

# Messenger

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2024 ADRA Appeal

OneVision –

working together for peace

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a weekend of connected leadership

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# Fire and fate



Celebrating 140 years of ministry

# What does 'good' look like?

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,  
*President of the British Union Conference*

Once upon a time, 7<sup>th</sup> Church recruited a Director of Music. She was charming, affable and gracious, and everyone deemed her to be in 'good and regular standing', well-dressed, and well-educated – someone who seemed to possess all the skills required for the role.

The first Sabbath, she sat with the other members of the congregation and enjoyed the a cappella hymns. The second Sabbath, she sat in the front and raised her hands in worship during the singing of the one chorus, which was also sung a cappella.

On the third Sabbath, there was no singing at 7<sup>th</sup> Church, and this continued for several weeks amid what were now rumblings of dissension and discontent.

At the next business meeting, the lack of singing was an agenda item that caused much debate. Some attributed the 'void' to the wrong choice of music. Others surmised that 'the world had now come into the church', while others were heard to utter the dreaded words, 'We need to go back to simpler times.'

Out of the blue, someone said, 'Let's ask our new Director of Music what her thoughts are on the music in this church.'

'I have no idea; I'm tone deaf!'



was her response, to the astonishment of all present.

'So how did you get recruited as our Director of Music?' another chimed in.

'Well, I saw the advert, and, as I had completed a Baroque Music History module while studying for a degree in Social Sciences, I thought I'd apply. In the interview you complimented me on my ability to communicate, and you admired the way I was dressed. You never enquired if I could improvise or sightread.'

## So what does 'good' look like?

It's a ludicrous parable . . . or maybe not. How often do you hear statements such as 'God does not call the qualified; He qualifies the called'

to justify appointments? We cite examples of the anointing of David as a young shepherd boy and the calling of Jesus' disciples to justify our arguments – often to the detriment of local congregations and the corporate church.

My wife is a gifted chorale director, composer, arranger, singer and pianist. My children play musical instruments, and my daughter sings. But, while I enjoy music and sing in a congregation or a choir, I would never class myself as a musician or a worship leader. I have no education, expertise or experience in this area, despite my interest.

## Educated, experienced, expert envisioned evangelist

When we appoint individuals, we need to ensure that, unlike Samuel, we do more than hire for outward appearance. 'But GOD told Samuel, 'Looks aren't everything. Don't be impressed with his looks and stature. . . . GOD judges persons differently than humans do. Men and women look at the face; GOD looks into the heart' (1 Samuel 16:7, MSG). God knows people's hearts, which appointment committees are unable to see. Our responsibility is to listen to Him.

When David was anointed as a young shepherd boy, he was the right choice, but it was the wrong time for him to assume the role. It was years later that the crown was placed on his head. He first needed to be **educated**.<sup>1</sup> David learnt matters of court by serving in the court of King Saul.

He gained **experience**<sup>2</sup> as a warrior in the army of King Saul and as a fugitive. He became an **expert** poet, writing at least seventy-five of the psalms, with eighty-eight traditionally attributed to him.<sup>3</sup> He was **envisioned**, wishing to 'be a doorkeeper in the house of my God',<sup>4</sup> and passionate about the work of God; and he was also an **evangelist**<sup>5</sup> who desired that the name of God should go out to all the world.

Finding the right person for a role isn't always easy, as leadership guru John Maxwell admits: 'The goal, too often, is to fill a position rather than find the best person.'<sup>6</sup>

As a church, charity, and corporation, we should use these five characteristics in our recruitment processes. Whether we elect, appoint or openly recruit for staff, we should be mindful that excellent recruitment decisions are made, and ultimately the values and mission of our church upheld, when we adhere to a formula that ensures that the best individuals fill the right positions.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 16:14-23 <sup>2</sup> Psalm 144:1

<sup>3</sup> <https://columbiaunionadventists.org/content/fun-facts-about-psalms>

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 84:10 (NKJV) <sup>5</sup> Psalm 51:13

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.success.com/john-c-maxwell-hire-the-right-people/>

# Editorial

by Dusanka Rancic,  
Editor



Dear reader,

We are celebrating 140 years of ministry with grateful hearts and strong faith. We are not afraid of the future, because we have experienced God's hand of guidance and protection in the past. The journey so far has not been easy, but it has always been hopeful.

I write these words while having another Stanborough Press anniversary in mind. It has been sixty years since the fire at the Stanborough Press. Namely, 3 January 1964, as some people still remember, was a very sad day for the Stanborough Press and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the British Isles. Only a few days after the fire, Pastor J. A. McMillan (then BUC president) described the event in the *MESSENGER* article 'Fire and Faith': 'Our hearts were grieved as we stood helplessly by and watched the flames spreading from room to room, and as parts of the roof fell in and sparks flew upward, our prayers

ascended to God for the vital work which our publishing house has done and must continue to do. . . . **We do not know** how this fire originated, nor **why** the good Lord permitted this important institution to be damaged. But **this we do know – the work will continue.**<sup>1</sup> And the work did continue, due to God's plan, leaders' vision, and people's faithfulness. While many were praying, some faithful members started to send money to practically help. Pastor McMillan also quoted E. G. White in his article, encouraging people 'to cherish faith'.<sup>2</sup>

In the same edition of *MESSENGER*, J. H. Craven (then manager of the Stanborough Press) shared his perspective: 'Our sole motive has been . . . [to] do a truly glorious work in building up the church. To see much of that work go up in flames in what seemed a few minutes, was something far beyond heart-breaking.' Still, he believed that a far greater future lay ahead for the Press. Unfortunately, he didn't live long enough to see that future, as he died only a few months after the fire.

A year later, in the article titled 'A Press-ing Need', Craven's successor, W. J. Newman, wrote, 'More than a third of our British publishing house was destroyed by fire. The editorial, art department, and manager's office were totally destroyed, as well as the dispatch department with thousands of books ready to go out. Those who are able to visit The Stanborough Press will be vividly reminded that **the scars still remain, and yet the work carries on.** To be housed in five different buildings makes for administrative problems. We long for the day when we shall be in one building.'<sup>3</sup>

In August of that same year, a contract was signed with Atcost Construction Ltd. to build a new Stanborough Press building in Grantham, Lincolnshire;<sup>4</sup> and, a year later, the new building was officially opened on 30 September 1966.

So, when we look back sixty years later, we can see faith in action in the middle of a storm – in the middle of a fire. While fire threatened to destroy people's faith in God and their enthusiasm in working for Him, the fire that God put in their hearts to proclaim the Good News was stronger. We need to continue in our predecessors' footsteps and 'cherish faith', rekindle the fire in our hearts, finish God's work on this earth, and finally go *home*.

<sup>1</sup>*MESSENGER* 17 January 1964, pp. 1, 2, 6 <sup>2</sup>Letter 19e, 1892 <sup>3</sup>*MESSENGER* 12 February 1965, pp. 1, 2 <sup>4</sup>*MESSENGER* 27 August 1965, p. 4

Stanborough Press staff pose for a photo among the charred remains and rubble of the fire





# Representation

by Pastor Nathan Stickland, SEC Executive Secretary

What is your favourite-flavoured ice cream or soup, or favourite football team? Already I am guessing that between the three readers of this article there are six opinions. We choose things for various reasons, but once we have made our choice we are unlikely to change our minds. From then on, we find an association with all things to do with that favoured thing.

One of the *Cambridge Dictionary* definitions of representation is ‘the fact of including different types of people . . . so that all different groups are represented’. Another of its definitions is ‘a person or organisation that speaks, acts, or is present officially for someone else’.<sup>1</sup> Representation can be about inclusion, but can also be about actions on behalf of a group not currently represented by inclusion.

We all have things we favour, things we prefer, things we better associate with. It’s not so much an issue when we are with others of a similar opinion, but it can be troublesome when we are outnumbered by others of an opposite view.

Strangers walking into a secluded old English country pub might find a stereotypical experience as portrayed in a 1980s film, where two American hikers go into a country pub late one evening, and the place goes deathly quiet. Clearly, they are ‘not from round here’. It makes me wonder how people feel walking into

any one of our churches if they are ‘not from our group’? When we are under-represented, is it possible to feel like those American hikers in a remote Yorkshire village pub: wondering if we shouldn’t have come here, feeling very out of place?

I want to ponder our awareness of people who feel underrepresented, and our behaviour towards them.

In the cover article of the *MESSENGER* for 21 April 1978 (vol. 83, numbers 8, 9), ‘Racial representation’, the British Union Conference (BUC) president at the time, Pastor E. H. Foster, reported on the meetings and deliberations of committees that led to what was later known as the ‘Pierson Package’. Rejecting a call for a black conference, in the name of unity as opposed to segregation, a sequence of implementations was concluded as the way forward to better represent all members in the BUC. This representation was to be enforced no later than the BUC session of 1981. The directives worked with the reality of underrepresentation of black people in pastoral and administrative roles.<sup>2</sup> The article suggests that at local church level the representation was more easily resolved, and the actions were an institutional matter to deliberately address.

Conclusions, and therefore issues addressed, included deliberately having black SEC and Union secretaries, black officers (with departmental responsibilities, in both conferences), a black BUC officer and a black BUC department director, calls to the Inter-American Division for ‘experienced, top-drawer black pastors with leadership potential’, and each conference to have a stewardship director (presumably to address the claim of diverted tithe funds away from the BUC to other entities). Other implementations addressed black

representation on boards and committees, increased cultural awareness, and the increase of finances for work in the BUC.

I do not mean to argue the merits of these points, but the article was presented as a matter of representation. I can see we have extended our considerations of representation when it comes to other noticeable differences between people and their preferences; outside the church (for example, disability and ageism), and inside the church (including women’s ordination and sexuality).

My pondering is not so much on the past matters raised above to do with inclusion, but whether, in the name of representation, we can let prejudice or unconscious bias in through the back door. I know ‘prejudice’ is a strong word, but I also think that this word is too readily used when what we really mean is ‘preference’; but there is a shadowy line between prejudice and preference. Someone’s behaviour may seem prejudicial, but actually that could be a reaction to their preference.

