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Messenger

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in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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Adventist presence in Exeter since 1873

**Members celebrate 80 years with place of worship.
'He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.'**

Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

Read full story on page 5



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A summary of the Treasurer's Report to the British Union Conference Executive Committee, 17 September 2020

by **Earl Ramharacksingh**, British Union Conference Treasurer

Adjectives like 'unprecedented', 'challenging' and 'catastrophic' are routinely and appropriately being used to describe these times. As the world continues to teeter from COVID-19 recovery to new spikes, the lives of so many across the world will have been so adversely affected that many changes will not be reversed.

As we try to make operational and strategic decisions, it is important for us to ascertain the financial impact and potential longevity of the current pandemic. The UK economy is unlikely to reach pre-COVID-19 level until early 2023. As a result, not every business or charity will survive the financial impact of the coronavirus. Across the British Union Conference, all the institutional treasury departments have been working tirelessly to ensure that data is efficiently and accurately processed to help leaders make 'informed' decisions.

BUC tithe – For the seven months to July 2020 we have seen a tithe return of £11.7m, which is a £2.03m (14.8%) fall in tithe across the BUC fields. We are expecting the overall tithe return for 2020 to further weaken as we reach year-end. At the end of July we were £217,799 below budget. The Welsh and Scottish Missions reflect positive increases during difficult financial times. Whether we see a positive or negative figure, we continue to affirm our covenant with God.

Working capital and liquidity – Because of our restricted operations and furloughing of staff, our costs have been contained for now, maintaining working capital 113%. However, as expected, liquidity has fallen to 81%, due to the erosion of cash held. Without the Government's Job Retention Scheme (JRS),

grants and the pension fund support, our liquidity would have been far worse. The Conferences have similarly been able to access JRS, and are able to use the Gift Aid income to sustain their operations at this time.

Expenditure – Our current expenditure is prioritised to 'just essentials', virtual programmes and evangelism (where this can still safely be undertaken). Employment costs are within budget, with the greatest saving of all, travel, down £50,873, as expected. Departmental expenditure is underutilised by £162,969. Office support expenditure is down by £17,013 due to the office closure, but insurance and maintenance costs are as budgeted, ensuring our properties are continually maintained. Overall, we are showing a deficit for the seven months to 31 July 2020 of £235,601. We expect this deficit to reach £400,000 by December and continue growing after that by £33,000 per month.

Coronavirus financial impact

Most of our sister organisations continue to experience financial challenges during this period.

ADRA – Due to the combining of the Foreign Office with DFID (UK AID), grant applications face a greater challenge, with the added factor of Brexit on the horizon.

The pension fund – The latest valuation from the actuaries indicated a decreasing deficit of £17 million, which is now scheduled to be paid by 2028, with the COVID-19 pandemic adding two years to the conclusion of the pension fund deficit resolution from our previous valuation.

The Stanborough Press – The Press

continues to operate in financially challenging times with the loss of its main revenue streams. It has taken the difficult decision to make redundancies, place other staff on reduced hours (and salary), and cut costs where possible.

Stanborough Primary School – The new school year commenced with 17 fewer pupils than the previous year, resulting in an income loss of £139,000 when compared with the previous year. The effects of the coronavirus on the ability of school life to function continue to cause apprehension. To ensure the school's future survival, a process has begun to make substantial staffing reductions to counter the huge fall in income.

Stanborough Secondary School – COVID-19 has had a critical impact on the school's finances. The loss of the lucrative overseas student market, coupled with a reduction in local boarders to four students, has highlighted the costs of the school of English and the boarding school staff to the overall school. As with the primary school, a process has begun to reduce staff in all areas of the school, with the aim of re-balancing the budget to viability and sustainability.

Conclusion: lessons from a crisis

Economic recovery from COVID-19 could take years, but business is already showing that innovation, determination and kindness are key. In all of this, we've had to do many things differently, finding new, innovative and creative ways to reach out to our members and support the work that God has entrusted to all of us. Friends, let us stay focused on our mission and task that God has commissioned us to do.

Account details

Sort code: 60-80-09/Account number: 84598816

Returning by cheque: cheques are payable to North England Conference.*

To return your tithe and offerings by making a card payment, please note our new dedicated number: 01157 950 785.

*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

Online donations can be made via the Conference's own website: <https://nec.adventist.uk/contact-us/donate/>. Simply follow the instructions given on each area of the page, and ensure that the North England Conference is your choice for where the donation should go.

'In seeking to fulfil the commission of Matthew 28, it is my desire that each congregation within the North England Conference should be an integral part of its community. Our congregations should be the place that our communities look to in times of storm, in times of crisis, in times of happiness and in times of celebration. Our congregations should be the place where refuge can be found, because we have demonstrated to them that all it takes to bring calm to a situation is a word from the Master, who never sleeps. Thank you for your continued faithfulness.'

Richard Jackson, President



David Neal, Editor

The pandemic – the long haul, and the Twizzle Ladder factor

Agreed! The pandemic has been going on long enough now, and it's time it was over. Given the Government's new COVID-19 restrictions this week, possibly lasting for up to six months, it's going to be a long and hard winter – unless we recognise the 'wake-up' call now. As one who has a fairly optimistic disposition on life, I have to say that in the last few weeks I've felt quite a sense of personal gloom, which is quite unusual for me. If I am 'feeling it', then surely others are too.

An Office of Population and Statistics survey showed that during the lockdown more than two-thirds of British adults (69%) reported feeling somewhat or very worried about the effect COVID-19 was having on their lives.¹ On 30 June the *Guardian* reported a MIND (the mental health charity) survey of 16,000 people during the first three months of lockdown: 'Overall, 65% of adult participants with a pre-existing mental health problem said it had become worse during lockdown, with the figure higher, at 75%, among people aged 13-24 with pre-existing mental health problems.'² It's not difficult to see the reasons for distress:

- Concern about personal health or that of a loved one
- Ban on household visits to see family and friends
- Inability to make plans
- The 'hassle' of wearing a face mask
- I used to have a job – but where and when is my next job?
- I have no money – only debt!
- How long will I have my job?
- Change – is this really the new normal?
- The loss of hope
- Boredom

Perhaps what really nags in the background: is this really the new normal? Who knows? But, for those of us living in the comfort and prosperity of the global West, this is new – and we're in shock. In 'usual times', mostly, we're able to keep health issues under control. Economic life is reasonably stable. Having a job is normal, and we travel freely wherever and whenever we want. The ability to aspire, economically and socially, is something we take for granted. Worth reflecting on is the context: these realities are not a given for billions of the people we share this planet with today; nor were they in history.

If you are 'overly' worried about any of the above (except wearing a face mask), affecting your ability to cope emotionally, do not hesitate to consult your GP or seek counselling from an appropriate health professional. With added

spiritual support, we might just make it through. Let me explain with a story.

A long time ago, when funfairs were popular, I found myself at a competition booth called 'The Twizzle Ladder' – the rope ladder challenge. Climb all nine rungs, angled at 45 degrees, ring the bell at the top, and the £10 prize is yours. In place of fixed ends, the ladder suspends over pivoting pulleys to create the challenge and to provide the fun. Make a false move while climbing, and you find yourself spun upside down and thrown off the ladder – all for the price of a pound.

