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Christian finance

Faithfulness to God

“But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. . . . Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” ’

(Malachi 3:8, 10, NKJV)

Is it worth it?

Reflecting on the mission of Seventh-day Adventist education in the UK

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,
President of the British Union Conference



For years, the 'is it worth it?' question has been asked about our schools. The declining numbers of pupils in our academic institutions, the cost of running these schools, and the changing UK educational landscape exacerbated by two years of a world-wide pandemic make this question reverberate about the halls of governance as well as in the minds of many of our members.

It is worth it!

Earlier this year, the BUC Executive Committee voted that the Union's flagship school, Stanborough School, remain open. This is a big decision. But we believe that Adventist education is so vital and important that we need to do everything to support all our institutions. Lorraine McDonald, our new Education Director, and the members of the school board are committed to developing our schools into centres of excellence that not only reflect the values of Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but provide academic rigour in teaching and learning in a safe environment for our children to develop, where behaviour is exemplary and school leadership is informed, innovative and inspiring. For more information about the strategy for Adventist education in the British Union Conference – including crucial details of how you can help – please see Lorraine's article, which starts on this page and continues on page 12.

It is worth it!

We are currently recruiting a new headteacher for Stanborough Park Secondary School. The contract for the current head will come to an end at the close of this academic year. We would like to thank Mr Kaz James for his leadership of the school over the past three years, especially during the challenging times of the pandemic.

We are seeking a dynamic, inspirational, and committed leader who can drive up and maintain high standards and be effective in leading the operational aspects of robust education delivery. Stanborough Park Secondary is a small school, but one that has much potential for growth. We anticipate that the appointed headteacher will seek opportunities to increase the number of pupils.

It is worth it!

Transformation comes through sustained change. And we believe that one of the most effective ways to do this with our schools is to set up an Education Commission with professionals across all sectors of the academic sphere. From Early Years through to Higher Education, supporting the work of home educators and addressing lifelong learning, we believe that our academic institutions will be transformed into centres of influence.

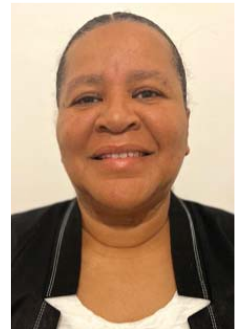
Please continue to pray for Adventist education in the British Union Conference.



Dudley House School

The best-kept secret! Let's blow the cover!

by Lorraine McDonald, BUC Education Director



Recently, I spoke with a non-Adventist parent who was praising Dudley House School. He remarked, 'This is one of the best-kept secrets in Grantham.' Since starting the role of BUC Education Director, I have found out that this is true of all our schools in the UK.

Did you know that Seventh-day Adventists operate the largest Protestant school system in the world? We have more than 8,000 schools, with nearly 93,000 teachers educating approximately 2 million students. Wow! Our schools in Britain are a part of that system.

Since the early days of our church, Adventists have understood that education should be redemptive in nature, for the purpose of restoring human beings to the image of God, our Creator. We believe in educating the whole person. Mental, physical, social, and spiritual health, intellectual growth, and service to humanity are essential values of Adventist education. All activities of an Adventist school

continued on p. 12



Harper Bell School



Julian Thompson,

Editor

From the editor . . .

Dear Reader,

The world of money today is nothing if not complex. Indeed, for non-specialists, it can be challenging to wrap one's head around what it means when we hear, for example, that a government has 'borrowed from the future taxpayer'; that £1,000 in today's money may only be worth the equivalent of £930 by next year; or that keeping the income tax rate unchanged can generate higher tax revenues. Money is something that impacts us all; and, while not everyone can claim to be interested in the broader issues of macro-economics, most of us recognise that, whether we like it or not, issues such as those mentioned above determine the size of our pay cheques, our ability to pay the bills, how much we put in the offering basket, and when we can afford to retire.

In the wake of the rising cost of living and salaries that do not keep up with inflation, we have seen terms such as 'side-hustle' and 'freelancing' enter common parlance as many people – Gen-Xers and millennials in particular – respond to present financial challenges by seeking additional sources of income. While some have sought to raise extra capital in the more traditional way of taking up a second job, it is also true that an increasing number are exploring alternate means of generating

income by engaging with the financial markets, cryptocurrencies, decentralised finance, and non-fungible tokens (NFTs). While some have found this to be a lucrative exercise, warnings as to the potential dangers of these financial activities are not hard to find.

At a time when the issue of climate change is high on the agenda, many are unaware that the energy consumption from mining and transacting in Bitcoin, the most popular cryptocurrency, is exceedingly high, with reports suggesting that every – yes, every – Bitcoin transaction consumes as much as 1,173 KWh of electricity, which is enough to power the typical UK home for more than three months!¹ Furthermore, many are also unaware of the reports that increasing numbers of young men who trade and engage with cryptocurrencies are having to seek help for symptoms associated with gambling addiction.² To be clear, I am not saying that investing, trading, or engaging with cryptocurrencies is gambling. What I am saying is that it can become gambling. If you find that your engagement with the financial markets or cryptocurrencies is becoming compulsive and you'd like to stop, support is available.³

While the world of money is complex today, the same could also be said of the ancient near

east (ANE). In the ANE, one of the primary drivers for the invention of writing was the need to keep records of contracts, trades, and financial transactions. In fact, some scholars argue that options contracts (an options contract is a financial instrument that 'gives buyers the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset at an agreed-upon price and date') existed as early as the time of Jacob⁴ – the suggestion being that in Genesis 29 Laban presented Jacob with an 'option' to marry Rachel in exchange for a future payment in the form of seven years of additional labour (Genesis 29).⁵ Though contracting for the purchase of brides is of course not a practice we engage in today, the example of Jacob's option to marry Rachel goes some way to evidencing the preacher's adage, 'There is nothing new under the sun' (Ecclesiastes 1:9, NKJV). After all, many digital currencies are programmed using what are known as 'smart contracts'.

In this edition of *MESSENGER*, you will see that the Bible has much to say about money and wisdom that can help us to address the financial challenges of today and prepare for those of tomorrow. I trust that within its pages you will find both challenge and hope, and will come to know a little bit more about what God is doing throughout the British Union.

¹'Crypto Energy Consumption', Moneysupermarket.com: <https://www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/features/crypto-energy-consumption/>

²Patrick O'Donoghue, 'Addiction experts warn of cryptocurrency "gambling" ' – *The Times*, 4 April 2022:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/addiction-experts-warn-of-cryptocurrency-gambling-sf625f2hg>

³There are several avenues through which additional support can be accessed, including your pastor, Adventist counselling services and the National Health Service.

⁴James Chen, 'What is an Option?' Investopedia, 1 January 2022: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/option.asp>

⁵Geoffrey Poitras, 'The Early History of Options Contracts' in Wolfgang Hafner and Heinz Zimmerman (eds.), *Vinzenz Bronzin's Option Pricing Models* (Berlin: Springer, 2009)



Tithing with a grateful heart!

by Pastor Maureen Rock*

The past two years have proved to be a financial minefield for families through loss of income, poor health, unexpected expenses, and uncertainties. However, through the faithfulness of our church members, the tithe returned over these past two years has shown an increase when compared with the previous year. Heartfelt thanks go out to all members for your returned tithes and promised offerings towards the diverse work of the local and global church.

'Stewardship is the lifestyle of the one who accepts Christ's lordship and walks in partnership with God, acting as His agent in managing His affairs on earth.'¹ These words summarise our intimate connection with God. As His stewards we are all called to take care of the blessings we receive from Him each day. These blessings include family, friends, health, ability to serve others, daily worship, Sabbath rest and finances . . . all of which first belong to God.²

As faithful stewards, we are to return ten percent of our increase or income as tithe in acknowledgement of God's sovereignty as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer and Owner.³ The Bible encourages us to put God first in all aspects of our lives, including the setting aside of ten percent of our income as the Lord's tithe before our regular expenses.⁴ The act of first identifying God's portion from our income, before all other expenses, serves as a reminder that God is the true Owner of our possessions.

The church as an organisation functions on

the income received through tithes. As a result, the local treasurer forwards all tithe to the Conference/Mission. The tithe is allocated to sustain the ministers whom the Lord has appointed to do His work.⁵ It follows that tithe is allocated to finance the cost of sharing the Gospel. However, the weekly church collection of freewill offerings is to be set aside for local expenses.

Our relationship and walk with God are reflected in our use of money. The biblical principles of money management encourage us first to lay up treasures with the Lord.⁶ Faithfully returning the Lord's tithe to Him is not just a habit: it also brings rewards from God in ways we cannot imagine.⁷ The return of tithe is an act of worship. What a blessing it would bring if during family worship we were to pray together and ask God to bless the tithe we return towards His work. It is never too early to instruct our children about the importance of putting God first in their day-to-day activities. We can guide our children to set aside a portion of their monetary gifts to say thank you to God, the Giver of all good things.

I recall, as a local pastor, telling the children's story on Stewardship Emphasis Day. The story reflected on the daily blessings we receive from Jesus. I asked for a show of hands of those who received pocket money. I then produced an envelope with ten twenty-pence pieces and shared with the children the importance of saying thank you to Jesus by returning a portion of our monies to Him.

Together we counted the ten twenty-pence pieces and set aside one coin for Jesus. The children were fascinated by the 'little' amount they had to return to Jesus and the 'large' amount they could keep for themselves. My heart lifted when, a few Sabbaths later, one child handed me a small bag of twenty-pence pieces 'for Jesus'. In speaking with her parents, they shared how enthusiastic she was to set aside a 'little' amount for Jesus.⁸

In the biblical narrative known as 'The widow's two mites',⁹ Mark and Luke shared that Jesus was sitting in the temple close to where people were bringing their monetary gifts to the treasury. The writers made no reference to the exact number of people who brought their gifts to the temple on that day. However, they shared that Jesus drew His disciples' attention towards some of the givers. Some givers were wealthy and placed a large

amount in the treasury. However, another giver was a poor widow who gave a small amount: it was 'everything – all she had to live on' (Mark 12:44, NIV). The gospel writers highlighted the woman's situation not only as a widow, but also as a poor woman. Her status meant that she was on the margins of society. She was a contrast not only to the rich who were putting large sums in the treasury, but also to those whom Jesus had earlier chastised for their treatment of widows.¹⁰ Yet Jesus commended the poor widow for her giving. God looks at the heart, not the hand – the giver, not the gift.

Buz Menhardt (2015), in the book *Beyond Blessings 2 – Celebrating the Joys of Stewardship*, noted: 'Not only did Jesus notice the method of giving, but He also noticed the motive. He counted the commitment, not the coins – the cause, not the cash. He determined the desire, not the dollars – the reason, not the revenue. Jesus sees everything. He takes it all in. He observes how we give.'¹¹

The narrative of 'the widow's two mites' highlights that the amount we give should be accompanied with a grateful heart for what we have received. The poor widow demonstrated her trust in God as her Provider, thus exercising faith and recognising that all she had came from Him. In faith she believed that God would provide for her needs.

How apt it was that the children at the local church, having learnt about the importance of giving back to Jesus, recognised the 'small amount' they were required to return and the 'large amount' they could keep for themselves. They also learnt that we return the Lord's tithes and give offerings back to God from what we have already received, so God will not leave us in want.

He has given to you. What have you given to Him?

**Pastor Maureen Rock is the Stewardship Ministries Director at the Trans-European Division. She has an MA in Theology from Newbold College, UK and is currently a DMin candidate with Andrews University. Maureen previously served at the British Union Conference as Principal of the Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland and for ten years as a field pastor with the South England Conference, UK.*

For more resources from the Trans-European Division Stewardship Ministries Department, please visit: <https://ted.adventist.org/stewardship/>.

¹General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Working Policy 2020-2021 Edition, Stewardship Ministries*, p. 417
²Psalm 50:10-12 ³Psalm 24:1 ⁴Matthew 6:33 ⁵Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, 1940, p. 101 ⁶Matthew 6:19-24
⁷Malachi 3:8-10 ⁸Proverbs 22:6 ⁹Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4, NKJV ¹⁰Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47 ¹¹Buz Menhardt et al., *Beyond Blessings 2 – Celebrating the Joys of Giving* (Pacific Press, USA, 2015), p. 68



GOD FIRST

I PROMISE:

- To SET APART** the first moments of each day to commune with the Lord through **PRAYER**, the **STUDY** of the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy and the Sabbath School lessons, and in **FAMILY WORSHIP**.
- To IMPROVE** my **RELATIONSHIPS**: growing in faithfulness, forgiveness, and loving by principle.
- To ESTABLISH** one new **HEALTHY HABIT**, to better serve the Lord with my mind: _____
- To DEVOTE** regular time each week to **WORK** for God, spreading the good news to others through Bible studies, small groups, etc. (TMI).
- To KEEP** the **SABBATH**, preparing for it accordingly on Friday, keeping its limits, right thoughts, and activities.
- To FAITHFULLY RETURN** the Lord's **TITHE** (10% of my income).
- To DEDICATE** a percentage (_____ %) of my income as a regular **OFFERING** to the Lord.

WITH GOD'S HELP: _____
DATE: _____

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

To give, or not to give: that is the question

by Michael Garkov

I am an accountant, and my logical mind tells me, 'Give, and you will have less.' But is that necessarily true? Is it possible that by trying to keep, we actually lose, as we fail to receive God's full budget for us?

Monkeys can be caught in the most bizarre way. Take a coconut and make a hole in it, exactly the size of the monkey's hand. Put a banana, or something shiny, inside. The monkey, not able to resist the temptation, will thrust its hand into the hole and grab the spoils. It is now trapped. As its fist is clenched around something, the hole is now too small to take it out. There is only one solution to the problem. Let go of the loot! But it won't, as it is trapped by its natural instinct to hold on and not let go. We can also be trapped by our 'natural mind', preventing us from receiving God's blessings reserved for us (Romans 8:7, 8).

God wants to give us more than we think . . . but there is a catch. To receive God's earmarked provisions, first we need to learn to give. That is a condition, but it's also a promise by God. 'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,' says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10, NKJV).