Some years ago, I visited a church as a guest speaker. Over lunch, a person of Caribbean heritage shared with me how their father had encouraged them and their siblings to behave in a certain way during the 1970s. They admitted their father was involved in actions that were working towards cultural representation. Decades later, they found themselves in a church they had made their home for many years, but that now had multiple language groups worshipping together. This perpetual change had not taken many years, and this person admitted to me that the way they felt has helped them consider how it must’ve felt when white churches transitioned to majority black churches, especially in the seventies.

I thank them for their openness.

On another occasion, the day Barack Obama became US President, I walked down the corridor to go to a meeting. Some colleagues were talking around the corner.

Celebrations of having a black president seemed muted by embarrassment as I rounded the corner. I don't know why; I have no problem with having a black US president. Or was there a different perspective – not so much the best president to represent the USA, but the best president to represent the black population in the USA? And if it is the latter, doesn't it prove my point of ponder, that previous presidents did not represent all peoples? At least with a committee we can try to include all kinds of representations, but with a single position we have to hope that one person will represent all.

When we use representation as a crowbar for triumphalism, we expose our motives. I see dangers in representation: firstly, it potentially excludes someone who can do an equal or better job (positive discrimination: generally prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. I know one case of this where the woman appointed because she is a woman knew she was not the best person for the job. Awkward! But at least the representation box was ticked); and, secondly, it uses the claim that you don't feel represented by another person due to their differences to you. There are also positives in ensuring representation, but as inclusion rather than exclusion. The moment we suggest that what was needed was top-drawer black Caribbean pastors, we are implying that the team of white pastors were not cutting the mustard for the migrant members. The Pierson Package emphasises the view that you can't represent me if you are not like me or do it my way.

So, let's put the shoe on the other foot. Think of your church. Does it represent your community? Do you represent the circles of influence you live/study/work in? If only people like us can represent us, then what about those people who are now underrepresented in our churches/neighbourhoods/universities – underrepresented because of ethnicity, age, disability,



gender, and so on. How ready are we to step aside, or include, in the name of representation?

If we take the good side of representation as finding someone you can associate with, in language, accent, culture, whatever, we should be ready to be reciprocal in realising others may find it uneasy in finding association with us or our representee. Maybe this is why Paul said he tries to be a Jew to a Jew, and a Greek to a Greek (1 Corinthians 9:20, 21). Paul was trying to assimilate his awareness to those not like him. He does not say he tries to make the Jews like Greeks, or the Greeks like Jews.

In an article in *The Voice* (5 March 1996), the author picks up on the representation matter in our church at that time. Pastor Don McFarlane, then the SEC president, is quoted as saying there was consideration of creating a department for 'white affairs'. The article quoted the feeling in the seventies and eighties of the 'new and increasingly dominant black membership' feeling 'under-represented at the bureaucratic levels', and then the article referenced the Pierson Package as the outcome. The article conjectures, 'Many black Adventists fear they will lose the huge influence their numbers had given them in the church. The news of possible separation [creating a new white conference] has not been welcomed by grassroots church members.' I wonder if some of that fear has been realised by the subsequent waves of other migrant groups?

Maybe I'm chewing on a big fur ball that needs more unangling, and I don't mean to open old wounds, but I can't help but feel that in a person's attempt at reaching for representation, we might gain our own representation without a thought for those others who also, or

subsequently, feel underrepresented. We should be conscious of the attitude that 'we got what we want, and now we must stay on top.'

Since the *Windrush* era, we have had other waves of transfer growth, resulting in monocultural churches, often in the name of language. This may be beneficial, at least for first- or second-generation migrants, but I suggest it's less so for 'new' Irish/British. I have hinted in previous articles how our migrant growth has kept our church going. These waves of migrant growth somewhat prove my point of representation, because essentially each previous people group plateaus and starts to decline. This opens up the question as to how we can better represent and include people groups from our communities over and above our own representation. Or are we worried that with demographic change in our churches will come a reduction in representation for people like us?

What I'm trying to get at is a caution of the danger of self-centred representation, and the need for us all to be aware of each other. Sometimes an exact balance of representation is not possible – for instance, in a committee – but a balanced consideration of others should be our determination.

Maybe we can each ponder on whom we can help to feel included in a world of noisy representation seekers. What you assimilate to should not prevent others from finding Christ. What do you need to consider in order to reach someone not like you for Christ? As we reach people for Christ, people not like us, may we make space for their differences, ensuring everyone finds representation within biblical boundaries.

<sup>1</sup><https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/representation> <sup>2</sup>I am using terminology as per the article of 1978 as reference to points made.



# Standing on the side of suffering!

by Professor Gifford Rhamie

The death toll and suffering in the conflict between Israel and Gaza have mounted to sheer catastrophic humanitarian levels. How does one get a perspective on this human tragedy?

In November last year, approximately a month after the violent attack on 7 October, an Israeli man in Tel Aviv reached out to me on social media. About a week later I bumped into a Palestinian man in London who had been over here on holiday when the attack happened, leaving behind a family afflicted by the massacre in Gaza. I had two amazing conversations with people who are suffering on either side of the conflict . . . serendipitously, you might say.

They both shared their disappointment, agony, embarrassment and sorrow with me. (I won't mention their names for obvious reasons.)

One was an Israeli Jew; the other a Palestinian Muslim – both living in Israel. Yes, this was troubling. Both were people of faith with personal hope in humanity. So, what did I do? How could I react? What could I say in those deep and meaningful moments?

This is what I learned from the conversations: **listen!**

**First, be silent.** I kept silent to 'enter in' through active listening. I listened to enter the space of suffering. Therein is the world of the visceral, the world of in-betweenness. Suffering is spiritual. It is tangible and intangible; visible and invisible;

historical and ahistorical! It's always messy – hardly a straight line.

**Second, groan.** As the Spirit groans in ineffable sounds in our groaning (Romans 8:26), so I groaned in theirs. Often there are no words to say in reply to existential suffering and pain. Your gesture of nodding, your groaning, connects your humanity with their humanity (their suffering, their pain).

**Third, be near and very present.** I found a moment in my heart when I'd suffered in the past, when I was in deep pain. This is an intimately human moment: a human 'presence', a human connectedness. Your presence is a sign of hope. People who look back at their moment of grief, loss and pain tend to take comfort from those who were present, even if they were silent in the shadows.

**Fourth, extend a hand.** I offered to help in a way that they desired, even to listen again. The human touch is affirming, and transmits tangible care and practical support. This is where hope is incarnated, is grounded.

**Fifth, offer to walk beside them.** By walking beside them in their story, I better understood their story from their point of view. Even as a listener, you may journey with them and follow their story. Here, you're seen as a well-wisher, a prayer partner.

**Sixth, be transcendent.** Acknowledge in your heart that



Someone greater than you is in your presence. That Someone, the Source of sources, is God.

**Seventh, find support for yourself.** Privately share what you've experienced with a confidant, a trustworthy friend. This helps you to manage what you've taken on, and helps you to retain your sanity and humanity.

By following these steps, my presence was taken seriously and empathetically. I was not worthy, but they saw my humanity as worthy. I'm not sure where these two gentlemen are today, but my prayers are with them and their families, because I am on the side of their suffering and their pain.

# The stranger

by Pastor Michael I. Walker



a voice to his left: 'Get out now!' He feared for his life, but, shaking from head to foot, he exited the car and suddenly felt hands pushing him to the ground.

'What do you want?' he stammered. Then came the kicks and the blows! Wow, it was painful until he started to feel numb. He screamed, 'Please stop! Tell me what

managed to lift him onto a cart. Then, as they gently and slowly made their way along the road, he could hear the clip-clop, clip-clop of a horse pulling him forwards with a rhythm that sent him back to sleep.

When he awoke, he found himself in a comfortable bed in a single room with the sunlight shedding its healing beams on him.

Someone opened the door. It was the hotel manager, accompanied by the desk clerk and an Israeli police officer. After assuring him that there were no broken

bones, they started enquiring about

how he felt now – was he more comfortable, and did he feel able to speak to the police about what had happened?

He had no idea who had brought him to the hotel. The clerk explained how, no hospital being nearby, a stranger had brought him on his horse and cart to the Comfort Hotel; had asked them to seek medical attention; and had paid for a couple of nights in advance, and asked them to keep him there until he had recovered sufficiently to return home. His benefactor had also promised to call by again and pay any further expenses incurred.

When the traveller heard about all this, his heart warmed towards this kind and generous stranger. Whom could he be?

He asked the question, but the manager simply said, 'A stranger.' He didn't want to comment further on the matter. As far as he was concerned, an angel of mercy had paid them to look after this man.

'But didn't he give a name?' enquired the sufferer.

'Oh, not to worry about that!' responded the manager with a casual wave of the hand.

'But someone must surely know?' protested the beneficiary.

Then the policeman uttered, as if virtually ashamed: 'He was a Palestinian!'

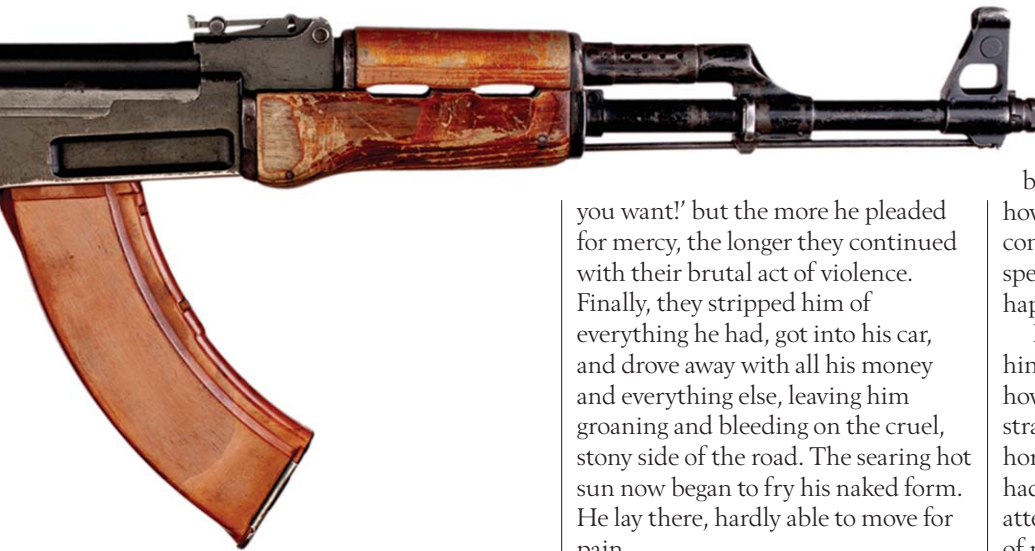
you want!' but the more he pleaded for mercy, the longer they continued with their brutal act of violence. Finally, they stripped him of everything he had, got into his car, and drove away with all his money and everything else, leaving him groaning and bleeding on the cruel, stony side of the road. The searing hot sun now began to fry his naked form. He lay there, hardly able to move for pain.