'No, not for me, thank you very much,' I said repeatedly to the stallholder coaxing me to try. His persistence made me wonder if the game was rigged; and, because I hate to see people being ripped off, I decided to stay around and watch.

Big, confident Barry was first on: 'No problem; any fool can do this!' he exclaimed. Looking carefully at where he put his foot on each rung, up he went. Rung one, two, three: 'Argh!' Onto the safety mattress he fell with a thud. Not only his pride was bruised.

Next up was a tourist from Japan. He looked as though he'd conquer the task with technical savvy. Standing at the foot of the ladder, putting both hands on each side in a deliberately calculated position, he gripped the rope as tight as he could, closed his eyes, paused for a moment (praying, perhaps?), and then was off. At each rung, he carefully watched where to place his hands to grip at the perfect point – rung one, two, three, four, five – and, just as he was beginning to look good, 'Tiek rādīti rezultāti vaicājumam!' (Japanese for 'Argh!')

You know the proverb, 'The higher you go, the harder you fall?' I need say no more. By this time, the crowd was getting a little restless and vocal, Barry's friends in particular. 'It's a con; can't be done; we want our money back!' The storeholder calmly assured them it was possible. 'Don't believe you; we're not stupid, you know; we can see this is a rip-off,' they replied. 'I'll tell you what,' said the storeholder, 'I will get my daughter to show you it can be done.' Then suddenly, as if out of nowhere, his young pre-teenage daughter appeared at the foot of the ladder. Up she soared, rung one, two, three, four . . . eight, nine and ten, ringing the bell vigorously to great cheers. *How quickly the mood of a crowd can change*, I thought.

The stallholder couldn't help but look smug. Barry couldn't believe what he'd just seen, and the Japanese fellow, totally dazed, walked away with notebook in hand,

scribbling a maths equation. My mind was in a spin. The stallholder was clearly on to a good thing here, raking in pound after pound, without having to award the prize. But how did the daughter do it? Ok, so she'd practised the routine hundreds of times, but that still didn't explain the secret. Then it clicked: Barry and the tourist were 'eyes down'. The daughter, from the foot of the ladder to the top – where were her eyes? Fixed, totally focused, on the bell!

'Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end' (Hebrews 12:2, GNT, emphasis supplied).

When faced with the pandemic for the long haul, where are you looking?

¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/5june2020>

²<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/30/uk-mental-health-has-deteriorated-during-lockdown-says-mind>



Praise God – Heaven is rejoicing!

by Shirley Williams

In these strange times of social distancing and lockdown, on Friday, 29 August, Pamela Lord, Franklin Grant, Britania Tulloch, Lovina Okoroama and Nancia Lutumbra demonstrated through baptism that Christ is to be Lord of their lives!

With the Lewisham church building closed for the prior five months, this baptism was held on completion of a risk assessment. Our service was quiet and sincere. Absent were the usual vibrant music, singing and packed pews. And yet we knew that these five wonderful people, and all heaven as well, were rejoicing with us! Each was baptised by Pastor Kwandwo Kwarteng-Ampofo and the pastoral team.

Here's just one story of a journey to Christ.

'My journey started in 2012. At that time I was going through a battle, and so when the opportunity arose for prayer and fasting I was eager to join, because I had a problem which could only be solved by divine intervention. I did not speak to anyone about it except God, even though I knew little about Him.

'For the month of June we would meet and pray together, but I never voiced my problem. One of my prayer requests to God was that I wanted to know how to pray so I could be set free from my current situation. At the end of the month of prayer and fasting, as I was praying, I literally heard: "Pray in reference." "Pray in reference to what?" I asked myself. Then I remembered that when I used to pray, I prayed without using the word of God as my guide. That night I slept like a baby with no bad dreams or disturbances.

'The Bible says all good things come from above. I knew this from experience, as God had set me free and I was able to start a new journey with the Father. Looking back, the most obvious thing for me was to be baptised – but that didn't happen then. Knowing that God had literally taken me out of the hands of the enemy and shown me love, compassion and mercy, I wanted to know more about the Creator. My prayers continued as I asked God to put me in a place where I



could truly learn and have a better understanding of who He is. With my desire for more, I can say that this is the point where I wanted to commit my life to God. But I needed guidance, and so, as God never leaves His children, the Lord sent me two Seventh-day Adventist ladies who took me under their wings and started studying the Bible with me.

'After almost two years of Bible study I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, and, after having lessons on baptism and attending church services, the question was put to me if I had ever been baptised. I never really understood very much about baptism or how important it is in the Christian life until I was given a Bible study and read the Bible myself.

'When I attended church, people would ask me if I was baptised. When I said 'no' I would see disappointment in their eyes, but later on I understood the importance of baptism as a symbol and witness of my commitment to Christ.

'Do you sometimes think things happen by chance? I know that with all that was going on in my life God was working to get me to where I am today. He's put me in a place where I can really get to know Him and understand what was done for me on the cross. When I got to this point of understanding salvation and what it entailed . . . I cried. I cried because I realised that, despite all that I had done before meeting God, because of love Christ died for my sin and took my place.

Once I understood this, I wanted to show God how sorry I was for all that I had done. I was ready to leave the old life, and, at whatever cost, start a new journey with Christ as my Lord, with the Holy Spirit leading the way, in His time.

'And to you, *MESSENGER* reader – if you want to get baptised, focus your mind on God. Allow

God to lead. Some are baptised due to pressure to please others. I would say, put it to the Lord: be still, and wait on Him to lead you.

'I pray that, as we continue to bond together in these changing times, God's word will move in earnest, bringing in the precious souls to Christ. Praise God – Heaven is rejoicing!'

A NATIONAL EVENT
HOSTED BY SEC
WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

CELEBRATING THE JOURNEY:
25 YEARS OF GOD LEADING WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

Women crossing over into a new era in these trying times!

Heather-Dawn Small
GC Women's Ministries

Raquel Arrais
GC Women's Ministries

Clair Sanchez
TED Women's Ministries

A Modern-Day Exodus Experience of Transition

Sharon Platt-McDonald
BLIC Women's Ministries

Jacqueline Otokpo
SEC Women's Ministries

Beulah Plunkett
NEC Women's Ministries

Sunday 4th – Sabbath 10th
October 2020
Live Stream & Via Zoom
(details to follow)

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Exeter Church celebrate 80th anniversary of their church building on Zoom!



The Exeter Church building was dedicated on 24 August 1940, but at the time of planning the 80th anniversary it was decided to wait until after the summer season to celebrate it. As it turned out, due to the COVID-19 virus, we celebrated the anniversary on Zoom on 5 September. With friends joining us from other parts of the United Kingdom and the world, our time together was a more vibrant occasion than anticipated, with over sixty people watching and listening.

The first meeting recalled the history of the church, and Stella Jeffery gave an account of that from records she had in her possession. It was in 1873 that a group of about ten Adventists first met together for worship each Sabbath. The first church or company was organised on 11 November 1916, without a resident minister or a proper place in which to worship. Following an evangelistic campaign the membership rose to 18, with baptisms taking place in the River Exe. The minister, Pastor D. Morrison, was based in Plymouth (45 miles away), so the members struggled on without a regular minister. By 1932 the membership had declined to three.

