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The love of God compels us . . .

Read more on pages 4-5



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Embracing opportunities in a difficult period

by Pastor Richard Jackson, North England Conference President

It goes without saying that 2020/2021 has been one of the most difficult periods globally in recent history. We have all suffered losses, albeit in different ways. However, this collective loss has given rise to the kind of tenacity and unity that characterised the church family in the book of Acts.

In seeking to support the spiritual health and well-being of our church family during the last twelve months, the NEC was privileged to share in three weeks of virtual praise, worship and evangelism, reflecting upon the hope that we have in Christ Jesus. First we were blessed by Dr Abraham Jules, and then by Pastor John Bradshaw. As well as their powerful and uplifting sermons, we were blessed by the ministry of the NEC pastors and members via devotions, songs, instrumentals and prayers of encouragement. The Pathway of Hope and The Pathway of Hope Reloaded series saw thousands of people view the daily services, and thousands more have viewed them since online.

The NEC has wholeheartedly embraced the virtual world within which we are all working, yet we have continued to find ways to evangelise our communities face-to-face within the constraints of the governmental guidelines. Several of our congregations have provided much-needed food-distribution services and developed innovative ways of engaging with the most vulnerable sections of their communities.

Prior to the pandemic, the NEC started several initiatives, one of which was the development of the NEC Media Centre. This development was aided by a grant from the General Conference. The receipt of this grant enabled us to develop the foundations of a media centre using two of the Ravenhurst properties. Our vision is to use this



centre to expand our media presence onto various forums, including television.

In addition to developing the media centre, we are also developing an NEC app which will allow our church family and friends to easily access NEC resources, news and information. The app will also allow us all to easily make donations, including tithe and offerings. The developments which we have made could not have been achieved without your continued prayers and support, for which we thank you.

We remain committed to praying for each of you, and we admonish you to continue to pray for and support each other, both now and in the future.

Pastor Richard Jackson serves as the President of the North England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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EDITOR





David Neal, Editor

The first 100 days

'In his first 100 days of office, the president is expected to . . .'

It's a line we frequently hear on the election of a president or prime minister (PM).

Within three months of reading this editorial, five presidents who oversee and serve within the constituent parts of the British Union Conference will have been elected (or re-elected) to begin a new term of office.

In the political world the first 100 days in office are significant as a time 'to get things done' and make desired changes. Leave matters any longer (they say) and the inertia for change slows down. I wonder what would happen if our presidents and their teams bought into the 'first 100 days' leadership principle?

An invitation

Let's face a reality: returning to church after the lockdown will look different, feel different, and be different, involving change to the way we worship and witness, with multiple problems to solve in both the local and national context. At first sight they might seem overwhelming, and our natural instinct will be to do everything to 'steady the ship'.

But problems become opportunities if we are prepared to move at a faster pace than pedestrian. By Thursday 16 September, all the newly elected and re-elected leaders will have commenced their terms of office. From Thursday 16 September to Sabbath 25 December is 100 days. Because it is the leader of any organisation who is the chief driver of change, I invite every leader (newly elected or re-elected) to consider this question:

'What must I do during my first 100 days in office that will determine the direction of travel this mission/conference/union/division/department/institution takes?'

In addition, I also want to invite every local church pastor to ask the same question.

'What must I do, within 100 days of reopening the churches in my district, that will determine the direction of travel for the congregation(s) I serve?'

Three priorities?

1. Set the spiritual tone of the organisation/department/congregation from the start.

First and foremost, the president is a spiritual leader. And yet these days it seems that spiritual leadership takes second place to the 'administrative burden'. The focus of our presidents is all too often on employment, financial and legal issues – in many ways serving as a company CEO. Perhaps we must

admit that this is the reality of operating the church in today's world. As stewards of church assets (both material and human), the leadership modus operandi leans towards the risk-averse.

Nonetheless, it is not how things should be, and not a problem only our denominational leaders face. In a 4 June letter to the Anglican newspaper, *The Church Times*, Jan McFarlane noted a trend in the appointment of Church of England bishops over the last few years – more for their 'management speak . . . than for [being] a spiritual leader in the Church of God' – leading her to pose this question:

'Who, now, are the great spiritual leaders in the Church, inspiring others to discipleship and mission, not through laborious mission strategies, but because their hearts are on fire?'