After a long time, he heard a vehicle slowing down. He could hardly see, but its occupant appeared to be a rabbi . . . but he suddenly accelerated and sped away. The poor wretch now lay and groaned. He uttered a Hebrew prayer to Yahweh to send someone to help him. It was indeed a lonely road, and it seemed ages before the next vehicle came. When it did, the driver once again cautiously slowed down – but, while the victim tried to attract his attention, he just continued to drive past. Another prolonged period left the poor sufferer losing consciousness as he drifted off into a dizzy, painful and confusing trance.

The next thing he half-consciously realised was that caring hands were wiping his body. He felt his head being raised as someone pressed a vessel of water to his parched and bleeding lips. Then, somehow, this kind person, whomever he was,

The question was once asked: 'Who is my neighbour?' Well, consider this. . . .

An Israeli businessman was driving down a lonely road from Jerusalem towards a coastal town on a company project. The searing wind wafted through his open window, but he preferred the fresh air to the air conditioning. In the distance he noticed an obstruction. He wondered if there had been an accident. He approached with caution, wondering if anyone was trapped inside the wreckage. He brought his vehicle to a halt. Cautiously, he looked around. All was quiet. He was about to open his door when an automatic rifle clicked to his right. A masked gunman was pointing the deadly weapon at his head! Then several other men surrounded the car. 'Get out!' yelled





# A call to compassion 2024 ADRA Appeal

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau, ADRA-UK Development Education Officer

*'But when He saw the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted and were scattered, like sheep without a shepherd.'*

(Matthew 9:36, MEV)



## Manic!

That's how one could describe Jesus's itinerary in Matthew 9. He begins His day healing and forgiving a paralysed man (verses 1-8). He recruits a staff member – Matthew (verses 9-13). He delivers a sermon on fasting (verses 14-17), irritating His dissenters; raises a dead girl and heals a sick woman (verses 18-26); opens the eyes of two blind men (verses 27-31); and finally restores speech to a demon-possessed mute (verses 32, 33).

The last four verses of the chapter (35-38) appear to summarise His day's work – teaching and healing – leading to a reflection on the impact to the beneficiaries of both the word and His humanitarian interventions, before finally closing with a direct call to action to His disciples. Central to His observations is the reverberating clarion call of compassion, which is defined as the 'sympathetic consciousness for others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it'.<sup>1</sup>

He notices that they are faint, that they are scattered, and that they have lost their identity.

## Faint

According to the NHS, to faint is to pass out for a short time. Two of the possible physiological reasons for this reaction are 'not eating or drinking

enough' and 'severe pain'.<sup>2</sup> Lack of adequate food security is a key reason for fainting.<sup>3</sup>

For people to thrive, it is necessary for them to have access to nutritious food. ADRA-UK's project, 'Improving Nutrition in Tea Estate and Rural Communities through Enhanced Service Delivery and Empowerment', has commenced in Sri Lanka. The aim of the project is to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable groups, create spaces for open dialogue, provide nutrition policy development, and encourage organisations to advocate for improved nutritional outcomes and serve the needs of 30,000 women, 10,000 marginalised young people and 5,000 malnourished children.

As a faith-based humanitarian agency, our call to compassion is informed by the Bible. 'Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.'<sup>4</sup> Our mandate is to 'pour [ourselves] out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted', with the attached promise of blessing: 'Then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.'<sup>5</sup> We are also urged to show compassion as one of the over-arching values embedded in our work. Justice, compassion and love are the guiding principles of ADRA worldwide.

## Displaced

Most of us consider ourselves to be compassionate. However, our relationship to those who are 'scattered' – the displaced, the

asylum seeker, the internally displaced, the refugee – is too often filled with misgiving. The political narratives that are spewed out about those arriving by boats to our country's borders have led to the 'controversial Rwanda deportation plan',<sup>6</sup> which was debated and suffered a defeat (214 to 171) in the House of Lords on 22 January 2024.<sup>7</sup>

Too often, leading politicians have used inflammatory labels such as 'a swarm of people'<sup>8</sup> and 'migrant invasion'<sup>9</sup> to describe the 'other'. For centuries, 'conflict [and] war . . . marked by the fields of innumerable battles' have all been 'proof of man's defeat – of the fact that he is unable or unwilling to come to an understanding with others'.<sup>10</sup> According to research from The Migration Observatory published in September last year, '52% [of people in the UK] thought that immigration should be reduced'.<sup>11</sup>

Emergencies are increasing. Climate change, conflict and war are causing mass migration. This February, ADRA-UK has launched an Emergencies Appeal to support new and emerging emergencies in Lebanon, Madagascar and Zambia.

The Hamas-Israel war has spilled over to southern Lebanon, resulting in 74,471 people being internally displaced (52% of them females). Through our Emergencies Appeal, ADRA-UK will support ADRA-Lebanon to help 600 people to buy food and non-food items over the next two months.



### Loss of identity

'Sometimes I feel too weak in the face of the given circumstances, and I'd have to be wiser and richer and younger to win the fight. Fortunately for me, I no longer count at all on any victory, and in painting I look for nothing more than the means of getting by in life,' said one famous artist.<sup>12</sup> The loss of identity can render life meaningless. The struggle for a livelihood that brings not only personal satisfaction, but economic stability, can contribute to a loss of identity. ADRA-UK, alongside its funding partner, Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA), is supporting 8,100 smallholder farmers in Zambia to increase their income through dairy enterprises, and also supporting 17,280 people in our sister project in Nepal.

ADRA's development projects and emergency response contribute to its mission in pursuit of its goal: 'so all may live as God intended'. Through our work in education, health, livelihoods, and advocacy, we seek to provide dignity to those who are marginalised, provide food security for those who are hungry, help farmers to support their families, and speak up for those who are voiceless.

### Call to action

So, what can I do? What can you do? What can we do together?

Our *Call to Compassion* is embedded in the DNA of ADRA, and we are inviting you to join us in answering this call through our relaunched Annual Appeal, 24 March to 28 April 2024. It's been five years since our last formal Annual Appeal, and there are some changes.

'With the re-introduction of our new-style appeal, we would like as many of you as possible to join to raise funds for those in need,' said Helia Mateus, Interim CEO. 'Together, we can reach some of the world's most vulnerable people and alleviate their suffering.'

Door-to-door 'ingathering' is no longer included in the Appeal, but we would encourage you to organise group activities and participate in fun projects to help to raise funds on behalf of ADRA-UK for those in need. You can also donate directly to ADRA-UK at



**Call To  
Compassion**  
*Care for all*

Join ADRA to make positive changes to the lives of women, men and children in need.

Justice  
Compassion  
Love

Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9JZ, England  
Tel: +44(0)30 30 40 10 17 • Email: [info@adra.org.uk](mailto:info@adra.org.uk)  
Registered charity 1074937 (SCO37726)

ADRA

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FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR

[www.adra.org.uk/donate](http://www.adra.org.uk/donate), or by calling our office, Monday to Thursday, 10am-2pm, on +44(0)3030401017. You can also email us at [info@adra.org.uk](mailto:info@adra.org.uk).

Leaflets, posters, and donation envelopes will be available through your local church. Please contact your ADRA agent or ADRA ambassador.

### Conclusion

'Too often in the history of religion, people are killed in the name of the God of life, waged war on in the name of the God of peace, hated in the name of the God of love, and subjected to cruelty in the name of the God of compassion. When this happens, God speaks – sometimes in a still, small voice almost audible beneath those claiming to speak on His behalf. What He says at such times is: "Not in My name."<sup>13</sup>

Let's listen to the 'still, small voice' of compassion that calls us to 'do

justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God'<sup>14</sup> for the benefit of some of the world's most vulnerable people.

<sup>1</sup>Merriam Webster Dictionary

<sup>2</sup><https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fainting/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/6-months-after-cyclone-idai-farmers-are-fainting-fields-because-hunger>

<sup>4</sup>Proverbs 22:9 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup>Isaiah 58:10 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup>[www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/21/rwanda-plan-could-fail-first-test-in-lords-as-peers-move-to-thwart-sunaks-bill](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/21/rwanda-plan-could-fail-first-test-in-lords-as-peers-move-to-thwart-sunaks-bill)

<sup>7</sup>[news.sky.com/story/blow-for-rishi-sunak-as-rwanda-bill-suffers-first-defeat-in-house-of-lords-13054210](https://news.sky.com/story/blow-for-rishi-sunak-as-rwanda-bill-suffers-first-defeat-in-house-of-lords-13054210)

<sup>8</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/nov/25/backlash-after-priti-patel-rebuked-media-over-channel-migrants-label>

<sup>9</sup>[www.heraldscotland.com/news/18650609.priti-patels-migrant-invasion-war-language-government-losing-fronts/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18650609.priti-patels-migrant-invasion-war-language-government-losing-fronts/)

<sup>10</sup>Ryszard Kapuscinski, *The Other* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 81

<sup>11</sup><https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/uk-public-opinion-toward-immigration-overall-attitudes-and-level-of-concern/> – it should be noted, however, that opinion and the data differ depending on how the question is phrased.

<sup>12</sup>*The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, selected and edited by Roland de Leeuw, translated by Arnold Pomerans (London: Penguin Classics, 1997)

<sup>13</sup>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God's Name* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2016), p. 3

<sup>14</sup>Micah 6:8 (KJV)



## Empowering dreams – the Screening Group’s journey in transforming visions into reality

by Wederly Aguiar, *BUC Treasurer*

Every so often, members, churches and departments within the Union dream up projects that will help their communities, champion a cause they support, or share the Gospel with people who may not know it yet.