In October 1938 Pastor Leslie Hardinge came to Exeter with Mr Osmond Rosier and Miss Frances Barr-Hamilton, who would visit the ladies. Within a year of the campaign at the Savoy Cinema, 33 people were added to the church membership, and eventually somebody found the building we now worship in.

Prior to being a place of worship, the building in King William Street had been a warehouse for a wholesale grocer and confectioner. Molly Hardinge called it 'the most dirt-harbouring, cobweb-infested building in the city'. They gradually 'coaxed the recalcitrant walls to order', installing a staircase, windows, baptistry and frontage. New paint brightened up the place. The BUC president, Pastor H. W. Lowe; BUC treasurer, A. Carey; and SEC president, Pastor G. D. King, officiated at a whole weekend of services from 23 to 25 August 1940 when the church was dedicated.

In 1974 the building was riddled with woodworm and rot, and we had to move out. With Pastor Mike Stickland as our pastor and Brian Jeffery the elder, we implored the South England Conference to help finance the restoration. Through the incredible support of Pastor Donald Lowe and the SEC Executive, we employed an architect under the supervision of Brian Jeffery. By 1977 the building was repaired and even extended, and on 17 September it was rededicated to the glory of God, Pastors E. H. Foster and Donald Lowe officiating.

During this time Pastor Leclare and Shelly Litchfield were appointed as the ministerial couple to the district, two newlyweds who endeared themselves to the congregation and their community. They joined our Zoom meeting from Tennessee, sharing their warm memories of working in Exeter. Litch and Shelly connected with the Stewart family through both Bible study and special story and craft sessions. Both Ron and Margaret later dedicated their lives to full-time ministry, Ron

becoming a pastor, and Margaret a Bible worker. It was special that Margaret and some of her family were able to be present with us for our celebration. Yet another connection was remembered as Michael and Doris Bowden recalled how Doris came from Mauritius in 1974 and brought her future husband into the church. Michael was baptised with Margaret and Ron Stewart on 6 January 1979.

The predominant concern for the church in 2015 was the building work to improve the front aspect of the church and the foyer to make it more inviting for visitors. The door was replaced and the steps in the foyer were widened, and this made the foyer more spacious and open. The work was made possible by the kind bequests of Nellie Wells and Irene Stockley.

A special moment in remembering our story was reconnecting with some of our former ministers. Pastor Ian Lorek (recently retired) told of the latest facelift and of the many characters he had known in his 14 years of service to the church, both starting and ending his working life as our pastor. Pastor Jonathan Barrett sent a video including pictures of various activities during his tenure as our minister. Pastor Bertie and Thessie de Nysschen joined the Zoom meeting from South Africa, highlighting further health and safety adjustments to the building during his tenure.

For our worship service, Hannah and Louisa Jeffery played a pre-recorded item on piano and cello reminding us of God's love and His peace. Our current minister, Pastor Weiers Coetser, worked hard to organise a beautiful online worship service, with Pastor Douglas McCormac (SEC Executive Secretary) the preacher.

Pastor McCormac, with his customary humour, spoke of projects he started but did not always finish immediately. He liked to have things to return to. His message to the church, from Philippians 1:3-6, was about God completing His work in us! God does not keep score of our failures, but sees the whole picture of our lives and values each one of us – He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion. This is true of us individually, as well as of the future of our Exeter church family.

It was also encouraging to hear from newer members of the church who have felt welcome here, despite language and cultural differences. Our official membership of fifty represents sixteen different nationalities. Our total number of worshippers represents many more. It is also a blessing to know that our children, now adults, who have moved to new areas are still working hard to help their present congregations.

Our 80th anniversary reminded us that we are one big, worldwide family saved by the grace of Jesus. We gave thanks for God's blessings in the past, and rejoiced in the assurance that God is still the foundation of our church for the future, with or without walls. After all, the church is the people!

STELLA JEFFERY

Iford Central Possibilities Ministries Day

'What is my label?' was the theme for the Iford Central Church Possibilities Ministries Day via Zoom. People from the various age groups were represented in the programme, from children to the elderly. We also had a presentation from ASNA (the Adventist Special Needs Association), illustrating the work and support they have been giving over the past year.

The possibilities leader, Gardia Howell, who is blind, gave an eye-opening explanation of the experiences the deaf and people with other disabilities encounter on a regular basis. She mentioned the way others try to speak for them, but not accurately. She highlighted the fact that disabled people of colour go through difficulties and hard loops; and, even in church, attitudes can be very discouraging.

Jesus broke down this barrier, but people put it up again. Jesus looked mostly to the small and insignificant and invisible, and we should be guided by our conscience. As members, we should not put up stumbling blocks for the blind, deaf and disabled, but consider the grace of God. There are over 11 million people in the UK who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as over 13 million people with other disabilities. These too are souls to be saved. We have a right to be here and to belong to the family of God.

The main speaker was Garfield McIntosh, who is deaf. In summary, this is what he shared:

We label people by the clothes they wear, their jobs, where they live, and so on. The labels we place on people result in many people facing injustice. Martin Luther King once said: 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' Sharing his own experience, Garfield shared how he became deaf while working in sub-zero temperatures in



Garfield McIntosh



Gardia Howell

Canada, when his inner ear became frozen. He now uses a variety of technological equipment to help him function. He further mentioned some of the various aids and equipment available for the deaf and disabled. Sadly, he said, 'Many of our churches fall short of the various aids available to help people who are differently abled.'

He mentioned his intervention in the incident of a blind lady who once attended church with her guide dog but was being turned away.

Differently abled people need support, because we all plan to be at the welcome table one of these days.

GARFIELD MCINTOSH

Newbold Diversity Centre

THE 2020 BEACH LECTURE

SCRIPTURE AND VIOLENCE

CHRISTIAN, JEWISH AND MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday
13th
October
2020
7.30pm
BST

newbold.ac.uk/diversity-centre
contact: Helen Pearson 07775 612 610

Speakers:

Julia Snyder
Daniel Weiss
Omar Shaukat

Cambridge Inter-faith Programme



As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Dear Friends of Diversity
Thank you for your support for the September Diversity Lecture. More than 170 people participated in the Zoom webinar, and the lecture has been viewed more than 1,400 times on the College Facebook page. There were nearly 50 questions in the Q&A session, showing the thoughtfulness and diversity of our audience.

The fact that our lectures are now online gives us an unprecedented opportunity to connect with *MESSENGER* readers spread far and wide across the UK and Ireland.

We are delighted that, for the first time in its history, we shall hold

the Beach Lecture online, on Tuesday 13 October, and feature three speakers rather than one!

What is the relationship between religion, Scripture and violence? Some people worry that scriptures such as the Qur'an and the Bible fan the flames of violence in the world today, while others insist that they are inherently peaceful. The 2020 Beach Lecture features leading contributors to a recent international research project into precisely this question.