During the recession, we were in a situation where we had to sell our house, which was not mortgageable. I had to find a cash buyer for a high-value property during the recession. *I have better odds at becoming the Prime Minister*, I thought to myself. But in Malachi 3:10 God insisted, 'Try Me!' So I did. I pledged a substantial amount to Him if He would help me sell this house. Only two weeks later, a couple viewed the house and fell in love with it. It turned out they were cash buyers. Completion was a piece of cake. I was now ready to fulfil my pledge . . . but kept the funds just for a bit!

At that time a series of problems



overcame my business. My wife and I prayed for a while. One day she asked me, 'Did you fulfil your pledge to the Lord?'

I told her that it was on my to-do list. 'You must do it immediately. It is not what you intend to do, but what you do that counts.'

I realised that the delayed pledge could be the reason for my problems. Immediately, I logged in, entered the amount, and was ready to press the button. Then, for a moment, I felt a strange feeling – fear of losing control; fear of letting go, like the monkey holding onto the booty. But isn't that what faith is – assigning control to God?

I pressed the button. The pledge was fulfilled. My business boomed.

I learnt my lesson. We need to give first, and then it will be given to us, because giving teaches us faith in God.

How we use our money is a barometer of our trust in God. Mark tells us of a poor widow with an absurdly low financial budget who was praised by Jesus. She came to Jesus and 'threw in two mites' (Mark 12:42, NKJV). Many rich people had already donated large amounts, but Jesus declared that she had put in more than all of them, 'for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood' (Mark 12:44, NKJV). It appears for Jesus it's not so important how much we give, but how much we keep. The rich invested more money, but the widow invested more faith. It is easier to give from our abundance, but harder when finances are tight. The financial budget we adopt speaks about our faith louder than our words. Generosity is faith in action!

Mastering the art of giving offers many benefits. Let's look at four of them.

Giving brings us closer to God. 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:21, NKJV). If our preoccupation is with money, our heart will be there also. We live in a consumer society, absorbed with having a bigger home, a newer car, or the latest product. We dedicate our time, energy and talents to our priorities. Material aspirations are fine, as long as they do not consume our life and drain us. 'No one can serve two masters' (Matthew 6:24, NKJV). Generosity is the medicine against catching the 'mammon' virus. It keeps our hearts close to God.

Giving is an act of worship. It's our recognition that everything we possess comes from God. I heard of a father who bought his son a box of chips in a drive-through restaurant. On the way home he took

one chip, and his son screamed, 'You can't have that; it's mine!' Really? The father drove the car, he ordered the chips, he paid for them, and he handed them to his son. The son didn't recognise that his father had the choice not to buy him any chips, the power to take all chips away, or even to buy him a truck load of chips. Aren't we also sometimes as ungrateful and closed-fisted as this child? Do we sometimes forget that our Heavenly Father is the Master of all chips? 'So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9:7, NKJV).



Giving can save others. There are two benefits here. One is the purely financial advantage in providing funds for mission work. I know of a man who may not have the gift of preaching, but has the gift of giving, as he has committed to sponsoring two missionaries for his entire life. Our generosity opens the opportunity for others to bring people to Christ. But there is also the spiritual gain of giving. When we are generous, others will see our faith and love in action, and that could be the strongest sermon you could ever preach. 'Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else' (2 Corinthians 9:13, NIV).

Giving exercises our faith. We all have fears and anxieties about our financial future. Accumulating money, properties, or investments can give us some sort of relief. But then we hear Jesus' verdict to the rich man: 'You fool!' (Luke 12:20, NIV.) He had been fooled by the false sense of security of his treasures – easy mistake. We also can indiscernibly put our trust in money and accumulated wealth. There is nothing wrong with money itself. The problem is that it can replace God in our attempt to achieve security and self-worth. Giving is the antidote. It is a vital exercise for our faith fitness.

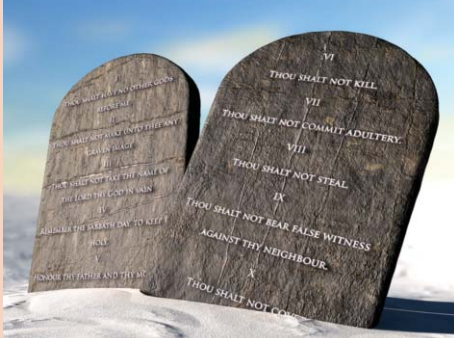
We benefit from giving, not God. Yet it doesn't come naturally, and it's not easy. We need to actively practise it. If we teach ourselves to give more abundantly, we can reap rewards that we never expected.

I want to have the faith of the poor widow. I pray for God to increase my giving and teach me not to be self-reliant. God is a Giver. Love gives. How are we to spend eternity with Him if we do not become like Him now? May God bless each of us to learn to give increasingly more, as 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35, NKJV).

God’s law of love: the basic principle for financial management

by **Murvin Camatchee,**

Pastor of the College Drive church in the Gulf States Conference, USA



The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), known as the moral law, are criteria that God has given us to evaluate our relationship with Him and with others. They are summarised by Jesus as follows: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-39, NIV). These two great commandments certainly do not replace what God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai, but rather confirm that God’s moral law stems from His love.

In giving the Ten Commandments to Moses, God begins by reminding His people that He is the One who delivered them from Egyptian captivity. He is a God who keeps His promises, a God who never abandons us. When we keep the moral law, it demonstrates that we understand that there is indeed a God who loves us, who cares for us, and who keeps His promises. God has given us His law as a means for us to reciprocate His love. That’s why Jesus says: ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14:15, NKJV).

These two great commandments are to be reflected in every decision we make, including our finances. It is interesting to note that the first and the last of the Ten Commandments are both directly related to the management of our financial resources. The first commandment is: ‘You shall have no other gods before Me,’ and the last is: ‘You shall not covet.’ Each of these two commandments respectively falls under the two segments as summarised by Jesus.

Love your God

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.

Love others

10. You shall not covet.

Love your God: ‘You shall have no other gods before Me’

The distribution of our financial resources in

our budget should reflect our love for God. The Bible has clear and precise indicators for how this should be done. An example is given by the prophet Malachi: ‘Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, “In what way have we robbed You?” In tithes and offerings’ (Malachi 3:8, NKJV). ‘Tithes and offerings’ are means of reciprocating God’s love that He established for our own benefit. They remind us of the love of God for us, which will eventually result in a reciprocation of that love from us. They also recognise the sovereignty of God, which keeps us from thinking that we are self-sufficient.

God, through the tithing system, wants us always to be aware of His ownership so that we do not depend on our possessions, thus creating ‘other gods’ in our lives. Our money can be the factor that plays a very important role in the creation of these other gods. Including the ‘love of God’ in our budgeting helps us to resist the temptation to create other gods to take the place of the true God.

Love others: ‘You shall not covet’

The apostle Peter reminds us that we should follow in the footsteps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21). One of the great examples that Jesus has given us is altruism. The ‘love others’ aspect is to be demonstrated in the preparation of our budget. The apostle Paul reminds us of the importance of helping others and caring for their needs: ‘Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others’ (Philippians 2:4, NKJV). However, this recommendation could be jeopardised by covetousness.

Coveting something is very often motivated by the desire of having a better life. Though it can be presented as the right to dream, coveting is like a virus that can subtly attack us. It can ruin relationships as it nurtures a sentiment of jealousy and envy. The person whose possessions or qualities are being coveted by us is, as a result, deprived of our love and friendship.

Coveting is the desire to obtain something we don’t currently have. However, once we get what we have coveted, there is an

adjustment to the new situation. A new feeling of dissatisfaction occurs, which leads to the desire for something else. This keeps us in a vicious cycle of wanting something based on what others have.



Coveting pushes us to spend to keep up with all the ‘upgrades’ deemed essential by our commercial culture: the latest gadgets and electronic devices, the most recent cars, and the trendiest fashions. This list is certainly not exhaustive. Not only do we neglect the ‘love for others’ aspect of God’s law, but we fabricate ‘other gods’, thus rejecting the ‘love your God’ aspect of the Ten Commandments.

Preparation of our budget

In preparing our budget, it is important that we ask ourselves the following questions:

- Does it demonstrate our love for God?
- Are we giving God the first place in our budgeting?
- Do we have any ‘other god’ in our lives that we have deliberately included in our budget?
- Is this keeping us from spending time with God?
- Has this become a priority in our life?
- Does it demonstrate our love for others?
- Are we taking others into consideration when we draw up our budget?
- Is this something we really need, or is it a result of covetousness?

The table below can help us to answer the above questions when preparing our budget. If we want it to reflect the ‘love of God’ and ‘love for others’, columns A and B should never remain empty, whereas columns C and D should always be empty.

God gave us His moral law so that we could live an abundant life. When governed by the principles derived from the two great commandments, our budgeting will surely reflect the will of God in the management of our personal finances.

Source

Website of the Stewardship Ministries of the General Conference: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/god%E2%80%99s-law-of-love-the-basic-principle-for-financial-management>

A	B	C	D
Cannot remain empty	Cannot remain empty	Should remain empty	Should remain empty
Demonstrates our love for God	Demonstrates our love for others	This is becoming ‘another god’ in my life.	I’m making those expenses because of my covetousness.
Tithes and offerings	Donations to specific funds or people	Cable TV?	Sports car?

The heart of stewardship

by Julian Archer,

Stewardship Director for the South Pacific Division



At 1.25am on Thursday 24 June 2021, Champlain Towers South, a 12-storey beachfront building in Florida, collapsed. Sadly, 98 people died, others were injured, and many have been mentally scarred by the event. What caused this great loss? Engineers are still investigating the collapse, but their preliminary findings show that the building's foundations were very weak. The foundation – the structure on which the entire building stood – was faulty.

Foundations are not seen, and are rarely inspected. It is critical that we look at the foundations, because it is on the foundations that everything else stands.

Our spiritual foundations can be good or evil. The apostle Paul told Timothy that if we look at the foundation of 'all kinds of evil' we find 'the love of money' (1 Timothy 6:10, NIV). If we dig down to see the foundations of stewardship, which addresses one's relationship with money, what do we find?

What is the foundation of stewardship, the foundation and heart of giving?

In speaking of the offering to be collected for Christians who were suffering during a famine in Judea, Paul appealed to the Corinthian church members, asking them for financial support: 'Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf' (2 Corinthians 8:24, NKJV). Note that the members' giving was proof of their love.

American author and co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White, wrote much on the topic of stewardship. As we read her writings, we see the word 'love' being used repeatedly. In section 1 of her book *Counsels on Stewardship* Ellen White describes the foundation of stewardship, using the word 'love' 36 times!

On page 19 we read, 'Paul sought to uproot the plant of selfishness from the hearts of his brethren; for the character cannot be complete in Christ when self-love and covetousness are retained. The love of Christ in their hearts would lead them to help their

brethren in their necessities.'

And again, on page 23, 'In His infinite love He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature, and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honour, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those are brought nearest to their Creator who thus become participants in labours of love.'

Faithful stewardship can be summarised as 'loving God and people with all I have and all I am'.

It may come as a surprise to many people that the foundation of stewardship isn't money, but *love*.

Christ's gospel calls for an alternative way of living in the world that places love at the centre – not money, not power, not possessions, not even security.

Paul reminds us of this again in Romans 13:8-10: 'Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law' (KJV).

Of course, Paul was just sharing Jesus' own words in John 15:12: 'This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you' (NKJV).

Where else do we see that love is the foundation of stewardship? In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Paul outlines it clearly: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing' (NKJV).

Wow! Paul is saying that I can be a multilingual, prophecy-preaching holder of seven university doctorates, a deeply self-sacrificing giant of faith who gives away everything to the poor, and even give my life as a martyr for the cause of God, yet the whole of my life can be wasted because I didn't live a life of love!

In *Counsels on Stewardship* we read, 'Christ came to this world to reveal the love of God. His followers are to continue the work which He began' (p. 24). Revealing God's love through the Spirit-led management and giving of our time, talents, testimony and treasure is the heart of stewardship.

Again, we see this principle outlined beautifully in *The Desire of Ages*: 'Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us.

And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts' (p. 641).

The teaching that love is the foundation and heart of giving is outlined most clearly in the Bible's most famous verse, John 3:16: 'For God so *loved* the world that He *gave* . . .' (NKJV). The message is simple: *Love gives!*

It's very important to remember that we can give without loving, but we can't love without giving. When we love God, we love His people, His mission, and His church, so we give. That's what love does. Love gives.

We don't give *to be* blessed; we give *because we are* blessed. Because we are loved, we love.

What a beautiful truth it is that 'God is love' (1 John 4:8, 16, NKJV) and that we are created in His image. We are created in the image of perfect love!

The story is told of a man – let's call him Peter – who received a new sports car as a gift from his brother. One day he drove it into the city and parked it on the street while he did some shopping. On returning to his car, loaded down with shopping bags, he saw a young homeless boy with wide eyes staring at the shiny new vehicle.

As Peter approached the car the boy shyly asked, 'Excuse me, sir; is this your car?'

'Yes, it is,' Peter replied. 'My brother gave it to me. It was a gift.'

The boy's eyes lit up with surprise at the thought of such a generous and expensive gift. 'Wow!' he said. 'That's incredible! I wish . . . I wish . . .' But he didn't finish his sentence, so Peter finished it for him.

'Yes, I know, son. You wish you had a brother like that.'

'No, no, sir. That's not it,' the boy quickly replied. 'I wish . . . I just wish I could *be* a brother like that.'

So what is the foundation of faithful stewardship, the heart of our giving? It's love. The heart of stewardship is *love*.

Thank you for your faithful giving, in both the good times and times of crisis. God's vital work for this time is moving ahead mightily because His people love.

Source
Website of the Stewardship Ministries of the General Conference: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/the-heart-of-stewardship>



Honour God with your finances – could this be the undiscovered 11th commandment?

by Paul Thompson



As Britain wakes up from the surreal sleep of COVID-19, the country is now facing the sharpest decline in living standards since records began. Many people in the UK are already leaning into credit and debt to meet the everyday challenges of the cost-of-living crisis, according to the Office of National Statistics.