Every endeavour that will make an impact begins as an idea and requires resources to make it a reality. This is where the vital work of the Mission Funding Screening Group (the Screening Group) comes into play.

The Trans-European Division (TED) initiated this function in 2015, and it has since been an active committee integral to the Division’s functioning; however, it is a relatively new endeavour at the British Union Conference (BUC), where the Screening Group was only formed in 2022. While the TED Mission Board can approve funding for projects, the BUC Screening Group holds power to recommend projects to the BUC Administrative Committee (AdCom), who can then decide whether a project gains approval.

The aim of the Screening Group is to identify suitable projects, programmes, plans and activities that are in line with the British Union Conference’s strategic objectives and to evaluate proposals against the defined criteria, as well as communicating with those initiating the proposals.

The Screening Group emerged as

a response to the need for a structured approach to channel the energy and enthusiasm of church members, churches and departments within the Union and Conferences into impactful projects, serving as a bridge between inspiring ideas and tangible actions.

The Screening Group is made up of the BUC Personal Ministries Director, the BUC Associate Executive Secretary, the Assistant Treasurers of the BUC, and the BUC Project Manager.

As stewards of financial resources, the Screening Group also monitors and reports on available funding, and only recommends financial support that fits within the current and expected future funding available, liaising with the TED Mission Board to maximise funding opportunities and finally monitoring the progress of initiatives approved by the BUC AdCom to ensure that ongoing or completed projects have reported as necessary. This commitment to follow-through and accountability safeguards the integrity of the initiatives and maintains transparency in the allocation of resources.

In the spirit of adaptability and growth, the Screening Group reflects on its operational procedures regularly, and this year the board aims to enhance representation by inviting participation from the North and South England Conferences and the TED, fostering a more synchronised and seamless process. This collaborative approach seeks to eliminate silos and prevent the duplication of efforts, ensuring a unified front in carrying out the mission of the church.

Some of the notable projects that the Screening Group has

recommended for approval have been to support the mission of the Cornerstone Counselling Service, which provides support to black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, specifically women and children. It has also assisted with the Chiswick Homeless Project to provide meals, toiletries and clothing to the homeless; it contributed towards the Special Needs Camp, which provides support to families who care for disabled people; and, finally, it supports the initiative of a Global Mission pioneer among the Irish and Scottish people with the aim of reaching people where an Adventist presence does not currently exist.

This year, the Screening Group will also be reviewing project initiation documents (PIDs), which were introduced to allow BUC departments to apply for additional funding to support any projects they might have that cannot be supported by their allocated budget alone. Equally, sometimes the Screening Group refers individuals to a department that is better aligned with their project so that they can take a collaborative approach where possible and receive the full support of the vast experience that the various departments can offer.

The Screening Group exemplifies the transformative power of collective action, embodying the teachings of Christ by turning dreams into tangible expressions of love and compassion.

As the Screening Group continues to evolve, its impact resonates far beyond the BUC, inspiring communities worldwide to dream big, work together, and bring about positive change in the name of faith, hope, and love.

# Boosting well-being in 2024

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,

BUC Director for Health, Adventist Community Services & Women's Ministries

Health analysts assessing well-being challenges and trends for 2024 have begun reporting on some areas of the Government's health focus for this year. The King's Fund, an independent charity working to improve health and social care in the UK, states the following: 'In spring, the Government has committed to publishing its major conditions strategy, laying out the next steps to tackle the major causes of ill health and mortality, and beginning to grapple with the issues faced by the one in four people living with more than one long-term condition, who too often experience fragmented care.'<sup>1</sup>

In spite of external influences and predicted National Health Service changes and challenges, setting our own health goals enables us to have some control over our well-being by making healthier lifestyle choices.

## Health aspirations

Forbes Health undertook a survey to glean the most prominent health goals for 2024.<sup>2</sup> The data of the top five out of fourteen New Year resolutions revealed the following:

- Improve fitness: 48% • Improve finances: 38% • Improve mental health: 36% • Lose weight: 34% • Improve diet: 32%

If you were to voice your health goals for this year, would any of the above feature in your top five?

Recently, I connected with health leaders, well-being professionals, and church members as I sought to ascertain their health goals for this year. The top repeated responses were as follows:

- Lose weight • Eat better • Exercise more • Better life balance & stress less (joint fourth place) • Improve spiritual life

## Boosting well-being

As you seek to accomplish your health goals for this year, accessing evidence-based research is one place to start. *Healthline*, in their article titled '9 Ways to Boost Your Body's Natural Defences',<sup>3</sup> give some useful advice. Here is their must-do list to assist you in boosting your well-being and achieving your wellness aspirations for 2024:

- **Get adequate sleep.** This helps to boost immunity. Research indicates that inadequate or poor-quality sleep is linked to a higher susceptibility to sickness.<sup>4</sup>
- **Eat more whole plant foods.** Fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes are rich in nutrients and antioxidants that could help combat harmful pathogens. Antioxidants in these food groups reduce inflammation, which can safeguard against chronic disease.<sup>5</sup>
- **Eat more healthy fats.** Avocado and olive oil are good sources. Olive oil, which is highly anti-inflammatory, is linked to a decreased risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.<sup>6</sup>
- **Eat more fermented foods** (or probiotic supplements if required). Fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi and natto are rich in beneficial bacteria called probiotics, which enhance gut flora, boosting digestive health. Non-dairy probiotics are available.<sup>7</sup>
- **Limit added sugar.** Mounting research reveals that added sugars and refined carbs may contribute disproportionately to overweight and obesity, which increases the likelihood of chronic illness.<sup>8</sup>
- **Engage in moderate exercise.** Regular moderate exercises like brisk walking, cycling, swimming, and light hiking help to boost the immune system, enhancing well-being both physically and psychologically.<sup>9</sup>
- **Stay hydrated.** An intake of adequate fluids to remain hydrated is key to general health. Dehydration impacts negatively on body functions and



ENHANCING HEALTH

increases the susceptibility to illness.<sup>10</sup>

- **Manage your stress levels.** Key to boosting well-being and enhancing immune health is the management and alleviation of stress and anxiety. Research indicates that long-term stress promotes inflammation and increases imbalance in immune cell function.<sup>11</sup>
- **Supplement wisely.** Only use supplements when needed. However, in reference to boosting immunity, there is some evidence to indicate that supplements like vitamins D and C, zinc, elderberry, echinacea and garlic may strengthen your body's general immune response.

Try the above health tips for the rest of the year, and assess their impact on your well-being. Then, at the end of the year, look back to see whether your health choices enhanced your well-being during 2024.

## Good health!

<sup>1</sup>[www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2024/01/challenge-change-what-does-2024-hold-for-the-health-care-system](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2024/01/challenge-change-what-does-2024-hold-for-the-health-care-system)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.forbes.com/health/mind/new-year-resolutions-survey-2024/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-to-boost-immune-health>

<sup>4</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26118561/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26118561/)

<sup>5</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27881064/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27881064/)

<sup>6</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27580701/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27580701/)

<sup>7</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19913684/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19913684/)

<sup>8</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28507007/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28507007/)

<sup>9</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26477922/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26477922/)

<sup>10</sup>[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2908954/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2908954/)

<sup>11</sup>[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24798553/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24798553/)

## Quotation by Albert Einstein

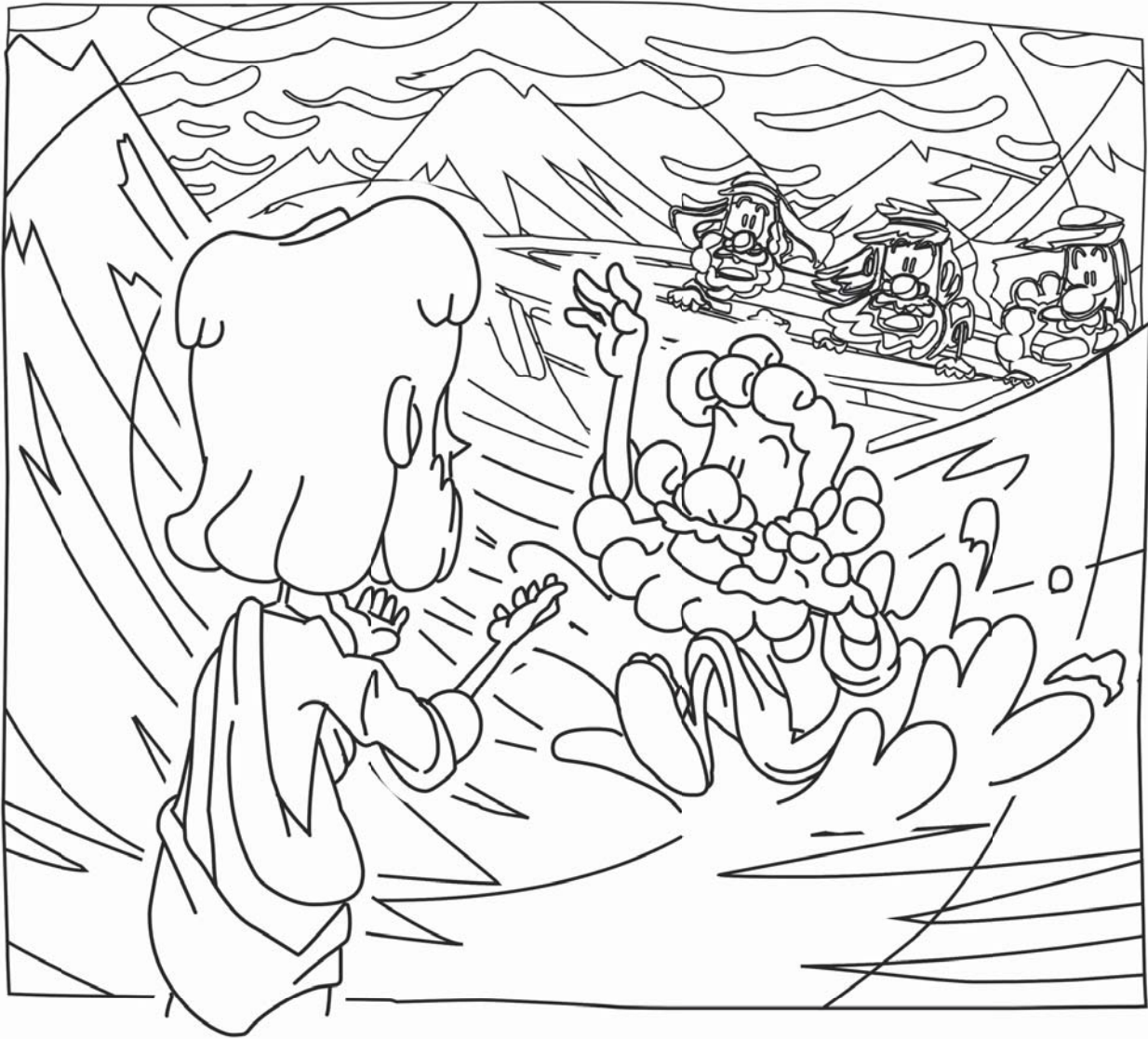
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								

Fill in the answers in the grid above and then use the code to reveal the quote below.

