

Messenger

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in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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Photo: David Neal

'He was looked down on and passed over,
a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.
One look at him and people turned away.
We looked down on him, thought he was scum.
But the fact is, it was *our* pains he carried –
our disfigurements, all the things wrong with *us*.
We thought he brought it on himself,
that God was punishing him for his own failures.

But it was our sins that did that to him,
that ripped and tore and crushed him – *our sins!*
He took the punishment, and that made us whole.
Through his bruises we get healed.
We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost.
We've all done our own thing, gone our own way.
And God has piled all our sins,
everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.'

Isaiah 53:3-6 (The Message)



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Vibrant, diverse and growing

by Pastor Paul Tompkins,
Scottish Mission President

The Scottish Mission is one of three Mission territories within the British Union; namely (alphabetically) the Irish, Scottish and Welsh Missions. A Mission territory is linked to the British Union Conference; and, because of smaller membership and correspondingly lower tithe income than the Conferences, the Missions receive an annual appropriation from the BUC.

Interestingly, however, during the COVID-19 pandemic the Mission territories have been less hard-hit financially, and at the January SM Executive Committee the landmark decision was made to institute a tithe support plan and to send a donation of £10,000 back to the BUC. Although small in size, the Executive Committee wished the Scottish Mission to be part of supporting and sustaining the life and ministry of the entire BUC territory.

The Gospel outreach continues to go forward north of the border, and in 2022 the Scottish Mission will celebrate 120 years since it was first formed back in 1902. Obviously, no one who was alive then is so today, but we are very aware that we stand on the shoulders of the faithful pioneers who came before. We walk in their footsteps as we proclaim the everlasting Gospel and the three angels' messages to a twenty-first-century audience.

Times have changed, and we are no longer selling *Present Truth* from door to door at 1d a copy, but today the same message goes forward using new and innovative ways with the current technology. Two present examples of this are a youth project called *The Word on the Street*, using podcast messages aimed at today's generation of young people, and a newly launched online evangelistic campaign entitled *The Basic Questions of Life*.

This programme has been run by the Edinburgh Forth Valley District and is aimed at secular people in society who, through the current instability, may have big questions on their minds about the important questions of hope, love and where we are going in life. Extensive online advertising has been taken out for the twelve-week series.



In the Scottish Mission we have a small but extremely dedicated team of seven pastors and an office secretary. These are joined by departmental sponsors to form our team leadership group. Each has been involved in nurturing the membership through online programmes in health, children's ministry, keeping the church family safe (KCFS), church clerk and treasury training, and Pathfinder and youth programmes. We are very much alive as a church without walls.

This includes helping those in need, and three groups have become part of the ADRA community service hubs: Edinburgh Cook-Inn, the Glasgow food bank, and the Crieff Hearts and Hands initiative. The first two gained extra funding through a Barclays grant for food security in this very difficult time. Other church-based initiatives are shown in the two-page Scottish Mission focus included in this edition of *MESSENGER*.

Through our sixteen churches, companies and groups – spread from Inverness in the gateway to the Highlands, to Irvine in the southern lowlands, and all major cities in-between – the church in Scotland, with its vibrant, diverse and growing membership, continues to be an active and important constituent part of the British Union.

MESSENGER subscription

Welcome to the third edition of *MESSENGER* for 2021, the third to be printed, and the third to be sent to you by direct mail. Thanks to all who have already subscribed to either the print edition of *MESSENGER* mailed direct to your home, or the digital version sent by email, and to those who have requested both.

Our aim is to send one printed copy of the *MESSENGER* to the household of every member who wishes to receive it. Enclosed with it are a copy of *Adventist World* and the quarterly *FOCUS* magazine.

Thank you for your assistance in getting our information up to date. If you know of any members who want a printed copy of the *MESSENGER*, but haven't so far received one, let us know.

Please note that this is the last edition distributed en masse to all without subscription. If you want to keep receiving the *MESSENGER* by post, you will need to subscribe (for which there is no charge), either by returning the card that is included with the magazine, or by sending a brief email to:

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This is a major new initiative to give help and support to all of our members in these strange and challenging times. We really appreciate your feedback and your assistance as we work with the church clerks to make it a success.

Peter Oppong-Mensah and Pastor John Surrige, Distribution Coordinators



David Neal, Editor

Isaiah lifts his baton

Towards the overture's end, the music slows to a moderate, reflective pace as Isaiah paints a picture of promise:

'But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint' (Isaiah 40:31, ESV).

When a divorce settlement is agreed between a husband and wife, the aim is to divide assets in a way that is equal and fair. Missing is the 'grief – the emotional contract of divorce'.¹ Given what I know about this as a pastor, this message rings true. Who in marriage ever wants to receive the crushing words, 'I want a divorce'? Whatever the state of the relationship, the direction of travel is clear: 'We need to go our separate ways.'

I was reminded of this painful reality recently while reading Isaiah 50:1:

'Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away?' (Isaiah 50:1, NIV.)

Without context, the line makes little to no sense, so let's unpack it. With sins as long as your arm, Israel's unfaithfulness to God led them into Babylonian captivity. While one commentator suggests that life in Babylon 'was not arduous',² for those who wanted to remain faithful to God it was a desperate struggle to keep going. *'By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion'* (Psalm 137:1, ESV). *'But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me . . ."'* (Isaiah 49:14, ESV).

A sense of hopelessness can lead to clinical depression, a condition Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe has experienced in recent times. Hopefully, by the time you read this editorial, Nazanin will be back home in Britain after completing a five-year prison sentence in Iran – the victim of a global powerplay. Her husband, Richard Ratcliffe, has frequently reported the poor condition of Nazanin's mental health, due to her unjust imprisonment. It is not difficult to understand the questions going through her mind. *Will I ever receive justice? Will I ever be free again?* Strangely enough, the people of Israel were also at the mercy of forces beyond their control. These very same questions were being asked by the people of Israel while in Babylon.

Back to Isaiah, this time to chapter 40. With Isaiah now over 80 years of age, the prophet becomes a pastor, knowing it is time to minister to totally shattered people.

Let's imagine him standing on a podium, in front of a combined choir and orchestra. He lifts his baton and starts to conduct. 'The first thing we hear is three stirring commands, like trumpet blasts: "Comfort. . . . Speak. . . . Proclaim!"' (Verses 1 and 2, NIV).³ God uses Isaiah to cheer up His people with real hope. As I read these words, I begin quite spontaneously to hum a familiar hymn tune:



'The first thing we hear is three stirring commands, like trumpet blasts: "Comfort. . . . Speak. . . . Proclaim!"'

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'The Lord in Zion reigneth; let all the word rejoice . . .'

Now let's be clear: pastoral care is not about providing warm but fake fuzzy feelings to the distressed. Such a ministry is useless, and even deceptive, unless it is based on truth at every point – something to which Isaiah is faithful. His ministry of healing was memory recall: a reminder that God has written the script, and things are not as they seem.

They are God's people (verse 1).
They have been forgiven (verse 2).
God will prove they've been forgiven by revealing to them His glory (verses 3-5).
God's Word can be relied on (verses 6-8).

For the rest of chapter forty the orchestra plays an overture about how great and good God is. Imagine the orchestra capturing the sweeping rhetoric of the questions God poses – first with the string section:

'Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?' (Verse 21, ESV.)

Isaiah then quickly points his baton at the wind and brass section to powerfully respond:

'It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness' (22, 23, ESV).

Remember who you are. Israel – you are 'chosen' to live out your 'calling' as the people of God. Remember, Israel – we are kith and kin. You have been 'redeemed' (cross-reference Isaiah 35:9). Remember, Israel, **the promises of God** – and fear not. Remember, Israel – **God is faithful!**

The 'kith and kin' cross-reference connects us with Isaiah's verse about divorce. Israel – wherever did that idea come from? Why would God ever think like that? It is completely fake news! As Barry Web in his excellent commentary on Isaiah explains, 'People who are loved like that have absolutely nothing to fear.'⁵

What's the application? There's a lot of folk I know right now wondering about their future. **The message from Isaiah is: 'Remember who you are.'** Isaiah will go on later to present to Israel Someone who is everything Israel ought to be, but is not: not just an ideal, but the Provider of mercy and grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). At this point Isaiah calls Him 'the Servant of the LORD'. Isaiah hints at a bright future, with the music about to be 'transposed into a new and higher key', because, as Web explains, **'The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of Isaiah 40.'**⁶

¹<http://meritagedivorce.com/>

²Bible Study Guide – <https://absq.adventist.org/current-quarter>

³Barry Web, *The Message of Isaiah*, p. 161

⁴*Seventh-Day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 7

⁵Barry Web, *The Message of Isaiah*, p. 175

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 164

BUC tithe report for December 2020

Dear members and friends,
Deep into this latest lockdown, the green shoots of a hopeful recovery of health abound. I am grateful to the Lord to be able to give a tithe report that continues to be extremely positive given the current health and economic climate. Here are the headline notes:

1. BUC-wide tithe is down on 2019 by £1,645,867 (6.8%).
2. SEC and NEC tithe is down by £1.09m (-7.0%) and £570k (-8.5%) respectively on 2019, and IM tithe is down by 5.9%.
3. SM (+9.8%) & WM (+8.1%) tithe continues to reflect positivity during COVID-19.
4. BUC projected or budgeted tithe income is now down to £126k below expected levels.
5. The SEC and NEC are £1.28m and £637k below their original budgeted tithe income.
6. BUC cashflows are now stable, with falls not expected to continue.

Exceptional 2020 cash income: (1) pension trustees received an injection of £476,000; (2) Stanborough Secondary School received £200,000 from the TED; (3) a legacy of £100,000 was received; (4) we have received £342,000 to date from the Government's Job Retention Scheme.

It should be noted that all tithe falls for the tithe-receiving entities have been more than offset by HMRC JRS claims, and in the case of Ireland by the new Revenue Service's equivalent of Gift Aid this year.

But the biggest reason for optimism, as we move through 2021, is the recovery of our members' tithe returns to 93% of 2019 returns. We give God immense thanks as we recognise His love and support for His church. We have so many reasons to be thankful to Him during a very challenging year for all my treasury colleagues throughout the BUC field.