Register here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/5915973424645/WN_RnrM1Y1eTBWQTNr9Lt6kCQ

A brief postscript to *Making Friends for God*, Lesson 12: 'A message worth sharing'

I don't know about you, but whenever we study together what is considered to be the epicentre of Revelation (chapter 14), I continue to be particularly energised about the message. And why not, because, without question, it has a specific application for end-time people. If there is one line of the lesson material that I repeatedly pressed my luminous highlighter over, it was the five words on page 94 which simply said, **'The Gospel is all about Jesus.'** How easy to highlight – and yet how difficult to keep in focus when sharing the message of the three angels. In preparation for the lesson, I stumbled across a book by the late Stuart Tyner, author of many books on grace. His work, *Chosen by Grace*, published back in 2009, describes seven portraits of how end-time people could be, living out over and over again the grace of Christ. Of particular note was the excerpt below, which caught my imagination . . .

Implications for evangelism

by Stuart Tyner

'Often, we've filled our evangelistic efforts with tales of led astray people who have attempted to change God's commands, to ignore them, or to lead others into disobeying them. What do you think would happen if, instead, we filled our evangelism with the stories of authentic end-time people who heroically and fruitfully are trying to obey all of God's commands?'

'What if, for example, instead of recounting medieval intrigues to add human works to the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, we featured testimonies of people whose lives have been dramatically changed by grace? What if, rather than focusing on the claims of aged catechisms about changing the Sabbath, we focused instead on the blessings that have come our way as we have attempted to obey the Sabbath commandment?'

'If the biblical claim is true that people are led to glorify God when they see our obedience, our good deeds (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12), why don't we commit to doing a better job of telling the stories of Christians who are doing good deeds: fighting AIDS in Africa, rescuing child sex-slaves in Thailand, translating the Bible into the languages of primitive tribes in South America, doing medical and dental work for refugees, and building homes for hurricane victims?'

'Scripture says God's kindness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). If that's true, might not the testimony of the people redeemed by grace, who are revealing the kindness of God by their obedience . . . effectively lead people to return to their heavenly Father?'

'If Jesus was serious when He said, "The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him" (John 3:14, 15, NIV), wouldn't lifting up Jesus always be a better evangelistic strategy than attempting to put down or discredit religious organisations other than our own? Isn't the good news that we are commissioned to tell to "all nations" (Matthew 28:19, NIV) really about "the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:8, NIV) and not about the beast that at the end of time is thrown into the lake of fire?'

Stuart Tyner, *Chosen by Grace* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2009), p. 71

A very limited supply of Tyner's excellent book, *Chosen by Grace*, is available from the sales team at our Lifesource Bookshop distribution centre in Grantham on 01476 591700 or sales@lifesourcebookshop.co.uk.

Price: £11.45 + postage and packing.

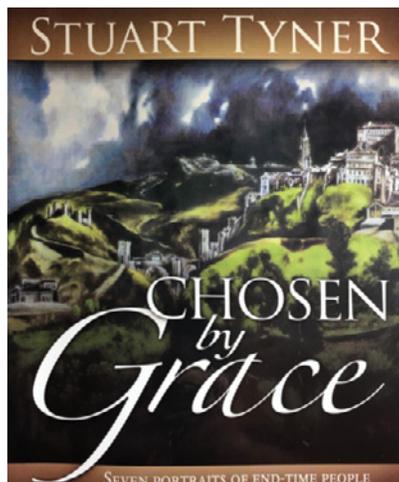


Photo: Judy Plaatjes



Helping children (and others) with viral anxiety

by Karen Holford



watching or listening to the anxiety-provoking news. Look for the heart-warming stories of kindness and generosity in this crisis and share these with your children.

Be a calm example

Tell your children what you do to calm yourself down when you begin to feel anxious, so they can learn some tips from you to help them manage their own fears. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, try some of the ideas in this article so that less of your distress spills onto your children. Find a quiet place to talk to the people who listen to your feelings, show that they care for you, and help you to feel calmer.

The coronavirus outbreak has naturally triggered an enormous outpouring of anxiety. The escalating crisis is in the news every time we turn on the TV or tap on our phones. Life has suddenly turned upside down, and the rules are being rewritten daily. Families are working, studying, caring for each other and trying to stay healthy in confined spaces, with limited resources, and often a long way from those they love. When we feel anxious we're more likely to be irritable with each other, and that causes even more anxiety.

The more children feel loved, safe, and happy, the less anxious they'll be. Even in hard times, there are lots of things you can do in your own home to help your children and teenagers feel much less anxious.

One of the first things you can do as a parent is to manage your own anxiety around COVID-19. Find out the latest reliable information about staying safe and help everyone in your family to follow the advice. Limit the amount of time you spend reading,

Notice what they're feeling

Pay close attention to what your children are doing and saying, and look out for any signs that they are worried about what is happening around them. Some children go quiet and sit alone in their room; others might become moody; some might behave more roughly with those around them, or play in ways that are destructive. Children and teenagers might not know how to start a conversation with you about how they're feeling. It can help to spend time alone with them, doing something that they really enjoy, before opening up the conversation about their concerns.

Listen carefully

Listen warmly to your children's fears and concerns. Stop what you're doing, look into their eyes, and show that you care by hugging them or touching them warmly. Explain that it's normal to feel worried when there are lots of scary things happening in the world, and the best thing to do is to talk about their fears so that you can care for each

other and work things out together.

If your child finds it difficult to talk about their feelings, try drawing an outline of a head and asking them to write or draw on the shape what they're thinking about. Or write out each worry on a separate piece of paper and think of practical things you can do together to manage each of their concerns. Try not to dismiss their fears, or put them down for being worried, because they might be less likely to talk to you about their feelings in the future.

Check in daily

A crisis like this will bring up all kinds of different emotions and challenges for each of us. Check in with each other every day by sharing your saddest moments together and comforting each other. Then share your happiest moments together and celebrate them in a fun way. Tell each other the most surprising thing you learned in the day, too; or the most beautiful thing you saw or heard.



A crisis like this will bring up all kinds of different emotions and challenges for each of us.

Remember when . . .

Most children have experienced a time when they felt really anxious about something, but everything turned out fine in the end. Use these experiences to help them remember how well they coped with some of their worries in the past. 'You were really worried about going into a new class at school last year: but you were really brave, and you managed so well; and by the end of your first day you had made friends with Billy and you had a load of fun! I wonder what will work out well this time?'

Balanced honesty

When children ask us hard questions about what is happening in the pandemic, we need to answer them honestly and simply, without too much extra information. If we 'lie' to them to help them feel better, and then they find out we have not told them the truth, it will make it harder for them to trust us in the future. 'Yes, a lot of people are getting very sick and some of them are dying, but lots more people get better. Many people in the world are working really hard to find a solution, and lots of people, right here around us, are doing amazing things to take care of others.'

Break the anxiety cycle

When our negative thoughts and concerns take over our brain, they can make us feel even more worried and sad. Doing something that takes lots of concentration can break the anxiety cycle. Hobbies, construction kits, jigsaws, learning a new skill, cooking, reading, mind puzzles, and art and craft projects can all help to distract children and teenagers from the spiral of anxious thoughts, especially when you do the activities together as a family.