1. Paul came to trial before him in Acts 25.
2. Believers devoted themselves to their teaching in Acts 2:42.
3. A wailing from this new place in Zephaniah 1:10.
4. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's in Exodus 10:20.
5. It teaches lies according to Habakkuk 2:18.
6. One of Nehemiah's brothers in Nehemiah 1:2.

1D	4A	1B		5A	5B	2B	2C	3D	1D	2A	6C	1D		1D	4A	5A	6E	5D
5A	1C		6C	2C	1D		1D	2C		1C	1D	2C	2B					
3A	3B	1B	1C	1D	5A	2C	6E	5A	6C	5D								

Taken from *Bible Brain Teasers* by Sylvia Coupland.  
 To purchase your copy, follow this link:  
<https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/bible-brain-teasers/>



## Peter walks on the water!

<sup>27</sup>But Jesus quickly spoke to them. He said, "Don't worry! It's me! Don't be afraid."

<sup>28</sup>Peter said, "Lord, if that is really you, tell me to come to you on the water."

<sup>29</sup>Jesus said, "Come, Peter." Then Peter left the boat and walked on the water to Jesus.

Matthew 14:27-29



# OneVision – working together for peace

by Enoch Kanagaraj, *OneVision Founder & Chief Executive*

On Sunday 3 December 2023, faith leaders, politicians and the Chief Constable of Hertfordshire met together at the British Union Conference (BUC) office in Watford. The meeting was an initiative of OneVision, a charity supported by the BUC, which works with different communities, faiths, ethnic groups, charities, non-profit organisations and government institutions, to create strong community leadership and bring about real change.

The agenda for the day, 'Working Together for Peace', was put together in response to religious tensions that have arisen in the UK following the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Spokespeople from the Jewish and Islamic communities expressed their concerns, and real fears, about antisemitism and Islamophobia, which have both seen a significant rise since the events of 7 October 2023. Personal reports of hate-filled messages on social media, as well as verbal abuse and graffiti, underlined the very real threats currently being faced by both Jews and Muslims here in the UK.

Representatives from the Jewish community spoke of their history, with some sharing the experiences of their parents during the Holocaust. They also spoke of the pain caused by recent antisemitic abuse, and the concerns of young people, some of whom who are fearful of attending their schools or wearing clothing that could identify them as Jewish.

Representatives from the Islamic

community gave their own experiences of Islamophobia and of the personal suffering experienced by Palestinians here in the UK. One spoke of a doctor who had lost ten members of his family in one air strike.

One Muslim leader emphasised the fragility of peace and the need for compassion and understanding. On hearing of the 7 October attacks he immediately contacted a Rabbi friend to express his condolences and offer his support. 'We must stand together against hatred,' he said.

All of those who spoke were in agreement that lasting peace will never come through military conflict; a different approach is needed.

Civic leaders praised the work of OneVision and the good community relations that exist in the county. 'Community cohesion is what we aim for, while at the same time protecting freedom of speech,' said one. 'This can be a difficult balance to achieve.'

Many expressed their personal concerns about the recent rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia, but

there was a general recognition that community and interfaith leaders have a key role to play in reducing religious tensions.

A common concern raised by most speakers was the role of social media, and some elements of the press, in polarising communities and inflaming existing prejudices. The relatively unregulated field of social media, and increasingly the 'chat' function within many games, is providing fertile ground for those wishing to spread hatred. This is particularly worrying in our schools and among those with mental health issues.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was represented at the event by Dr Patrick Johnson (from the Trans-European Division) and Pastor John Surridge (BUC Executive Secretary). In his closing prayer, Pastor Surridge underlined the fact that all members of God's family have been created in God's image, and that His desire is for us to live together as one. In our fractured and dysfunctional world, this can only be possible when we allow our hearts to be permeated by the peace of God.

Although there were no specific action points from the meeting, many lessons were learned, and many friendships were strengthened. As one of the rabbis who were present said, paraphrasing Psalm 133:1, 'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!'



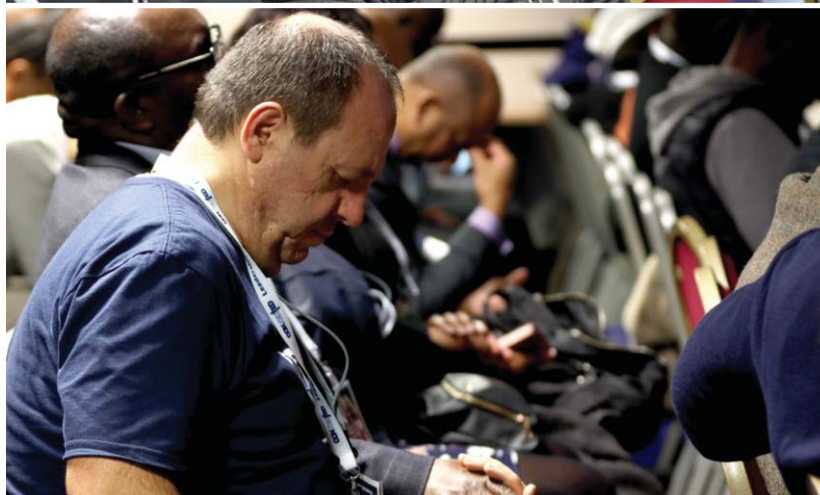
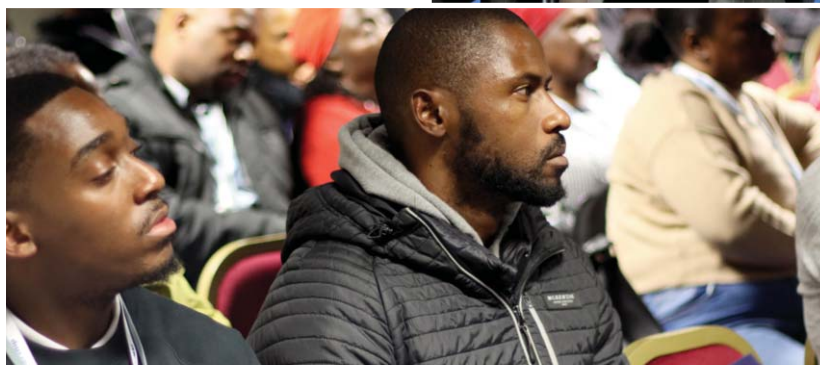
# Empowering church leaders: a weekend of connected leadership

by NEC Communication Department

From 10 to 12 November, Yarnfield Training & Conference Centre hosted an enriching weekend event focused on 'Connected Leadership'. The gathering saw a diverse group of church leaders, including elders, treasurers, deacons and deaconesses, coming together for a time of learning, inspiration and spiritual growth.

The event commenced on Friday evening with an uplifting worship session led by the praise and worship team from Camp Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. The main speaker for the event, Pastor Fredrick Russell, delivered a stirring sermon encouraging attendees to fully surrender to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, setting a reflective and motivational tone for the weekend.

Sabbath morning brought more enlightenment with Pastor Daniel Duda, President of the Trans-European Division, leading the Sabbath School. His presentation, titled 'Motivation and Preparation for Mission', challenged attendees to introspectively reflect on the effectiveness of their churches in



winning souls and the quality of disciples being nurtured. His poignant question, 'What kind of people is our mission reproducing?' resonated deeply with the congregation, prompting thoughtful consideration of their mission's impact.

Post-lunch, the attendees split into separate breakout sessions tailored to their respective ministry roles. These sessions, led by a mix of speakers from the North England Conference (NEC), the British Union Conference (BUC) and the Trans-European Division (TED), included Mack Tennyson (TED Associate Treasurer), Wederly Aguiar (BUC Treasurer), Daniel Duda (TED President), Pastor Sam Ouadjo (BUC Ministerial Secretary) and Elder Lloyd Facey. These sessions provided valuable insights and practical advice on various topics pertinent to their ministries.

Sunday continued the trend of informative and enriching breakout sessions. Key topics included the reintegration of prisoners into churches, handling uncomfortable conversations, and Adventist Risk Management (ARM), all crucial for effective administration and pastoral care within church communities.

The success of this event can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of the Ministerial and Treasury departments, led by Pastor Juljan Kastrati and Elder Michael Agyei-Asare respectively. Reflecting on the weekend, Pastor Kastrati and Elder Agyei-Asare shared their thoughts. Pastor Kastrati noted the profound impact of the sessions, emphasising the growth and development observed among the participants. Elder Agyei-Asare commented on the successful collaboration and the positive feedback received, highlighting the event's role in strengthening the leadership within the church.

As the weekend concluded, attendees left with renewed vigour and a deeper understanding of their roles as leaders within their congregations. The 'Connected Leadership' event not only provided a platform for learning and spiritual renewal, but also fostered a stronger sense of community and shared purpose among church leaders across the NEC.