EARL RAMHARACKSINGH

British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Tithe Report - December 2020

This Month	2020	2019	Inc / -Dec	Variance %
South	£1,842,716	£1,809,870	£32,845	1.8
North	£704,220	£621,135	£83,085	13.4
Welsh	£47,637	£41,933	£5,704	13.6
Scottish	£63,688	£46,851	£16,836	35.9
Irish	£117,975	£112,507	£5,468	4.9
Total	£2,776,236	£2,632,297	£143,939	5.5%

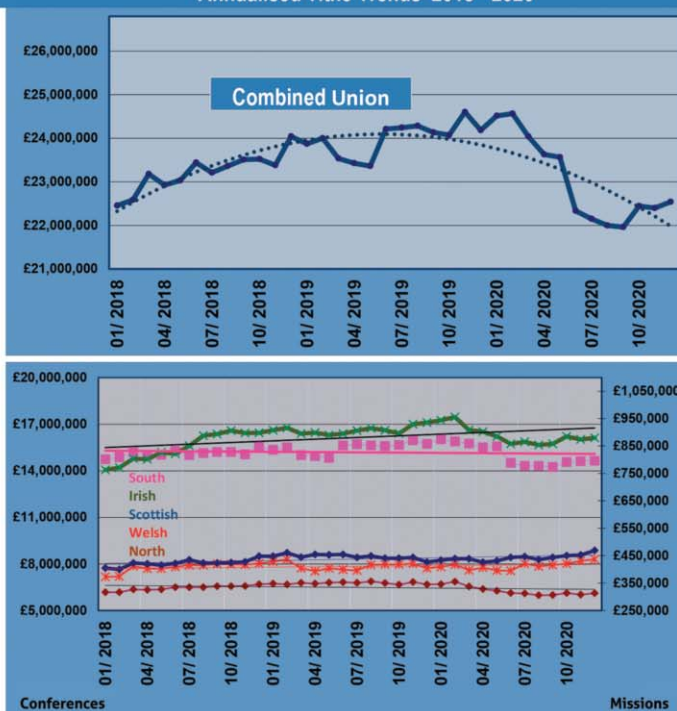
Cumulative to Date

South	£14,641,180	£15,735,130	£-1,093,950	-7.0%
North	£6,112,445	£6,683,373	£-570,928	-8.5%
Welsh	£436,814	£404,105	£32,709	8.1%
Scottish	£468,969	£427,263	£41,706	9.8%
Irish	£880,047	£935,451	£-55,404	-5.9%
Total	£22,539,455	£24,185,322	£-1,645,867	-6.8%

Budgets

	Annual	To Date	Variance	%
South	£15,922,044	£15,922,044	£-1,280,864	-8.0%
North	£6,750,000	£6,750,000	£-637,555	-9.4%
Welsh	£426,000	£426,000	£10,814	2.5%
Scottish	£427,000	£427,000	£41,969	9.8%
Irish	£920,000	£920,000	£-39,953	-4.3%
Total	£24,445,044	£24,445,044	£-1,905,589	-7.8%
BUC	£2,379,967	£2,379,967	£-126,021.45	-5.3%

British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Annualised Tithe Trends 2018 - 2020



Join the BUC office for morning worship

Every weekday, at 8.30am, the British Union Conference office holds a morning worship by Zoom. It is also shared on the BUC's news and youth Facebook pages: www.facebook.com/adventist.org.uk and www.facebook.com/adventist.youthukandireland. You are most welcome to join us by Facebook. We take prayer requests that are submitted on the Facebook pages or sent by email to info@adventist.uk, and we would love to hear from you.

2021 BUC Session notification

Notice is hereby given that, COVID-19 restrictions permitting, the ninth quinquennial session of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will take place at the Staverton De Vere Conference Centre, Daventry Road, Daventry NN11 6JT, on Thursday 8 and Friday 9 July 2021. Notice is also given that proposals to modify the constitution of the British Union Conference and the operating policies of the Missions in harmony with the General Conference models will also be presented. Delegates will receive documentation in advance of the session.

PASTOR JOHN SURRIDGE (EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE)



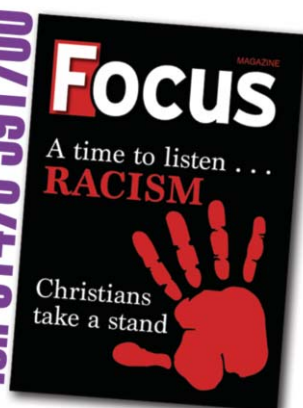
Since the death of George Floyd almost a year ago, civil society has started a conversation about racism like never before.

What is our response? What is the Christian response? What do we do when racism is found in the church?

It's time for Christians to take a stand.

Focus magazine – published and printed for Seventh-day Adventists in the UK and Ireland to share with friends.

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God answers prayers!

by Robert Sullivan



The Sullivan family with Sonali Shah from the BBC's *Escape to the Country*

For the past five years Robert and Michelle Sullivan have been the owner-operators of their farm, The Artisan Grower Ltd., in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. They have been supplying restaurants and chefs with their local edible flowers and microgreens. They have also provided retail customers with veg boxes, and have offered a free veg box subscription to those identified by their local pastor, Njabulo Ndlovu, as being in need.

It was after two seasons of growing vegetables that Robert came in from the field, hot, sweaty and covered in dirt, and started a conversation with his wife: 'Meash, have you asked the Lord to bless our farm recently?'

Michelle replied, 'Um . . . no, I haven't recently.'

'Well, we need to pray and ask God to continue to bless the farm,' Robert responded. That was when they prayed for God to bless their farm.

A few days later, and after a few missed

calls, Robert found that a message had been left by the BBC. It was a request to come and film their farm for an upcoming episode of *Escape to the Country*. They called back straight away to find that the opportunity had passed them by; the BBC representative said that they had decided to film something else.

Feeling rather despondent and morose, they did not know what to do, but a peace rested upon the Sullivan household. After some time, the family remembered a scripture verse. It was Proverbs 21:1, which reads, '*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will*' (KJV).

The family jumped up and decided to claim God's promise. Robert and Michelle asked the Lord, 'If You can be glorified by our farm being on this television programme, please change the hearts and minds of the BBC producers.' The following morning the BBC representative called back and said that they had spoken

with the producer, and they still wanted to film the farm. They did so, and viewers were able to watch the episode on BBC iPlayer until 24 March 2021.

Not too long after this, the Sullivans received a message from a video production house for Jay-Z and Pharrell Williams (Michelle didn't know who Pharrell Williams was, and had to google his name). They were asking if they could feature their farm in an upcoming video, showcasing black entrepreneurs across the globe.

The family felt a little reluctant to be included at first, not knowing what the content would be. After much prayer, the Sullivans felt impressed to allow this video production to include their farm. Once the video was released, much attention was drawn towards the farm. The farm was also featured in the *Telegraph*, BBC News, BBC Breakfast TV, BBC Radio Scotland, Reuters Group, farming periodicals and many more papers and periodicals around the globe.

The Sullivans were also asked to be keynote speakers alongside Adam Henson of the BBC's *Countryfile* at a huge farming show at the Birmingham NEC. The family were also asked to be brand representatives for The Original Muck Boot Co. and many other products.

After five years of farming on one acre, circumstances called for a need to move. The family prayed to the Lord to provide them with new land. Three days after they prayed, the family received a call from the CEO of what is known to be the largest privately owned hotel chain in the UK. In this call, the Sullivans were asked whether they would be willing to move onto the land of one of the Aberdeenshire hotels that covers 2,400 acres. The family were also asked whether they would be able to supply ten Scottish hotels.

The family feel blessed that they are able to serve their community in this way. They feel that their prayers have been answered. Jesus says, '*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it*' (John 14:13, 14, KJV).



New births on Christmas Day

While most on 25 December focus on the babe born in a manger many centuries ago – the first advent of Christ – the Aberdeen members last Christmas spent the time welcoming six new members into the family of Christ and the church through baptism. Witnessed by a small gathering of family friends, we gathered together in the newly revamped church building in accordance with the guidelines for places of worship relating to the current pandemic. One measure included the chlorination of the water in the baptismal pool.

On hearing that the Scottish government had ordered a lockdown immediately after Christmas, the time of the baptism was brought forward from Saturday evening to Sabbath morning (Christmas Day). The first 'open' meeting held in the church since the initial 2020 lockdown, the service and atmosphere were quite different, but nevertheless the congregation gathered to witness this unforgettable service – acknowledging that Jesus is the Lord; Jesus is the Saviour.

The homily was provided by Pastor Patrick Johnson via a video link. He spoke on how to be and to make disciples as Jesus instructed us, and included personal messages for each of the candidates.

Nancy

Nancy was born in Tanzania and raised as a Catholic, first attending the Aberdeen church in 2013. Never in her mind did she ever intend to become an Adventist; but it was through joining a Sabbath School class that she realised a need to know more about God's word. Impressed by this need, she began to study the Bible more.

Shawndel

Already baptised as a Pentecostal twenty

years earlier, Shawndel was perplexed as to why she had not received the Holy Spirit's visitation based on her understanding. Though living as she thought, Shawndel realised she was not keeping God's commandments. While on a break, Shawndel reunited with her friend, Aberdeen member Genny, and as a result she was introduced to the Adventist faith and decided to rededicate her life to Christ.

Shirley

Shirley, from the town of Peterhead, north-east of Aberdeen, came to the church as the result of a dream, wanting to know more. Her journey to Christ has been fraught; yet, despite it all, Shirley decided to surrender to God and to accept His will for her life.

Nyabane

Nyabane (aged 12), who is affectionately known as Nyane, is the son of our pastor, Njabulo Ndlovu. Nyane's journey started two years earlier, when he decided to make Jesus his personal Saviour.

Simon and Tobias

Simon and Tobias (aged 10 & 12) are brothers from a ministerial family of our sister church in Bucksburn. Simon had wanted to be baptised since age nine, to make Jesus his Friend. His brother, Tobias, decided to follow Jesus no matter what, and his testimony is that he would like to encourage others to follow Jesus too.

Pastor Ndlovu attended each candidate in the baptistry. Under the guidance for baptisms during these restricted times, the candidates self-immersed. However, on this occasion, a different position was taken. Each candidate knelt once in the baptistry, whereupon Pastor Ndlovu

completed the act of immersion. The right hand of fellowship was then extended to each member by their respective church representatives.

We praise God for making this service possible during a time of great uncertainty. For our new members, we applaud and praise God for their commitment and request the Lord's care over them. The prayer to our Father is that He will hold over them His loving arms, and keep them until that sure and happy day, our Saviour's return. Some call it The Second Advent!

JANICE SAVIZON

Editor's note: Some readers may wonder why we have included a report dating back to Christmas Day. Due to social distance restrictions, both the timing and improvisation of immersion are newsworthy.

Second, I noted with interest that Shirley's journey to Christ was the result of a dream. Want to know more about twenty-first-century men and women coming to Christ through dreams? Check out the 6 February sermon by Pastor Dwight Nelson from Pioneer Memorial Church on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/511274066>.



Pastor Ndlovu baptising Nyane



Shawndel (left) with friend Genny



Left to right: Nancy, Stella (Bucksburn Rep), Nyane, Shirley, Pastor Ndlovu, Simon, Manuel (Aberdeen elder), Shawndel and Tobias

Out for delivery! Updates from Women's Aid

You might remember reading an article about Eliana, who in September 2020 ventured on a fundraising experience for her sixth birthday. Almost four months have passed since £850 (the outcome of Eliana's fundraising, boosted by a further donation from East Kilbride Church) and 32 sponsored teddy bears were delivered to WASLER (Women's Aid South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire).

We are thankful for the subsequent updates received from Loraine Harris, a team manager of the CYP team at WASLER, which enable us to see the impact of our support for their services. In November, Loraine sent us a special message:



'Hello; we now have our names and are finding our forever homes with some special children. We will provide comfort and reassurance and will be loved. We hope to make our children feel happy and safe. Thank you for sponsoring us. All the WASLER trauma teddies xx'



Some of the WASLER workers, as we learnt, even prepared adoption certificates, giving the children the option to change the name of their teddy if they desired to.

And last week (7 February) Lorraine shared, 'Today is quite exciting for us as we are posting out the well-being boxes to 34 of our children and young people.' We trust that seeing the photos showing examples of the contents of the boxes will bring a sense of satisfaction to all who have contributed to this initiative. We give God thanks for inspiring us to find ways of supporting women, children and youth, for whom the past months have been difficult not only because of the pandemic, but also because of the domestic violence they have experienced.

Hand-in-hand with our desire, 'Your kingdom come', as expressed in our prayers, goes our determination to spread the atmosphere, values and love of God's kingdom while we continue to wait for Jesus' return. May your efforts and ours, however small, be blessed by God and achieve the desired outcome.



Above: well-being boxes



Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland

Union-wide online campuses ready for take-off

by Pastor Maureen Rock, Director, Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland

Is it possible to turn a crisis into an opportunity? Over the last year, as have many other ministries, the Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland (ADC) has been conducting most of its work online. Nothing particularly noteworthy about that, you might suggest – except . . . there is a further dimension I would like to share with you.

Historically the ADC has been Watford-based, Watford-driven, and Watford-administered. Across the British Union, local church teams have successfully administered paper-based correspondence courses with

guidance from the ADC.