2. The pastoral touch

Lee Eclov in the May/June edition of *Christianity Today* suggests that what both the members and employees of a church organisation notice most of all about the leader is his or her 'pastoral touch'. 'In the early days of your ministry, your strategic plan is not a front-burner issue for people. What they'll notice is your *pastoral touch*. Meet with as many people as you can . . . listen to stories and make a few notes.'² He shared this principle as the pastor of a large church, but without a doubt it is also applicable to administrators. Is it not in many ways common sense? The outcome is mutually beneficial, because authentic listening builds up a trust bank, providing opportunity for the president to talk about, as Eclov notes, 'the big-picture issues and hopes for the church'.

3. Openness and transparency

I once served as the chair of an executive committee. The number-one complaint I received from its members was about how it was run. 'Why do you need us to attend your committee, when you and your admin team have already decided what is to happen before we meet together?' A characteristic of strong leadership is to set the agenda, but when leaders steam ahead of committees without proper consultation or authorisation for actions, we run into trouble.

From the many members who talk with me from all corners of the church in the UK and Ireland, church leadership at all levels still has much work to do on this. In 2015, the General Conference leadership, recognising this to be a continuing problem, invited all leaders

around the world to make a greater commitment to a higher level of leadership integrity when they published a booklet called *Transparency and Accountability*. In this booklet, they define 'transparency':

'"Transparency" is an extension of the word "transparent", which means "to see through", "nothing hidden", and is associated with honesty, openness, and trustworthiness.'

When it comes down to the first 100 days in office, perhaps it's not so much a decisive policy action that needs to be taken, or a project to implement, but the clearest signal possible that we are determined to change the leadership culture of our respective organisations for the better.

Perhaps a useful tool for us all who aspire to leadership in the local or wider church is to remind ourselves of the leadership pledge outlined in that same *Transparency and Accountability* booklet, which is reproduced below.

My leadership pledge

Recognising that the call to leadership in the Church is a call to service, as modelled in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ,

I dedicate my life to humble service in whatever capacity or post I may be called to hold.

I covenant to lead a spiritual life of Bible study, prayer, and Christ-like behaviour. I accept my leadership assignment as a sacred trust which is to be used for the glory of God.

I promise to uphold the high moral standards of Christian life and leadership.

I vow to be a faithful steward in protecting the interests of the Church and in nurturing its development.

I determine to strive for excellence in every aspect of my life and work.

I pledge to demonstrate a spirit of cooperation and openness with my colleagues, realising that in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.

I commit myself to the principles of shared leadership in the Church.

I devote myself to the noble purpose of advancing the kingdom of God and preparing people for the return of Jesus.

I am sure it is the prayer of us all that if Jan McFarlane were ever to connect with our presidents, she would find them to be *'great spiritual leaders in the Church, inspiring others to discipleship and mission . . . because their hearts are on fire'*.

This editorial was written prior to being informed of the postponement of the July British Union Conference Session. The full 2015 Accountability and Leadership booklet may be downloaded here: <http://leadership.gc.adventist.org/leadership/Presidential/Curriculum/Excellent%20Governance/GC%20SPREAD%20Transparency%20and%20Accountability%20Booklet.pdf>

¹*The Church Times*, 4 June 2021, p. 15

²<https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/october-web-exclusives/your-first-100-days-at-new-church.html>

The love of God compels us:

A statement of the Biblical Research Institute Ethics Committee on the humanitarian crisis of refugees, migrants, and displaced people

In the first part of this statement on refugees, migrants, and displaced people, the Biblical Research Institute Ethics Committee illustrates the plight of the 79.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world, gives examples of biblical migrants, and outlines how God's law says we should treat foreigners who live among us.