Try gratitude

Thankfulness can be a great antidote to anxiety. When we remember the positive things in our lives, and we feel grateful, we're

more likely to feel calmer and more joyful. Go through the alphabet as a family, listing all the things you're thankful for, beginning with each of the letters. Walk through your house and name ten things you're thankful for in each of the rooms. Find a tray, and ask everyone to put three things on the tray that represent what they're most thankful for.

Calming down

Help your child or teenager to make a list of things that help them to feel better when things are bothering them: sipping cool water, or trying to blow the biggest bubbles possible, can help them breathe in naturally calming patterns. Hugs, laughing at jokes and funny video clips, gentle tickling, back rubs, warm bubble baths, playing games, baking bread, making a meal together, being creative, and focusing on the intricate details of nature can all help them to feel better. Try to include some naturally quiet and calming moments in your everyday schedule at home.

Be kind

Doing something kind for someone else helps us to feel better, too. When we're compassionate and think of others, we're naturally calmed as well. Check out the kindness activities you can do from home at the Trans-European Division (TED) website.

Help your children to make colourful and encouraging posters to put in the windows of your home to give hope and joy to the people who walk down your street. Make cards to send to lonely relatives, and create gifts together that you can give to others in the future.

Prayer and worship

In this time of anxiety and stress, look for the Bible verses that bring peace and comfort, and focus on them. Learn them in fun ways, and sing any songs you know that are based on these Bible verses. Act out the story of Jesus calming the storm, and reflect on how He calms the storms in our world and in our hearts. Anxious children may need interactive prayers that they can see and experience.

Draw around your hands and cut out the shape. Imagine that this is the hand of God. Write your worries on the palm of the hand. Then remember that God cares about us very much, and we can leave all our worries in His hands.

At times of major crisis, like this COVID-19 pandemic, there are many things we hear and see in the news from around the world that can overwhelm us with a sense of helplessness and tragedy. It's important to put these things in God's hands too so that they do not overwhelm us. This is where we can leave our prayers for all the suffering people, those who have lost loved ones, the medical staff and the scientists who are looking for cures, medicines and vaccines.

If you are looking for creative worship ideas to do at home together, check out the family worship placemats which you can download and print on the TED website.

These are challenging times. None of us has a clear road map of how this pandemic will be resolved in the end. We will have moments of anxiety as we face difficult challenges and decisions. Talking about our dilemmas together, comforting each other, and praying for each other will all help us to navigate this unknown territory. But we can be sure that God does have the map; He knows how this will work out; we know that He is lovingly longing to take us all away from this broken world forever. One day He will wipe away all our tears forever and calm all of our fears with His love.

For now, He is with us and our families through this crisis. He holds us all close to His heart. He cries when we cry, and He hurts when we hurt. He comforts us in all that we are facing so that we can comfort others and pass on His love. And He invites us to hand over all our anxieties to Him, because He cares so much for each of us.

(Revelation 21; 1 John 4:18; Isaiah 41:10; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 1 Peter 5:7)

Karen Holford has an MA in Educational and Developmental Psychology and an MSc in Family Therapy. She is the Family Ministries Director of the Trans-European Division.

How the immune system works – an illustration

by Grace Walsh

Castles were primarily built during the wars of the Middle Ages for the purpose of protection. The castle was a kind of fortified tower that had central importance in the defence of a region. Think of your body as a castle with a sophisticated defence system.

When it comes to COVID-19, we do everything in our power to make sure we maintain social distancing, and if necessary self-isolate to protect both ourselves and others. At the same time, understanding the nature of our defence system, and doing everything we can to boost it, will position us well.

There are three lines of defence:

The most important non-specific defence is the skin, which acts as a physical barrier to keep pathogens out. Even openings in the skin such as the mouth and eyes are protected by saliva, mucus, and tears, which contain an enzyme that breaks down bacterial cell walls.

Non-specific immune cells are macrophages (which detect and destroy pathogens by engulfing them) and dendritic cells (which detect pathogens and initiate an immune response among other cells of the immune system).

The specific immune system is made of lymphocytes like B- and T-cells, which are activated mostly by dendritic cells.

To keep this war metaphor going, the immune system is far more advanced than the best militaries in our world. It is equipped with scores of mobile soldiers, an arsenal of deadly weapons, and a sophisticated chemical communication network. These defenders must be on duty every minute of every day in order to detect and destroy the enemy. Even one surviving virus or bacterium can be potentially life-threatening.

Phagocytes are the army's foot soldiers – the first ones to arrive on the battlefield. They

engulf invading germs and dissolve the enemy with powerful enzymes. One out of every 100 cells belongs to the body's armed forces – an army totalling nearly one trillion white blood cells! They make up about 1% of the total blood volume in a healthy adult.

Lymphocytes perform other important tasks. Some, like natural killer cells, carry weapons that destroy cells infected with invading viruses. Other lymphocytes target cancer cells, while others produce highly specialised weapons called antibodies.

While the immune system is designed to protect the body from disease, if it is weakened in any way we are more likely to get sick.

So what's food got to do with it?

Good nutrition is more about what you do eat than what you don't eat. Nutrients and phytochemicals work in synergy to enhance immunity. Eat a healthy diet instead of just using vitamin and mineral supplements as insurance. A high-fibre diet blunts harmful, excessive immune responses in the lungs. At the same time, a high-fibre diet boosts antiviral immunity by activating killer T-cells.

Additionally, soluble fibre transforms the 'personality' of immune cells. They go from being pro-inflammatory, 'angry' cells to being anti-inflammatory, healing cells that enable us to recover faster from infection. Good sources include beans, oats, oat bran, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits, apples, strawberries, peas, and potatoes. Greens and cruciferous vegetables are especially useful for boosting immunity in the gut and the skin.

Berries are excellent immune system boosters because of their high content of anthocyanins and polyphenols. Onions and garlic increase natural killer cell activity and help to inhibit inflammation.

By eating natural foods that



contain an abundance of vitamins and minerals, we can help keep our immune systems operating smoothly. Vitamins A, C, D, E, B6 and B12 are powerful antioxidants and immune system boosters.

Minerals such as selenium and zinc deserve special attention for immunity. Selenium also helps natural killer cells to proliferate and increases their virus-fighting activity. Brazil nuts, cashews, oats, brown rice, lentils, and spinach provide good amounts of this trace mineral. Zinc is a trace mineral that exerts antioxidant activity and is essential for all immune cells. Zinc deficiency reduces the efficiency of T-lymphocytes.

For a healthy immune system,

the body needs certain essential fats. The body cannot manufacture these, so they must be obtained from nutritious food. One class of friendly fats is the omega-3 fatty acids, which empower the cancer-killing forces and inhibit the growth of cancers. Flaxseed, walnuts, green soya beans and spinach are all good sources of omega-3 fats.

Studies show that reducing fat intake to 22-25% of the total diet can improve the viral-fighting protection of immune cells.

And, finally, sugar, as sweet as it is, suppresses the immune system and encourages inflammation that fuels chronic complications of viral infections. Sugar weakens the white blood cells' ability to destroy bacteria.

NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO DURING THE LACKDOWN?

ARE YOU ANXIOUS, FEELING ALONE OR FRUSTRATED?

Do you need Bereavement support or are you struggling with your children?