And then came COVID-19. While the ADC has been hosting online courses for almost a decade, a challenge we always faced was the ability to stay connected with students. Because ADC staff are Watford-based, the transition of a student to a local ADC representative once a course is completed often did not work, losing up to 60% of students. It was as if we were providing an invitation to study, to explore, to belong, on behalf of a third party. In reality, the transition in many ways was an interruption in the

ADC's discipleship process, the critical issue being about constancy of the relationship formed between the student and the teacher.

Here's the news: online local Bible schools are now up and running Union-wide in the regions listed below, providing an online platform for a local church to run its own Bible studies ministry. These local online Bible schools are campuses of the ADC. Training and support for leading a local online Bible school will be provided by the ADC director.

Online Bible school locations and points of contact

- **British Union Conference** – Pastor Maureen Rock, Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland
- **Reading West** – Pastor Trevor Thomas, Reading West Life Development Centre
- **Dublin** – Mrs Natasha Didkivska, Discover Truth
- **Kings Norton** – Pastor Isaac Liburd, Kings Norton Bible School
- **Birmingham** – Pastor Obinnaya Iheoma, SOLVE-IT Bible School
- **Camp Hill** – Pastor Gina Miller, Camp Hill Bible School
- **Manchester North East** – Pastor Neville Taylor, Manchester North East Bible School
- **Folkestone** – Pastor Greg Wilson, Folkestone Church Bible School
- **Totton** – Pastor Rosemary Lethbridge, The Watering Hole Bible School
- **Merseyside** – Pastor Jeff Couzins, Merseyside Bible School
- **Leighton Buzzard** – Pastor Eliette Loziel, Connect Bible School
- **Swinton, Greater Manchester** – Pastor Neville Taylor, Swinton Bible School
- **Edmonton** – Elder Maduka Ogbuonye, The Lighthouse Community Bible School
- **Isle of Wight** – Pastor Adrian Peck, The Gathering Place
- **Erdington** – Pastor Alex Gutu, Erdington Online Bible School
- **Portsmouth** – Pastor Elliott Williams, Portsmouth Discovery Centre
- **Rochdale** – Pastor Paul Jayaraj, Rochdale Bible School
- **South East London** – Pastor Lewis Quayle, South East Community Bible School

Each local online Bible school is a platform for the church to further develop its Bible studies ministry by connecting directly with local students. The added value of this model is that discipling of the student begins from online enrolment. Because the heart of discipling is relationship, the purpose of the local contact person is to journey with the student towards the most important relationship of all: the relationship with Christ.

For churches that currently have paper-based students, transition to an online Bible school only requires contact with the ADC. We also wish to reassure you that the ADC will continue to provide paper-based lessons for students' preference.

Online ADC course curriculum expands: *Try Jesus – Series 1* and *Coping with Stress*

The ADC team is excited to announce the launch of two additional online courses. Previously only available as paper-based courses, *Try Jesus – Series 1* and *Coping with Stress* are now available for online studies.

Try Jesus – Series 1

The beauty of the ADC curriculum is that you can find courses for all ages and any stage of your Christian walk. *Try Jesus – Series 1* is for those who simply have a curiosity about Jesus. The lessons assume nothing, including familiarity with the Bible. 'How do I use a Bible?' is one of the starter lessons, quickly followed by 'Who is Jesus?' What about His

life, death and resurrection? What was that all about? Another way of describing this series is an introduction to the Gospel. Sounds basic to most *MESSENGER* readers – spot on; it is. Someone once shared with me that before we introduce students to John's book of revelation, we should introduce them to his gospel!

Coping with Stress

The challenging times we are all experiencing are affecting some more than others. We each have coping strategies that we can employ. However, not everyone is finding this possible.

This is a course designed for interests who want to connect with us for quality-of-life reasons. I don't need to push how relevant this

course is. Based on trying to reduce stress factors in our lives through lifestyle change, the course includes a self-assessment test to help the student understand the level of pressure they currently face.

You can view *Try Jesus – Series 1* and *Coping with Stress* by logging on to www.discoveronline.org.uk and entering the search term, 'Courses'.





ADC Virtual Bible School

The Adventist Discovery Centre, UK & Ireland (ADC) continued to support students during lockdown.

From the summer of last year, ADC Director, Pastor Maureen Rock has been holding a Virtual Bible School with 25 students, who are a mix of Christians from various denominations, most of whom live in the West Midlands.

The ADC was invited by members of International First Born Church of the Living God to study the relevance of the book of Daniel for our times. Once it was confirmed that the Pentecostal church leaders were aware of this and would be attending as students, a local Bible School coordinator was identified and arrangements were made.

The Virtual Bible School began with all students studying the course, *Focus on Prophecy*, which consists of studies on the books of Daniel and Revelation. Encouraged by the local coordinator, Purcelle Davidson, the students studied up to four lessons and

met together with Pastor Rock via Zoom. This was an opportunity for them to seek clarity on the lessons they had studied and receive additional Bible instructions. The process was repeated every two weeks, until they all completed the course and graduated.

All students are now studying the ADC course, *Great Teachings and Prophecies of the Bible – Part 1*, and have recently completed the lesson relating to the seventh-day Sabbath and the historical aspects which led to the change from Saturday to Sunday.

The studies are Bible-focused as opposed to being denominational. A spirit of collegiality reigns throughout each meeting, as the ADC's aim is to journey with the students while assisting them to understand the Bible better.

Membership of the ADC Virtual Bible School now includes church members of various denominations, including Pentecostal, Seventh-day Church of God and Seventh-day Adventists. The students' locations currently include the UK, New Jersey, Michigan, and Trinidad and Tobago. A ministerial colleague, Pastor Leon George (based in the US), has since joined the Virtual Bible School and contributes to the fortnightly studies. A number of students now log on to Zoom Sabbath services both in the UK and in the US.

Feedback from the students included:

- 'We have not had studies like this in our church before. This is lifting us; this is deep.'
- 'We would have liked to have had these teachings in a whole-church open forum.'
- 'Our knowledge of the Bible has increased.'
- 'I have found peace as I now understand and can separate what history and the Bible have to say about the Sabbath teaching.'
- 'The studies are organised and structured,

with the Scriptures provided within the lessons.'

- 'We now have the (ADC) booklets to return to when needed.'
- 'This material is a blessing as it answers so many Bible questions.'

Through prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit the ADC has seized the opportunity, made available by everyone living through a worldwide pandemic, to pivot into the ministry of the local church. We are undergoing a major ministry paradigm shift. In one sense, we recognise that 'the church has moved outside' – and we need to seek new methods of sharing God's Word with neighbours and friends at their level of both interest and understanding.

Are you ready to join us in new ways of sharing the Gospel of Christ and His relevance for our times? I would like to think that the expansion of online campuses all across the British Union Conference will be a new day for mission in these isles – and that we will further develop into the mission-focused movement we are called to be.

Pastor Maureen Rock,

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Liberty of conscience and the law Is the UK COVID-19 'status certificate' proportionate?

by Dr Brighton Kavaloh, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Director, South England Conference

Introduction

On 21 May 2020, at the No. 10 Downing Street press briefing, a member of the public (Finlay from Ardrossan) asked: 'If a vaccine is developed, will it be mandatory? If not, how will you bridge the difference in opinion between those who believe it necessary and those who do not?'¹ In essence, this was a profound question as the UK was emerging out of the first lockdown. The reply from the Honourable Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, was inconclusive. He said: 'The question of whether it's mandatory is not one we have addressed yet.'² However, Professor John Newton, a British epidemiologist and Public Health expert, responded that 'vaccine programmes are more successful by consent',³ and this echoed Lord Donaldson's dictum: 'An adult patient who . . . suffers from no mental incapacity has an absolute right to choose whether to consent to medical treatment. . . . This right of choice is not limited to decisions which others might regard as sensible.'⁴ And this includes vaccination.

A year on, and, in the process of coming out of the third lockdown, the UK now has vaccines being rolled out and over 20 million people inoculated. However, Finlay's question has yet to be fully addressed. There are currently British companies that are seriously considering 'no jab, no job' contracts to require new and existing staff to vaccinate. However, other sectors express concern that such measures may lead to implications in the short and long term on employment law.

UK COVID-19 'status certificate' review in context
Nadhim Zahawi, the Vaccine

Minister, initially warned that the use of domestic vaccine passports would be wrong and 'discriminatory'. Subsequently, however, he acknowledged that some 'companies might press ahead with their own schemes'.⁵ The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, expressed reservations about introducing domestic passports, arguing that the idea raised 'moral and legal issues'.⁶ but then he seemed to change his mind, citing the international community of nations that had already embraced the idea, but also at the domestic level he believed that 'COVID-19 status certificates'⁷ could enable the kick-starting of business. However, some government ministers were deeply uneasy, feeling that such documents could 'lead to discrimination against people who cannot, or will not, receive the COVID-19 jab . . . a prospect that may end up being tested in courts'.⁸ Boris Johnson acknowledges there are 'deep and complex' issues⁹ with using vaccine passports or certificates to attest an individual's COVID-19 status. Hence the Prime Minister has appointed the Cabinet Office Minister, Michael Gove, to lead the review over the matter.

Legal implications

Barrister Louise Hooper of Garden Court Chambers observes, 'It is clear that mandatory medical treatment and vaccination are explicitly prohibited by the Act [Coronavirus Act 2020].'¹⁰ To compel someone in the UK to be vaccinated would require a change in the law (primary legislation). It is worth noting that Louise Hooper adds: 'There is, however, potential for abuse to infringement of civil liberties and



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human rights unless the powers contained in the Coronavirus Act are exercised lawfully.'¹¹ On the other hand, an individual's human rights may be curtailed through regulatory powers¹² given to the Secretary of State to deal with an emergency for the shortest time possible: for example, an order to self-isolate, etc. In such circumstances, the exercise of such powers must be 'reasonable, proportionate and necessary'.

Bridging the difference

The ethical dilemma surrounding the COVID-19 vaccination issue is this: on one hand, going unvaccinated exposes others to risk, and this violates their rights. And, on the other hand, the curtailment of one's principle of consent inevitably infringes on their liberty of conscience. The answer is not a simple one. It demands that a delicate balance be struck between the two competing interests in the face of an ongoing and ever-evolving COVID-19 pandemic. Hence Finlay's implied axiom, 'Bridge the difference in opinion', must not be lost sight of. The balancing of the two competing interests in vaccination acceptance or refusal is crucial. Use the skills of persuasion, and not draconian measures for both sides to comply, to minimise the 'disadvantage' – in this case, the spread of infection and subsequent deaths. The means used to achieve the goal must not be only one-sided: for, if

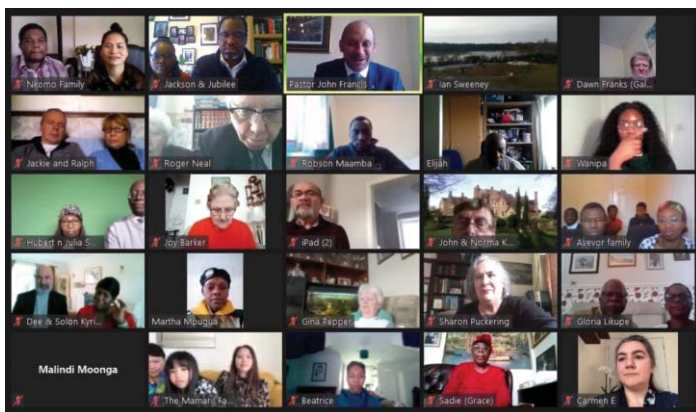
challenged in the courts, it will be for the service provider or employer to justify its practice. The question of whether the implementation provides a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim may be approached by the courts in two stages:¹³

1. Is the aim of the practice or measure taken legal and non-discriminatory, and one that represents a real, objective consideration?
2. If the aim is legitimate, is the means of achieving it proportionate – that is, appropriate, reasonable and necessary in the circumstances?