As households grapple with multiple sharply rising prices, many will find themselves defaulting to greater reliance on credit and increased indebtedness. In January 2022, people in the UK owed £1,767.1 billion (in secured and unsecured consumer debt), up by £62.2 billion from January 2021.

More people are using credit to cover their essential costs, with ten percent of those who fall into serious arrears citing the increased cost of living as one of the main reasons for their debt, according to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

The circumstances leading to the UK's financial decline are all too well known by now, with inflation hitting a 40-year high in February 2022 at 6.2%. Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, inflation was expected to reach its peak this April around 7%, but this is now forecast to be 9.5% in October 2022. This coincides with another significant expected high-default area: household energy.

Rising prices have rarely been far from the headlines recently, with sharp increases in global fuel dominating. Late in March, UK fuel prices hit an all-time high, with the average cost of petrol at £1.67 per litre and diesel at £1.79 per litre. These sudden rises, along with other factors, are impacting manufacturing, production, and transport costs, driving up consumer prices for many everyday items. Rises aren't just limited to weekly costs, though, with the average UK house price reported to have reached a record high of

£278,123, the fastest annual rise since 2007.

It is inevitable that many Adventists are feeling the economic squeeze and are fast being caught up in using credit to cover their essential costs. The question which remains unanswered is, 'How will this impact the church's tithe and local offerings?' Can the church members weather this bleak outlook?

The Bible has good counsel to offer in terms of borrowing and lending, and a closer look reveals that God knew that money, debt, and the ability to delay self-gratification would form a clear battle line for Adventists of today.

It is incontrovertible that God understands the importance of money – 16 out of 30 parables are concerned with money. In the Bible there are 2,325 verses on money, wealth or possessions, but only about 500 on either faith or prayer. It is amazing! God knew that money would be a significant challenge for His people.

Key economists predict that this economic downturn is likely to fuel one of the most intense and unpredictable periods of financial turmoil experienced globally in the last 50 years. The fact is that no one knows when it will end. Adventists will therefore need to get way ahead of the curve by putting in place robust and resilient plans to ride the global financial seismic shockwaves.

So how can this be achieved? Is there a formula?

Here are eight Bible-based guiding principles to help Adventists weather the financial storm.

Principle 1 – Use your time productively and make every day count.

- Time management: 'Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory' (Ellen G. White,

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 342).

- Hard work: 'Make it your goal to live quietly, do your work, and earn your own living, as we ordered you' (1 Thessalonians 4:11, GW).
- Avoid lazy people: 'Our friends, we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep away from all believers who are living a lazy life' (2 Thessalonians 3:6, GNT).
- Laziness: 'Work and you will earn a living; if you sit around talking you will be poor' (Proverbs 14:23, GNT).



Principle 2 – Plan for self-support, and take control.

- Invest well before spending: 'Don't build your house and establish a home until your fields are ready' (Proverbs 24:27, GNT).
- Avoid get-rich-quick schemes (Proverbs 13:11).
- Control spending (Proverbs 21:20).
- Be obedient to God (Joshua 1:7, 8).
- Embrace financial success (Philippians 4:13).
- Never forget the poor (Proverbs 14:21; 28:3).
- Invest in the church (1 Timothy 5:17-19).

Principle 3 – Focus on saving and investing.

- Saving money is not the difference between income and expenditure. It is budgeted.
- Savings are the secret to financial growth and prosperity (Proverbs 6:6-8).
- Prosperous people see savings as being as essential as food.
- Change your mindset: it is what you save, not what you earn, that determines your financial position.
- Lack of savings will eventually result in hardship.
- Putting aside regular savings brings independence regardless of income.

Principle 4 – Set challenging financial goals.

- Set a savings goal for short-term needs.
- Set a savings goal for long-term needs.
- Plan for your future investment.
- Review financial goals monthly.
- Budget to spend 60% of your income and save 40%.

Principle 5 – Be aware of the money problem signposts.

Money problems usually occur when:

- Expenditure exceeds income;
- There is unemployment or insufficient income;
- There is inefficient spending or impulse buying;
- Priorities are not set;

- We try to keep up with the Joneses;
- And set priorities are disregarded.

When all these things happen, you will continue to struggle.

Principle 6 – Don't get caught in the debt trap.

- The Bible teaches that God wants us to get wealth. 'But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day' (Deuteronomy 8:18, KJV).
- The Bible describes two sides of the debt relationship – borrowing and lending. Lenders loan money to borrowers, and borrowers owe money to lenders.
- In addition to these two broad headings, the Bible uses the following terms concerning debt: usury, trust, vows, striking hands, and co-signing. All of these references relate to debt in one form or another.
- Proverbs 22:7 says, 'The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender' (KJV). This text teaches that the person who borrows puts himself in servitude to the lender.
- We can expand on this by saying that the person who borrows is a slave to his lender, both in terms of time and money. The text also points out that the essence of debt is to transfer wealth from the poor to the rich.

Principle 7 – Only lend money if you can afford to lose it.

- Exodus 22:25: 'If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury' (KJV).
- Leviticus 25:35, 36: 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you' (NKJV).
- Deuteronomy 23:19: 'Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury' (KJV).

Principle 8 – Do not stand as a guarantor.

Should we stand surety or be guarantors for anyone?

- The dictionary definition of surety is: 'Agreeing to be legally responsible for a debt, default or conduct of someone else'.
- Proverbs 22:26: 'Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts' (KJV).
- Proverbs 17:18: 'A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge, and becomes surety for his friend' (NKJV).
- Proverbs 11:15: 'Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to shake hands in pledge is safe' (NIV).

Prophetic warning

In the latter part of Ellen White's life, God gave her a series of letters, counsels and guidance to the church to keep us on track and to keep on investing in evangelism – after all, this is why we are here on earth now.

God gave her a vision to warn Adventists to keep away from 'self-gratification', unwise spending, and being swept away with commercialism.

In 1901 she left the church this message: 'There are only two places in the world where we can deposit our treasures – in God's storehouse or in Satan's, and all that is not devoted to Christ's service is counted on Satan's side and goes to strengthen his cause' (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the*

Church, vol. 6, p. 448). There was something that moved Ellen White to write these words – words which rest squarely on the shoulders of each of us today.

Fourteen years later, Ellen White died, but her words cut deep across the challenges we face today. The truth is that either you are using your income to help others come to know Jesus, or you are boosting someone else's profit line.

Where is your money going each month? Are you living a life of financial servitude? Isn't now the time to break free?

References

- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>
- https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/corporate_categories/about-us

Job vacancies

Title: Departmental Secretary – full-time (37 hours per week)

A fantastic opportunity has arisen for an individual with strong administration experience to join the North England Conference Secretariat team.

The successful candidate will display excellent communication and organisational skills, be able to work well within a team and have the ability to work well within a busy environment across multiple departments. They must be able to prioritise their work efficiently in order to maintain an effective service to the NEC team and churches.

The role involves working closely with the departmental directors to support the preparation of live and virtual events that take place across the NEC. We are looking for a reliable, forward-thinking individual who is passionate and dedicated to the work of the ministry. If you have the required experience and qualifications, are well organised, and can work independently or as a team player, then we want to hear from you!

Qualifications and experience • Previous PA/admin experience is essential.

Secretarial skills required • Ability to multi-task, anticipate and respond effectively to changing priorities • Flexible, conscientious attitude to work • High standard of written & verbal communication, with a confident & professional phone manner • IT literate, with a strong working knowledge of Microsoft Excel, Word & Outlook

Duties • Provide secretarial support to departmental directors and be the first point of contact to receive incoming calls/emails for the departments • General administration, including scanning, printing, photocopying and filing • Book and manage meetings, conferences and events in person and virtually (for example: Zoom, MS Teams, Skype) • Take and maintain event bookings • Processing of departmental expenses • Deal with telephone and email enquiries, covering main switchboard when required and acting as backup to incoming calls • Schedule and attend meetings, create agendas and take minutes

Person specification • This role would be suited to a person who has experience in working in a similar environment • Fluent English speaker • A practising Seventh-day Adventist • Team player, friendly, Christ-centred and committed to the mission of the church • Flexible and able to manage change in workload and priorities; may entail some department weekend ministry support (working)

Essential skills: • Self-starter who is able to work flexibly and respond to change in workload • Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, Teams, Excel, PowerPoint) • Management of digital platforms to facilitate meetings and training as well as marketing (Zoom, Teams, social media) • Excellent verbal and written communication skills • Be able to maintain confidentiality • Effective time management

Desirable skills: • Attention to detail • Experience working in an administrative support role • Knowledge of the GDPR policies

Title: Associate Treasurer

The purpose of the role is to assist with the key accounting functions in a busy treasury department. You will report to the treasurer of the North England Conference on a day-to-day basis. You will also be reporting to the NEC president (who will have oversight over this post).

The key responsibilities for the associate treasurer will include but not be limited to: • Manage/oversee bank accounts and investments, ensuring regular reconciliation. • Act as a point of contact for banking queries.

• Supervise cash, including collection and deposition of cash/cheques and petty cash. • Deal with insurance matters, respond to requests and queries, and liaise with ARM. • Manage trust fund and loan accounts (areas and churches), furnish statements, and reply to requests and queries. • Provide support to business units and departments, including provision of financial information. • Maintain and reconcile inter-company and control accounts with the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (headquarters) and other units such as Aberdaron (campsite) and the like. • Ensure payments are disbursed properly, including by assisting the payroll officer to ensure the timely monthly payroll run. • Facilitate in maintaining proper records and documents, which includes maintaining correct recording and posting of entries in the ledger. • Prepare various financial reports as per financial norms. • Assist in preparing and monitoring the budgets and related reports. • Assist in preparing accounts for statutory audits. • Provide assistance and support to the treasurer and operate the treasury to ensure the smooth running of the department. • Manage office functions in the absence of the treasurer and execute all duties pertaining to the treasurer's office.

Successful candidates for both positions must pass a disclosure and barring security check.

Please submit an updated CV with a cover letter stating your job history by 29 May to recruitment@necadventist.org.uk.

The North England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is a registered charity and head office of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the North of England.





Have we given up on evangelism?

Part 4

by **Dr Kirk M. Thomas**, Evangelism, Missions, Publishing, Personal Ministries & Sabbath School Director of the British Union Conference

The statistics are frightening; the projections are perilous. A study of the decline in church attendance by Church of England parishioners has predicted that by the year 2033 most if not all the parish churches will be closed because of lack of members. Damian Thompson, writing in *The Spectator* in 2015,¹ further iterated the plight of Christianity in the United Kingdom. I quote him: 'Every ten years the census spells out the situation in detail: between 2001 and 2011 the number of Christians born in Britain fell by 5.3 million – about 10,000 a week. If that rate of decline continues, the mission of St Augustine to the English, together with that of the Irish saints to the Scots, will come to an end in 2067. That is the year in which the Christians who have inherited the faith of their British ancestors will become statistically invisible. Parish churches everywhere will have been adapted for secular use, demolished or abandoned. Our cathedral buildings will survive, but they won't be true cathedrals because they will have no bishops. One day the last native-born Christian will die and that will be that.' If you have visited Scotland, you will have noticed that some churches have already been converted to pubs. I even noticed one where the spire was still on top of the building. A casual reading of that quotation should be enough to at least cause us to look critically at our own denomination and our lack of effort to spread the Gospel.

So how can we look at those frightening statistics and recognise that we must take individual and corporate responsibility to fulfil our mission from God to help humanity know the Saviour? Let's focus on a biblical text written by Paul over two thousand years ago – Romans 13:11: 'And do this, knowing the **time**, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed' (NKJV, emphasis supplied). I specifically highlight the word 'time' to begin a discourse about the relevance of our message, preaching and witnessing to the various needs around us. In his book *Between Two Worlds*,² John Stott, one of my favourite authors, tells the story of his encounter with two brothers who grew up in a Christian home. Their parents were traditional Christians, but now they had renounced their parents' faith and Christian upbringing. One of them was a student at Oxford University, and the other at the University of Edinburgh. One said he was a complete atheist, while the other saw himself as an agnostic. Stott asked them what had gone wrong: was it that they believed Christianity not to be true?

They replied that they had no problem with Christianity.

'What is the problem, then?' he asked.

They replied, 'We do not see Christianity as relevant! Christianity was born over two thousand years ago in a first-century Palestinian culture. What can an ancient religion of the Middle East say to us who live in a twenty-first-century kaleidoscopic world of space exploration, electric cars, genetic engineering, cyber technology and ground-breaking surgical procedures?'

I would like to suggest that to counter such thinking and culture we need to understand the concept of bridge building. There is an unbridged chasm between our biblical world and that of the modern world. Historically, Christian witnesses have tried to relate the Bible to their world. Each new generation of witnesses has tried to enter into its predecessor's labours. Sometimes, in building a new bridge or path, a generation adopts and refurbishes that existing one – major change may be necessary. While this method may be good, the world is changing so rapidly that the church/witnesses are challenged by the ever-increasing gulf, so that those ancient bridges are too short, cannot

be refurbished and need to be replaced. The COVID-19 pandemic actually exposed the shortness of our bridges to span that gulf of relevance. Just this week a talk show host on LBC reported that it was the hierarchy of the church (Church of England, *et al.*) who went to the Government and begged them to pass legislation to close churches during the pandemic. The Government had wanted churches to be left open for people to pray and find comfort. During the world wars they were open. Again, relevance is important.

Stott posits that we must be aware of the perils of the demand for relevance. If, for example, we become preoccupied with the questions people ask, we may overlook the fact that often they ask the wrong questions and must be helped to ask the right ones. In his words, 'If we acquiesce uncritically in the world's own self-understanding, we may find ourselves the servants rather of fashion than of God.' Therefore, the type of bridge to be built must be determined by biblical counsel rather than by the prevailing culture of the times we live in. We are called to challenge secularism, not surrender to it. According to Thompson, 'The deadliest enemy of Western Christianity is not Islam or atheism, but the infinitely complex process of secularisation.'