The situation of millions of refugees and displaced people around the world is the greatest humanitarian crisis we have faced since World War II. According to the UNHCR, at the end of 2019 there were some 79.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.¹ About 40% of them are children who often are exploited, abused, or victims of sex trafficking and violence. These staggering statistics should not blind us to the fact that we are dealing with real human beings and their stories. The predominant discourse on international migration emphasises large flows of migrants and refugees from the Global South to the Global North. However, countries of the Global South host 84% of the world's refugees and displaced persons, and their numbers are increasing.² In fact, the poorest countries in the world – the least developed states – host 28% of all refugees. In other words, the refugee crisis is disproportionately present in the Global South, where those who are the least able to bear responsibility often are forced to shoulder it. As a global church with a worldwide outreach, we are confronted

with tragic human circumstances and a crisis that poses unique challenges and responsibilities for all of us. The situation calls for a careful biblical evaluation and response that reflects the love of God and His compassion.

Being confronted with unfamiliar people from distant parts of the world who speak a foreign language, practise a different lifestyle, have unusual value systems, and share other religious preferences can easily create reservations in us and foster prejudices. Often the fear is expressed that large numbers of displaced people can impact the prevailing culture and social dynamics and will have economic implications for the countries in which they seek refuge. In the field of forced migration studies, the available empirical data strongly suggests that refugees are not an economic burden to host countries in the long run.³ We recognise the right of any state to guard the safety of its citizens, and we see the need of migrants and refugees to respect the laws and culture of their host countries if they do not contradict God's law. But fending off victims of violence, armed conflict, religious persecution, natural disasters, or life-threatening economic conditions is inhumane and does not reflect the Spirit of Christ. While it is understandable that unfamiliar customs and practices create uneasiness in us, we should carefully guard our thinking and our actions from fears that may or may not be driven by conspiracy theories. All our insecurities and fears, as well as our sinful prejudices, need to be confronted in the light of the Gospel and truth. The Bible tells us that God's love drives out all fear (1 John 4:18) and always seeks the best in the other person (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). God even commands us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27) and do

Part 1





native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God' (Leviticus 19:34). God even admonishes His people to treat the needy and poor among themselves as they would treat the foreigner and stranger (Leviticus 25:35; cf. Exodus 12:49; 20:10; 23:12; Deuteronomy 10:15-19). Therefore, Israel should apply the same law for foreigners and native-born (Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:15, 16). God even reminds His people that they reside in His land *'as foreigners and strangers'* (Leviticus 25:23).

This call for compassion to all human beings, irrespective of their geographic origin or ethnic identity, is grounded in the biblical teaching of creation. The Bible teaches that we all are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27). Regardless of their legal status, all refugees, migrants, and displaced people possess inherent and inviolable human dignity because of humanity's common origin in God. Love for others is more than just a passive feeling; it involves active engagement. Reflecting the image of God, every human being deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and kindness. The right of residence does not change this premise. This fundamental insight into the dignity of all human beings who are created in the image of God finds its secular legal expression in human rights. As Seventh-day Adventists we honour the inalienable worth of every human being because of our common origin in God, and therefore we respect human rights that reflect this biblical teaching.



In the concluding instalment of this statement, the Biblical Research Institute Ethics Committee examines Jesus' example of love and compassion, the fact that we are all

pilgrims on this earth, and practical ways in which we can help migrants and refugees.

good to them, expecting nothing in return (Luke 6:35). This biblical mandate may force us out of our comfort zone, but it will be a blessing when we follow the example of Jesus.

Some biblical perspectives Biblical precedents on migrants

From its very beginning, Scripture tells us that people had to leave their home and settle in foreign places. The human story begins with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23, 24). Abram had to leave his home and move to a country that was new to him (Genesis 12:4-9). The people of Israel were forced to flee to Egypt because of a great famine in the land (Genesis 42-47). Later, God's people were displaced because of war and led captive into Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-16; Daniel 1:1-3). Joseph and Mary fled with Jesus to Egypt because of persecution (Matthew 2:13, 14), and later Jesus' disciples faced a similar fate (Acts 8:1-5). The Bible is full of stories of displaced people who had to flee and seek refuge elsewhere. Because of their own painful

experience as foreigners and slaves in Egypt and as exiles in Babylon, God repeatedly reminded His people to be mindful of their experience and be kind to the strangers in their midst.