Conclusion

We are living in challenging times, albeit couched with opportunities to witness for God. Let us seize these moments during the COVID-19 pandemic pandemonium to 'courteously and respectfully'¹⁴ endeavour 'to preserve liberty of conscience'¹⁵ and thus be agents of change to 'bridge the difference'.

¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE6aDXWUy7s> ²ibid. ³ibid. ⁴Court of Appeal, Civil Division – Lord Donaldson, Re T (Adult) [1992] 4 All ER 649 at 653 ⁵Financial Times, 16 February 2021 ⁶ibid. ⁷Evening Standard, 22 February 2021 ⁸Financial Times, 16 February 2021 ⁹Evening Standard, 22 February 2021 ¹⁰Barrister Louise Hooper, 'Coronavirus Act 2020: Does It Permit Mandatory Vaccinations?' Friday 1 May 2020 ¹¹ibid. ¹²Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 ¹³Equality Act 2020 Code of Practice – Services, Public Functions and Associations ¹⁴1 Peter 3:15 ¹⁵Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 713, 714



York's 100th anniversary

For the past 100 years, in the historic city of York, there has been a community of Adventist believers. On Sabbath 13 February we celebrated this milestone, even though unable to meet together in person. The blessings of Zoom provided the means to easily connect with former members and pastors, and to experience the blessing of worshipping together. At our peak during the day, over 50 families joined our worship, some from North America and some from Africa.

Throughout the day we shared memories of God's leading over a century.

- The granddaughter of one of the first members and her grandson (fifth generation) who are part of the congregation represent the unbroken line of fellowship over a hundred years.
- Pastor Roger Neal, a former minister, recalled his experiences in overcoming reluctance by some churches in the area to work with Adventists, and how God opened doors for spreading the Gospel through music when an Adventist Ghanaian choir took centre stage at a cultural event put on by the City Council.
- Two lifelong friends, Joy Barker and Gina Pepper, gave their testimony of how God had miraculously led them to

the church. When they tried finding the church again at that location they were told there had never been a church there. Young people who have grown up in the church shared their experiences of attending church in York. There was a special song by Poppy Hall, who is just 5 years old.

The preacher for the worship service was Pastor Ian Sweeney, who focused on Psalm 122, and Pastor Jackson closed the day with a message from Psalm 124, with both passages recalling the providence of God in the history of the church. In addition to Pastor Neal and the current pastor, John Francis, former pastors Kyriacou and Karbah also took part in the programme or sent greetings. Pastor Allcock shared his message in a letter. While memories of the past were shared through pictures and stories, we also focused on our current and future mission to York. Our discussion focused on both the challenges and opportunities a university and cathedral city provides for service, not forgetting the growing population of senior people. We also considered the life and witness of the church post-COVID-19.

With grateful hearts we thank God for His leading in the past, and look forward to the great reunion when there will be no more parting.

LINCOLN SARGEANT



We're all in this together

by Bert Smit (CEO, ADRA-UK)

We moved to a new house in 2009 and befriended our neighbour Debbie and her family. We keep our polite distance, greet and chat – complicated now by social distancing – and help where we can. We have looked after their cats during their holidays, and they look after ours when we are away.

Debbie follows ADRA on Facebook and decided that this year she wanted to ask people to donate to ADRA for her birthday, instead of giving a gift to her. Many others have done so, but I never thought that Debbie would.

What struck me the most is one of the messages that she posted to engage her friends to donate to ADRA.

This is what she said:

"The CEO of the charity is my next-door neighbour, so I know where the money is going. He & his wife used to be a pastor & wife. Such wonderful people & here to help everyone & anyone, UK or worldwide. I seriously feel a sense of help is needed worldwide at this critical time – maybe I need to change from swim teacher to fundraiser?"

This is not about me. This is all about such a positive attitude at a time we need it most.

As I write this, things are looking up. The Prime Minister's roadmap outlines how we will return to a form of normal life over the next couple of months. Infections are down and vaccinations are up. This means churches will soon be able to open up again. We can go back to worship as we want it. We can enjoy being part of the family of God in person – not via Zoom. We can be singing; expressing; doing things together . . . and, for ADRA, helping raise funds for our work.

People like my neighbour Debbie are needed: people with a vision that help is needed worldwide. We may be seeing light at the end of the tunnel here in the UK, but for many already living in dire circumstances there isn't even an escape tunnel.

Are you willing to help make a difference? As we emerge from our third lockdown in the space of a year, are you prepared to continue the community spirit that has literally transformed people's lives?

We choose *Together* as the theme for ADRA in 2021, because it encapsulates what we need. *Together* means you, me, and all of us. *Together* we can continue to help the tens of thousands of people in need – both here in the UK and overseas.

Sabbath 27 March is the launch of our 2021 ADRA Appeal: and, since we are not time-limited by the door-to-door collection this year, this is the beginning of a *whole year* of fundraising for ADRA.

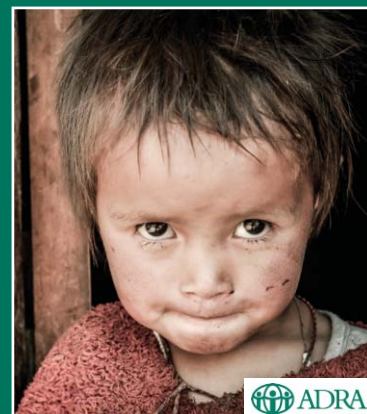
So, if you are not sure how to get involved, why not start by setting up a direct debit or making a donation? Throughout the year we will suggest fundraising activities that you can safely do – both virtual and actual.

Yesterday Debbie walked by with Monty, her black Labrador. She punched the air and said to me, 'I am so excited! I think I will raise £150 for ADRA! How cool is that!'

Indeed: *how cool is that!*

Together, we pray that 2021 will be a year of blessings for all those whom ADRA seeks to serve.

Visit our website – www.adra.org.uk – for more information!





Generations – are we really that different?

by Pastor Adam Ramdin,
Youth Director, North England Conference



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Every generation of youth since the beginning of time has had a struggle to discover its identity and place in society, but the challenge today is greater and more intense than ever before.

First, let's define what a generation is:

A generation is an analytical tool for understanding culture and the people within it. It simply reflects the idea that people who are born during a certain period of time are influenced by a unique set of circumstances: global events; moral and social values; technologies; and cultural and behavioural norms.

Today, what we in church circles would class as 'youth' fall into two categories – millennials and generation Z. They both have some unique characteristics . . . but first let's look at the other generations that we have in society and the church.

The builder generation (born before 1945)

Born during or before World War II, they are sometimes called the 'greatest' generation, and are characterised by frugality, family values and a strong work ethic. In the context of our UK church family, for example, older members of the *Windrush* generation would fall into this bracket.

Baby boomers (born between 1945 and 1965)

We need to note that there are differences between 'early' and 'late boomers', but they are generally characterised as being hardworking and industrious. They were the first generation to have ready access to the television. It was during this time period that women entered the workplace en masse, and divorce became socially acceptable. It also was a time of protest, not least about the Vietnam war and civil rights. The hippie movement and flower power were perhaps

the clearest signal that all was not well between generations.

Generation X (born between 1965 and 1977)

This generation of people are hardworking, innovators, the brains behind much of the tech revolution to come. They were later to marry and quicker to divorce, being themselves children of divorce, for whom the phrase 'latchkey kids' was coined. They tend to be cynical and sceptical of institutions, and form the lowest-voting bloc of any generation.

Xennials (born between 1977 and 1983)

This is a micro-generation of those who manifest characteristics of both generation X and millennials.

Millennials (born between 1977-83 and 1996-2000)

This generation was raised during the tech revolution and saw the proliferation of the internet and mobile phones, but is the last generation to have a reference point – 'before and after' the internet and smartphones. This generation experienced academic pressure and had 'omnipresent' parents, often called 'helicopter' parents. As the children of baby boomers, it is possible that they wanted to ensure that they didn't mimic their own wanton adolescent years.

Generation Z (born between 1996-2000 and 2012)

This generation of young people are digital natives, meaning they have always known a world with the internet, social media and smartphones. A tech-savvy generation with ready access to more information than any previous generation, they have lost faith in the traditional institutions and sources of learning in society – church, school, university and government. They are the first generation in the West to grow up in a post-Christian

context, with only 4% having a biblical worldview.

Today's generation

Today we see the rise of the 'nones' – people who have no religious affiliation. In 1963, in the UK, 3% of people claimed to have no religious affiliation. In 2015 that figure was 44%, but among those under 25 it was 66%. Today's youth need factual answers for their faith, to assist them in sharing in an environment where 50% of their peers are atheist. The answers that satisfied our questioning will need refreshing and fleshing out.

Today the influence of technology, pop culture, media, entertainment, science and an increasingly secular society is intensifying the differences between generations. Some have observed that 'this next generation is not just slightly different from the past', but 'discontinuously different from anything we have seen before' (*You Lost Me*, p. 37).

Three big challenges

Three big challenges that face all of us, but especially generation Z and millennials, are secularisation, privatisation and pluralisation.

Secularisation means there is a less supportive context for faith within the institutions of society, such as education.

Privatisation has made all things related to faith a private affair, like your favourite food or colour.

Pluralisation buys into the idea that all faiths and worldviews are equally valid and true.

How we articulate and live our faith today is a challenge – and the way faith worked for previous generations will not necessarily work for today's younger generations.

Understanding the basic differences, and knowing that the values of each generation have changed, is important for our mission. Whereas one generation is primarily concerned by 'Is it right?' another generation is concerned by 'Is it loving?' and yet another generation will ask the question, 'How does this work?'

The church is the last institution in society where intergenerational relationships can be built: something integral to the strength of the church community, rather than a cause of division.

In the story of Samuel and Eli, Samuel needed Eli to help him understand the voice of God, and Eli needed to recognise that God was speaking directly to the younger generation. There was a need for both listening and trust between generations, and as this took place the work of God was advanced.

Further reading:
You Lost Me, David Kinnaman
Meet Generation Z, James Emery White



SEC Adventurer and Pathfinder Bible Experience – virtual style

by Pastor Clifford Herman, Adventurer and Pathfinder Director

On 16 January 2021 Pathfinders and Adventurers in the SEC embarked on another new innovative journey, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic that has landed on our shores. Instead of meeting in the large meeting halls, we moved to our computer screens as we endeavoured to produce the Adventurer Bible Experience and Pathfinder Bible Experience test for the first time on a virtual platform.

When something has never been done before, the best plans often bring in some challenges, as was experienced with some of the technology both with the coordinating team and in some of

the children’s homes. However, I believe God was with us, and by His grace, and with the help of our many volunteers, we managed the area-level virtual event successfully.