However, there is a tremendous need for more understanding, sensitivity and discernment of the modern world around us.

So, with all the declining of Christianity in general, how can we as a Seventh-day Adventist church membership bridge the chasm and be relevant to the people and society around us? We need to examine and change the way we view society. It's not us versus them. An open and honest discussion with a view to systemic change must be had at every level. Many are more concerned with the preservation of the institution than the pursuance of relevance. Where are the youth? Are we relevant to them? At the level of the local congregation, have we become a place where we come, meet, greet, eat, burp, quarrel and leave? Are our special days relevant to the community? Why don't we have those days in community spaces where they're accessible to more people? For example, have a youth day in a popular hall, or engage the schools to talk about solutions to knife crime and period poverty, climate change, and so on. The list is endless. Perhaps the challenge with Christianity is that it is too confined to a building. The pandemic has shown how insignificant buildings can be. So how will you change your witness? Your church? Your mindset? The next time you plan, think, share your faith, or send that invitation to the community – think relevance! GO, BUC!

¹Thompson, D., 'Crisis of Faith', 2015: <https://www.spectator.co.uk>

²Stott, J., *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994)



My testimony

by William Johnston

I grew up in a Catholic home in Perth, Scotland. There were six of us: Mum was a Catholic; Dad didn't belong to any faith or religion, but backed Mum up; and then there was my older brother Alex, my older sister Anne, my twin brother George, and me.

The four of us went to the Catholic school and church. For readers unfamiliar with Catholic teachings, there are 'confessional boxes' built into the walls of churches. A priest enters one side of the box, and a church member goes into the other side. There's a wooden partition in the middle with a hole cut out and a veil over the hole. The member then confesses their sin to the priest, who claims to have the power to absolve the member of their sin! How farcical!

I left school at 15 and started work in a bakery in Perth. When I was 19, my sister saw an advert in the local paper for a campaign, a series of meetings every evening for a month in November 1970 in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Perth, and asked me if I wanted to go. My first reaction was: 'The *what* church?' I had never heard of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but I agreed to go out of curiosity.

On the first evening I was given a King James Version Bible. *A Bible!* (I had never seen inside a Bible in my whole life! The Catholics teach the Catechism.) The meetings were taken by three ministers: Dennis Uffindell, Doug Sinclair and David Newman. There were some evenings when the ministers outnumbered the attendees! On those evenings there was only Anne and me. The most on any evening was seven. It is *very* difficult to get converts in Perth; and, as there hasn't been an Adventist church in Perth for many years, I'm sure the situation hasn't changed.

But what I learned during the campaign was a complete revelation to me! The Catholics had never told me about Christ dying for me, about His second coming, about the state of the dead, about eternal life, and, obviously, about the Sabbath. *This* was a shock to me! Going to church on a Saturday . . . ? No . . . ! You go shopping on a Saturday; you go and watch St Johnstone play, Perth's football team. Go to church . . . ? And not *just* church: the *whole day* is set aside, Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. It took time to get used to that. *And you don't* do any work on that day . . . this presented a problem for me.

At that time I was working every second Friday night, midnight till 8.30 Saturday morning.

It was after the campaign ended that Doug

Sinclair, who lived in Dundee then, drove to Perth once a week to give Anne and me Bible studies.

So I went to the manager of the bakery and explained the situation. He said, 'Leave it with me, Willie; I'll see what I can do.'

He called me back to his office a week later. He said, 'I'm willing to give you your Sabbath off, but the bakers aren't.'

'That's understandable,' I said.

The next time Doug came, I told him what had happened. I told him I would go round every bakery in Perth trying to get the Sabbath off. So I did. I went round *every* bakery in Perth – without success. So the following week, when Doug came, there was only one thing I could do: hand my notice in. Doug said, 'God will provide.'

So I went to the manager and did it. He looked at me in shock. He said, 'You're serious, aren't you?'

I said, 'Yes, Mr Crighton, I am.'

He said, 'You're crazy! You'll be a master baker in 18 months, and you're throwing it all away for this religion!'

I said, 'I have to follow my convictions, Mr Crighton.'

And when the bakers found out what I'd done, *they* thought I was crazy too!

So I worked my week's notice. Now, no one in my family other than Anne and Doug knew that I'd left my job with no prospect of another. Doug had told me that if there was any trouble at home I was to go to Dundee and stay with his family for a while. He said they'd be praying for me at church and at home.

So on the Sunday, when I didn't have a job to go to next day, George and I were in our bedroom and he asked if he could borrow my motor scooter to go and see his girlfriend. I said no, because I needed it. He asked why. So I pulled out my case from under the bed and told him I couldn't find a job in Perth with Sabbath off, and I was going to Dundee for a while.

For a second or two, he didn't know what to say or do. Then, in frustration and anger, he threw my clothes all over the room and went downstairs to tell Mum. Fortunately, Dad was out, and I don't know where Anne was. Mum came up and asked what all this was about. She had known that I had gone to the meetings, but hadn't realised the situation had come this far.

She tried emotional blackmail: 'You'll never see your dad again.'

I thought, *If that's the case, so be it.*

So I went to stay with Doug and his family for a week, came back to Perth, and stayed



A very proud William with his daughter, Lauren, at her graduation

with the Newmans for two weeks. It was during the second week that Doug phoned me and told me he had got a job for me at Granose, which was then the health food factory on Stanborough Park in Watford. So he picked me up from the Newmans and took me home to pack my case.

I said goodbye to Mum; Dad was in the kitchen, as he wouldn't come into the living room. I said, 'Cheerio Dad.'

Mum said, 'Your dad doesn't want to say cheerio to you.'

I said, 'OK.' So Doug took me to Edinburgh and I got the overnight coach to London and started work in Granose on the next day, Monday 21 June 1971.

I don't have a significant story about tithing, but I have tithed since I was baptised in June 1971, except for three months after I retired in September 2016. I thought: *OK, I'm not earning now; I don't need to tithe.* So I didn't from October to December. Then in January I thought, *I'm still getting income – my pension!* So I started tithing again.

My thoughts on tithing? The Bible says, 'Bring ye all the tithes . . .' (Malachi 3:10, KJV). You know the verse. I learned it by heart at 19.

I *have* thought at times when I'm putting the tithe in the envelope: *I really could use this!* But then I think: *If I don't keep my part of the deal, how can I expect God to keep His?* Another point: God hasn't said *when* He will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing – He just says that He *will*.

continued from p. 2



should be Bible-based, Christ-centred, service-oriented, and kingdom-directed. You can find Adventist schools in almost 150 countries – yet in the UK this is the best-kept secret. How many Adventist schools exist in the UK? That's your first bit of homework!

We want to engage you, our members, on a mission to blow the cover on Adventist education in the UK. In order to do that, there are a few things that I need to do.

Find all the Adventist teachers in the UK, whether you are teaching in one of our schools or in the mainstream sector, from nursery practitioners right through to university lecturers. We need you to sign up and be a part of the new **Adventist Teachers' Association (ATA)**. We are here to support you both in your career and spiritual life as you have taken the challenge of educating young minds. Your collective expertise will help in the development and marketing of our schools and help move them from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'.

We also want to find all the **Adventist Education leaders** voted into office in every local church in the UK. We need you to sign up to be our ears, eyes and voice on the ground in your church.

We want to find **marketing experts** to help relaunch our schools, both within the church and in the community.

Visit www.adventist.uk and click on the *Education page*, under *Departments*. There you will find two separate links to forms to capture your information. If you can offer your marketing services, contact me directly at Imcdonald@adventist.uk. We need you! Your church needs you! More importantly, God needs you!

At the end of the year, the BUC Education Department will be writing a **special edition of the MESSENGER on the history of Adventist education in the UK**. We are looking for the following:

- Past teachers and pupils from our current schools (including pictures, please);
- Past teachers and pupils from the schools that have since closed: for example, John Loughborough and Theodore McCleary (London), Lauriston (Leeds) and Grianach House School (Dublin). If there are other schools that have been missed, please let us know;
- Pictures and articles from previous editions of the *MESSENGER* or school newsletters from any of our schools, however big or small;
- Pictures and names of people who ran Adventist supplementary schools in the UK;
- Writers and editors.

Whether you were in our school for one term or all of your school life, we wish to hear from you.

If you would like to contribute to the writing of this special *MESSENGER*, or have information that could be included in the *MESSENGER* special, please contact me, Lorraine McDonald, at Imcdonald@adventist.uk.

We hope to start an **international Adventist school alumni chapter in the UK** so people can continue being a part of the rich history of our schools, from wherever you are in the world.

Look out for the **union-wide questionnaire on education** that will be coming through in June/July. We need as many people as possible to contribute to the biggest Adventist education survey ever since the opening of our first school in 1919. Which school was that? That's your second piece of homework.

The importance of Adventist education cannot be overstated. Did you know that the Department of Education for the East-Central Africa Division oversees the largest network of Adventist schools in the world? The Division has about 2,200 Adventist schools, including 10 full-fledged universities. These schools have an enrolment of about



Stanborough Park School

700,000 students. There are about 100,000 baptisms annually as a result of evangelistic and discipleship activities. We have just under 600 students in our UK schools in total. So far in 2022, we have baptised four precious pupils, and a further seven are preparing for baptism. Such is the power of Adventist education, which needs to be unleashed in the UK. Each school should be a 'centre of influence' in the local community it serves. We are not just educating for this life – we are **educating for eternity**.

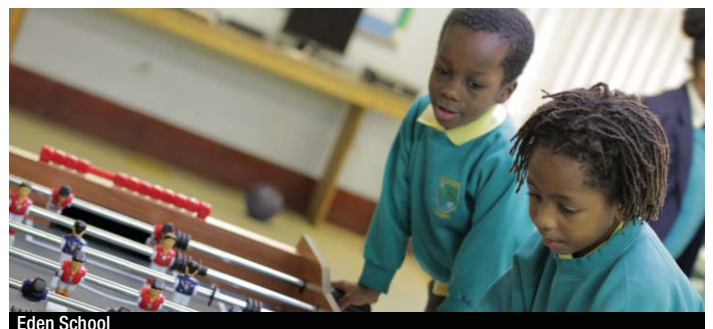
For the past decade or more, many Adventist churches in the West have struggled to succeed with traditional public evangelistic events. Our church's schools can play a powerful role in lovingly discipling our church's children, as well as people from our communities, into a personal relationship with Jesus. They must provide a loving Gospel culture for our children and be centres of Gospel evangelism for our communities. Our churches can also reach our communities by working through our schools. Humanitarian outreach activities can be hosted at our schools, as well.

Now is the time to be a part of this exciting journey. The most helpful thing in a person's discipleship journey is to help others in their journey, growing young people into the body of Christ: 'being rooted and established in love . . . filled to the measure of all the fullness of God' (Ephesians 3:17, 19, NIV).

The mission of the British Union Conference Education Department is to:

- Promote the values of Seventh-day Adventist education throughout the constituency of the Union and to make education a vehicle for helping pupils to come to know Jesus;
- Formulate and develop the educational policy framework and instruments necessary for delivering an efficient and effective education service;
- Provide support and advice, and to monitor the work of educational institutions operating within the authority of the British Union;
- Seek to improve access to Christian education for Adventist children.

Come and be part of this venture. Adventist schools have been the best-kept secret for far too long. Let's expose the secret!



Eden School

L is for Lifestyle – Christian choices that don't cost the earth!

On the Tuesday night before the Easter weekend, when Christians everywhere remember the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Newbold's final Diversity Lecture of this academic year focused on loving the world, which God loved so much that He gave His Son to redeem it. The lecture explored how we can live out our discipleship in a culture that continually bombards us with the pressures of consumerism.

Dr Ruth Valerio, a theologian and campaigning environmentalist from the charity Tearfund, encouraged her online audience to think about the practical Christian choices that everyone can make, particularly for the sake of those poorest people at the greatest risk of the negative effects of climate change. She said (later in the lecture) that a person in the UK emits the same amount of carbon in 6 days as a person in Malawi in a whole year.

Valerio began her lecture with staggering statistics about the threats: 33% of amphibians and reptiles and 25% of mammals at risk of extinction; biodiversity loss at an unprecedented rate; ecosystems and species collapsing all around the world. Humans are the problem species – abusing the land, polluting the atmosphere, overfishing the sea and exacerbating the problems.

During the pandemic, Valerio suggested, we have forgotten the threats to us and to our health from our overuse of plastic. Not only is the marine environment suffering as turtles, albatrosses, dolphins and whales eat our discarded plastic, but research now shows a threat to human health, as microscopic plastic fragments have been found in the air we breathe. For billions of people living in poverty without adequate rubbish management and disposal, the threat is even greater. Rats bring disease, and the burning of plastic gives respiratory issues. A video from a Tearfund worker in Zimbabwe recounted problems of drought, food insecurity, and generations of children missing out on education because they need to work or walk to collect water. Polluted drinking water brings more disease.

The biodiversity loss, the climate crisis, the water shortage and the plastic pollution are all caused by human irresponsibility. How can we act to take care of this world and fellow creatures?

Valerio named our various circles of involvement: home, church, community and wider world. She involved the online audience in making suggestions about how we can use resources more responsibly everywhere: not using bottled water or wasting food; recycling responsibly, particularly plastics; growing vegetables seasonally; driving less, walking, or using bicycles or buses; passing on unused clothes; planting seeds to attract bees and butterflies in community green spaces. Looking at our domestic and institutional use of energy, Valerio recommended environmentally friendly insulation of homes, churches and the college, and encouraged support for companies using sustainable energy products.

In the wider world of environmental campaigning, Valerio suggested that we can all use our voice to speak up and call on our government and businesses to work in favour of the natural world rather than against it. She talked about developing a campaigning movement of Christians to develop awareness about the environment. 'The big systemic change will come only through the actions of government and business when they are called out to act on their rhetorical environmental values,' she said.