## SEC Evangelism Expo reveals renewed mission – a fresh vision of Christ: Christ in our hearts, Christ in our homes, Christ in our churches, Christ on the streets.

by David Neal, *Trans-European Division Communication Secretary*

The new South England Conference (SEC) leadership hit the ground running on Sunday 9 January at their annual Evangelism Expo, held at Newbold College of Higher Education. In just four months since taking office, the leaders, alongside department heads, have charted the conference's new course: *Christ in our hearts, Christ in our homes, Christ in our churches, Christ on the streets.*

It was a bitterly cold day, with members travelling up to four hours to gather at Newbold's auditorium by 10am. Approximately 1,000 local leaders, driven by their commitment to the mission, congregated to explore how to embody these values amid the rapidly changing world around them.

SEC President Pastor Kirk Thomas made a heartfelt appeal to embrace change and put Christ at the centre. The expo delved beyond the usual 'how to' and novel ideas. It grappled with 'change' and 'paradigm shifts', addressing new cultural realities surrounding the church. 'It is critically important for us to be aware of this,' shared Roger Hernandez, Ministerial and Evangelism Director for the Southern Union Conference, USA, the first keynote speaker. He emphasised the vital importance of understanding how our beliefs intersect with a culture repelled by 'absolute truth', 'combative dialogue', 'demonisation' of groups, 'ideological border policing', and 'shaming' to ostracise.<sup>1</sup> Hernandez's ministry partner and wife, Kathy, echoed their vision in a video on

hospitality, highlighting the need to extend care beyond a simple greeting. Hernandez shared some of the cultural shifts the church faces today. Could a hospitality ministry be more effective in creating connection than engaging in 'combative dialogue'?

Karen Glassford, Digital Evangelism Manager for Communication and Media Ministries at the General Conference, followed suit. She underscored the rapid growth of digital evangelism, and initiated a collaborative project with SEC Communication and Media to pilot digital evangelism models with select churches. The potential impact of this project on connecting with an increasingly online community drew praise from attendees like Elizabeth Taslmacsi: 'People who live in our large towns and cities are quite isolated. . . . [This initiative] will create opportunities for greater involvement.'

In the morning's final plenary session, Pastor Thomas stated: 'It's time to learn and move on from the past,' calling for renewal, growth, and a willingness to embrace change. He urged leaders to 'go' and be 'inspired for mission', emphasising Christ as the centre of the SEC strategy.

Twenty-three workshops, primarily run by SEC administrators and department directors, provided local leaders with a chance to engage with the new leadership. These workshops offered valuable insights into the new vision. Three sample seminars reflected the depth of the agenda:

- Youth Ministries – 'The Future Is

Where You Go': newly elected Youth Director Warren Gillen expressed his focus on connecting with senior youth aged 18-25 by understanding their spaces and engaging with youth groups.

- Diversity Ministries – 'The Church in 2024: A Place of Belonging': Director Max McKenzie-Cook and Dr Gifford Rhamie highlighted the importance of recognising and celebrating diversity as a means of genuine engagement. Rhamie called for each church to 'recognise the diversity it already has, and the diversity of the people groups in the community', to be engaging.
- Communication and Media – 'Effective Digital Evangelism': Sorin Petrof's workshop, featuring plenary speaker Karen Glassford, explored collaborative plans for digital evangelism, signalling a strong interest in connecting with people in new ways. Pastor Bernie Holford, now at the Hemel Hempstead church, said, 'As an older person who hasn't engaged with Facebook very much, I've realised just how powerful the digital evangelism approach could be.'

The day concluded with participants mingling and reconnecting outside workshops, visiting the Stanborough Press store, and exploring various ministry exhibits.

### Why the annual SEC Evangelism Expo?

In the words of Pastor Steve Roberts (Lewisham and Downham churches), 'It's about fellowship, acquiring resources, and empowering churches for service, all contributing to advancing the Gospel in the SEC.'

As leaders departed, Newbold Principal Dr Steve Currow reflected on the event's success, noting the joy of seeing the campus buzzing with 1,000 leaders actively engaging in ministry partnerships.

The vision persists – *Christ in our hearts, in our homes, in our churches, and on the streets.* What better vision could we have for 2024?

<sup>1</sup>Hernandez was quoting Dan White, a US church planter.  
[Photo: SEC Media]





### Dudley House children shine at Christmas concert

The children of Dudley House School, the Seventh-day Adventist school in Grantham, Lincolnshire, all put on a super performance at their Christmas concert, play and Christingle service on 14 December 2023 – which was doubly impressive given the interruption to their preparations by the sudden arrival of Ofsted inspectors in late November! After the concert, parents commented to each other on how well the children had done, especially those who had previously been shy. Some of the children then sang Christmas carols for residents at the neighbouring Martin Court retirement complex a few days later. The staff do a tremendous job in building the children's confidence and compassion and preparing



them to take the lead. We give thanks to God, for He is the Master of our school!

ANDREW PUCKERING

### Gift-giving Sabbath

For many years our church has organised a special giving service on the first Sabbath of December. The Community Services Department chooses different charities with different needs to support each year.

This year our display consisted of Moses baskets filled with baby gifts, items knitted by church members and special toiletries for mums. Sarah from Bridge Central Church, Lincoln, who is one of the people responsible for the county-wide Baby's Basket charity, visited our church on 2 December to tell us about the charity and receive the latest baskets. Over the year a total of eleven baskets have been donated by Grantham Church. During the service a collection was also taken for Baby's Basket, raising £166.30.

ELISABETH CARNELL



### Grantham Community Services snapshots

The Grantham Community Services Department has met throughout 2023 for fellowship and planning. Recognising the cost-of-living crisis, they supported the local food bank with food and toiletries, using the slogan, 'If you can – give a can.' The Foodbank greatly appreciated a delivery of food following the Grantham Church Harvest Festival, and helping to light up someone's life provides tremendous joy for everyone concerned.

The department also donated to The Bible Society's Prison Ministry service, helping to provide Bibles and run

The Bible Course. Dominic, a chaplain in two prisons, one high security institution and one open prison, said, 'I've seen more people encounter Jesus personally in prison than in decades of ministry in churches. Your support sends a powerful message of love and care, and I'm so grateful.' How wonderful to find lives changed by Jesus, who fills hearts with hope and peace!

Baby hats, blankets, cardigans and cannula sleeves for babies are regularly knitted and crocheted by our team of expert knitters. The majority are sent to SCBUs in Lincoln and Boston; more than 100 items have been delivered this year alone. Two members of the knitting team are over 90, showing that age is no barrier to service. Friends have joined in too, making a tremendous contribution overall. It is both a privilege and a joy to provide a Moses basket with baby items for a mother and her newborn baby in need today, and it comes with our love too.

ELIZABETH HOLDEN



Ninety-year-old Lynette Kenlock

## Ninety-year-old woman baptised at close of Love and Happiness series

As part of the Reflecting Hope initiative, Dr Jeffrey Brown, an author and relationships expert hailing from Birmingham, England, now serving as Associate Secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association and Associate Editor of *Ministry* magazine, led a transformative programme at Brixton Church titled

### Langley baptism

On 16 December 2023, Langley Church hosted the baptismal service for Nigel Saleem, Gabriel Richard, Karen Richard, Aaron Richard, Shamin Shakir, Salman Sohail, Jonathan Frank, Elystan Frank and Meryl Frank. All these candidates were accepted into Walsall Church except for Steve Simon, who was accepted into Langley Church. Pastor Dalbir Masih baptised the candidates, with Pastor Anoop Gill being the local officiating pastor. Afterwards, the church community enjoyed food and fellowship during lunch.

On 23 December 2023, Langley Church hosted a 'profession of faith' service for James Allen Decker, who was accepted into the local church membership following a verbal examination by Pastor Anoop Gill. James is the first American Adventist the church has accepted, and the members feel truly blessed to have such an active and God-fearing worker for Christ. The local churches look forward to working with these new members to spread the Gospel further.

ALF MASIH



### A day to remember

The three-year-old Swinton church plant in Manchester celebrated its first baptism and ordained an elder, four deacons, and five deaconesses on 16 December 2023 under the leadership of the Global Mission pioneer, Elder Danny Apeadu.

Five souls were baptised. Carlos Roberto had been a

'10 Days to Finding Love and Happiness' from 30 April to 13 May 2023, centred on the Ten Commandments. Each day's lesson delved into a key principle such as 'Choosing God's Son' and 'Choosing God's Way'. The series culminated in a heart-warming baptismal service for Ishmael Hamzat, Rhostav Mbaeva, Utarera Mbaeva, and 90-year-old Lynette Kenlock.

Raised in a Sunday-observant tradition, Lynette had eventually discovered the Seventh-day Adventist Church, recognising the importance of worshipping on the Sabbath. She'd considered baptism earlier in life, and now she wished to commit her life to God. Lynette had words for those who felt it might be too late for them to be baptised: 'Seize the opportunity to make the decision to choose Him as our Lord and Saviour while we still have breath.' She now cherishes each day as if it were her last, living according to the Lord's will and creating precious memories with family and friends.

Towards the end of the series, more than twenty couples recommitted themselves to each other and to God, emphasising the importance of commitment and faith throughout the various stages of married life.

BRIXTON CHURCH COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT



Baptismal candidates



James Allen Decker

Baptist. Luciliza Gomes had suffered depressive episodes, suicidal thoughts, and complex life and relationship issues, but through Bible studies had developed a new love for Christ, which has given her confidence in the Lord and hope for the future. Rogerio Knaus, having suffered marital difficulties, relies entirely on the Lord. Siblings Eduarda and Miguel Marcelino were joyous when friends in their community, Pathfinder club members and the NEC Pathfinder Director, Pastor Ikwsa Mwasumbi, came to witness and support their baptism.

Many visitors heard a Spirit-filled message from the senior pastor and NEC Personal Ministries and Evangelism Director, Dr Patrick Hebert, who also conducted the baptism. Two souls responded after he made a heartfelt appeal.

DANIEL APEADU



## Baptism at Wood Green

On 21 October 2023, members of the Wood Green, Tottenham Lighthouse and Edmonton churches gathered at Wood Green for a glorious baptism of eight candidates. One candidate who had physical difficulties that prevented her from entering the pool was accepted on profession of faith. The sanctuary was filled to capacity with friends and family from all three congregations, and livestreamed for family members as far as Albania and Uganda.

