percent growth per year . . . and they exceeded it.

Pastor Martin Anthony, in an article for a special Centenary of Adventism publication,² pointed out that in the 1960s the 'Dial-a-Prayer' initiative was rolled out across the BUC, following its extraordinary success in Camp Hill, where Pastor Victor Benefield received 250 calls in one day, though seemingly no baptisms came of the venture.

Our church has pioneered stop-smoking courses, but stopped just before it became a trend to stop smoking. Some churches have run vegetarian cookery classes, but ceased before it became in vogue to be vegetarian or vegan.

It seems to me that we are satisfied with our numeric growth because it is a big number, but we have lost sight of the rate of growth. While our union has benefited numerically from waves of immigration, this has disguised the rate of growth since post-war years. Is it time we took on some Big Hairy Audacious Goals? After all, the UK population growth slowed to 0.5% in 2019,³ so that makes our membership rate of growth less than x0.75!

Quoted in the book, *Christian Service*, Ellen White wrote, '**I was shown that as a people we are deficient. Our works are not in accordance with our faith. Our faith testifies that we are living under the proclamation of the most solemn and important message that was ever given to mortals. Yet in full view of this fact, our efforts, our zeal, our spirit of self-sacrifice, do not compare with the character of the work. We should awake from the dead, and Christ will give us life**' (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 114).

'In 1961 the slogan, "Win One in '61" was adopted widely by churches, at a time when evangelistic programmes were still relatively fruitful. But so much depended on the ability of pastors in particular to motivate their flocks to action. Perhaps this very factor lies at the heart of the slowing of the growth of the Church in the later part of the past century' (Anthony, 2000, p. 14).

'Let ministers teach church members that in order to grow in spirituality, they must carry the burden that the Lord has laid upon them, – the burden of leading souls into the truth. Those who are not fulfilling their responsibility should be visited, prayed with, laboured for. Do not lead the people to depend upon you as ministers; teach them rather that they are to use their talents in giving the truth to those around them. In thus working they will have the co-operation of heavenly angels, and will obtain an experience that will increase their faith, and give them a strong hold on God' (Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 200).

It will take another ponder to consider whether we are ready as a church for a day-of-Pentecost experience and to have our neighbours flood our churches, becoming new Adventists. This will of course alter the demographics of our churches. Could this be a factor as to why our churches are not experiencing 25-300% growth annually? Could it be that members do not know how to share their faith? Therefore, does that mean some members have accepted a knowledge of faith but skipped the transformed life in Christ?

Whether it is a corporate or personal objective, how about making some BHAGs of faith, to make it our individual goal to bring someone to faith in Jesus? In my cautious ponderings, I wonder if we can reach more than 60 thousand people for Christ, and take our membership to over 100k in the UK and Ireland. Ask your pastor and elders how.

¹<https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/bhag.html> ²<http://www.adventisthistory.org.uk/documents/CenturyofAdventism.pdf> ³<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/january2021>



Will Zoom disappear when we return to church?



The first in a two-part series by Kendall Down

There is no doubt that Christians are looking forward to meeting face-to-face again, yet something valuable may come to an end – Zoom Church.

I think of a small church in Worcestershire which regularly has 14 computers participating in its Zoom services – with approximately 21 people behind those computers. Most of them are church members, but others are not. One member's disabled sister in Devon is delighted to be able to join corporate worship (albeit virtual) after years of worshipping in isolation. Another woman's father in Newcastle-upon-Tyne takes pleasure in worshipping with his daughter. A couple who live in a different county, but who had connections with the church before they retired and moved, also join regularly. The husband, who never attended church before, now joins his wife on the sofa because it's easy to do, and, anyway, 'She needs help with the technology.'

I know someone who is running Zoom Messy Church and has noticed something interesting. When she did Messy Church in reality, many non-church parents regarded it as little more than a free crèche and dropped their children off at the church while they went shopping. Now, with Zoom Messy Church, the parents are getting involved. At first it was simple self-preservation – the mess that can be created by an unsupervised child armed with finger paint and glitter is unbelievable – but, gradually, their interest has been roused. They are asking questions, making comments, and the leader is starting to consider how she might transform this interest into an enquirers' class for the parents after Messy Church has finished.

Yet, when vaccination becomes universal, lockdown ends, and churches go back to meeting in reality, what happens to all these people? Will they go back to being excluded and isolated, just because they're unable physically to attend the church of their choice, or because they've not yet developed the habit of church-going? Yet how can churches combine the virtual with the real – to serve both?