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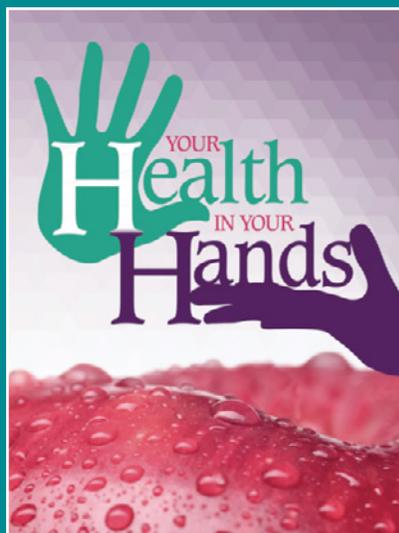
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Your Health in Your Hands

Editor: Julian Hibbert
 Publisher: The Stanborough Press Ltd.
 Pages: 160
 Format: paperback
 Price: £7.50 + p&p
www.lifefsourcebookshop.co.uk

During its 130 years of existence the Stanborough Press has promoted good health. During the 1960s and 1970s we published a magazine called *Good Health* with the motif, 'Good health does not come in a bottle.' In today's world we believe this value still rings true, and we applaud the efforts of the Government and the NHS to focus more on lifestyle medicine, which without question is overdue.



Your Health in Your Hands comprises

contributions from a cross-section of doctors, consultants, healthcare professionals and lifestyle medicine experts. Lifestyle diseases are still the biggest killers the Western world faces – and they're of increasing concern for the developing world, too. Is it possible that the health of our families can be a matter of choice, not chance? Even in the context of COVID-19, while we would never suggest that we know of a cure (we do not), we totally agree with the Prime Minister and UK public health policy in saying that making some wise health choices, particularly in the area of nutrition and exercise, can best position us to fight the COVID-19 virus we are so concerned about. But, above and beyond the current crisis, to care for our body, mind and spirit is an act of worship, recognising God's ownership of us. We call it stewardship.

I like to use the illustration of colour. In the context of the uncertain future, the outlook is grey, both personally and as a nation. Many of our personal and collective dreams are on hold. To cut to the chase – there seems to be trouble everywhere, and life as we used to know it, in many ways, is on hold.

But then there is hope! The 'Adventist health message' doesn't just stop at matters concerning body and mind, but deals in a hope based on the ancient and ever trustworthy words of the Bible. There is someone bigger than me, wiser than me, and intensely interested in my personal welfare – and even in the welfare of our nation. I dare to call Him a friend, whose name is Jesus. Of the many things He said and did during His life, one of His most interesting statements was, 'I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of' (John 10:10, MSG).

MESSENGER readers may think that, in recommending this book, I am preaching to the choir! Perhaps, but I know how difficult it can be at times to make right choices to support good health. Follow its principles and practical help, and there will be a need to change. Change that lasts is best done step-by-step. Change involves a lot of unlearning, which without question requires spiritual help.

Your Health in Your Hands is helpful in challenging us to think about the future again with hope – a message not only for us, but also for our friends – because, without doubt, it is also a book worth sharing.

EDITOR

The impact of loneliness on well-being

Recognising the detrimental impact of loneliness in England, the Government launched the world's first governmental strategy to address loneliness with the publication of a document in October 2018 titled 'A connected society: a strategy for tackling loneliness'. Containing 60 new policy commitments from across nine government departments, this has brought loneliness to the forefront, spotlighting the need for action.¹



The first Annual Report (January 2020) following the publication of the Loneliness Strategy lists some negative health outcomes of isolation.

'Often feeling lonely has been linked to early deaths and an increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, depression, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's.'²

In 2017, the Mental Health Foundation and Age Scotland published research on loneliness in Scotland which drew some sobering conclusions. Identifying loneliness as one of 'the leading public health challenges of our time', they went on to state:

'Research suggests more than 100,000 older people in Scotland are "chronically lonely" and it's as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day.' Highlighting the need for action, they concluded: 'If we are serious about ensuring older people enjoy a good quality of life then the prevalence of loneliness must be fully recognised and addressed.'³

In the same report, the research data found:

- 24% of adults aged 65+ feel depressed and 16% feel anxious as a result of loneliness.
- Nearly a third of older adults feel that they ought to be able to cope with loneliness by themselves.
- 15% of older adults see spending time on social media as improving their mental health.
- However, nearly 20% of older adults see technology as replacing face-to-face contact and so actually causing loneliness.
- 6% of older Scots will spend Christmas alone (up by 50% from 2015 figures).
- 1 in 5 keep the TV on most of the day because 'it's lovely to hear human voices'.
- 8% indicated that the TV is their main source of company over the festive period.

The challenge of loneliness also affects young people.

In a bid to tackle social isolation on campus, and thinking of students who might be struggling to thrive in a typical university environment, Plymouth University took decisive action. A space was created where individuals could feel comfortable and connected. In December 2018, a student-run well-being café called SPACE (Socialise, Play, Aspire, Connect and Enjoy) was created to provide a drop-in area offering mental health support for students.⁴

The next issue will highlight support interventions for loneliness.

Good health!

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-connected-society-a-strategy-for-tackling-loneliness> ²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-first-year> ³<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/loneliness-public-health-challenge-our-time> ⁴<https://gritdaily.com/uk-british-loneliness/amp/>

Adventist Church leaders vote ‘One Humanity’ statement addressing racism, casteism, tribalism, and ethnocentrism

The following statement was voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, on 15 September 2020, as published in the Adventist Review online.

One Humanity: a human relations statement addressing racism, casteism, tribalism, and ethnocentrism

The moral duty of declaring biblical principles in the treatment of fellow human beings has become paramount as the world increasingly recognises the lingering scourge of racial injustice, tribal conflicts, and caste system bigotry suffered by millions of persons in every society and world region. God *‘has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth’* (Acts 17:26, NKJV), and Jesus teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matt. 22:39). The Seventh-day Adventist Church acknowledges the important responsibility of making its commitments and compassion clear to a world expecting both words and deeds in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. Our commitment flows from our mission to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to *‘every nation, tribe, tongue, and people’* (Rev. 14:6, NKJV) in our troubled world as we recognise that only Christ can change the human heart.

Seventh-day Adventists are committed to the unchanging biblical truths which reveal that human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Based on the creation account in the book of Genesis, we believe in the God-given and immutable equality of all persons in all times, all places, and all circumstances. We are all descended from Adam and Eve, our original ancestors, which makes all humanity one family (Gen. 3:20). Even the tragic results of human choice to rebel against God have not erased the enduring relationships between all human beings. Distinctions of race, ethnicity, caste, and tribe are used to sinfully segment and divide the fundamental unity God intended all human beings to experience with Himself and each other.

We maintain our allegiance to the biblical principles of equality and dignity of all human beings in the face of historic and continuing attempts to use skin colour, place of origin, caste, or perceived lineage as a pretext for oppressive and dominating behaviour. These attempts are a denial of our shared humanity, and we deplore all such aggression and prejudice as an offence to God. Still, we acknowledge that many members of our worldwide church fail to uphold this biblical truth about the equality of all persons. Contrary to the teachings and example of Jesus, many believers and church organisations have absorbed sinful, dehumanising ideas about racial, tribal, caste, and ethnic valuing that have led to practices injuring and wounding the human family. These ways of thinking, and the practices resulting from them, undermine the very truths we have pledged ourselves to live and teach. We apologise for occasions when in the past we may not have spoken or acted boldly enough on these matters.