When we see the challenges and complexities of the environmental crisis, we think: *Where do I start?* Valerio suggested that we can simplify our approach by thinking about our actions in four areas: food, travel, energy and rubbish.

With food we can ask, 'How has it been grown? How much water has been used? What chemicals have been used? If we do eat meat, are we ready to pay more to support farmers that care for their animals?'

When it comes to travel, are we ready to take the alternative to flying, even when it is longer? Are we prepared not to fly, or to fly very seldomly? Can we drive cars that are more efficient – or, better still, can we walk or cycle instead? Choosing a renewable energy company is important, as is reducing the amount of energy we do use. Insulating our homes and using energy-efficient appliances are important.

And then to the bathroom: 'How many plastic things do you have in your bathroom?' Valerio asked. And the kitchen: 'How many chemicals are you using to clean your home? Try to ditch the plastic and the chemicals!' If all this seems overwhelming, think about and do one thing in each area.

Valerio concluded with five top tips for Christian environmentalists:

- Start on your knees with an attitude of repentance and humility to recognise where your choices have been damaging.
- Recognise that the issues are complex, so don't take all the guilt individually. Government and business carry a lot of responsibility and could make it easier for the rest of us to do the right thing.
- Keep finding ways to learn about the issues. Join in with other individuals and communities to learn together.
- Don't take an 'all or nothing' approach or worry that you're not doing things perfectly.
- Make the most of the big decisions, such as choice of house, car and heating system.

The Q&A session discussed diet. 'Ninety-nine percent of the world's soya is used to feed animals,' said Valerio. It's more efficient to drink soya milk and eat tofu and so on than eat the meat from cattle fed on soya. Another questioner explored the difficulties of passing on environmental values to children who may not share them. A different question explored the familiar concern about environmental values being unimportant because the world is going to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. 'We wouldn't take that approach with poverty, would we?' said Valerio. 'Isaiah 58 teaches us that, whatever is going to happen, God has called us to care for people.' Another question explored the difference between secular and religious environmentalism. 'We as Christians are not surprised when people don't deliver,' said Valerio. 'We do have a future hope and a long-term perspective that sustains us.'

The lecture and the Q&A which followed can be seen in full at the following link: <https://fb.watch/cN10n-ldIN/>. This was the last Diversity Lecture organised by Michael and Helen Pearson.

HELEN PEARSON



As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Creation changes everything



Part 1

In this first article in a two-part series on evidence for Creation, Timothy G. Standish, PhD responds to a leading atheist's critique of the human eye.

Thousands of years ago, the prophet David wrote these words: 'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well' (Psalm 139:13, 14, NIV).

I love this text, because it tells us something about what people were thinking thousands of years ago, and something about what they understood about the human body and the rest of creation, but most of all I love it because at its centre it tells us the reason for worshipping and praising God. We praise God because we and the rest of creation are fearfully and wonderfully made. God is worthy of our worship because He is the Creator.

Now I want you to contrast that view with this view that was expressed by Charles Darwin. Now, Charles Darwin, you'll remember, was trying to come up with a materialistic or a naturalistic explanation for everything – particularly life and the diversity of life on Earth. Talking about human beings, he wrote in 1838: 'Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work worthy the interposition of a deity (sic); more humble, and I believe truer, to consider him created from animals.'

I want you to see the impact that this particular view has on brilliant people as they look at the human body and the rest of the creation. Now, to do that, I'm going to use a quotation from Richard Dawkins. Richard Dawkins wrote this: 'Suppose I tell you that the eye's "photocells" are pointing backwards, away from the scene being looked at. The "wires" connecting the photocells to the brain run over all the surface of the retina, so the light rays have to pass through a carpet of massed wires before they hit the photocells. That doesn't make sense – and it gets even worse. . . .'

Don't worry. We'll get to what he considers to be 'even worse'. But let's just step aside a little bit so that we can see what Richard Dawkins was talking about.

On the facing page is a diagram of the

human eye, and at the back of the eye is the retina. In the retina there are light-sensitive cells. So if we have an image, that image is focused onto the back of our eye by the lens at the front of our eyes, and those light-sensitive cells respond to the light that is focused on them (figure 1). However, just having light-sensitive cells responding to light doesn't really do anything for us. We need to have some way in which we can take the responses of those cells back to our brain. And that's what the nerves do (figure 2). The nerves collect that information that is generated by the light-sensitive cells, bring it all together and take it back to our brain via the optic nerve. Let's zoom in here on the retina and just take a look at what's going on here that Richard Dawkins has a low opinion about.

Here are light-sensitive cells, or our light-detecting cells (figure 3). Now, those light-detecting cells are very metabolically active. That means that they require a lot of energy. And the fuel to run those light-detecting cells is provided via the blood. So our eyes actually have a very good blood supply – they need it if we're actually going to see things. If you've ever looked at blood, you've probably realised that light doesn't travel through it very well, so it's absolutely necessary that that blood supply be behind the light-detecting cells, and obviously the nerves that are going to be taking the signals from those light-detecting cells can't be in the same place as the blood, because two things can't be in the same place, so there's only one place where they can go, and that is in front of the light-detecting cells. So here's the 'problem' that Richard Dawkins was pointing out. When light comes in and it's focused so nicely by the lens in our eye on the retina, it has to pass through the nerves before it gets to the light-detecting cells, and as a consequence of that the light gets dissipated a little bit. He considers this to be bad design, but I think you can see it's pretty much the only way it can be if we're going to have the kind of eye that we have. I should tell you that there are other organisms, like squids and

octopuses, for example, that have a different design here. That design suits their needs very well. But the human eye is designed for our needs, and as a consequence this is the necessary design.

And think about this a little bit: is it bad design, or is it just a kind of compromise that had to be made? What would you do about it if you were the designer? Richard Dawkins thinks it's bad design. I don't think it's necessarily bad design, but I'd call it necessary design that things be this way.

Now here is where things get kind of interesting. God is actually smarter than you or me or Richard Dawkins, and God recognised this engineering necessity that caused this problem of the light having to pass through the nerve cells. And He designed and created for us a solution to that problem – special cells called glial cells that act like fibre optics (figure 4). What they do is take that light that has been focused onto the retina and pass it through without it being blurred in any way to the light-sensitive cells (figure 5). It's a truly remarkable system. It's a solution to an engineering necessity. It's the kind of thing you see in really well-designed stuff. So Richard Dawkins was apparently not aware of this when he was writing, even though his eyes are using this system all the time – our eyes are using it all the time. You may not have been aware of it either. It's not that Richard Dawkins was necessarily foolish, but his mind was prepared to see bad design, because that was what he was expecting. He believes that he evolved from animals; that there was no design, no conscious designer, no God – nothing like that. In reality, that particular argument about the arrangement of things isn't a particularly good one against the idea that God designed our eyes, but let's continue with what Richard Dawkins wrote. He says:

'One consequence of the photocells pointing backwards is that the wires that carry their data somehow have to pass through the retina and back to the brain. What they do, in the vertebrate eye, is all converge on a particular hole in the retina, where they dive through it. The hole filled with nerves is called the blind spot.' Obviously, it's blind because there are no light-detecting cells there. And then he draws this conclusion: 'It's not just bad design: it's the design of a complete idiot.'

Now let's see if he's right about that blind spot. Remember, this is what the eye looks like – and there it is, the blind spot, the place where all those nerves come together and go through the light-sensitive cells and take the signal back to the brain (figure 6). Again, it's absolutely necessary, but is it really a problem? Let's think a bit about what God did when He made us. He made us with two eyes; and, as a consequence of that, the blind spots in our left eye and our right eye are in different places. Our brain integrates all of the information from these fabulous eyes that we have, and the blind spot in my left eye is filled

in with information from my right eye, so we typically don't see that blind spot at all. But there is a blind spot there, and there are tests you can do to find it. They're very simple if you want to look that up.

God thought of this potential problem, and He gave us two eyes so that it's not a problem. The only people who are going to have an issue with this are pirates. That's obviously a joke, but you get my point. People with one eye may have an issue with this, but even then our brain helps to compensate for

this very real blind spot that is there.

What can we conclude from this information? How might we as Bible-believing Christians view human eyes in a different way than a Darwinist like Richard Dawkins?

My conclusion is that believing in Creation changes how we view ourselves. We see ourselves as objects of our Creator's love, created 'very good', with a purpose, in the image of God and responsible for the rest of creation. The alternative is that we are purposeless creatures, victims of the uncaring

process that made us. The data, in my opinion, line up far better with the conclusion that those of us who believe the Bible and worship the Creator come to.

This article was first presented in video form at the Global Camp Meeting: see <https://www.campmeeting.com/creation-changes-everything-divine-design/>.

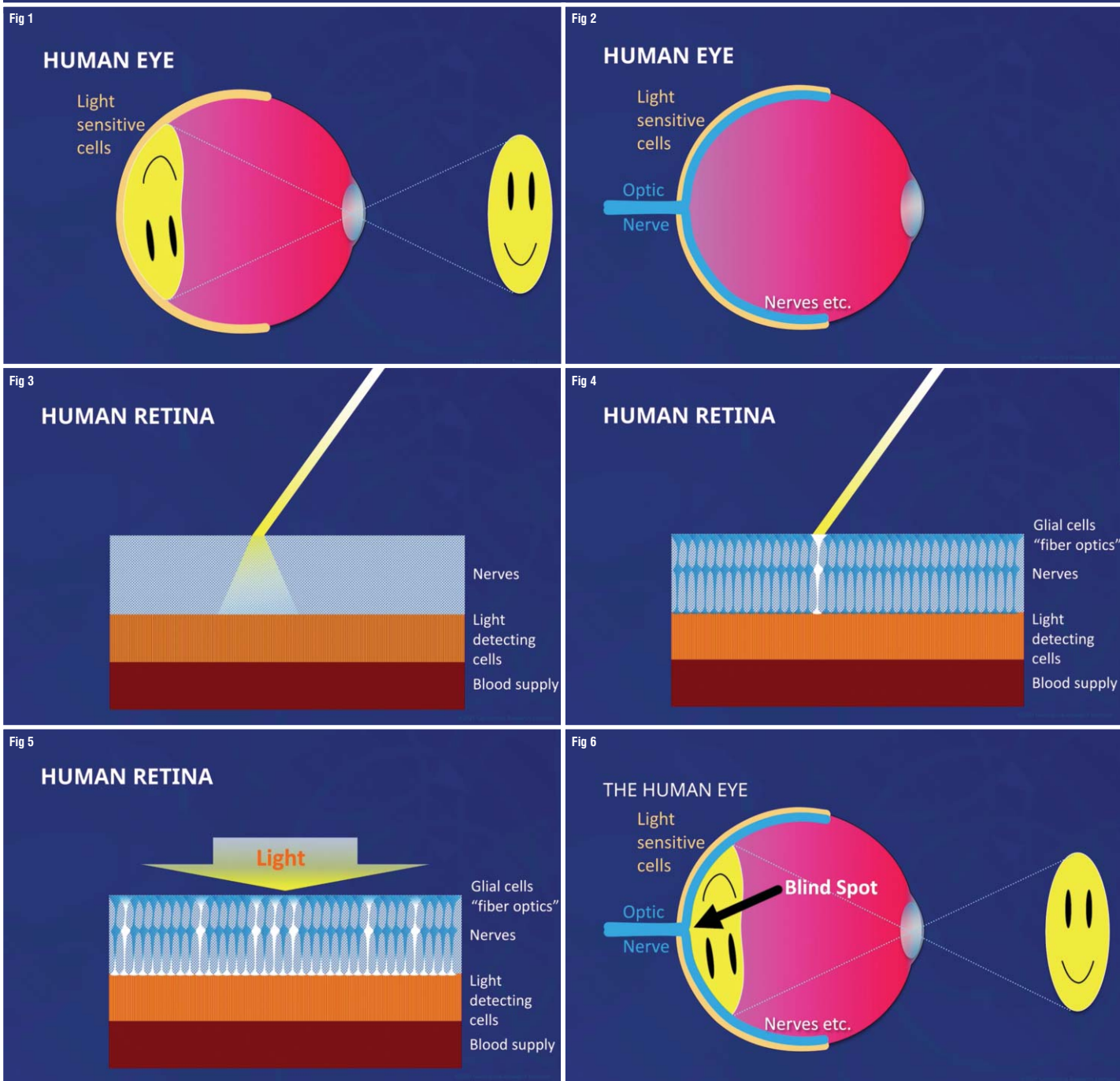
Fig 1: The human eye, showing the light-sensitive cells (retina) with an image projected through the lens onto the retina.

Fig 2: The human eye with the nerves over the top of the light-sensitive cells (retina), which carry the information to the brain via the optic nerve.

Fig 3: This image demonstrates how the light has to pass through the mass of nerves in order to reach the light-sensitive cells (retina), and how the retina is fed by a strong blood supply.

Figs 4 & 5: In order to help the light pass through the nerves uninterrupted, the nerves have glial cells which act like fibre optics, assisting the transfer of light.

Fig 6: Because all the nerves at the back of the eye converge together at the optic nerve, this has the potential to create a blind spot. But we get around this problem by having two eyes. Of course, this may be an issue if for any reason you have lost the use of one of your eyes.





Crieff Church at Easter

Crieff Church hosted a very special weekend of contemplation and celebration over the Easter period. Those who attended were blessed to have Pastor Ian Sweeney, Trans-European Division Field Secretary, and his wife Jennifer as the speakers for the weekend.

On Friday evening, an agape feast and Ordinance of Humility service were held in the Ross Hall at Crieff Church. As well as church members, several people from the local community attended this special service. Pastor Sweeney gave a meditation on the Good Friday biblical events which gave everyone much to consider and reflect upon.

On Sabbath, the church was full of members and visitors who were blessed by an uplifting Sabbath service and Pastor Sweeney's Easter message, entitled 'King on a donkey'.