Biblical principles to deal with strangers and foreigners

To show compassion and mercy and to help those in need is a divine mandate, rooted in God's great love for us. In the Old Testament, God's compassionate character is the very reason why *'the poor and the foreigner'* should not be neglected (Leviticus 19:10). God admonishes His people, *'When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not ill-treat them'* (Leviticus 19:33; cf. Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Deuteronomy 24:14, 17; 27:19). In fact, God reminds us that *'the foreigner residing among you must be treated as your*

¹'Figures at a Glance', UNHCR, 18 June 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (accessed 18 April 2021). These were the latest numbers available at the time this document was written.

²Ibrahim Awad and Usha Natarajan, 'Migration Myths and the Global South', *Cairo Review* 30 (summer 2018): 46-55, <https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/migration-myths-and-the-global-south/> (accessed 18 April 2021)

³See, for example, the following studies: Hippolyte d'Albis, Ekrame Boubtane, and Dramane Coulibaly, 'Macroeconomic Evidence Suggests that Asylum Seekers Are Not a "Burden" for Western European Countries', *Science Advances* 4, no. 6 (2018), <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/6/eaq0883/tab-pdf> (accessed 18 April 2021); and Alexander Betts et al., 'Refugee Economies: Rethinking Popular Assumptions' (Humanitarian Innovation Project, University of Oxford, June 2014), <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/refugee-economies-2014.pdf> (accessed 18 April 2021).

All biblical quotations are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

The doors of the church were open

On Sabbath 1 May, the Coventry Central church family and viewers from Poland witnessed the baptism of Lukasz Brzozka (affectionately called Brother Lucas.) His journey started on a cold Thursday afternoon in December 2019 when he saw the church door open on an unusual day during the week. Feeling prompted to enter the church, he discovered the local pastor and two elders holding a pastoral team meeting. For 13 years, Lucas had walked past Coventry Central Church without even entertaining the thought of stopping for a moment to find out what was happening inside.

The following day, Friday evening, Lucas attended the prayer meeting, and the next morning he joined the baptismal class. Since then he has not looked back as he has continued to discover more, even during lockdown. As he shared his story of meeting Christ, he shared how, back home in Poland, his family came from the Baptist tradition. He also was able to share how Christ had helped free him from the grip of alcohol and tobacco.

The baptismal service was broadcast live, and most of the church members and family in Poland watched virtually via Zoom and YouTube as they saw Lukasz make a public declaration of his faith.

In addition to the church members present, there was a stranger in the congregation, a visitor, who entered the church before the programme began. Why did she come in? Because for more than a year she had seen the church door closed. With the door open on this Sabbath morning, curiosity got the better of her!

Dr Patrick Herbert preached a powerful message entitled 'When the music stops', which connected with our times – a story of coming into the ark of safety before the music stops. As our churches in the North England

Conference continue to reopen, our prayer is that there will be many more like Lukasz and our stranger friend, who will be prompted by the Holy Spirit to take a look inside.

EDITH MUKADA

'When the music stops'

An excerpt from Dr Herbert's sermon

Based on the story of Belshazzar's feast in Daniel chapter 5, Dr Herbert concluded with the following remarks:

Friends, we are living in serious times. The world is only interested in the 'Belshazzar's banquet' lifestyle: party, party, party. The world is only interested in having a good time. The world only tells you to live it up. Enjoy yourself. That's the motto of the world.

Friends, I'm here today to tell you that there is coming a time when all partying and living it up will stop. And many will be frightened like Belshazzar when they see that writing on the wall.

Friends, there is coming a day for all of us when we will see the writing on the wall for ourselves.

The bottom line for each of us today is: *'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting'* (Daniel 5:27, KJV).

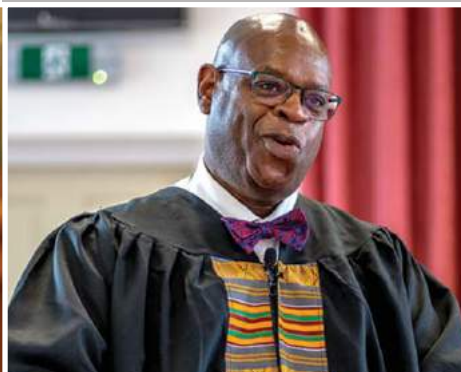
That's the bottom line.