To give you an idea of the scale of the task, allow me to share some statistics. In total we had 664 individuals who pre-registered on Microsoft Teams (40 PBE teams and 29 ABE teams). On the day we had 385 individuals connected to MS Teams at one time for ABE, and just under 400 for PBE. A hundred and seventeen graders and observers assigned to individual teams were working in tandem as the test event was

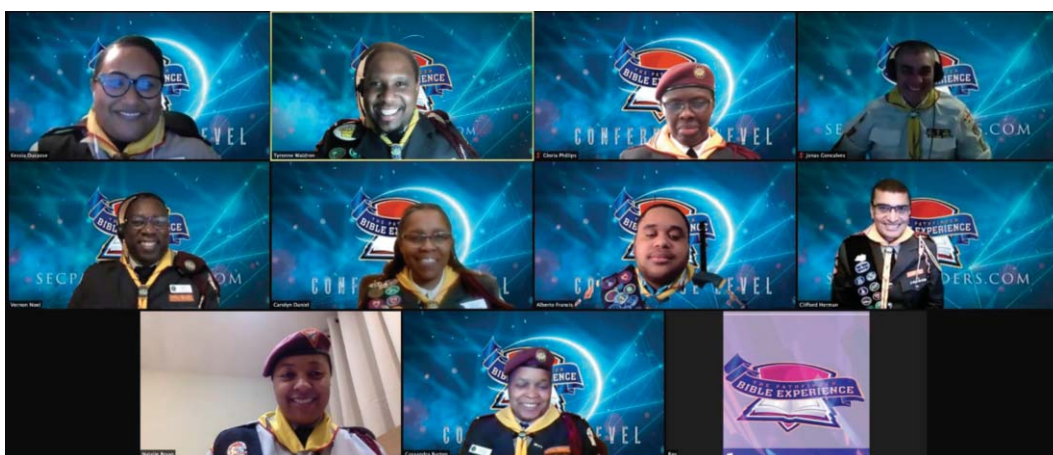
happening. Observers were given the task to continually oversee the smooth running of procedures and report issues in a separate ‘Zoom’ room. Graders tirelessly concentrated by accurately typing in the answers they received from the children into a program called ‘Nearpod’. While this was happening, 20 Pathfinder area coordinators were working on various platforms, assisting participants online, as well as standing in as observers and graders at times. In order to make the technology run smoothly, five technical support volunteers were working over eight hours, standing by to assist individuals with technical issues, and dealing

with them in record amounts of time. In the end, we had a large team all pulling together for the success of this amazing programme. All the while, internet structures held up; Microsoft Teams did not crash; Nearpod held steady; and two ‘Zoom’ platforms kept up with the pace until the test was completed with just over half an hour’s delay.

It was an exciting day with a new experience, and a renewed commitment by all concluded the day with the assurance that, although we are challenged by external circumstances, we are resilient enough to try new ways to minister to our children. The results were that all the teams progressed to the Conference level in February.

By 13 February we were ready for the Conference level. For weeks we had prayed, reviewed our systems, reconsidered how we did things, and re-trained the volunteers. And then we did it all over again. None of the teams had been lost in the process since the previous test, and no one was discouraged by doing a test on-screen again. By the time of the Conference-level test, we were ready. Everyone logged in early; observers and graders were prepared; and a larger nine-person technical team was up for the job. As a result, the programme started on time for both ABE and PBE tests, and finished with time to spare. Once again, we testified that God is good, because the event went off without a hitch. At Conference level the standard is usually high, and teams had to achieve 90 percent to qualify for the next round. We can proudly announce that 15 PBE teams and 14 ABE teams made it through to the next level. However, all the other teams performed well, scoring more than 75 percent. We look forward to the BUC Union-level test.

As a Pathfinder and Adventurer movement in the SEC we continue to innovate and try new things, and never allow any challenge, even the COVID-19 pandemic, to hold us back. I am proud of the team, because we are not afraid to think outside the box; and by God’s grace we will continue to innovate and improve our ministry in a challenging world for the blessing and benefit of God’s children.



The spice you need

How my local church diversity is enriching my worship and social experience

Sharon Tennyson



Some time ago I read about Akiko Iwasaki, a well-known Yale University immunologist whose lab team has published nearly two dozen papers since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the years she's deliberately put together a diverse team, including scientists from more than a dozen countries with different education levels, and some who haven't followed the typical career path. More than half are women. She says, 'From a selfish standpoint, if we want to do the best science we can, we need a diverse set of people.'¹

When I read Iwasaki's comments, I thought of my diverse Adventist congregation in St Albans. I remembered how we creatively managed to worship and interact during the long months of 2020.

A secret binding ingredient

Early in the pandemic we were delighted to connect via Zoom to sing, worship God, visit, and support each other virtually. We have talented teams that host the Zoom meetings, alternating music teams that creatively organise ways for our church family to sing and learn new songs. We've done a couple of the now pretty familiar YouTube singing sessions that took Roger Gietzmann hours to put together and that included many individuals singing.²

As we all hesitated to 'leave' our Zoom time together one Sabbath early in the lockdown, church member Sharon Milanović said she was making aubergine curry for lunch and asked what everyone else was cooking. That launched the All Nations Cook Along (ANCA) group!³ On Sunday mornings we virtually 'cooked together' in one another's kitchens. There was spanakopita and later moussaka made by Margarita from Greece, pea and dumpling soup by Melita from Serbia, and palak paneer with Rose from India. There was also tofu in red sauce by Jay from the Philippines; Thai spring rolls with peanut sauce by Sharon, who has daughters from China; and tahinopita with carob molasses by Elle from Cyprus.

We tried cornbread by Brandon from Canada during the following weeks; a lentil version of the very British shepherd's pie by Emma; and mince curry with peas, a South African Cape Malay recipe shared by Vera. We even tried Trinidadian corn pie by Helyn-Jo, black bean empanadas by Johanna from Venezuela, and the always impressive French apple tarte tatin by Ben.⁴

My mouth is watering, thinking of these international dishes. After a quick upload of pictures of our finished dishes to our WhatsApp group, we dug in for tea time. When asked about the Zoom cooking 'chats', Sarah, a born-and-bred Brit going back many generations, said she loved the time spent cooking with her daughter, and felt as though she'd

gone on an outing with the women from church. 'I feel I've had a tea morning out with friends and had a good chat,' she confessed. Others agreed, as everyone felt enriched by the experience.

An enriching experience

I think of the multicultural church we were when we met in person before the pandemic. Anne from

Romania with her South African husband and three beautiful young boys, lying all over her during church and running their hands through her hair as the middle one would suck his thumb. I remember the first time Delores and her husband, Darren, came to church. I didn't realise at the time that it was their first visit because of their friendly, comfortable way of settling into their seats with baby Luanne, again (as kids always do) holding on to her parents, walking all over them.

Gibson and Faithful Taruwinga's sons would draw and colour detailed pictures of people during the church service. It was no surprise, since both their parents are in finance and accounting. Their family had moved to the United Kingdom from Zimbabwe just two years ago for professional jobs in London. We even have a family with two young girls from Lithuania who drive an hour from London to St Albans to attend church each week.

I remember seeing Delores and Darren's 17-year-old son, Jordan, up front, effortlessly playing a beautiful piece on the piano, after their first church service ended. They already felt part of the St Albans church! Delores, whose mother had emigrated from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom decades ago, told me that what had attracted her to the St Albans church was the striking diversity. Every row had a different nationality in it. 'This is how it's supposed to be! Church should reflect who God is, and God loves diversity,' she told me. 'He didn't create just one tree – an oak, for example. He created many variations of the same thing!'

Delores thinks that if we all segregate into our own comfortable churches, we may inadvertently set up a barrier to inviting new people to church. She tells me, 'I can invite anyone in the world to the St Albans church, and they will find themselves reflected here.'

Surprises everywhere

During a recent Zoom service, the Grices' 4-year-old triplets shared their father's creative recording from their back garden. They had each memorised two verses from Psalm 1, reciting the chapter in its entirety. It made me think of their mother growing up in Jamaica, probably doing the same thing at a young age.

Septuagenarian Rosemary told me the St Albans church is nothing like the church she grew up attending. As a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist in England growing up attending Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church (the second-oldest Adventist congregation in the country), her father was the only man in the congregation. There were very few children in her church. Now she is delighted to see the many children in our church, and the families from around the world.

I asked Rosemary what she thought of the variety of music each Sabbath, not always from the hymnal.

'You never know what to expect!' she said. 'I love it!'

¹<https://www.statnews.com/2020/10/27/akiko-iwasaki-profile-covid19-research-fighting-sexism-power-imbalances-science> ²You can listen to the St Albans Adventist Church Lockdown Choir at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-kEvsipgJQ>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0wGS1AgYMY> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh7eVfoIRmQ>. ³You can watch the ANCA group at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goDS1ro1MrQ>. ⁴St. Albans members are planning to create a digital cookbook and sell it to raise funds for charity. Keep a lookout for the completed product to be published soon. In the meantime, you can find some of the recipes of the St Albans cooking group at <https://www.adventistreview.org/quarantine-cuisine-part-2>.

Sharon Tennyson is a UK-based distribution coordinator for *Adventist Review* Ministries. This article first appeared in the online edition of the *Adventist Review*, 1 February. Used with permission.



Ministry in lockdown: advantages in adversity

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

Pastoring a two-church district, combined with the added role of being an area coordinator with 19 churches and 13 pastors, has given me a fascinating vantage point to see how churches have responded to the ongoing lockdown restrictions in relation to meeting for public worship.

Some churches have opted to make a production, in part or fully recorded, and broadcast it at a given time, providing opportunity for anyone, local or global, to view it, including the use of pre-recorded sermons. On one occasion it was quite surreal to see the preacher joining in via 'live chat' while the screen showed him in full sermon flow. This kind of congregational interaction is rare in most of our churches. However, I can think of one Hertfordshire congregation where the speaker is forewarned to be ready to be questioned, even partway through a sermon!

The second option is to utilise videoconferencing, giving opportunity for viewers to interact with each other. Following guidelines for using this platform, one limitation is the ability of viewers to watch either the live service or a recording. It is possible to record and broadcast onto platforms like YouTube, but the viewer misses out on the personal interaction and socialisation.

My two churches have adopted and evolved their programme formats, but both use Zoom. St Albans quickly adopted a routine of Zoom Sabbath schools, with some kids' programmes recorded to watch at a convenient time for the family. The praise and worship service includes sing-along songs, mostly led by families of musicians and singers; an offering time; and other special items. Occasionally, and increasingly, a brief spiritual message is included.

Similarly, Hemel Hempstead has an adult Zoom Sabbath school, but includes half an hour of conversation and shared pictures: for example, of members' gardens. To accommodate young people, their Sabbath school follows after the main worship service, from 11.45am until 1pm. For worship, Hemel soon opted for watching a Sabbath talk every week, including offering time and sing-along videos. A key addition to their service is the conversation about the sermon – after the sermon! For me, it was strange at first, but now I enjoy watching my Sabbath talk, and then getting involved in the subsequent conversation – a sort of question time. I can quite see it becoming a familiar feature of church worship, even when we reconvene meeting in person.

At both churches we have noticed some of our regular

worshippers opting out of our online worship, who we believe have taken the opportunity to click, view and join somewhere else for worship.

For a number of months in 2020 many of the area pastors were furloughed. This immediately triggered a weekly pastors' meeting, and also a weekly area first elders' meeting, which now continues fortnightly, including elders' training/coaching. All credit to the elders who have steered their churches through this period. Is this a hint of a church leadership model in the future?

The lament from those wishing to meet together in person has been echoed; and, while some churches have opted to work within the constraints of the limited Government guidelines for places of worship, my members have mostly been willing to adopt a hesitant approach to returning to church. My view is that as things ease we should reconvene, but should leave Sabbath morning services online until all restrictions are lifted. For example, meeting in smaller groups on a Sabbath afternoon could be possible (subject to guidelines).

With both St Albans and Hemel Hempstead members scattered over Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, one advantage of meeting online is that the 'commuter church' challenge is neutralised in regard to attendance at meetings. In the previous article on page 14, you read about the regular Zoom cook-alongs.

From the adversity of this pandemic we have found opportunity in technology as it facilitates our worship. I'm looking forward to safer times when funerals do not have to be socially distanced, baptisms aren't like a game of bobbing apples, and weddings can draw the crowds.