The churches in Crieff have long celebrated Easter Sunday together with a 7am service on the summit of the Knock (the hill that Crieff is built on). This year the service was moved to MacRosty Park at 8am, and there were more than sixty people gathered in the park to mark the fulfilment of the resurrection nearly 2,000 years ago. The Easter Sunday service was full of singing and readings, as well as a short talk by Pastor Sweeney, who reflected on the events of that resurrection morning alongside the beautiful promises found in John 14:1-3.



Following the Easter Sunday service, Crieff Church hosted a breakfast in the Ross Hall, where a magnificent feast was laid on for the morning worshippers. Organised by head deaconess, Eleri Dutton, and ably assisted by her team of helpers, everyone who attended was nourished by good food and good fellowship.

Thanks to everyone who was involved in making the Easter weekend at Crieff such a memorable occasion.

ANGELA LOGAN



Brixton youth take to the streets

Global Youth Day took place on 19 March 2022. Youth around the world united for this year's emphasis, 'Loving the Forgotten'. The Brixton Church Youth Department tabled various activities representing the emphasis of this year.

On 17 March members of the Youth Department were on hand to meet and greet attendees of the Open Doors project based at Brixton Church, where hot meals and snacks are provided every Thursday.

On 19 March the pastoral team went out into the community to distribute leaflets and handmade cards and visit the housebound.

In conjunction with the Youth Department, Brixton Jays – the Pathfinders and Adventurers club – organised a walk. More than fifty members, including parents, club attendees and church members, walked from Santley Street to Evolve Housing+Support on Stockwell Road.

Evolve Housing+Support is a housing charity offering 16-25-year-olds 'tailored programmes of support to meet individual needs that include housing, employment and skills training, mentoring and counselling'.

Members of the community were treated to a large singalong as the walk concluded. Solidarity was shown as drivers blew their horns.

Gift bags with essential items were given to the residents of Evolve Housing. Forming a large choir outside the building, more uplifting songs were belted out for residents and those walking by to hear.

NATALIE BYFIELD

Ordination of new dynamic leaders at Central London Church

Central London Church on 2 April ordained five elders and three deaconesses in an inspired service, setting apart eight new leaders for the work of ministry.

The church was full with family, friends, church members and visitors as the ordinands were reminded of the high calling that ordination represents. God had called these new leaders for 'such a time as this'. The ordinands were challenged to go and lead in the power of the Holy Spirit, but working in their own armour.

The five elders ordained were Keyla Abigail Cervantes-Tena, Valter Sousa, Maitwa Desmond Mainda, Raluca Tapu and Royon Wright; and, as if this weren't enough to inspire, they were joined by three deaconesses: Martha Banaszek, Denise Barbosa, and Patricia Marshall, who represents and leads the church as head usher.

The service was administered by the head elder, Claudia Passer; Dr



All ordinands about to receive their gifts with those that officiated, along with Newbold ministerial students Adam Best and Jake Frood; from left to right: Godwin (centre manager), Valter (elder), Patricia (deaconess), Keyla (elder), Raluca (elder), Desmond (elder), Claudia (first elder), Adam (ministerial student), Jake (ministerial student), Royon (elder), Denise (deaconess), Dr Nelder (non-serving elder), Martha (deaconess), and Colin Stewart (pastor)

Nelda (a non-serving previous head elder); centre manager, Godwin Benjamin; and senior pastor, Colin Stewart.

God be praised as we continued to see and experience a transformed Central London Church.

CLC COMMUNICATION



Mrs Britta Dunton and Pastor Augustus Lawrence

Surprise thanks for a long-forgotten good deed

Although recent attendance numbers at Stanborough Park Church have been rising slowly, they are still lower than pre-pandemic levels, but Mrs Britta Dunton, one of our very senior members, has not let COVID-19 fears dissuade her from regular attendance, even though she walks slowly between home and church with the aid of a walking frame.

Attending church as usual on Sabbath 26 March, she was surprised to find herself not the usual spectator, but actively involved in the service, as she was presented with a large bouquet of beautiful flowers by SEC Family Ministries Director Pastor Augustus Lawrence. Pastor Lawrence explained to the congregation that it was a thank-you to her in appreciation of the help she gave him as a penniless Liberian student who was unable to pay his fees when he arrived at Newbold College to begin his ministerial studies.

At the time, her husband, the late Dr Hugh Dunton, was employed at the college, and somehow their paths crossed, and she enquired how he was going to find the money to pay his fees. Retelling the story, he told of how he explained to her that he didn't know how he would manage to pay his fees, but was sure that God would provide. Her response was swift: she directed him to Neil Hunter, the cafeteria manager, who provided employment for the full duration of his studies so that he was able to graduate debt-free! He also mentioned the sponsorship by her late husband, Dr Hugh Dunton, for which he was very grateful.

For Mrs Dunton the occasion has blurred into the mists of time, but Pastor Lawrence's grateful memories of her help have lingered on. Taking up his SEC post provided an ideal opportunity to express his gratitude for her kindness to an impoverished student so long ago. Now SEC Family Ministries Director, he has certainly shown her that her actions brought forth good fruit – along with a bouquet!

COMMUNICATION DEPT



Aston-Newtown Community Church's sponsored walk

Sunday 3 April 2022 was this year's ADRA appeal. It provided an opportunity for members of Aston-Newtown Community Church to support the valuable work of ADRA by doing a sponsored walk to support so many people who are living in extremely difficult times and situations. After nearly two years of being unable to get together and do this annual sponsored walk, it was a most welcome opportunity to get back outdoors and walk to support this good cause.

Our walk commenced from Aston-Newtown Church to Cannon Hill Park via the canal side. There were fifteen of us on the walk – nine adults and six children. The walk let us step outside the fast pace of life for a short while and enjoy three great gifts God has given to us – the joy of creation; the joy of good companionship; and, of course, great weather. We all had a wonderful time on the walk, and we want to thank God for His blessing and for keeping us all safe.

So far we have collected £95.00 for the sponsored walk alone, but more monies from the walk and other events are still pouring in. We are hoping to beat our goal of £1,500 with God's help. God bless you all.

ASTON-NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CHURCH ADRA DEPARTMENT

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE
LET'S CROSS OVER
 SEC Camp Meeting 2022
 Web: campmeeting.org.uk
 Tel: 01553 606000

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE CAMP MEETING 2022

LET'S CROSS OVER

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MAY 30th to JUNE 5th to
HAY'S WOOD
 Retreat Centre
 King's Lynn, Norfolk, UK

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

ADRA is an action-orientated organisation. From working in conflict zones, supporting refugees and internally displaced persons, to running development projects throughout the world, it is an agency that some have described as being ‘the hands and feet of Jesus’.

ADRA is changing the world through four key areas – health, education, livelihoods and emergency response – helping to relieve the suffering of millions around the world. But underpinning our implementation work is the need for advocacy.

But what exactly is advocacy?

Put simply, advocacy is a written or spoken activity by an individual or a group whose purpose is to influence decisions within the political, economic or social institutions.

How is it demonstrated in ADRA?

Did you know that there are 262 million children around the world who are currently denied the right to education? Most of us living in the UK can only imagine this statistic, as we have mandated education for children, most of which is funded by the Government. Children out of school are vulnerable to recruitment by militia and child trafficking. Girls have an increased risk of early marriage and teen pregnancy.

ADRA, supported by the 20 million Seventh-day Adventist members around the world, was able to get more than a million signatures advocating that world leaders ensure that all children, adolescents, and youth have access to free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.

Currently, the three main issues that are fully developed revolve around education (girls’ education, education in emergencies, and children with disabilities), but more advocacy project initiatives are in the pipeline for the future.

Advocacy in the UK

Over the weekend of 22-24 April, thirty community leaders gathered at the BUC office to be trained as advocates under ADRA-UK’s



Advocacy

Justice, love, and compassion through words

by Cathy Boldeau

‘I AM Urban’ initiative. Leading the training were Maja Ahac (Head of Advocacy for ADRA

Europe) and Siri Karlsson (County Director for ADRA Sweden). Both ladies have a wealth of experience in the field of advocacy. Joining them was the special guest speaker and newly appointed Head of Advocacy at ADRA International, Dr Herma Percy. Topics over the weekend included ‘Injustice and inequalities’, ‘Speaking up for the rights of the poor’, and ‘Called to be agents of justice’.

The weekend began with a key devotional thought by Bert Smit, CEO of ADRA-UK, who spoke about ADRA’s values of justice, love, and compassion. Additional content was provided by the writer; Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook, SEC Community Services, Prison Ministries and Diversity Director; and Abigail

Wright Stephenson, LAMP NHS National Project Manager, with input from Sharon Platt-McDonald, BUC Women’s Ministries, Health, and Community Services Director.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the chance for attendees to speak about the work that they are currently doing in their local communities. Stories revolved around the impact of grassroots community hubs throughout the pandemic. There was also a desire to become more impactful through becoming advocates. One attendee at the weekend described the training as ‘life-changing’ as she wept, while another stated that ‘it was the best training weekend’ that she had ever attended.

Reflecting on the weekend, I can only say that it was great to be in a room of passionate individuals who now not only want to work in their local communities, but are advocates for ADRA-UK.

If you would like to join IAMU’s advocacy network or want to know more about ADRA’s work around the world, please go to our website: www.adra.org.uk.

Please remember that our ‘Do Good’ campaign lasts the entire year, and you can donate to ADRA-UK at: www.adra.org.uk/donate.





Easter Bikers' Run

With COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, the 2022 Easter Bikers' Run was back in business.

For the past several years, bikers from across the East Midlands, sponsored by the Nottingham Triumph Owners' Motorcycle Club, have made the journey to the Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham, bringing with them Easter goodies for distribution by the Grantham church.

The total number of items this year amounted to just over 1,000, brought by 437 bikers.

As previously, these were collected by church members and taken to the church, where they were made ready in appropriate batches for distribution to the 27+ worthy organisations, comprising residential groups, children and young people's societies, together with adult societies in the Grantham area.

After being distributed by volunteers from the church, all were received with enthusiasm and thanks, helping to make Easter 2022 just a little happier during this time of sadness in the world at large.

As one biker remarked to the distribution coordinator of the Grantham church, Elisabeth Carnell: 'We're doing it for Jesus!'

MIKE COWEN (GRANTHAM CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY)



Hampstead Church Vision Summit at Hay's Wood Retreat

Hampstead Church's board, together with their newly appointed senior pastor, Mohan Abbadasari, met at Hay's Wood Retreat, a Seventh-day Adventist spiritual venue, on the weekend of 1-3 April 2022 to review and update the church's vision and mission. Hay's Wood Retreat was intentionally selected because it is nestled in the pristine woodland area of Norfolk – an ideal setting for a spiritual retreat – and the programme was presented by Pastor Abbadasari.



Front row, left to right: Mishaël Terrelonge, Gabriella Nelson, Pastor Jesse Samuel; second row, left to right: Yvette Audain, Charleen Arendse, Pastor Mohan Abbadasari, Leyan Saddler, Naomi Ninvalle, Moses Arendse, Una Moore; back row, left to right: Daphne Daytes, Carolyn Daniel, Adriano Nelson, Judith Herbert, Joshua Terrelonge, Steve Nelson, Kirk Morrison, Kemisha Nelson, Robert Carr, Roseline Felix, Joan Saddler, Frank Daniel, Oliver Terrelonge, Anselm Moore



Grantham baptism

The baptism of Akira Wilson took place in Grantham Church on 30 April before many friends and church members.

Although it was Akira's wish that she be baptised at Grantham, her home church, by Pastor Kyriacou, she will be relocating to Norfolk following a family move.

After the service there was a fellowship lunch.

We wish them all God's blessing in the years ahead.

MIKE COWEN (GRANTHAM CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY)

The Vision Summit was themed 'Here am I – send me', and from the outset Pastor Abbadasari made it clear that the purpose of the summit was to put the focus on our relationship with God and each other. The key text for cogitation throughout the summit was Acts 2:40-47. Four areas of a dynamic church were focused on at the retreat: 1) **worship**; 2) **fellowship**; 3) **nurture**; and 4) **witnessing**. According to Pastor Abbadasari, these four ingredients are quintessential aspects of a vibrant and dynamic church.

The routine habit of attending Sabbath services such as Sabbath School, Divine Service, singing, Bible study and even midweek prayer meetings – as important and as necessary as these may be – does not by itself constitute true worship. True worship *takes place in the heart of the believer* (Matthew 15:8, 9). True worship affords the believer the opportunity to demonstrate *thanksgiving*: thanking God for His *goodness* towards us (Psalm 95:1, 2). True worship is also punctuated by *praise*: we *praise* God for His *greatness* (Psalm 95:3-5). True worship is oriented towards God: He intends our corporate worship to be directed *at Him* and *for Him* with a unified voice (oneness). Other key ideas that were stressed at the summit include the following:

- Worship is an attitude and sets us apart as God's people.
- We need to be intentional when worshipping God.
- Express thanks when worshipping God, because thanksgiving relates to God's *goodness*.
- We worship God on His terms (not our terms).
- Worship, nurture, witnessing and fellowship are key ingredients to spiritual growth.
- In-reach and outreach are two aspects of witnessing that we can participate in.

The Vision Summit was indeed a spiritually uplifting event in which time was set aside for reflection and introspection. It also allowed participants to take nature walks to reorient themselves with God and nature. Conspicuously visible at the summit was the spirit of brotherly love among fellow believers, and all expressed a keen desire to become better servants in God's vineyard. It was a very positive experience, and we strongly advise our sister churches to consider taking their church boards on such a retreat.

MOSES ARENDESE
PHOTO BY PAELO SADDLER



Reigning over God

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

Following the death of her father on 6 February 1952, Queen Elizabeth II was crowned on 2 June 1953. The gap in time was to hold to a tradition of allowing an appropriate time to pass for mourning before festivities were held.

'The Queen's relationship with the Church of England was symbolised at the coronation in 1953 when Her Majesty was anointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and took an oath to "maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England".'¹

The Queen is not the head of the Church of Scotland. This has been in agreement since the 1707 Act of Union between England and Scotland. The Church of Scotland is Presbyterian and recognises that Jesus alone is the head of the church.