It was a great joy for the Wood Green elders to study with the candidates every Sabbath. The names of the candidates for Wood Green were Manuela Peter, Ashley & Natalie Nyonjo, Eden Ekoli, Lennox Mayers, and Patricia Leonard, who was accepted on profession of faith. The candidates for Edmonton Central were Noel Prince Chevington Allen and his two sons, Nashon Prince Allen and Noel Jr Emmanuel Allen.

Lennox Mayers and Noel Allen were baptised by Pastor Jude Jeanville. While Pastor Jeanville was visiting the US, Lennox's sister, who lives in New York, told him that she

had a brother in London with whom she had been studying for years. When Pastor Jeanville returned, he visited Lennox, who readily accepted the invitation to be baptised. At his baptism, Lennox, who is 88, danced in the pool, acknowledging the song 'No turning back'.

Noel, although a member of the Edmonton church, is a faithful member of Tottenham Lighthouse's 5am prayer group. A year ago he suffered three strokes that left him without speech and mobility, but he joined the prayer meeting even from his hospital bed. God has worked miraculously, and Noel has now regained his speech and mobility, to the amazement of his doctors, his family and friends. With great joy we watched him recommit his life to God, and his two sons – Noel Jr and Nashon – joined him in baptism. Noel Jr wanted to be baptised before going off to university. It was indeed a day of rejoicing, both on earth and in heaven.

*ODELE PRINCE AND MAXINE DONOVAN*



## Triple baptismal blessing at Newport

Newport Church was overcome with joy on 25 November to witness the baptism of three precious souls.

Emmanuela Bakare, who had grown up in a Christian household, admonished the whole church to stand faithfully: 'Let your rock be Jesus – not the pastor, your friends, or even your Christian parents – that way, should they fail, your faith remains uncompromised. If there are benefits that come with pleasing our bosses and teachers, there are even more for pleasing God.'

The second candidate was Emmanuela's mum, Oluwasikemi Bakare. She had grown up in a Christian household passionate about morning prayer. She had attended a Pentecostal church and served passionately, but due to domestic violence she could no longer attend that church. She felt impressed to visit the Adventist church in Bristol with her daughter, where they approached guest speaker Elder Donald Ndhlovu of Newport and asked for Bible studies; and, when they moved to the Newport area, they continued the studies with Pastor Samuel Semakula, who had also come from a Pentecostal background.

Marley Brown's whole life had been a series of testimonies. Before his birth, the doctors couldn't find his heartbeat and believed he was dead, but he was delivered safely the following week. He fled domestic abuse with his mother and older brother, and escaped a failed kidnapping, all before the end of primary school. He shared the significant role his grandmother had played in his life before she died, and stated: 'The one thing that has stayed consistent in my life is God's protection. God has a plan for us all, and He is the only logical reason I'm standing here today.'

*PASTOR SAMUEL SEMAKULA*

## Dudley House School 'on a high' following Ofsted inspection



Staff and governors ended 2023 'on a high' following another successful Ofsted inspection at the end of November 2023. Jenny Johnson, Dudley House School Headteacher, and Lorraine McDonald, British Union Conference Education Director, were delighted as they sat and listened to the glowing feedback the inspectors shared during the inspection, and just wished everyone could have been there to hear what was said.

The inspection was rigorous: the inspectors delved into every aspect of school life. Also present was a senior HMI who assessed the inspectors carrying out our inspection.

The inspectors collated evidence that, despite challenges since our last inspection, we were a solidly 'good' school that had consistently and securely met all the independent school standards.

Ofsted referred to the school as 'a small school with big ideas'. Jenny Johnson was glad this was visible: 'We have always had big ideas and constantly strive to provide the best experiences and outcomes for our pupils.'

Throughout the inspection, inspectors noted that the quality of education provided by this small independent school is something they can be proud of. The curriculum is 'broad, ambitious and interesting'.

The inspectors were impressed that all 'pupils behave well throughout the school day' and readily retain the knowledge they access through the exciting curriculum. Reading is a particular strength, with all pupils learning to read quickly.

At the school, it was noted that pupils come from remarkably diverse backgrounds. Ofsted recognised that all pupils' 'emotional and mental health needs are well supported', and, through the Christian ethos, pupils 'live out the values of respect, inclusivity and kindness', with a



notably strong relationship between pupils and staff.

The inspectors' parting comments were: 'We will never forget you and your school – not for the wrong reasons. It has been an absolute privilege.'

It certainly is a privilege to share high-quality Adventist education. We nurture and transform the lives of children from diverse backgrounds so that every child can thrive – not just now, but in the future, too.

The year ended on a high for staff and governors, who celebrated being able to share the good news with pupils, parents, and the community that 'Dudley House School continues to be a GOOD school where pupils thrive because of the committed and dedicated staff who work tirelessly to provide the best for every pupil in its care.'

Dudley House School has an exciting future, as 'God is the Master of our school.' We thank Him for His guidance, enabling strength, and the joy of working for Him.

JENNY JOHNSON

If you would like your child to experience the blessings of Dudley House School, take a look at the school's website: [dudleyhouseschool.co.uk](http://dudleyhouseschool.co.uk) and Facebook page: [facebook.com/dudleyhouseschool](https://facebook.com/dudleyhouseschool), and call the headteacher on 07483 455997 to arrange a visit!

## An outstanding Ofsted inspection for Newbold School

On 16 November 2023, after three days of intense Ofsted scrutiny, Newbold School was judged to be 'Outstanding'.

The school's staff and governors have worked tirelessly towards this incredible success with unstinting belief in the quality of what the school has to offer its pupils. Headteacher Mrs J. Crissey commented: 'Our passion and dedication were commended many times during the inspection. Above all, Christianity was recognised as being at the heart of Newbold School. Our inspector told us that he could feel the Christian ethos surrounding him the moment he entered the school.'

The children's excellent behaviour was remarked upon several times during the inspection and in the final report: 'Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. In lessons and at social times, pupils show great levels of self-confidence and respect' (Ofsted inspection report, 14-16 November 2023).

Forest School lessons are taught weekly in the woods around Newbold College. This feature of the school impressed the inspectors enormously, particularly the benefits gained from it in Early Years. Mrs Jennings, Deputy Head and Early Years Manager, remarked: 'Our children learn about responsible stewardship of our planet and embrace nature as God's creation.'

Throughout the entire school, Newbold pupils' attitude to learning was commended: 'An exceptional quality of education from Nursery to Year 6 helps pupils to develop an infectious enthusiasm and thirst for learning. Consequently, they flourish here' (Ofsted inspection report, November 2023).

To view the full report, please visit the school's website: [www.newboldschool.info](http://www.newboldschool.info).

JAKI CRISSEY



# Share Your Story

Have you encountered God's extraordinary touch in your ordinary life? Have you found hope in unexpected ways through His grace?

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Send your articles to [editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk](mailto:editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk) with the subject 'Inspirational Submission'. Please include a brief bio and your contact information. Submissions from those wishing to remain anonymous are welcome. More than one story or article from the same individual is also welcome.

### Deadline for Submissions: 30 June 2024

*Don't let your story stay silent. Your testimony is a gift, not just for you, but also for the whole world to glorify the Lord.*

*"Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story..." Psalm 107:2 (NIV)*

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**WHEN AND WHERE**

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28 Mar-1 April	GYC Focus, UK Pioneer Centre, Kidderminster	

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Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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### New premises for Carlisle Church

Our Seventh-day Adventist church in Carlisle has been situated opposite the castle for many years, but we have recently outgrown the small building, so it became necessary to find a larger place. Our search for new premises has been successful, to the delight of our members. With a group effort, we found a beautiful larger church to rent on Sabbath mornings. It is perfect for us, and we can see a great future for our church there. As for the old building, it will remain in use by our expanding youth group.

The new church building is situated in a deprived area, so we ask for prayers to help us become a shining light, reaching out to those around us who need God's word. Thanks to God for blessing the church of Carlisle and providing a solution for us.

LEIA BROOMFIELD

### Retirement celebration

In a heart-warming gathering, Sydenham Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with family, friends and well-wishers, came together on Sabbath 16 December 2023 to celebrate the retirement of Pastor Simeon Esson, who has dedicated forty-four years of service, both in the UK and Jamaica. The celebration was filled with fond reminiscences and heartfelt appreciation. Church members and friends joined together to express their gratitude for his years of dedication and service.



The event featured touching speeches, heartfelt anecdotes, and a video presentation highlighting the remarkable career of Pastor Esson. Elder Sheldon Boothe emphasised in his tribute that retirement does not signify the end of his influence: 'Your wisdom and experience remain invaluable resources.'

In his final speech, Pastor Esson shared his thoughts and plans for his well-deserved retirement, leaving an impression on all present. We wish Pastor and Mrs Esson fulfilment, joy and God's richest blessings as they step into this new phase of life.

SYDENHAM CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



### Tamworth ordination

On Sabbath 18 November 2023, at Tamworth Church, family, friends and members witnessed the ordination of four deaconesses and a deacon.

Sisters Joanna Dolatowska, Navelyn Hemans, Petol Mullings and Maxine Nicholson and Brother Piotr Dolatowski were ordained at this special ordination service.

The officiating ministers were Pastor Jermaine Swaby, our local pastor, and Pastor Jeff Nicholson. They were assisted by our head elder, Brother Clifton Nicholson.

The service included a litany of commitment read by Pastor Swaby and Pastor Nicholson. There was also a time of laying on of hands led by Pastor Nicholson, and a special prayer was offered for all the ordinands. They were welcomed, and the eldership team presented each one with a certificate and a lovely gift book set.

Pastor Jeff Nicholson brought us the sermon, entitled 'God Loves the Babylonians', and the scripture reading was taken from Jeremiah 51:6-10.

May God bless Joanna, Navelyn, Petol, Maxine and Piotr as they serve their Lord, Tamworth Church and the local community.