In times past, members of one church only occasionally interacted with those of another. The Zoom paradigm has made 'joint' experiences commonplace, including joint Week of Prayer, 10 Days of Prayer and Christianity Explored, to give a few examples. I wonder how much future cross-fertilisation there will be. Outside of Sabbath worship services, is there further potential for the 'joint' experience? Could these adverse conditions, which currently cause us to meet only online together, lead one day to us 'meeting up' in person with each other in ways that were previously beyond our imagination? The question is, how many of these advantages that we have utilised will we incorporate in our future church services? Watch this space as Area 7 pastors explore the possibilities.

St Albans church camp, 2019





'The Broadcasting Church' Croydon Central

Pastor Royston Smith is the senior pastor at the Croydon Central and West Croydon churches. His position at Croydon Central started in October 2019, a few months before the start of the pandemic, and he is only one month into his additional role at West Croydon. Among other things, throughout the coronavirus outbreak, he has been a regular co-host of Croydon Central's online Sabbath School, which has become the most viewed and listened to Sabbath School broadcast in the South England Conference, with a growing national and international audience.

Don Roberts, from SEC Media, spoke with Pastor Smith about his experiences as a pastor through the current COVID-19 pandemic, and on the growth of Croydon Central's online Sabbath School.



Pastor Royston Smith

SEC Media: Pastor, thank you for taking the time to give this interview. When the coronavirus pandemic started and churches were closed to congregational worship, Croydon Central was one of the first to be able to provide their own online worship experience. How did you manage to do that, and how did your Sabbath School take off as it has?

RS: Croydon Central has spent a significant amount of money on technology. It probably goes back to Pastor Richard Daly (currently BUC Communications Director) and then Pastor Samuel Ouadjo. I'm actually a beneficiary of their hard work. We already had an online space on Livestream and YouTube: I think 100 subscribers before the pandemic.

When lockdown started, I said to the members, 'Whatever we're going to do, we must be live. I don't want to preach on Zoom; I'll go to church, and we can trial the Sabbath School.' The basic idea was to make the members feel as if they're in church.

I think I was watching Newbold Church and thought, *Wow, that's nice – but how can we then make it interactive?* The team said, 'We can do it, Pastor.' So the idea was to borrow what Newbold was doing, borrow what Hope Sabbath School was doing, marry them and make it into one programme.

We have the panel. Initially, we had more people – too many. The members' feedback was, 'We're hearing the panel, but not the viewers.' So I took on that role, to be the voice of the viewers.

SEC Media: Did you think it would have this reach and become this successful?

RS: No; we never dreamt of that. We just wanted to make the experience for members and viewers more interactive and more interesting. On a Sabbath, we have about 1,000 devices logged on live to our service every week, and it's growing by at least 20 devices each week. YouTube views are around 4,000. The numbers have bumped incredibly. If we can hit the 10,000-subscriber mark, then as a church I think that we're going places. We get emails, letters; people donate money. We have people from Indonesia, Malaysia, Trinidad, Kenya, Nigeria, Mexico. They get up very early in the morning, just to participate in the Sabbath School, because they feel valued and they feel listened to. Even if we disagree with the points they have made, we still voice their opinion and then we clarify – as best as we can – the Adventist perspective on the matter.

We're in correspondence with people online on a regular basis about faith, their relationship with God, and how we can support them. We signpost them to churches close to them. Our next baptism will be on 20 March, and we're hoping to baptise 10-15 individuals, most of them part of our online experience.

It has been a team effort: it's not down to me; it's everybody else. Since the lockdown, there has been a group of about 20 people. There is the panel; we now have three different hosts: Elder Jonny, Kai (one of our young people), and Neil Nunes, who works for the

BBC; and many people behind the scenes. I'm a co-host. I said I'd never be the host: it must be owned by the church, not by the pastor. I'm around people who are willing to give not just of their time, but also of their talents. Then, as Pastor Cudjoe (my associate pastor) would say, 'We pray and ask God for direction and He will lead.'

SEC Media: What are the plans for the Sabbath School moving forward? What will happen when the congregation can finally return to church?

RS: One of the visions of Croydon Central is to become a broadcasting church. Our Sabbath School goes out on two radio stations, one of them Adventist Radio London. We want to convert one of our rooms into a studio, so when members return to church we can be in-house and still maintain our virtual presence to solidify and expand the gains we have made. We introduced online health and lifestyle seminars given by experts in their field, and run online cooking classes. We're also thinking of doing an online internet radio, which hopefully will be up and running by the end of this year. We want to practise what the Conference has talked about – 'Making Disciples and Building Communities' – in the physical and virtual world.

SEC Media: Do you have any advice for a church that would like to emulate your online success?

RS: A friend of mine sent me a song the

other day, and it crystallises in my mind what ministry is about. The song says, 'I'm just a nobody trying to tell everybody about somebody who can save anybody.' That really captures how I see myself. It's not about me.

SEC Media: But allow me to talk about you for a bit. How has the pandemic impacted you and your ministry?

RS: I'm a people person. I haven't been able to do the kind of pastoral care that I'm used to doing: sitting with a member; having a laugh, a talk; reflecting on their life, their journey, their faith; and also sharing a bit of me with them: my life, my journey, my faith. Croydon members are very engaged and very much involved online – seniors, young people, and children. However, as much as the virtual world is a good space in which to operate during a pandemic, still there is that gap between the virtual and being able to be there physically. You can still minister, but I don't think it's as effective.

Funerals have been my greatest emotional strain. I think I've done over 23 or 24 funerals during the lockdown – not necessarily members of the church, but people who are connected to the members. You're used to people at a funeral expressing, sharing, hugging, crying. Now there are tears, but you can't even reach out because of social distancing. I've cried with family members. It has been very painful for me.

From a pastoral team perspective: we have prayed for people, for their healing, and we feel like failures because people are dying who we have prayed for . . . so sometimes this pain crashes down on your spirit. But I've come to the realisation – which I knew before – that the purpose of prayer is not so much the healing as it is drawing us closer to Christ. If things happen when we pray for them not to happen, it's not a matter of our faith being weak, but it's the will of God being accomplished, and we need to sync ourselves to His will.

SEC Media: So how have you been able to

cope? Who pastors the pastor?

RS: A touching thing happened to me the other day. I got a call from a member who said, 'This is your pastoral call. You're always calling us. You send us texts every week. This is your call.' And for an hour the member talked with me. This was very cathartic. Also, on my birthday, the members did a video for me – an hour and a half of them thanking me. It was very moving. That for me was the essence of ministry. It's about the members: how they rally around you, embrace you, and pray for you. Those things really lift my spirit.

My wife and child are very supportive, and I have a few friends in ministry who have been there for me through thick and thin – they and the pastors in Area 6B have been fantastic.

Thanks to Don Roberts, Communications and Media Assistant for the South England Conference, on behalf of SEC Media.

Well-being at Stanborough Primary School

At Stanborough Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and well-being of our pupils and staff. As we near the end of our busy first spring term, we would like to acknowledge our amazing pupils for their dedication in continuing to show our school values, despite the current circumstances. We know that everyone experiences life challenges, and sometimes this can make us feel vulnerable and in need of additional emotional support.

With this in mind, we as a school community would like to recognise our pupils' efforts and do something special for them, as their emotional health and well-being is a priority to us. Thanks to a generous donation from Mr Kanagaraj, our parent governor and founder of One Vision, we have been able to create 'well-being goody bags' for each child to say, 'Well done and thank you.' The pupils were able to open their well-being bags on Friday, 12 February, during our whole-school treat at 11.15am, when the school livestreamed a musical.

It is our hope that our well-being goody bags will remind the children of just how much they are appreciated and cared for. We cannot forget the staff, as they have continued to work tirelessly to ensure that our pupils have had continuity with their learning.

We would also like to thank One Vision, not only for supporting the school, but also for providing a much-needed service to the community of Watford, particularly during these challenging times. May God continue to bless your ministry as you 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven' (Mathew 5:16, NKJV).

MRS T. MADDEN (HEAD TEACHER)



Enoch and Tiann



Children's well-being bags



Staff well-being bags

Newbold Offering

Your donation today is their tomorrow

Preparation for ministry is more than just a study experience, it is answering a call – it is the opportunity to enhance the lives of others through God's word.

We invite you to support the ministry of the future with funding contributions to help real people make a real difference in the real world.

We are dedicated to providing support for students who find themselves in tough circumstances, and together, we believe we can help to enable individuals to make the most of their time on this faith-affirming, life-enriching journey into the world of ministry – to make room for learning and serving by taking away financial strain.

Relieve gifted individuals as they delve into a world of critical-thinking, intentional reflection, engaging mission-based projects and driving positive change within the Church and wider communities.

The Student Hardship Fund

The overall aim of this exclusive fund is to remove unexpected financial barriers for committed students who are preparing for a life in ministry.

Simply, it is a safety net for students with a significant short-term circumstance outside their control that leads them to request monetary assistance. Each application is assessed on individual need – there is no guarantee that they will be awarded the fund automatically.

The fund may provide vital assistance across essential costs such as tuition fees/credits, accommodation fees, and campus living fees (e.g. meals).

It ensures each student in need is able to continue with their studies and reaches their full potential.

Your support transforms lives

In these situations, the demand for support always exceeds the funds available, but with your contribution we can ensure that our students don't have to give up on their calling. Together, let us sustain the future of our fellow Newboldian, and in turn, the ministry of tomorrow.



“ I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors of Newbold's Student Hardship Fund, who really can turn dreams to realities for so many individuals.

The financial burden of education can be heavy for a lot of students, I was one of them – and I'm so grateful for the support I received to relieve the weight that was tied to the monetary constraints.

I'm proud to share that with the help of this fund I have experienced a life-changing educational journey and have successfully completed my Master of Arts in Theology. I'm currently finalising my Postgraduate Certificate in Mission and Ministry and reflect on the path that led me to this point with gratitude to the sponsors that made it possible.

NICOLE GOODEN



“ The Student Hardship Fund has made a huge difference to my studying experience. Knowing the financial support was there allowed a release of mental pressure which meant I could really focus on my studies without the worry.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this essential funding, I can't stress the relief it's brought to my life.

SAMUEL SEMAKULA

Help make a difference today:
newbold.ac.uk/offering

Judgement is good news!

'As I watched, this horn was waging war against God's holy people and was defeating them, until the Ancient One – the Most High – came and judged in favor of his holy people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the kingdom' (Dan. 7:21, 22, NLT).

The judgement is good news! The judgement is the Gospel!

Is it? Certainly that is not the way many Adventists have viewed the topic.

I remember the first time I attended an Adventist church. Living on a merchant marine ship in San Francisco Bay, I had not the slightest interest in Christianity or the judgement. But I had met a girl who took me to church.

The whole place was rather a shock to my system. But the knockout blow came when an 'old' lady (she must have been all of 40) stood up before the youth group and began waving her bony finger at them,

letting them know in no uncertain terms that they had better be lying awake at night dredging up and confessing every sin that they had ever committed. After all, no one knew when their name would come before the heavenly judgement. And when it did, if they had one unconfessed sin, they would not be spending eternity in their destination of first choice.

Decades of such teaching not only presented Adventists with a 'bad news' interpretation of the pre-Advent judgement, but led them to despise the teaching itself. That is unfortunate, because the biblical picture is that for God's people the judgement is good news.

In fact, it is the best of news. As God put it to Daniel, the pre-Advent judgement

is 'for' or 'in favour of' the saints. The Bible pictures the divine Judge as being on our side. After all, it is God who sent the Saviour. He is not trying to keep people out of heaven, but to get as many in as possible. The Lord wants His house to be full.

But not all accept His offer of salvation and the change of heart that He provides. Some rebel against His ways, mistreat others, and become aggressive and destructive. He can't let that go on forever . . . so they also come under judgement. For those who choose to live a life of active rebellion against God and His principles the judgement is obviously not good news.