Non-participatory services

There are two types of service we need to consider. The first is the non-participatory type, where the congregation are little more than spectators (other than listening), rather like the typical preaching service.

The best way to cater for the virtual congregation is to live-stream the service via Facebook, YouTube, or some other streaming service. This has the major advantage that the address (URL) can be advertised widely without the danger of the service being interrupted or hijacked by malicious hackers.

It would be good if the service could be recorded and uploaded to YouTube as well as streamed, so it can be viewed at a convenient time by people for whom the standard service times are not suitable. I remember preaching in a particular church where a member of the congregation always left at 11.50, thus missing out on the concluding five minutes of my sermon! It must have been frustrating for her, but she lived in an old folks' home and had to be back at a fixed time for dinner: otherwise, she went hungry! Similar considerations may affect our online congregations.

Mark Gungor (you can search for him on

YouTube – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iDxAzoAeaQ>) uses livestreaming to reach a wider audience. He has his main church and two satellite congregations in different parts of the town. He is physically present in the main church, but his sermons are relayed over the internet to the satellite congregations which value his preaching style. They are also recorded and uploaded, so that people can watch his sermons weeks or months later.

Surveys show that giving to churches has plummeted during the pandemic; and, even worse, fully 20% of parishioners do not intend to resume going to church when the pandemic ends. Inevitably, there's going to be some retrenching by the church authorities. Some churches will close, but others will – perhaps for the first time – be forced to share their minister. Mark Gungor provides a model for how one minister can be in two places at the same time!

The simplest set-up is to have a single camera (or other recording device, such as a mobile phone) in a fixed position, recording the whole service from beginning to end. It works – but it is not visually interesting. Unless viewers already have a firm commitment to the church, they will soon tire of the unvarying picture and go elsewhere. St Paul's in Llandudno started out with a single mobile phone clamped to the front pew (see: <https://www.stpaulsllandudno.co.uk/>). They have since become more sophisticated (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0yjZS2-4-U>).

I believe that we should do our best to be as professional as possible, both to glorify God, and for the simple fact that the better our

presentation, the more we will attract and hold viewers.

In an ideal world at least three cameras are needed – one to take in the whole of the platform area, one to provide a close-up of the preacher or leader, and one from the side to give variety.

Multiple cameras require a means of switching between them. Video switchers used to be horribly expensive (the simplest started at £1,000+); but, since the pandemic began, two different companies have produced switchers, easy to use and reasonably priced. One is the ATEM Mini (<https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/atemmini>), which costs £330 on Amazon, and the other is the LivePro (<https://feelworld.itd/>), which costs £308 on Amazon.

Both switchers allow four HDMI inputs. These might be four cameras or, perhaps more usefully, three cameras plus a computer displaying things like the words of the hymns being sung, the announcements (or notices), the Scripture passages being read and the preacher's presentation. (PowerPoint is used by most people, but my DisplayUTF software is the easiest to use to create a complete service.)

Both switchers allow picture-in-picture, so that the presentation shows full-screen and the preacher appears in a corner of the screen.

HDMI video cameras can be purchased for as little as £35, though it goes without saying

that you get what you pay for, and the output from such a cheap camera is likely to be of a lower quality than a more expensive camera. For wide-angle shots you could use a GoPro or even a dash-cam, most of which have an HDMI output.

Both switchers output to USB, which means that to your computer they will look just like an ordinary webcam. That, in turn, means that the multiple cameras can very easily be incorporated into your livestream or your file for later upload.

Of course, you don't have to use all four inputs; you could start off with just one camera and the PowerPoint computer, and then add another one when you can afford it. Even with just one camera and your PowerPoint, your presentation will be more visually interesting than if you only had one or the other.

Having read up on them, I have to say that the ATEM Mini is probably the easiest to use, but the LivePro offers slightly greater sophistication if you are prepared to put a little effort into learning how to use it. There are numerous reviews of both on YouTube, and I would advise watching them before making a decision.

Recording the service is one thing; the next step is to get it out onto the internet. For that you will need to have some way of connecting to the internet from your church. You might choose to have a telephone line connected to your church (some churches may already have this if they have a church office). If that

is not feasible for some reason, you can use a mobile device on 3G, 4G or 5G if that is available in your area. You will need to have a suitable contract that allows adequate data (or unlimited data), so that there is probably not much difference in how much you will pay between the mobile and the fixed line options.

If this is not possible, you will have to record the sermon and upload it and do without livestreaming.