Seventh-day Adventists are members of a diverse, global church, and are committed to being agents of peace and reconciliation in society by modelling and advocating for the biblical truth about our shared ancestry. *‘For the love of Christ compels us’* to regard people from His point of view and to be His *‘ambassadors’* in this divided world with the *‘word of reconciliation’* (2 Cor. 5:14, 19, 20, NKJV).



We will support and nurture those who are marginalised and mistreated because of their colour, caste, tribe, or ethnicity (Matt. 25:40). We believe that those who abuse and mistreat others should, in accordance with biblical principles, be brought to justice appropriately and will ultimately face divine judgement (Eccl. 12:14; Heb. 9:27). We will teach and urge that God’s truth about human origins and equality as taught in the Bible is the wisest foundation for all human relationships.

God places a special responsibility upon those who have responded to His gracious salvation for all (Gal. 3:28) to demonstrate our commitment to equality, fairness, and accountability in all human relations. God created each person unique, and His powerful influence in our lives results in a celebration of differences that respectfully values each person’s human heritage and culture. We recognise that the ultimate solution to the sins of racism, casteism, tribalism, and ethnocentrism is the transformation of individual lives and relationships through Christ and His saving power. We accept and embrace our Christian commitment to live, through the power of the Holy Spirit, as a church that is just, caring, and loving, grounded on biblical principles.

God invites everyone, everywhere, to join the remnant church described in Bible prophecy (Rev. 12:17) in proclaiming the everlasting Gospel, which focuses on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, encapsulated in the three angels’ messages (Rev. 14:6-12). These messages are to be given to *‘every nation, tribe, tongue, and people’*, culminating with Christ’s soon return (Rev. 14:6, 14). We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth where *‘there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’* (Rev. 21:4, NKJV).

<https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story15445-adventist-church-leaders-vote-one-humanity-statement>

Success for first South England Conference e-camporee

by Pastor Clifford Herman

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many events, retreats and camps being cancelled or postponed. E-events and camporees became the new normal for Pathfinder and Adventurer entities around the world. The Pathfinder Department in the SEC were forced to cancel both Adventurer and Pathfinder camporees for this year. Although club directors and area coordinators managed to keep the Pathfinder programme going on local levels, there was a wish for a Conference-wide Pathfinder event. It was in this vein that the idea for an e-camporee was born. Learning and catching ideas from others across the world who followed a similar trend, plans were laid at the end of May 2020. It was going to be a first for the South England Conference, and we wanted the programme to be more than just a spectator event. Also, we wanted people to have a memento of a unique experience, and so we decided to print patches and T-shirts for both Adventurers and Pathfinders. Thanks to the area co-ordinators, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes while the Conference director was on furlough, a skeleton programme was put together. By the beginning of July, when the director came back on a part-time furlough arrangement, we had added substance to the programme and it soon became a workable event.

We then decided that, if it was going to be worth it, this event deserved quality and effort. We approached the BUC office for some space to have a makeshift studio. An enthusiastic Pathfinder leader in Swindon and local artist volunteered to design and paint a background for the film set. God also provided us with media artists to assist us with camera and digital work in order for us to film and stream the programme on two popular social media channels.

In mid-June registrations opened and T-shirt and patch orders started rolling in. From the registrations we received and the amount of T-shirts and patches we sold, we expected that the numbers who would be participating would exceed the 2,000 mark.

The programme included ample activities; new awards and honours for both Adventurers and Pathfinders; two great speakers in the personalities of Mrs Cedrene Botha from Scotland, and Pastor Kyle Crawford from the USA; and an ABE and PBE Kahoot quiz. We also received hoards of video special items, poems, and testimonies from a majority of clubs around the SEC. To make it more special, we recruited six young Pathfinders from Stanborough Park Church to be the camporee hosts for every morning and evening.

When the countdown started on Thursday, 6 August 2020, we didn't know what to expect from those who tuned in to the SEC Pathfinder channels. By the end of the evening 1,600 viewers had tuned into the YouTube channel, and half of that number on Facebook. Our nightly quizzes; two talented area coordinators who coordinated the worship programmes; brilliant activity presenters; and the marvellously talented Pathfinders and Adventurers increased those numbers every day. By the end of the Sabbath we had passed our 1,240 subscriber mark on YouTube. Also, judging by the comments and interactions during every session, we believe that God was blessing the much-needed event.

When the closing ceremony came, our daily viewing figures passed the 5,600 mark, and we received 10 requests for baptism and Bible studies. Positive comments continue to be received for the blessing the e-camporee brought to our young people across the Conference.

We praise God that crises like these do not curtail Him from doing His work, or the Gospel from being spread. We thank all the Pathfinder area coordinators, communication and media volunteers, hosts and presenters of all the activity and worship sessions for the time and commitment they brought to make these past few days a success.



Wholehearted service

by Elaine Campbell



'And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought . . .'
(1 Chronicles 28:9, NIV).

To serve God, we must know Him. To love God, we must know Him. To trust God, we must know Him. He is able to keep us; He is willing to help us; He wants to help us. In serving God, we must serve Him with 'wholehearted devotion' – not half-heartedly, not conditionally. We must serve Him with a willing mind. You see, God searches the heart and is interested in our motives.

What may appear to be great service to God may be great glory for the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-18.)

God understands all the imaginations of the mind, and we need to examine our motives for doing something. When Ananias and Sapphira saw others selling their land and giving the proceeds to the church so the poor could be cared for, they thought it was a great idea in theory. However, when they sold some land, they withheld part of the money and then lied about it. They wanted to 'look the part' without having to pay the price. But Peter exposed their sin, telling them that it's not people they lied to, but God!

People might not know our motives, but God does, because He knows our hearts better than we do; so not only were Ananias and Sapphira's motives exposed, but they both dropped dead. As a result, 'Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened' (Acts 5:11, NLT).

Whatever position we find ourselves in, it is good sometimes to ask ourselves, 'Why am I doing this? Is it to glorify God or to glorify self? When it comes to examining our

motives, here are two Scriptures we need to read and consider, carefully and prayerfully: 1) 'The LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you' (1 Chronicles 28:9, NIV). 2) 'I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve' (Jeremiah 17:10, NIV). Check your motives today. Are you acting for the right reasons, or the wrong reasons?

BOOK REVIEW

Adventists and Military Service: Biblical, Historical, and Ethical Perspectives

Editors: Frank M. Hasel, Barna Magyarosi and Stefan Hoschele
ISBN: 9788472087095

Reviewed by Victor Pilmoor

Military service among Adventists in Britain is rare due to lack of conscription and our non-combatant tradition. By contrast, national service remains a requirement in some European countries. In the United States, military participation, under the banner of 'cooperation', is a growing trend that is not well understood this side of the Atlantic.

When Adventists were at the edge of society, claiming exception in the face of national responsibility was relatively simple. However, where Adventists have a significant presence, holding significant offices of state, responsiveness to duties and responsibilities becomes more complex.