The division of heads of churches goes back another 200 years to the time of the Reformation. Henry VIII was a devout Roman Catholic who spoke up against the proclamations of Martin Luther. This found favour with the Pope in Rome, who, in 1522, called Henry the 'defender of the faith'.

Henry was married to Catherine of Aragon, who bore him only one surviving child: a girl, Mary. Henry took this as a sign to find another wife – Catherine of Aragon was his brother's widow, and Henry quoted Leviticus to enforce his view that his marriage was cursed by God.

Some History

King Henry I refounded Dunstable over 850 years ago, in the early 12th century. In 1131, he tried to promote his new town by founding an Augustinian Priory.

Medieval construction was a slow process. Building the church took several generations. Eventually it was consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln in October 1213.

Until the end of the 14th century the people of Dunstable used the north aisle of the monastic church for their worship, paying for repairs to it and the north porch. But the town grew, and the expanding congregation began to disrupt the monks' services.

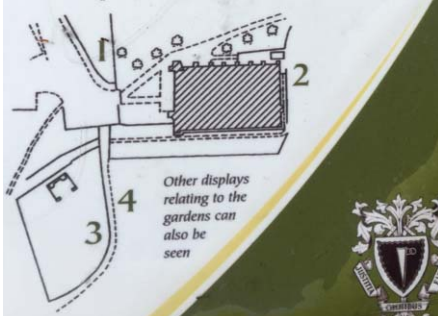
The problem was resolved in 1392 when the Canons gave all the west end of the church to the parish on condition they kept it repaired.

In May 1533 Archbishop Crammer held a court in the Lady Chapel. It declared null and void Henry VIII's marriage to his first Queen, Catherine of Aragon.

This decision contributed to the English Reformation and the creation of the Anglican Church.

Dunstable Priory was dissolved by Henry VIII during the English Reformation. Only parish use saved the nave; the rest of the church was destroyed after the failure of plans to convert it into a new cathedral.

Priory Display Boards



Seeking an annulment to his marriage, Henry was displeased when the Pope refused; which may have been influenced by the fact that Charles V of Spain (and king of other countries), a nephew of Catherine of Aragon, had encircled Rome, paving the way to a later pope calling Charles the Holy Emperor of Rome.

Henry asserted royal supremacy over the Church of England through Acts of Parliament, including the 1534 Act of Supremacy and the later Treasons Act, and severed links with the Roman Catholic Church by ordering his own clergy to annul his marriage to Catherine, providing the chance to marry Anne Boleyn.

I've developed an interest in the story, not least because I



discovered during a walk around my local town that the location of the chapel where the annulment was declared is right on my doorstep. Only painted lines on the grass remain of the location of the priory in Dunstable where it all took place.

I suppose now is not the best time for me to admit to you that my two worst subjects at school were Religious Studies and History. This is a constant reminder from God that He called me to pastoral ministry through His strength, not my own. So, after this brief history lesson, this pastor wants to ponder with you.

A repeated question I ask of my members is: 'What is sin?' Some now echo back to me the reply, 'Sin is when I think I know better than God.' What has this got to do with our current queen? She is the head of the Church of England, and has expressed her faith in subtle but open ways. But, had it not been for Henry VIII, Elizabeth II may have been a Roman Catholic by faith, and not a faith leader in any way. Her title was passed on because a king wanted his own way and set up his own church to accommodate his wishes.

Is it possible for us to do the same – to manipulate the church or to demand that God accommodate our own perspectives? 'For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear' (2 Timothy 4:3, NLT).

As you continue to explore and grow in faith, do not be afraid to surrender your own shortcomings to God. Instead of expecting God to adjust His way to your perspective, be ready to accommodate His transformation. 'Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church' (Ephesians 4:15, NLT).

Let God reign over you, rather than trying yourself to reign over God. Has it ever worked the other way around in the past?

¹<https://www.royal.uk/queens-relationship-churches-england-and-scotland-and-other-faiths>



by Sharon Platt-McDonald

Are you well?

Part 3 – Social health indicators

Explaining how social aspects of well-being impact our health, the World Health Organisation states: ‘Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age. These conditions influence a person’s opportunity to be healthy, his/her risk of illness and life expectancy.’¹

This issue of ‘Enhancing Health’ spotlights social relationships and well-being outcomes.

Good social connections

A research study published in *The Psychologist* by the British Psychological Society sought to ascertain the links between perceived social support and well-being.

The study, undertaken by University College London and the Anna Freud Centre’s Evidence-Based Practice Unit, involved more than 10,000 teenagers.

Evaluating the study outcomes, the researchers stated that their evidence suggested that ‘more support from home, school, peers and the community was correlated with better well-being.’²

Age UK published an online article titled: ‘Social connections and the brain’.³ The article headline states: ‘Keeping up our ties to friends and family and taking part in social activities may help us stay sharp as we age, according to the Global Council on Brain Health.’

Capturing the above statement in an infographic, Age UK outlines some simple social tips for better brain health:

- Join a group.
- Get a pet.
- Teach someone something.
- Volunteer or help others.
- Use technology to stay connected.
- Share a smile!

Poor social connections

In my seminars on social health, I run a workshop titled: ‘When helping you is hurting me!’



This focuses on the negative health outcomes when we engage in ‘toxic’ relationships that demand more from us than we are able to cope with, whether psychologically, relationally, physically or even spiritually.

Attendees take an inventory of their relationships – family, relatives, friends, work colleagues and church members. They evaluate what they put into those relationships and what they receive from them. Where individuals are ‘helping’ others over and above their ‘healthy’ capacity to do so, red flags are present in the form of increased stress, poor health, decreased sleep and declining mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation reports:

‘It’s not just the number of friends you have, and it’s not whether or not you’re in a committed relationship, but it’s the quality of your close relationships that matters. Living in conflict or within a toxic relationship is more damaging than being alone.’⁴

For more information on safeguarding social connections, visit: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/relationships-21st-century-forgotten-foundation-mental-health-and-wellbeing>.

Good health!

¹<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/social-determinants/social-determinants> ²<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-35/january-2022/wellbeing-and-social-support> ³<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/staying-sharp/looking-after-your-thinking-skills/social-connections-and-the-brain/> ⁴<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/relationships-21st-century-forgotten-foundation-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

International news

- **Pastor Ted Wilson has called for special prayer before this year’s General Conference Session**, reported the Adventist News Network on 28 April, because ‘time is short. We must unite in proclaiming the three angels’ messages and pray for revival, reformation, repentance, and humility as we prepare for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the final loud cry before Christ’s Second Coming.’ The sixty-first session, which is due to take place from 6 to 11 June, previously had to be postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is not anticipated that any further postponements will be necessary and the event should go ahead as scheduled in St Louis, Missouri. The forty days of prayer began on 3 May and run through the session to 11 June.
- **Adventist Health is facilitating donations for Ukrainian hospitals**, writes Kim Strobel in the North American Division. He goes on to report, ‘Medical supplies and medications will be airlifted to Ukraine through a collaboration between ADRA and Adventist Health.’ Some of these supplies have been given by Adventist Health medical supply partners, and others partly by private donors. The supplies are being given to eight hospitals in Ukraine with the assistance of ADRA. Strobel writes, ‘While many supply chain channels into Ukraine have been cut off because of the war, logistics are in place through ADRA to route the supplies where they are most needed. The ADRA Ukraine team have remained in their country to coordinate this work as the fighting intensifies.’ John Schroer, Global Mission system lead for Adventist Health, says, ‘These are desperate times for the people of Ukraine. . . . There is no greater

opportunity to live God’s love and provide health, wholeness, and hope in a community than at a time of great despair.’

- **The Prime Minister of Cape Verde praised the actions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church** during a recent visit to the Adventist church of Achada São Filipe in Praia, the country’s capital city, in the Western Sahel Union Mission of the West-Central Africa Division, writes Guilherme Lima, Director of Communication for the Cabo Verde Conference. The Prime Minister, Dr Ulisses Correia E. Silva, said he would ‘like to recognise the wonderful work that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is doing. It is an old church in Cape Verde, and, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, they made a very strong action of solidarity.’ He went on to say that the church plays an ‘important role’ in fighting extreme poverty, resulting in that government’s decision to work with churches to make poverty history.
- **More than 8,000 new believers have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Haiti** since January, including 1,690 new members at the close of a two-week evangelistic campaign in Pétiön-Ville, according to Libna Stevens of *Inter-American Division News*. Pastor Vanel Louissaint, evangelist and Personal Ministries Director in Central Haiti, told them, ‘You must get serious and prepare for Jesus Christ’s soon return. . . . Jesus can save your family and restore to man what was lost in Eden.’

ANDREW PUCKERING

International News is a regular column for *MESSANGER* that provides a brief snapshot of developments from the rest of our church around the world.

**Nigel Naidoo
(1941-2021)**

d. 26 November.

Nigel Naidoo was born to devout Hindu parents on the idyllic island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean on 8 August 1941. Nigel had every desire to be a faithful Hindu worshipper . . . until he heard the good news of how God sent His Son to die for our sins. The compelling story of Christ's death on the cross broke Nigel's heart. To him it was mind-blowing.

Nigel decided to accept Christ as his Saviour and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1960s in his late teens.

This decision was too much for his devout Hindu family to endure. He had brought shame on his family in the Hindu community. You can imagine the pressure that was brought to bear on young Nigel to conform to the family traditions and return to his roots. This pressure turned into persecution, not only from his family but also from the community.

Although Nigel dearly loved his family and his community, he decided that in order to remain true to his new-found faith he had to leave not only the family home and his community, but the country. So he travelled to the United Kingdom, settled in London, found work as a bricklayer and began worshipping at Holloway Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Nigel's thirst for youth fellowship led him to regularly attend the Saturday night youth fellowship at the New Gallery Centre in Regent Street. It was at this youth fellowship that Nigel met Raija, who had recently arrived from Finland. They were married in the Holloway church in 1970.

Nigel was a bricklayer by trade, but no ordinary bricklayer. When he transferred his membership to the Wood Green church, where he served as an elder, he discovered that the members were unhappy worshipping in a pre-fabricated old place that was definitely not fit for purpose. Nigel reflected on the fact that back in his country Hindus worship in a temple.

When the elders discovered Nigel's skills in the building trade, they gave him the lead role in changing the fortunes of the Wood Green church. They became highly motivated and excited at the proposition. The erection of the new church saved the church organisation thousands of pounds in construction charges. It resulted in Wood Green having a place of worship that now stands proudly in the community. Wood Green



Church is one of the South England Conference's most representative church buildings in London.

Leading out in the successful construction of Wood Green Church could have whetted Nigel's appetite to remain in the lucrative business of construction and earn hundreds of thousands of pounds. However, after finding out how many good books we have in the Church, he became concerned that he should leave his well-paid job and become a literature evangelist. When you've been called from the world to follow the Master, true disciples maintain a humble and surrendered heart, because they are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. And, as such, they are 'ready to go, ready to stay, ready their place to fill; ready for service, lowly or great, ready to do His will'.

Nigel responded to the call to join the army of literature evangelist workers and take the Gospel of Christ from house to house. It would mean leaving his lucrative salary in the building industry to become a self-employed person without a fixed income. He would have to depend on the commission he received from each sale to earn a living. That's a leap of faith that many have had great difficulty in embracing. Imagine the earnest, heartfelt prayers prayed by Nigel for divine confirmation that such a call was from above.

He accepted the call, and, along with Brother Moses Elmandjian, was successful in selling books in many non-Adventist churches. He climbed the ranks in the literature work and obtained the various credentials as a successful worker in the literature ministry. The leaders were quick to acknowledge his faithfulness and leadership skills, devotion to duty and continued desire to grow in grace.

Nigel was invited to join the ranks of conference publishing directors with Bill Kitchen, until in 1983 a call came from Senegal in West Africa for a publishing worker who was fluent in the French language. Again, Nigel was 'ready to go, ready to stay, ready his place to fill'. He spent four years in Senegal as Publishing Director for the Sahel Union, and was then transferred to Ivory Coast (Abidjan) as the Publishing Department was moved there, since they had more colporteurs. He and Raija stayed there for another three years.

He was ordained in Dakar, Senegal, on 1 December 1990, before moving to Lubumbashi in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to occupy the role of Union Secretary for two years. Subsequently, he was asked to go

to Bangui, Central Africa, as ADRA Director.

Nigel began to experience ill health and had to return to the UK in 1993. He was hospitalised and twice underwent a triple heart bypass. He survived for a short while, being lovingly cared for at home by Raija. He passed away peacefully in his sleep after a long illness on 26 November 2021.

The funeral service was conducted at Romford Crematorium by Pastor Roy Chisholm, Pastor Harrison Mburani of Romford Church, and Elder Tristan Cuniah of Wood Green Church.

Nigel is now resting in peace as he awaits the call of the Life-giver.

PASTOR ROY CHISHOLM AND RAIJA NAIDOO

**Robert Richard
Timmerman
(1949-2021)**

d. 9 December.

Robert was born on 21 October 1949, the third child to the late Frederick and Sybil Timmerman. He attended Georgetown Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bourda, Guyana. His main church, when he joined his parents and siblings in England in the 1960s, was Chiswick Seventh-day Adventist Church in West London, and in the mid-1970s, while there, he met and married Lorraine Rutherford, who had also attended the Georgetown church and was a member of Brixton Seventh-day Adventist Church, where they were married on 10 September 1978. They were blessed with four lovely children, Diana, Roderick, Richard, Amanda, and granddaughter Astrid.

Robert worked and excelled in teaching and psychological counselling. He had achieved a Bachelor of Science degree and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, and was a brilliant science teacher and headteacher. He also enjoyed managing play centres in the school holidays.

Robert also attended Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA, in the early 1980s, where he obtained a Master of Arts degree in Counselling Psychology. He returned with his wife and daughter, Diana, to practise in Britain, where he felt his skills were greatly needed. He further achieved a Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Counselling from Roehampton University; a Certificate in Supervision and Consultancy from Maudsley Hospital, Kent; and recognition as a Person-Centred Supervisor from the Metanoia Institute, London.