The greatest problem is likely to be finding someone to operate the cameras and the video switcher. This is an area where a young person can provide an invaluable service to the church: but if you have no suitable young people, you will have to rely on an older person and be prepared to spend time in training. If there is no one available at all, then you may have to rethink what you are able to do.

- **Simplest:** 1 mobile phone, streaming live to the internet
- **Simple:** 1 computer streaming live to the internet but also using its camera to show the speaker
- **Clever:** 1 computer, 1 camera, video switcher
- **Professional:** 3 cameras, 2 computers (one for the presentation software and one for streaming), video switcher

Next time, I will share how to set up a permanent participatory service, and what it means to 'speak into the camera'.



An adventure in faith

What if . . . ?

In 2010, Mark Finley published a small, pocket-sized book called *Revive Us Again* to help and encourage members to feel the need for urgent, personal revival.

'What could possibly be more critical for the people of God than the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power for the finishing of God's work on earth? This must be at the top of every board-meeting agenda on all levels of church structure. But revival always begins with one man, one woman, one boy or one girl on his or her knees, seeking God. You can be that one who is used of God to bring spiritual revival to your home, your church, your school, or your conference/mission.'

During 2013 a copy of *Revive Us Again* was supplied to every Irish Mission member in preparation for the 2013-2015 Dublin evangelistic adventure. Talk with Irish Mission members, and they will recall that something special happened in the life of the church during those years – which continues to this day. Taking to heart the principles of *Revive Us Again* helped us and our churches grow spiritually in three significant ways:

- Together we experienced a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit working in our own lives, and in the life of the church.
- We felt a higher level of commitment to reaching lost people, both personally and collectively.
- We saw lost people make a commitment to follow Christ.

What if, as we begin returning to meeting together again in person, we think again about reviving our personal relationship with the Lord? *Revive Us Again* can not only help us begin that journey, but help keep us on it.

EDITOR

Available from the LifeSource Christian Bookshop for £1.50 a copy at the following link: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/revive-us-again/>



Lorna Victoria Bucknor (1956-2021) d. 4 January 2021.



Lorna, born in the quiet district of Dallas Castle, St Andrew, Jamaica, was the second eldest of eleven siblings; and, when Lorna's parents migrated to England, Lorna became a mother figure to her younger brothers as well as caring for her grandparents. Lorna would rise up very early in the morning to complete her chores before going to school. It was for this reason that Lorna was nicknamed 'Birdie', as a testament to her dedication and independence. Lorna came to England aged 15 and settled with her parents and siblings in Hornsey, London.

In 1979 Lorna met the love of her life, Carl Bucknor, and the couple were married on 16 August 1986. The couple had four children: Antoinette, Nicolette, Karlena and Matthew. Lorna was an inspirational woman who was dedicated to her husband and family. She taught her children to stick together, encouraged them to treat others how they wanted to be treated, and showed them how to follow their dreams and remain level-headed.

Elder Percival Douglas gave Lorna Bible studies which led to Lorna being baptised by Pastor Leighvard on 7 March 1992 at

Tottenham Seventh-day Adventist Church, London. Lorna met her best friend, Norma Taylor, at Bruce Castle Park in Tottenham over 40 years ago, and they spent many a Sabbath lunch together along with their children. Lorna loved the Lord with all her heart, and was a part of the Tottenham church family. She supported the church by working as a treasurer, auditor, Women's Ministry leader and trustee of Sugar Plum Day Nursery. Lorna had a quiet, determined spirit and a calm demeanour, and she was a hard-working woman of faith.

In October 1994, Lorna began her employment at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, working in the Accounts Department, where she worked for 26 years. Lorna was considered a mother figure at her workplace, because her colleagues would share their personal concerns with her, and she provided sound Christian advice.

Lorna loved holding social gatherings in her home; and so, at Christmas, New Year, birthday events and games nights, Lorna catered for friends and family.

In March 2019 Lorna was diagnosed with myeloma, a rare form of blood cancer. Throughout her treatment, Lorna was mentally strong and positive, and her faith in God was unshakeable. In December 2020 Lorna contracted COVID-19, and she passed away on 4 January 2021.

Lorna is survived by her husband, four children, two grandchildren, eight brothers and two sisters.

'You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised' (Hebrews 10:36, NIV).

SONIA MUNROE

Ninette Finck (c. 1917-2021) d. 29 January.



Our oldest member, Jeanne Virginie Finck (née Noel), affectionately known as Ninette, sadly passed away on 29 January 2021 at the blessed age of 103. The funeral was conducted by Pastors Vili Costescu and Arthur Campbell on 24 February 2021.