PAULINE NEWTON, COMMUNICATIONS



### Weston-super-Mare says goodbye to Pastor Rio Espulgar

Sabbath 16 December was a day of rejoicing and sadness for the members of the Weston-super-Mare church: rejoicing because they had been blessed by an excellent Christmas carol service, but sadness because their pastor, Rio Espulgar, and his wife and daughter were saying goodbye, as Pastor Espulgar had been called to serve the South England Conference as Family Life Director. To show the church's appreciation of their service, Pastor and Mrs Espulgar were presented with a Bristol blue glass vase and flowers. Their daughter, Rianne, has used her musical skills to enhance their worship experience, and she was given a framed photograph of the youth music group she had been part of. Pastor Espulgar's wife has been very active caring for children's Sabbath School and the Pathfinder club. All three members of the family will be greatly missed.

PR SECRETARY

**Caroline Lorencin (1940-2023) d. 10 September.**

Caroline was born in Aberdeen on 9 August 1940, the only child of George and Ivy Catto. George's grandmother, Mary Kennedy, was one of the first Adventists in Aberdeen.



After completing her GCEs at Stanborough School, Caroline came to study at Newbold College. Before she left for Newbold, her mum advised her 'not to get mixed up with those foreign boys' – but, by the end of the first school year, Caroline was with a young man from Yugoslavia called Jovan (John). Soon after, Caroline boarded a train to the very different world of communist Yugoslavia. However, everyone was warm and welcoming. She was also very impressed by the vibrant music life at the Belgrade church, where John was the youth pastor. And so, on 12 June 1960, Caroline and John became engaged. They were married on 26 July 1961 at Stanborough Park Church in Watford.

Many questioned her decision to move from England to Yugoslavia, a communist country which, at that time, many Yugoslavs were looking to escape. She didn't know the language, but she knew the universal language of music, and soon she was in the thick of that vibrant music life of the Belgrade church, prompting one young boy to ask: 'Mum, how does she know how to play in Serbian?' She did, of course, learn the language, and soon spoke it like a native. One person said, 'She was sophisticated, graceful, kind, and would always greet us with a smile. For a British person she mastered the somewhat difficult-to-pronounce Serbo-Croatian language really well with a lovely accent.'

She took the country and its people to her heart, and in response they took her into their hearts too. She loved music, working with children, and knitting. Even in her retirement she actively served the church, playing the organ and piano.

The last time she was able to visit her son's family in the United States, she was able to witness her granddaughters, Caroline and Jovanna, being baptised on the anniversary of her own baptism.

She lived a life of service to God and the people around her. Till the end she was so peaceful and calm, encouraging others. Her faith did not waver. She was at peace with the people around her and with her Creator. The words she said the night before she died were: 'I want to sleep.' The next day she did so, and her Creator will wake her on that wonderful resurrection day.

DAVID LORENCIN AND JUDITH VUCIC

**Pastor Roy Arthur Burgess (1926-2023) d. 12 November.**

We are saddened to learn of the death of Pastor Roy Burgess, who passed away on 12 November 2023, after a long battle with a



neurological condition.

Roy Arthur Burgess was a true Watford boy – born on 14 June 1926, he spent his early years at Parkgate, Callowland, and Stanborough Schools and Leggatts Way Senior Boys' School. An active member of Stanborough Park Church, he was baptised in 1941 and was a lay preacher and a treasured youth leader.

After a period working in Clive Blackburn's shoe repair shop, he entered denominational employment on 30 September 1942, serving as a general hand at Granose Foods Ltd, and then as a baker. In April 1948 Roy decided to study for the ministry at Newbold College, graduating in 1952 with a BA in Theology. In August of the same year, he married his sweetheart Sheila Coppock at Stanborough Park Church. They were blessed by the birth of Elaine (1958) and David (1959).

Pastor Burgess accepted the call to ministry in the South England Conference to begin his internship, firstly in Cornwall and then in Edmonton, London. Roy was ordained at the SEC Conference Session in 1957, after which he was assigned to serve the Southampton and Portsmouth districts before moving to Gloucester. He later accepted the call to the Irish Mission, first serving in Dublin, then Portadown and Banbridge, where in 1963 he was called to the Welsh Mission to serve as minister and MV sponsor in the Newport districts. His next appointment in 1967 was to pastor the Shrewsbury and Wellington churches. Roy never forgot his love of Wales, its members and Welsh hymn singing.

Pastor Burgess returned to the South England Conference in January 1976 to minister to the Gloucester, Cheltenham, Chalford and Stroud churches. In 1983 he moved back to Watford to be the senior pastor at his 'home church' of Stanborough Park along with the Rickmansworth company, during which time he had the honour to preach for a BBC Sunday morning broadcast.

In addition to his ministerial roles, Pastor Burgess kept busy through his role as a youth sponsor for the Welsh Mission; ran an annual youth camp in Brecon in the days when you had to dig your own toilets and wash in the river in the mornings; was a leader of motor camps during the 1960s and '70s, taking youth to Ireland, Switzerland, Italy, France, Norway and Iceland; and coordinated the music for many SEC camp meetings.

Roy also assisted in evangelistic campaigns, such as the Vandeman campaign in London in the 1950s, and other campaigns in Dublin and Shrewsbury.

Over the years Roy enjoyed mentoring a number of intern pastors who all faithfully served the church in the UK and Ireland, and who remember him fondly.

In 1990 Roy pastored the Hemel Hempstead church until his retirement in September 1991, having completed forty-four years of dedicated and enthusiastic denominational service. But he just couldn't stop serving his God, and continued to preach regularly in the West Country, East Anglia and the South Coast, supporting the local pastors for more than twenty years.

He was loved and respected by his congregations and colleagues for his quiet leadership and his Bible-based preaching.

We thank God for Roy's long and faithful service in the UK and Ireland, and extend our deepest condolences to Sheila, his wife of seventy-one years; their adult children, Elaine and David; brother, Reg; sister, Ruth, and their families; and sister-in-law, Cath, and late brother, Ken, and his family, with caring thoughts and prayers.

The funeral took place on Wednesday 6 December at Stanborough Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, and was followed by a committal at North Watford Cemetery. Pastor Jacques Venter officiated, supported by Pastor Terry Messenger.

We look forward to Christ's soon return on that glorious resurrection day.

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE AND DAVID BURGESS

# Messenger

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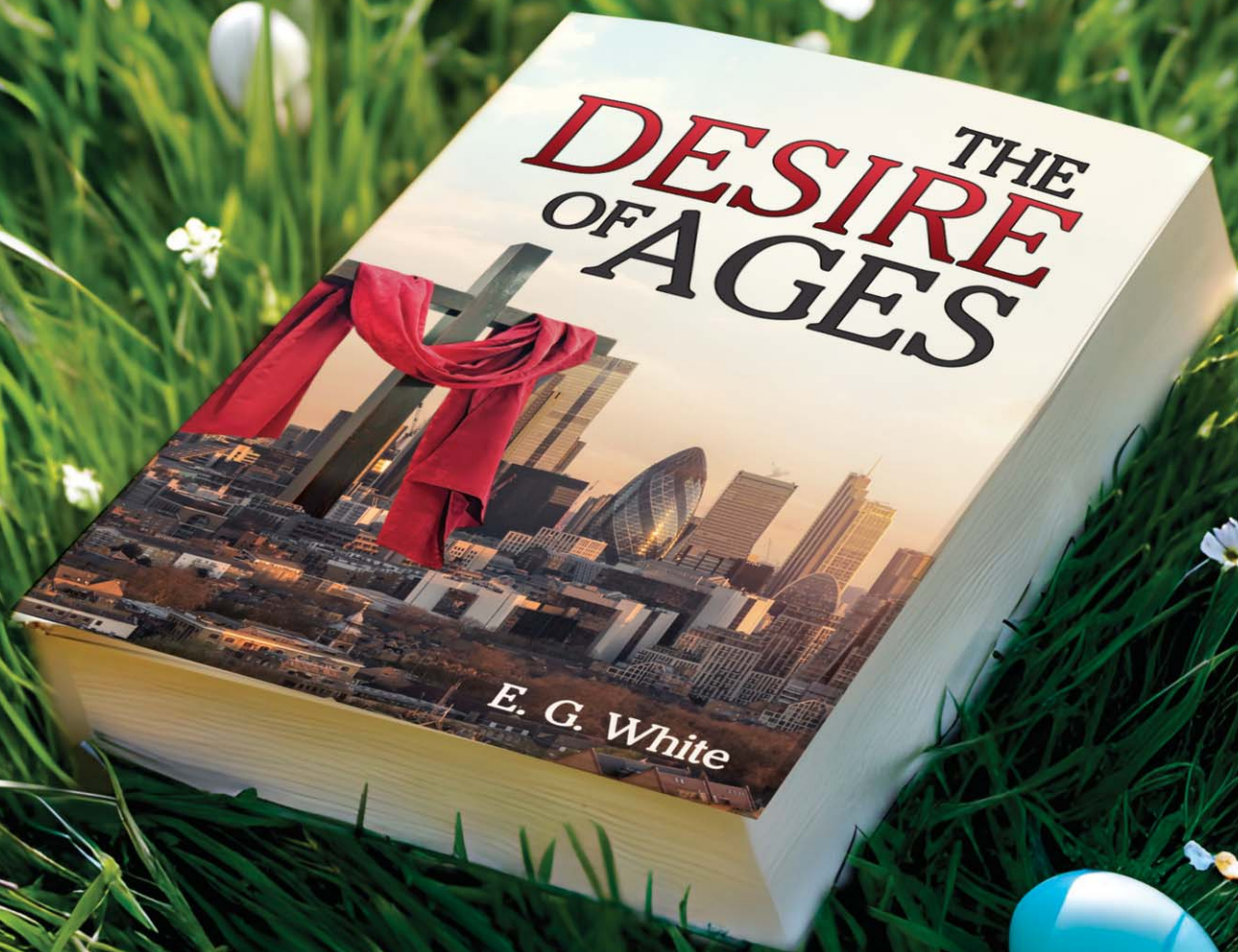
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	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Beif
Feb 23	5.29	5.41	5.31	5.33	5.47
Mar 1	5.42	5.54	5.44	5.48	6.01
8	5.54	6.06	5.57	6.03	6.15
15	6.06	6.18	6.10	6.17	6.28
22	6.18	6.30	6.22	6.32	6.42

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