Robert enjoyed many very



happy years working in therapy, serving a great number of people in the church and in the wider community in London and other parts of England. Most of his work was done as a therapeutic counsellor, then manager, at the Hammersmith Crisis Centre and Abayomi in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBH&F). During that time he also served as an associate and then executive member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP); a chairman of the LBH&F Commission for Racial Equality (CRE); a vice-chair of MIND in LBH&F; and on the Forum for the Advancement of Educational and Therapeutic Teaching (FAETT).

With the closure of Abayomi in 2001, Robert re-entered the field of education and became more involved in teaching and administration at a leadership level, first in the state sector and then at their privately run school. He retired from education in 2016 and renewed his passion for cooking, playing tennis, and swimming, among other things.

As a husband and father, Robert led his family extremely well. He became a church elder during the 1980s at Hampstead Seventh-day Adventist Church, where he also served as Personal Ministries Leader. He was a very active lay preacher, and in the 1990s he and his family started Beulah Branch Sabbath School in Streatham, South London, which later became South Mitcham Seventh-day Adventist Church. Whenever he could, Robert sought to encourage adherence to the fundamentals of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Before his death, he attended Basildon Seventh-day Adventist Church in Essex and followed 3ABN avidly. Robert passed away at Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, Essex, on Thursday 9 December 2021. His funeral service, held at Chiswick Seventh-day Adventist Church on Monday 7 February 2022 at 11.30am, was followed by cremation at Mortlake Crematorium in Kew at 2pm. The service was led by Pastor Melki, supported by Elder Marc Sabadin of Basildon Church, Essex, where Robert worshipped, and by Pastors Kwesi Moore and Kirk Thomas of the SEC and BUC respectively, of the United Kingdom Chapter of Adventist Guyanese (UCAG).

Among relatives and friends in attendance were Annette Briggs-Smith of Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church, Robert's 'spiritual sister'; Florence Allen, former president of UCAG; author Dr Penny Rawson, Robert's former supervisor for Counselling and

Psychotherapy; and Mr Norman Mitchell, MBE, aged 100+ years, Robert's oldest friend and mentor from Brent.

Left to mourn are his wife, children, and granddaughter; his siblings Terrance, Maurice, Yvonne, Veronica, Audrey, Gloria, Julie, and Priscilla; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins here and abroad.

Only God fully knows and understands our grief. Robert will always be sadly missed, but we cling to that blessed hope of the Resurrection: that, when the heavens burst and Jesus Christ returns for His own, we shall see our beloved Robert again. Meanwhile, may he rest in peace as we prepare for that Great Day!

LORRAINE TIMMERMAN & FAMILY

Leslie Riskowitz (1926-2021)

d. 21 December.

Leslie Riskowitz fell asleep in Jesus in hospital on 21 December 2021. He had been teaching piano pupils and, as an appointed elder, lay preaching and leading Bible study in the Rhyl church until COVID-19 called a halt to everyone's normal activities.

On the afternoon of 13 January 2022 a very large number of Leslie's friends and former pupils from far and wide gathered with church members and officiating ministers to say farewell to this renowned gentleman who had lived a long and extremely interesting life. The graveside service was held in Coed Bell Cemetery, Prestatyn, overlooking the sea and under a blue sky with day-long sunshine.

This service was a very moving and spiritual time, appreciated by everyone. Pastor Graham Allcock, Welsh Mission President, read the initial Scripture passage, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, and



concluded the service with the committal. Pastor David Foster presented a meaningful address; Pastor Roger Neal offered a heartfelt prayer; and Pastor Malcolm Turner read an encouraging meditation: 'In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore.' Pastor Kendall Down and Brother Earl Ramharacksingh shared their happy memories of Leslie and his dedication to God through his words, musical talent and teaching ability.

Earlier in the day, a short service for family and friends had taken place in the Rhyl church, led by the pastors who ministered at the graveside and the recently appointed minister, Pastor David Mano. Pastor Kendall Down officiated at the organ. Each pastor read a scripture followed by prayer. The elders of Rhyl Church, Barbara Griffiths and Mathew Smith, also presented comforting scriptures, and Barbara recited Leslie's favourite verse: 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me' (Galatians 2:20, NIVUK).

After this service, time was set aside for individuals to enter the church to pay their respects or to share their personal memories of Leslie.

Leslie's journey had begun far away from Wales. He was born in South Africa of Jewish parents who had originally lived in Lithuania. They moved to South America for three years, then settled in South Africa. His parents were Orthodox Jews of the tribe of Levi. He began playing the piano at the age of 3 and performed his first concert aged 7. At the age of 12 he was awarded a gold medal from the Trinity College of Music with a pass mark of 96%. During his teens he continued to excel as a pianist and studied with

outstanding teachers. He played Grieg's Piano Concerto in Johannesburg in 1943, and he had contracts with the South African Broadcasting Corporation and played concerts, performing Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov and Prokofiev. He then became a Licentiate in the Performing Arts of the University of South Africa.

In 1952 Leslie relocated to London to further his studies and acquired the LRAM and ARCM, and also performed in Brussels and Amsterdam. He studied with Frank Osborne, an exponent of Beethoven, and Louis Kentner, brother-in-law of Yehudi Menuhin, and with other eminent teachers. He performed five recitals at the Wigmore Hall, and one at the Royal Festival Hall. Leslie taught many young people from the London area, and became much sought after by parents wishing to enable their children to study music.

Having grown up in a Jewish family, Leslie said that he did not hear the name of Jesus Christ until his sister-in-law took him to a Christian class in Johannesburg when he was 22. His mother was horrified when he began to read the Bible, including the New Testament. After moving to London, he noticed the New Gallery Centre while walking down Regent Street. He went into the Reading Room, where he was invited to attend evangelistic meetings with Pastor E. Folkenburg. He extended his study of the Bible, but could not understand the idea of coming to God through Jesus Christ. Eventually the words 'in the name of Jesus' brought home to him the importance of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He accepted Jesus into his life and was baptised.

Leslie met Megan, daughter of Pastor and Mrs Matthew Murdoch, in London, and they married in the New Gallery Centre in 1967. They moved to North Wales in 1975, where he became much sought

after as a piano teacher, enabling young people to excel in their studies and to obtain places at Chetham's School of Music, Manchester. Since Leslie's passing, one of his talented young students has continued to excel and recently won three first prizes at an annual music festival. So Leslie's talent continues through his pupils who perform and also train others to develop their musical skills.

We look forward to the 'sweet by and by' when Jesus returns and the greatest concert of all time will take place. Together we will sing the Hallelujah Chorus with all the angels of heaven. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

MIRIAM WOOD

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Ancient words: 'without'

Last month we all celebrated Easter (observing it for its real significance, the crucial events of Passion Week, in which our Lord was crucified for our sins and raised to life), and so we sang hymns around that theme (although, of course, they're relevant at every time of year, not just at Easter). One of these was 'There Is a Green Hill Far Away', number 164 in the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. I'm sure you know it very well. Its first line continues, 'without a city wall', which often causes us to think that the hill in question, the hill of Calvary, lacked a city wall, while other hills had them. While this is certainly true – the hill of Calvary did not possess a city wall, in that it was not surrounded by one – that's not the primary meaning of 'without' in this song. Rather, 'without', as it is used here, used to mean 'outside', so that we should instead envision a hill near to a city wall, with the city enclosed by the wall, and the hill outside it.

To my mind, that makes the scene of the crucifixion even more tragic. It wasn't that Christ didn't have His own city, His own kingdom, His own people. He did. He was simply 'outside' them, 'without' – rejected, abandoned, forsaken – their Creator, Redeemer and King, being crucified by the people of the very city that He longed to gather together and protect, but which would, just forty years later, be razed to the ground. Praise God for the crucifixion and the resurrection, which give us hope beyond the grave.

ANDREW PUCKERING

Sunset

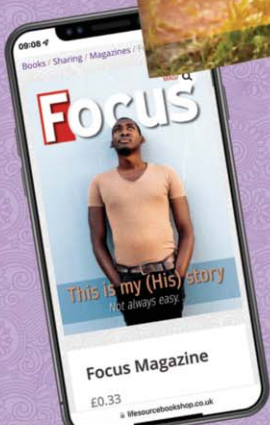
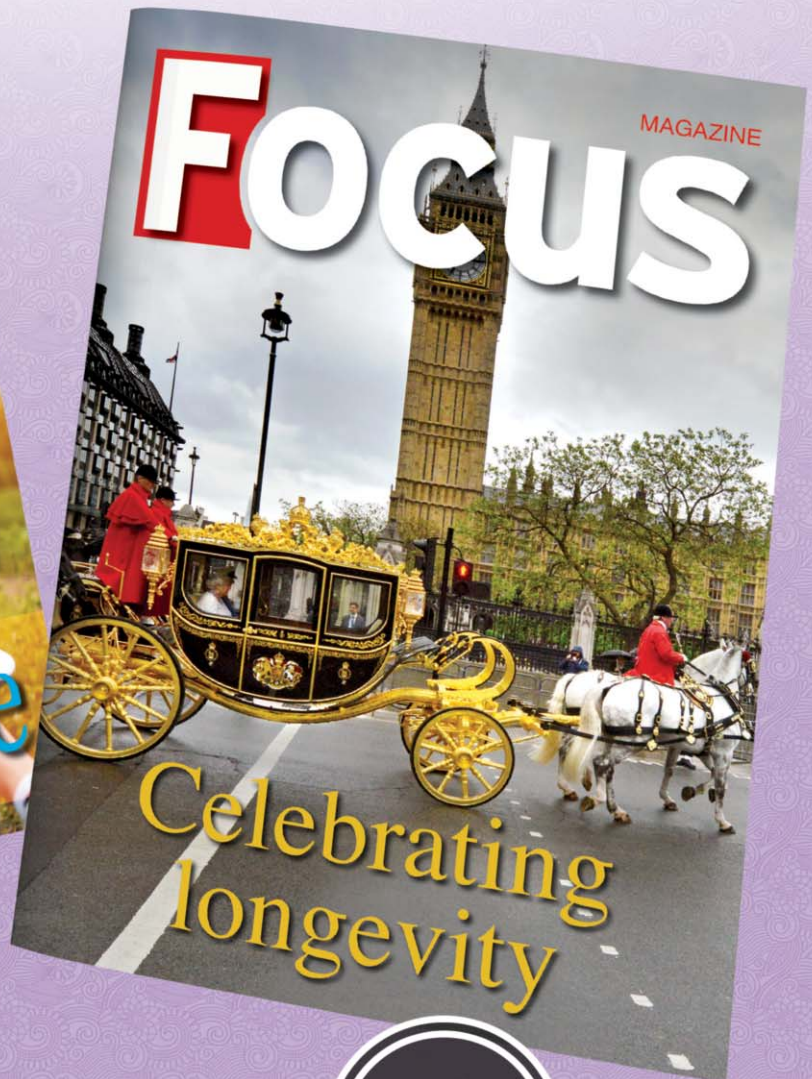
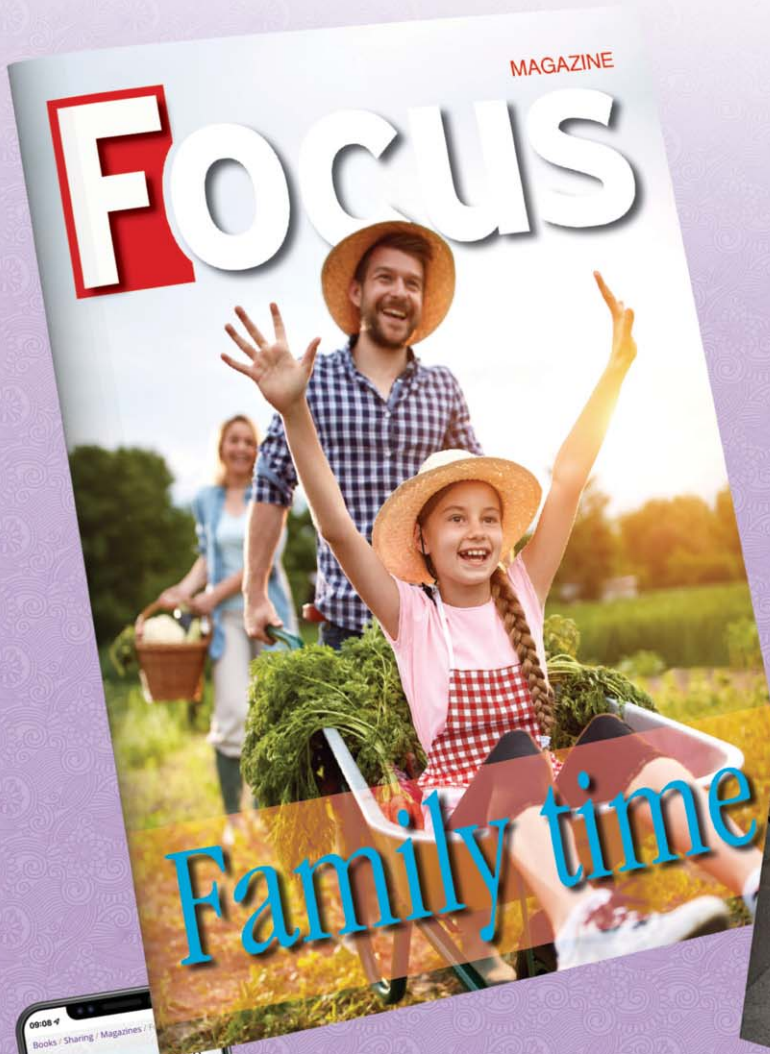
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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
May 27	9.03	9.15	9.14	9.40	9.42
Jun 3	9.10	9.23	9.22	9.50	9.51
10	9.17	9.29	9.29	9.57	9.58
17	9.20	9.33	9.33	10.02	10.03
24	9.22	9.34	9.35	10.03	10.04

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