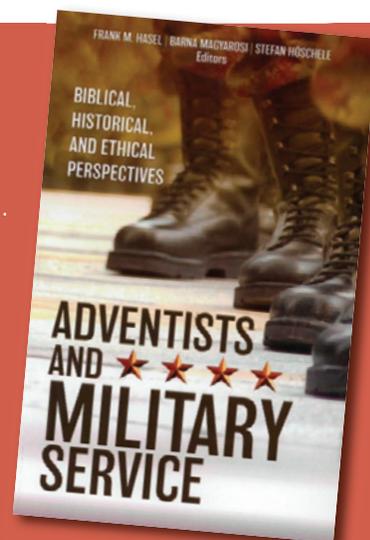
Could an Adventist president of the United States comfortably hold a finger on the nuclear button? Less extreme is the impact of Adventist leaders in places like Fiji, Jamaica, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, among others.

Adventists and Military Service is a compilation by the Biblical Research Institute in the European Division for European readers with a rear-view message for the church in America, who will probably find it 'grit in the eye'.

A chapter by Kwabena Donkor discusses ethnocentrism – a political alternative for tribalism in Africa, where fatal conflicts, even genocide, have engaged Adventists. This opens the question as to how allegiance to a faith community can override kinsman affinity: a phenomenon occasionally experienced in the British context.

There is a maxim that suggests that preparation for war is a means of maintaining peace. In this book, Frank Hasel suggests that if you want peace, you should prepare for peace and live peacefully!

In an era and environment where participation by peacemakers in the cause of social justice impresses itself, Adventists of all shades will want to examine the boundaries of public participation from which many of us have traditionally stood back.



100 – not out!

August 31 was to be Laurie Beetison's 100th birthday. Weston-super-Mare church members were anxious not to let this occasion pass without showing Laurie how much we love and appreciate him. With all the COVID-19 restrictions it was going to be difficult, but, fortunately, Weston Church has a really big car park and it was decided – weather permitting – to hold an outdoor event for Laurie on the afternoon of Sunday the 30th. Keeping in mind a limit of numbers, social distancing, no food preparation and so on, tables were scattered around the car park for people to sit in their 'bubbles' and everyone brought their own snacks and drinks. An amazing card for Laurie was hand-painted by Roger Gallaher, and messages from members and friends were sent by email to Roger, who printed them off and pasted them in the card.

In brilliant sunshine, at 3 o'clock prompt, flags were waved as Laurie's family drove him into the car park. He was so surprised and happy to see everyone. With the aid of a microphone Weston elder Len Sitton was the master of ceremonies, and Laurie's daughter and granddaughter gave a brilliant, interesting decade-by-decade summary of his 100 years. Laurie himself gave a speech and thanked God for all the blessings he has had in his life, and for bringing him to his hundredth year.

A faithful church member and deacon, until lockdown Laurie had attended church most Sabbaths, and since lockdown he has come on Zoom to join Weston and Croscombe church members in Sabbath services. May God continue to bless Laurie with good health, happiness, and his cheerful, friendly spirit in the years ahead.

MAUREEN REES, COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY



Photos by Pastor Rio Espulgar

Irish Mission
Tithes and Offerings

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*To assign your donation to your local church, write the name of your church on the back of the cheque, and include your Gift Aid number if you're a Gift Aider.

'This crisis has taken us by surprise, but not God; He's still in control, and, at this time, may we all continue to entrust our lives and means into His care. Thank you all for your faithfulness and support in ensuring that the Church continues to fulfil her mission and carry out her ministry of care, nurture, and love. Blessings and good health to you all.'

Dan Serb, President

Scottish Mission
Tithes and Offerings

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'Thank you to all our members for making God first a way of life for all times and in all circumstances. I think for all of us this is a non-negotiable and irreducible minimum of our Christian faith. He is faithful and remains our "Jehovah Jireh" – the Lord our Provider.'

Paul Tompkins, President

Welsh Mission
Tithes and Offerings

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'Often, it is in times of great anguish that we are able to see more clearly the goodness of God. Let us continue to be faithful and true, for we are confident that even though we walk through the darkest valley, God is with us; He will never leave us and never forsake us.'

Emanuel Bran, President

For returning tithes & giving offerings in the **Irish, Scottish or Welsh Missions**, email: abarki@adventist.uk, including the breakdown of T & O, the name of the church, and your Gift Aid number. The local budget offering will be credited into the church deposit (trust) account and later transferred to the local church bank account, upon the request of the treasurer.

Teens programmes in the North England Conference



Since the lockdown began in March, different departments in the North England Conference have turned to virtual streaming to reach people, and the Teens Ministry Department started planning programmes for the teens.

From 18 to 22 August, the NEC Teens Ministries Department, led by Pastor Ikwsia Mwasumbi, had its first series of presentations on Christian music by Christian Berdahl. This music seminar exposed the methods used by Satan to entrap Christians into music that is not of God. Christian uses the Bible, Ellen White's writings, science and even the music industry itself to back up his presentations.

On the first day Christian introduced the music seminar by talking about the impact of music on the brain. In the subsequent presentations he talked about the different genres of music and their history. On Saturday he talked about the different types of worship music, using the acronym MUSIC: music should

be meaningful, untainted, spiritual, inspirational, and clear.

The seminar, which was broadcast on Zoom and Facebook Live, was watched by people in different countries, such as Brazil, Malawi and Russia, to name just a few. One particular young lady from Russia was eager to learn more from the presentations as she was planning on recording an album.

On Sabbath the teens from Worcester Church led the Cornerstone lesson for an hour before Christian presented his last seminar of the series. Some of the teens stated, 'It was an eye-opening seminar. Oftentimes we don't think that the type of music we listen to or play matters to God.'

From 22 to 29 August, another week-long programme for the teens took place, this time on the history of Africa, during which Professor Kofi Owusu-Mensa presented the story of a great African civilisation which most young people hardly hear anything about. Every night, people on

Zoom and Facebook Live heard more about African history and culture.

The NEC teens have been having online programmes since June, after the need to have virtual programmes was identified. On 21 June, which happened to be Father's Day, Pastor Ikwsia Mwasumbi called a Zoom meeting for parents and leaders in the North England Conference to discuss what programmes they would like to see planned for their teens and Pathfinders. There were lots of suggestions from parents and leaders. On 25 July, the teens logged on to Zoom to discuss the Cornerstone Sabbath School lesson with their peers for the first time since lockdown. Since then they have not looked back. They keep coming back, week after week, with the encouragement of the NEC Teens Committee, which includes Helderberg Jackson, Lynne Sesinye-Samwinga, Pastor Isaac Liburd, Sharon Wallace, Clifton, Keshia Mellis and the Teens

Leadership Training cohort. The other programmes that this committee has been working on include mental health presentations as well as a midweek prayer meeting.

The committee has more virtual programmes planned for the teens while churches remain closed.

LYNNE SESINYE-SAMWINGA

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		London	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Sept	25	6.51	7.03	6.55	7.03	7.14
Oct	2	6.35	6.47	6.38	6.44	6.56
	9	6.20	6.32	6.22	6.26	6.39
	16	6.04	6.17	6.06	6.09	6.22