But for Christians it is the best of news. God's judgement is their vindication. Because it is in their favour, it is the event that opens to them the doors of the everlasting kingdom. Praise God for His loving judgement.

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



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At a glance . . .

- **The location of the next General Conference session in 2022 has been moved** from Indianapolis in Indiana to St Louis in Missouri. The change came after the city of Indianapolis unexpectedly informed the GC that space 'was no longer available' for 6-11 June, according to the Adventist News Network. Thankfully, however, officials at the St Louis Convention Centre have confirmed that they have space to host the event during the same dates originally scheduled for the session in Indianapolis, so the session will still take place from 6 to 11 June 2022.
- **Reading the Bible has increased mental well-being during the pandemic**, according to a new survey for the Bible Society carried out by Christian Research. Premier Christian News, reporting the results of the survey, state that the biggest rise in Bible reading was happening among 25-34-year-olds, more than half of whom reported reading the Bible more often.
- **Information about ADRA's presence in war-torn Yemen**, along with contact details and opportunities to donate to ADRA's work in the country, can be found at adrayemen.org. According to Paul Adams of the BBC, a fresh Houthi offensive on the government-held city of Marib is looming, and hundreds of thousands of refugees from elsewhere in the country are at risk of being displaced by fresh violence. See ADRA Yemen's Facebook page at [facebook.com/ADRA.Yemen/](https://www.facebook.com/ADRA.Yemen/) for more stories.
- **Pastor Lameck Barashinga, Burundi's Adventist leader, has finally been released from prison** after being jailed for his faith for fifteen months. The East-Central Africa Division president, Pastor Blasious

Ruguri, says, 'I would like us to thank God for protecting His servant. He has answered our prayers.' Pastor Ted Wilson, the church's global president, praises the Lord 'for this good development towards a normalisation of Seventh-day Adventist Church activities in Burundi so the three angels' messages can go with increased power.'

- **UK chaplains have been facing increased challenges during the pandemic** as they offer spiritual and pastoral care to their flocks, according to the BBC. Photographer Louise Haywood-Schiefer has been taking pictures and interviewing chaplains across London, including chaplains at a prison, an airport, a college, and 'The Household Division, the Royal Military Chapel (The Guards' Chapel)', among others. To read their stories and see the pictures, visit [bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-55903529](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-55903529).
- **Non-Christians' attitude towards Christian churches in the UK has improved** since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new survey by Savanta ComRes, commissioned by YourNeighbour and international Christian children's charity World Vision. Premier Christian News reports that 25 percent of non-Christians now agree that the church in the UK makes a positive difference, a rise of 6 percent on three years ago, while overall 42 percent of UK adults say that local Christian churches make a positive difference in their communities.

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

ANDREW PUCKERING

How long, O Lord, how long?

A COVID-19 community lament

by Cedar H. Leigh*

During the past year, we have experienced a deep and ingrained sense of loss. We've stared out of the windows onto grandiose gardens, the greyness of squalid brick, and decaying high streets. Young children and teenagers are constant companions if we are young parents; but we miss the absence of grown-up children if we happen to be ageing or extremely clinically vulnerable.

How long, O Lord, how long?

The four walls of our homes collapse in on many with depression, home working, home schooling, domestic violence and cabin fever: the crumbling building blocks. Yet, for frontline workers, home is a place of safety from the virus – a safety which is not always a daily luxury. 'Remote' is the new buzzword attached to learning, the office, and the fragile mood of a country that is appearing to emerge triumphant after a messy divorce with its nearest neighbours.

How long, O Lord, how long?

Furlough schemes have lured many into a false sense of security. Others would welcome any semblance of financial security. A minority are building empires on the backs of the insecurity of the majority. Government borrowing is unprecedented in an effort to prevent total economic collapse.

How long, O Lord, how long?

Loss is a daily companion. News anchors pump out the death news with alarming clarity and calm. Grim-faced politicians urge us to 'follow the science' despite them often doing otherwise. Rites of passage and rituals are diminished due to government guidelines. Our sense of elation is dampened and our pain is numbed.

How long, O Lord, how long?

There is a roadmap of key destination points. Schools will reopen. Non-essential shops will fling wide their doors. Haircuts, facials, and workout routines can resume. People will once again gather in cafes, car showrooms and churches to speak, spend or sermonise. The world will once again return to normal.

But the world was normal. The sun shone. The rain blessed the earth with water. The daffodils bloomed in spring. The warmth of summer blessed our souls. The richness of the apple trees ripened in autumn. And the recent snowy days afforded us a clean winter.

Father, as we look to the future, may we never forget how You have led us in the past. We have shed tears of hurt, of loss, of grief. Our frustration, mixed with anger and fear, often denied Your existence. Forgive us. We lost jobs, relationships, and a sense of mundanity. We lost friends, and relatives and spouses. We are crushed by the



overwhelming numbers of messages and stories that invite us to seek answers in humans instead of relying on You. We praise You that, during our darkest days, You were present in Your absence and speaking in Your silence.
*CEDAR H. LEIGH IS A PSEUDONYM

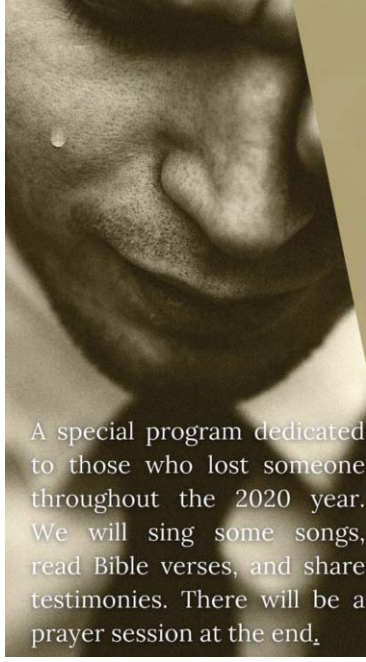
BUC ZOOM

PRAYER MEETING

Every first Wednesday of the month 7:30pm

Zoom details are: Meeting ID: 873 7894 0121 Passcode: 790322
YouTube: Search BUC News Channel

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted



A SPECIAL EVENT

TEARS & PRAISE

Date: 30 January 2021
Time: 3 pm
Location: Zoom Platform,
 MESSAGE US FOR MORE
 DETAILS.

A special program dedicated to those who lost someone throughout the 2020 year. We will sing some songs, read Bible verses, and share testimonies. There will be a prayer session at the end.

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

through their profession and work, had either contracted the virus and recovered or were still in the process of coping with isolation and loneliness. At the same time, most of us know someone who has lost a loved one, or know of a grieving work colleague or friend. 'Our trust and faith in God,' said Pastor Bran, 'is a reminder to pray for and help others in their grief.'

As a church family made up of an international community, many members were unable to attend funeral services due to coronavirus restrictions. The pain and sense of loss could be heard in the voices of all the participants.

As the service progressed, each person who chose a song or scripture explained why it was special to them.

'According to John 11:3,' said Pastor Rancic, 'even the "friends of Jesus" can get sick and eventually die. When this happens,' he continued, 'although it is difficult to face sickness and death, we should not lose our faith

if this occurs to us or our loved ones. Jesus took some time to deal with His pain. Jesus cried with His friends and expressed His grief.'

Turning from the reality of grief to the promise of hope, Pastor Rancic gave a reminder that Jesus assured the sisters of Lazarus that their brother would rise again. 'Take time to deal with your loss and combine it with hope – the hope of Jesus, who said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" ' (John 11:25, NKJV).

The service closed with a reading from 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14, written by the apostle Paul, with his conviction that we should not grieve as others who have no hope. Our hope is in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, who rose again, and who is coming again soon to bring pain, suffering and death to an end.

'Until Then' was our final song and prayer. *HUEDEL MORGAN-ISAAC*

Tears and Praise Service

On 30 January the Cardiff and Cardiff North churches held a joint memorial service for all those who had suffered loss of their loved ones during the past year. Led by the Cardiff and Cardiff North church elders, Jonathan

Mazura and Zuze Moyo, and accompanied by Pastor Emanuel Bran (Welsh Mission President) and Pastor David Rancic (Cardiff district of churches), it was a moving experience for all.

Many in our congregation,

'Long COVID'

by Sharon Platt-McDonald, *BUC Director for Health, Women's Ministries & Adventist Community Services*



During the first wave of coronavirus in April 2020, increasing numbers of people encountered various ongoing health challenges upon discharge from hospital with COVID-19, many of whom struggled to care for themselves. Others, who tested positive but didn't require hospitalisation, also struggled to recover.

New symptoms included continued breathlessness, extreme fatigue, low moods and depression, which hindered buying and preparing food. This was a huge burden, especially for those living alone.

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence define long COVID as 'signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis'.¹

Guidelines on managing long COVID can be found at their website: <https://www.nice.org.uk/news/article/nice-sign-and-rcgp-set-out-further-details-about-the-uk-guideline-on-management-of-the-long-term-effects-of-covid-19>.

Symptoms of long COVID

The NHS website lists common long COVID symptoms: fatigue; shortness of breath; chest pain or tightness; brain fog; insomnia; heart palpitations; dizziness; pins and needles; joint pain; depression and anxiety; tinnitus; earaches; feeling sick, diarrhoea, stomach aches, and loss of appetite; a high temperature, cough, headaches, sore throat, and changes to sense of smell or taste; and rashes.²

The NHS advises contacting your GP if you experience these symptoms for more than four weeks after contracting COVID-19.

Indicators for long COVID

Researchers at Cambridge University published an article on 18 January 2021 called 'Likelihood of severe and long COVID

- may be established very early on following infection',³ finding that:
- Individuals who have asymptomatic or mild disease show a robust immune response early on.
 - Patients requiring admission to hospital have impaired immune responses and systemic inflammation (chronic inflammation that may affect several organs) from symptom onset.
 - Persistent abnormalities in immune cells and a change in inflammatory response may contribute to 'long COVID'.

The report highlights the complexity of the immune response, stating: 'Most people who get infected by SARS-CoV-2 mount a successful antiviral response, resulting in few if any symptoms. In a minority of patients, however, there is evidence that the immune system over-reacts, [causing] damage to multiple organs, often resulting in death.'

Whole-person approach

The British Herbal Medicine Association (BHMA) suggest lifestyle changes, herbal remedies and supplements to combat the inflammatory response associated with COVID-19.⁴

Their suggested kitchen remedies for COVID-19 symptoms include garlic and onions, thyme, ginger and turmeric, chilli pepper, fermented foods like sauerkraut and kimchi, herbal teas, and diaphoretic herbs like peppermint, chamomile, lemon balm and ginger.

The BHMA also encourage the following: reduce stress; enjoy the outdoors; eat whole foods; engage in regular physical activity; play more; connect with family and friends; ensure adequate sleep; express gratitude; laugh more; slow down.

Spiritual focus

Prayer and scriptures like Psalm 107:20 & Jeremiah 17:14 sustain faith when battling prolonged illness.

For more information on COVID-19 recovery, see: <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>

¹<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188/history> ²<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/> ³<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/likelihood-of-severe-and-long-covid-may-be-established-very-early-on-following-infection> ⁴<https://bhma.org/covid-19/>

Myrtle Ruth Cooper (1928-2020)
d. 21 October.



Myrtle was born into a pastoral family in Swansea, south Wales. She was the third child of Thomas and Marjorie Cooper, early graduates from what was then Stanborough College (later, Newbold College). Throughout Myrtle's early years, the family moved between north and south Wales to pastor different churches every two or three years. The annual family holiday by the seaside at Rhyl was spent collecting for what is now ADRA!