Ninette was born and brought up in Mauritius. She followed in the footsteps of her father in education, and later became a headmistress. Ninette was married to Henri, and they had five children. The family migrated to London in the sixties. Ninette joined the civil service, and had a successful career at the Land Registry and Customs and Excise.

Ninette was a devoted Christian. The Wimbledon church was blessed with her diligence in serving the Lord in various positions, including but not limited to being a deaconess, Sabbath School teacher, member

of Dorcas, Flower & Garden Committee member, Music Committee member (where she faithfully played the piano during Sabbath School), and choir member.

Ninette was welcoming, generous, hospitable and fun. She loved playing Scrabble, and would place the tiles strategically to win. Her friends also enjoyed playing board/card games with her on Saturday nights, often after having a scrumptious Mauritian meal. She was very competitive, and would not go home or let her friends go home until she had won the last game.

Ninette was a much-loved member of the church, and well respected by those who knew her. She was blessed with five children, eight grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. We miss her, but we also know we will see her again one day in heaven.

INA CHAPMAN

Doreen St John-Lewis (née Paine) (1928-2021) d. 14 March.



Doreen was born on 29 March 1928 to Frederick and Dorothy Robinson in Surbiton, Kingston-upon-Thames. They were members of the Church of England, and Doreen was both christened and confirmed into the Church

Pastor James Phillip (1947-2021) d. 4 March.

Born in the Caribbean island of St Kitts in the late 1940s, who would have known that 'shy John Morris', as he was known locally, would have become an Adventist pastor?

The Morris/Phillip family consisted of eight boys and two girls, and James helped his father farm acres of land in Molyneux, attended school during the week, and was an altar boy for the Catholic church.

In his teens he went to live with an influential cousin in St Croix, who introduced him to Adventism. Attracted to the word of God, he relinquished his former beliefs in Catholicism.

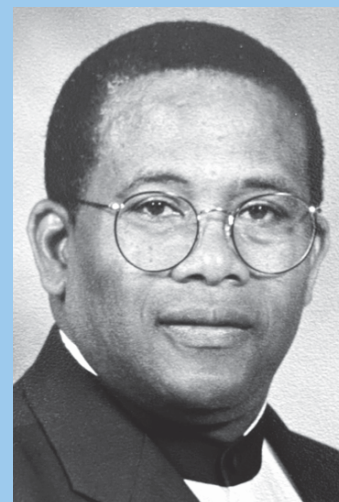
After his conversion, he moved from St Croix to the University of the Southern Caribbean, formerly Caribbean Union College (CUC), in Trinidad, West Indies. He worked in a bakery and travelled across the Caribbean region, selling literature to pay for his ministerial studies.

As a student at CUC, he forged lifetime friendships that included meeting his wife-to-be, Anne Pilgrim, a Mathematics teacher. Completing his studies in 1973, he got married and began his ministry in that year as the Youth, Health and Temperance director of the Eastern Caribbean Conference in St Lucia. In his first term of office his eldest daughter, Shanda, was born. Moving from there to Barbados for his second term of office, his second daughter, Anna-lee, was born.

As a director he was required to travel across the Eastern Caribbean islands, and could speak conversational French patois. He also believed in and applied a mentorship model for young people, pairing them with experienced individuals. His message to everyone was to have a limitless view of living, as found in Philippians 4:13: *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'* (NKJV).

He then returned to CUC as Dean of Men in the eighties, where those at Cedar Hall Dorm (aka 'Spartans') formed great memories under their beloved 'Round One'. He was a prolific table tennis, dominoes and basketball player. He taught 'Christian Beliefs', the first course all students had to complete.

In 1986, accepting a call to minister in south-east London, James and family relocated to the United Kingdom.



of England faith.

When Doreen was eight years old, her mother passed away from cancer. In time, her father married again. Her stepmother was a devout Methodist, and Doreen enjoyed attending chapel while continuing to attend Church of England services.

Doreen married and had a family, moving to Romsey in Hampshire. In the late fifties, she received a Voice of Prophecy card, and following the studies she and her husband were baptised and became members of the Southampton church.

Soon, however, Doreen became the lone parent of four young children, now living on the Isle of Wight. Wanting to serve Jesus in whatever way she could, she went from door to door selling *Bedtime Stories*, *Good Health* and *Good News* magazines, and would return to give people Bible studies.