After attending Hawarden County Grammar School, Myrtle completed a Diploma in Education at Birmingham University in 1949. She was chosen as one of the trainees of the pioneer American educationalist, Dr Earl Carlson. She worked for two years at Carlson House, the first UK specialist school for children with cerebral palsy. In 1952 she had an accident which necessitated surgery to relieve pressure on her spine. The surgery was not a success. Myrtle's life changed irrevocably.

In 1954 she moved to live with her widowed mother in Watford, and taught at Stanborough Primary School. Four years later, she flew to California to look after her small nephew and niece after their parents' serious motor accident. The following year, she was back to teaching – first at Stanborough School, and then to lead and teach at Laurieston, the church's school in Leeds. Among 'my boys', as she called them, were several future leaders of the church.

In 1967 she had to give up her beloved work again because of illness. She never worked full-time again. After her mother's death in 1969, however, she took in lodgers and continued part-time remedial teaching at local schools.

Her health continued to deteriorate and she eventually decided to give up the precious independence that her specially converted Mini offered her. Undaunted as ever, she moved to a small apartment and took to a wheelchair with electronic controls in which she managed sophisticated movements. Always keen to learn, she mastered her laptop; and, with visits from

carers and regular help in the house, she maintained her independence.

In September 2011 she was hospitalised again, and her GP gave her six months to live. Myrtle defied all medical predictions! She got tired, but she obviously enjoyed meeting the various medical people who visited her. She built lasting friendships with carers. When dementia took over she still loved to sing the songs of faith from church camps of her childhood, conducting vigorously with the one hand she could still wave. On 2 October 2020 she was admitted to the Bushey House Beaumont nursing home, where she died peacefully on 21 October. She was buried in North Watford Cemetery beside her mother on 17 November. The officiating ministers were Pastors Wayne Erasmus and Terry Messenger.

In her papers, her family found this reflection: 'True courage comes from focusing not on the size of the obstacle in front of us, but on the greatness of the God beside us.' She believed it and lived it. Her family give thanks for her example.

HELEN PEARSON

Dr K. A. Paulsen Yesudian, MBBS, DCH, MRCP (1931-2020)
d. 23 November.



Paulsen Yesudian was born in Neyoor, a small town in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, India, on 19 October 1931. His parents had become Adventists in the 1920s, and Paulsen grew up in a close, God-fearing family. There was no church in the village, and the small group of believers met in the family house.

He was sponsored to study medicine by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and commenced his studies at the Christian Medical College in Vellore in 1953, graduating in 1959.

His first posting was at Giffard Memorial Hospital in Nuzvid, Andhra Pradesh, where he met his wife of 58 years, Naomi, and they were married in 1962. In 1964 he moved to the UK to further his studies in paediatrics. His paediatric studies led to him obtaining his Diploma in Child Health in 1965, and membership of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow in

1967. During this period his first son, Andrew, was born in London in 1966. They attended church in Bradford, Crewe, Sutton Coldfield, Cambridge and Watford, according to the junior doctor postings he had.

In 1968 the family relocated to southern California, where Paulsen completed a cardiology fellowship at Loma Linda University.

During these years, he was aware of the work of the Adventist Church in building a hospital in Ottapalam, Palakkad District, Kerala. He was invited to become the first medical director, and the hospital was opened by Pastor Pierson in November 1969. His second son, Peter, was born in 1969, and a daughter, Suseela, in 1971. Five happy years were spent here; and, apart from paediatrics, the life of a mission doctor involved all aspects of medicine and surgery, and also the training of junior doctors.

He had kept his connections with Good Hope Hospital in Sutton Coldfield, and he was able to return there and work from 1974 to 1976. He became close friends with Pastor Dalbir Masih during this time, a lifelong friendship. Paulsen was still keen to do mission work, and the young family moved to work at Port of Spain Adventist Hospital in Trinidad, West Indies from 1976 to 1977, and then Surat Adventist Hospital in Gujarat, India, from 1977 to 1979.

He then returned to Good Hope Hospital in Sutton Coldfield in 1979, and continued to work in the UK until 1992. During this time the family attended Erdington and Windsor St Churches in Birmingham.

His lifelong dream was the foundation of an Adventist hospital in Tamil Nadu, India. Taking early retirement from the NHS in 1992, he returned to India. His dream was fulfilled when the Thanjavur Adventist Hospital opened in 1996 with the support of the worldwide church as a 13th Sabbath offering project. He was able to work here until almost his 70th birthday.

With retirement, he and Naomi spent more time in Sutton Coldfield so they could be closer to family. He was a key member of the new church here, often the first to arrive, well into his eighties. He was still passionate about working with the poor and disadvantaged, and used his

medical skills in Kenya and the Philippines.

At the beginning of 2020 he was diagnosed with stomach cancer, and at 89 surgery was felt to be too risky. He died peacefully at home on 23 November, surrounded by family and his beloved books.

The COVID-19-restricted funeral was held on Friday 18 December in Sutton Coldfield, with Pastor D. Masih and Pastor S. Gligorov officiating. Paulsen leaves behind his wife Naomi, his children, and four grandchildren. We all await that glorious morning when Paulsen will be among those who will see their Saviour and loved ones again.

PETER YESUDIEN

Selvin Sylvester Sealy (1936-2020)
d. 3 December.



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Mr Selvin Sylvester Sealy to our relatives, friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Our beloved passed away on 3 December 2020, aged 84 years.

He grew up in Barbados and came to England in June 1966. He trained as a registered mental nurse in a psychiatric hospital in Staffordshire. His fiancée, Violet Ermine Sealy (née Hollingworth), also a Barbadian, was working in London as a registered general nurse, having qualified at the same time as he did. Wanting to be near her, Selvin moved to Botley's Park psychiatric hospital in Chertsey, Surrey, where he was in charge of the unit at Murray House, remaining in that position until his retirement. After their wedding at Holloway Church, Violet joined him in Surrey.

He will be fondly remembered as a loving father and devoted husband. He was a dedicated church elder who went out of his way to help and encourage so many people of all ages. He will be remembered as an ardent Bible quiz winner – his family lost count of how many times he won the Bible quiz at the annual SEC Camp Meeting. He was also dedicated to his profession and had many hobbies and interests, including sports like weightlifting, cricket, football and athletics, to name but a few. He played cricket at a district level, as well as for the hospital team in his local village. Selvin enjoyed reading,

writing, poetry and singing, and he was involved in numerous charitable organisations.

He authored stories, poetry and matters concerning psychological issues. He had a very progressive attitude towards health and well-being, including adhering to a strict vegan diet and abstaining from all forms of stimulants, including caffeine.

He was a man of his word and was very successful in all his undertakings. His influence will have a lasting effect on his family and friends to come.

His family and friends look forward to the promise found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17 when Christ returns.

CATHERINE PALMER

Fred Sneed (1932-2020)

d. 5 December.

Frederick Milford Sneed (Milford after the nurse who saved his life), the third of four



children, was born in 1932 to Salvation Army parents living in Leytonstone. His mother became a Seventh-day Adventist soon after. World War II saw the older three children evacuated to Essex, while their mother and youngest brother went to Ipswich. The war period had a large impact for life on Fred and his siblings. Fred, aged 7, thought he would never see his mother again and became seriously ill, prompting his worried older sister to write and tell Mother. Mother came and found a home for them all, and Fred soon recovered with her care and healthy vegetarian cooking. Here in the country Fred enjoyed fresh air and exercise, learning how to garden, care for animals, work hard, and appreciate the countryside, all values he carried throughout his life.

Returning to Leytonstone after the war, Fred was baptised at 16 along with other young people at the Walthamstow church. As a conscientious objector he completed National Service in the food industry and nursing care, and then went on to teacher training, spending many years as a permanent class teacher and supply teacher, working one-to-one with those needing extra support. He also ran his own wholesale business for a while, enjoying travelling and meeting people.

Sadly, for some years he had little to do with the church. Then

he met Judith at International Folk Dancing events, and they married in 1968 at Judith's Methodist church in Birmingham. Judith prayed that her husband would return to church, and it is testimony to the power of a Christian wife's prayers that four years later Fred returned to the Adventist Church, bringing his wife and 2-year-old daughter. After rebaptism Fred became a keen children's Sabbath School leader; enjoyed leading the church in song, introducing new songbooks; participated in outreach; and shared his love of God's nature with church children, his own two daughters, and local children at a club he ran for them.

He retired to Wales, where he acquired a dog which accompanied him on walks. In the last few years he slowed down physically and struggled with a growth on his pituitary gland, but could still play Scrabble. The night before he died, Judith read a devotion and he prayed to open Sabbath; then, during his sleep, Fred entered his eternal Sabbath rest.

Fred is remembered for his love of travel, his sense of humour, his commitment to family worships and praying for his family; for having high ideals, for his interest in people, for his love of music and nature, for making the Sabbath a delight for his children, and for loving his family.

He will be missed by his wife, Judith; daughters, Vicky and Wendy; and sons-in-law, Mike and Felix; and as Morfar to his grandchildren, Robin, Rowan and Alexa. We all look forward to seeing him once again when Jesus comes and we all go to heaven.

VICKY BEAMISH WITH WENDY IKUJOMOLA

We wish to thank Pastor Roger Neal for conducting the funeral, and also Uschi Mertens, Jo Brewer, and Janet and John Meredith from the Carmarthen church for their support to Fred and Judith, especially during COVID-19.

John Arthur Dillon (1928-2021)

d. 9 January.

John was born in 1928 to Sarah and John Dillon in London, one of eight children. He served in the military from 1946 to 1948 and served in Egypt. John travelled halfway around the



world in 1954, reaching as far as New Zealand, when he worked at sea in a large cruise ship as a ship's printer. He was apprenticed to be a compositor in the printing industry in 1942, in which he remained until retirement.

John was married on 21 September 1958 to Jean, the daughter of Florence and Lewis Williams. His daughter, Anne, became a palliative nursing care specialist, which is the top of the nursing profession, having gained her degree at Oxford Brooks University. John had two grandsons, Austin and Spencer, and Austin gave him a great-grandson.

John became a Seventh-day Adventist at 28 and maintained his faith until his passing at 92. He was baptised in the London Adventist Church in the City of London by Pastor Elman Falkenberg, the resident evangelist at the time. John and his family moved from London, where they were all born, to Strood in Kent, and then Rainham in 1963, and worshipped in the Chatham Church, where they remained until the present church was built. John served as an elder in Chatham from 1964 until he moved to Aylesbury in 1997, where he served as an elder until ill health prevented him.

John held most offices in the church over his 50-plus years as a member, always smartly dressed and recognised for his punctuality, his enthusiasm and his willingness to serve his church and God's people wherever he could. Along with Pastor David Spearing, he collected the keys for the new church building in Aylesbury. He took an interest in the youth and young adults, and often introduced to them educational interests to further their own learning. This opened academic pathways, which has benefited many young people. Of further interest is the fact that Brother Dillon wrote a series on the books of Daniel and Revelation, Hebrews and Jude.

Not long after settling in Aylesbury, he had to give up driving his car, and was collected from his house and driven to church by a dedicated and faithful church member every Sabbath morning.

Sadly, ill health rendered him unable to attend church services, but he watched the virtual worship services broadcast by

many of our churches nationwide.

As well as a dedicated churchman, John was an amazing father, grandfather and great-grandfather, never failing to support, love and care for his family. He is survived by one daughter, two grandsons and one great-grandson.

To God be the glory!
Hallelujah! Amen!

'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus' (Revelation 14:12, KJV).

PAULINE STERLING, COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT, AYLESBURY SDA CHURCH

Messenger

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	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Beif
Mar 26	6.24	6.36	6.29	6.39	6.49
Apr 2	7.36	7.48	7.42	7.53	8.02
9	7.48	8.00	7.54	8.08	8.16
16	7.59	8.12	8.07	8.22	8.29



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