There was no church on the Isle of Wight, so Doreen held Sabbath morning meetings in her small home in Steepledown Road, Ventnor. She met a lady from Shanklin who had also been introduced to the truth via VOP Bible studies, and the meetings were moved to this lady's house. When the group became large enough, the meetings were moved to the upper room of the Shanklin Conservative Club. Thus the Isle of Wight company was born, and it continues to this day.

During this time, while looking for more ways to serve the Saviour she loved, Doreen attended Laymen's Summer School at Newbold College of Higher Education from 1960 to 1963. She graduated and received her lay preacher's credentials. Doreen began preaching in Methodist chapels, and then Baptist, Plymouth Brethren, Pentecostal and Congregational churches, and independent groups such as the Cowes Christian Mission.

Despite having a very low income, her home in upper Ventnor was always open to visiting pastors and their families. Many enjoyed her fellowship and refreshments.

When her four children had left home to make their own lives, Doreen left the Isle of Wight in 1978 to return to the Enfield area of London. She continued to serve God in whatever capacity she could – be it taking the children, offering prayers, or reading portions of Scripture.

However, her health began to fail, and in 2008 she moved to Hereford to be near her daughter Helen. Even in her eighties, Doreen continued to preach, until her eyesight was lost due to degenerative macular eye disease. Not one to be idle, Doreen became a Sabbath School superintendent and prayer warrior, right up until the first COVID-19 lockdown. Even

lockdowns didn't stop her from praying for anyone who made a request to her.

Doreen now rests in her Saviour, after being diagnosed with the last stages of cancer on New Year's Day 2021. She is survived by her four children, ten grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren.

HELEN TONEY

Pastor Raphael Luz (1967-2021)

d. 5 April.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Pastor Rafael Luz on 5 April 2021.



Pastor Luz was born on 15 May 1967 in Brazil. On 21 August 2005 he married Sheilla Ferraz, and their union brought about Shawn and Timothy.

In 2005 Pastor Luz was employed as the Dean of Boarding at Stanborough School. In 2007 he accepted a call from the South England Conference to serve as the pastor for several of the Portuguese-speaking churches across the conference, and was later ordained in June 2009.

After serving in the South England Conference for 11 years, Pastor Luz and his family accepted a call from the Welsh Mission to serve as a pastor in the Swansea, Port Talbot and Haverfordwest district of

churches from January 2019. He faithfully served the members and public in this district until his resignation at the end of February 2021. Soon after, Pastor Luz travelled to Brazil for some medical treatment, where he contracted COVID-19 and, sadly, succumbed to its impact on 5 April 2021.

Pastor Luz was much loved wherever he served, and leaves behind his wife, Sheilla, and two sons, Shawn and Timothy.

BUC SECRETARIAT

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Sunset

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	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
May 28	9.04	9.16	9.16	9.42	9.44
Jun 4	9.12	9.24	9.24	9.51	9.53
11	9.17	9.30	9.30	9.58	9.59
18	9.21	9.33	9.34	10.02	10.03

He pastored churches in Downham, Sydenham, Mottingham, Eitham, Lewisham, Balham and Brixton, and became an area coordinator. While there were opportunities for him to hold office roles at Conference level, he purposed in his heart to be a pastor at a local level.

He is well remembered for trailblazing renovations and improvements to church buildings and services, which can still be seen at Balham, Lewisham and Brixton.

In 2014 he received a Stewardship Leader of the Year award, and for his family this reflected his mental mathematical computations, which were faster than typing into a calculator!

He officially retired from ministry in 2015, but not in his heart and ways. He was a bishop, father, dean, gardener, tent-maker, mentor and cook (juice and salt-fish pattie) extraordinaire; a carpenter, driver and comedian. A no-nonsense man, he disliked church politics, preferring to be a friend to all mankind.

After 47 years of service and marriage, James has left a legacy of love, growth and service to all, and poured this into the lives of many.

Sadly, Pastor Phillip passed away peacefully in hospital as a result of chronic illness (without COVID-19-related complications) on Thursday 4 March 2021.

He will be truly missed, and sleeps now, awaiting our Lord's return, who is 'true and faithful'.

PHILLIP FAMILY

Pastors Davey and Murtagh

It is also with a sense of sadness and loss that we inform *MESSAGE* readers that Pastor Desmond Murtagh and Pastor Ronald John Davey passed away on 25 January and 11 April respectively. Full obituaries for both pastors will be published in the June edition.

ED.

'I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.' "

(Revelation 21:3, NLT)



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