But the good news is: *'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'* (Romans 5:8, KJV).

A story from Scotland tells of a mother's dramatic rescue of her child. Workmen were blasting rock in a quarry. One day, after they had attached the fuse and retired to a safe place and given the alarm, they saw a three-year-old child wandering across the open space where danger threatened. Every passing second meant death was closing in on the child. The workmen called to the child and waved their arms, but he only looked on their strange antics with amusement. No man dared run forward, knowing that the explosion was only seconds away. The child most certainly would have been killed, had not his mother appeared at this moment of crisis. Taking in the situation at a glance, she did what her mother's heart dictated. She did not run towards her son or yell to frighten him. Instead, she knelt down, opened wide her arms, and smiled for him to come. Instantly the child ran towards her. Within seconds the area shook with the force of the explosion, yet the child was safe in his mother's arms.

What a picture of the grace of God and of the cross. With outstretched arms on the cross, Jesus gives His gracious invitation to the world, indicating that we are to come to Him before the music stops – and He promises eternal safety.

Will you come to Jesus? Will you come?



Eight choose to live in the promise

When the Lord keeps adding to His church in these challenging times, we have every reason to celebrate His goodness.

From 8 to 15 May the London Ghana church held a virtual evangelistic campaign under the theme, 'Living in the Promise', with Pastor Andrews L. Ewoo as the speaker. With the viewers, he shared God's three global promises to humanity: God's salvation to humanity through Christ (Genesis 3:15); the return of Christ for His faithful followers (John 14:1-3); and the elimination of sin (Revelation 20).

As participants were challenged to make a decision to follow God's will and His promises, they were blessed with the music of Esther Santos-Gyasi. At the end of the week-long series, eight people committed themselves to Jesus and were baptised.

The baptism was conducted by Pastor Emmanuel Asamoah (a recent Newbold College graduate) under the supervision of Pastor Ebenezer Jones-Lartey (London Ghana's senior pastor).

We continue to give praise to God as an



Back row (left to right): Edward Azalety, Richard Owusu, Abraham Aseidu and James Hanson
Front row (left to right): Janet Acheampong, Erica Yebowaa, David Obeng and Mary Asante

additional three persons have already made their decision to follow the Lord and be baptised as soon as possible. Let us continue

to live in the promise of Jesus' soon return, because an eternity full of joy awaits us.

JAPHETH O-AMANKWAH



Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt holding Alban, with his parents, Ross and Sarah

Dedication of Alban De Vos McKinnell

On 5 December 2020, the Winchester church family celebrated the baby dedication of Alban Joseph Samuel De Vos McKinnell by Zoom with his family. The service was taken by Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt, with family and friends from all over England, Wales, Scotland and beyond joining remotely.

Alban's grandfather, Nigel De Vos, provided a special opening prayer, following which Scripture readings from Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 43:1, 2; and Jeremiah 29:11 were provided by three of Alban's godparents, Natasha (from Middlesbrough), James (from Brighton), and Maria (from Blairgowrie). A special musical item and photo slideshow were provided by Alban's remaining godparents, Dhana and Khaya (from Leicester); and Alban's parents, Sarah and Ross, shared the short story, 'Alban, God loves you'.

Alban is such a wonderful little chap. He seemed to enjoy the celebration with us all, and he even got to have some cake! God really is amazing, supporting us in these times.

We thank God for your life, young Alban; we wish you a good life, a great future, and peace in the knowledge that the Creator of the world sees you, loves you, and will always be there for you.

WENDY BRADLEY

Weston-super-Mare youth day

Sabbath 1 May was a special day at Weston-super-Mare Church when our young people's joint leaders, Molly Johnson and Alastair Boyd, presented a Zoom youth day with 65 persons on Zoom joining for the morning service from near and far, including friends from Italy and a visitor from Ecuador.

Although missing personal contact with friends, this youth day via Zoom was special – an opportunity to reconnect and worship together. Such is the blessing of modern technology!

A particular feature of the service was Emma Fuller's story about the little boy who lost a £2 coin! With songs and hymns pre-recorded by our talented young people, Pastor Juan Patrick, South England Conference Teens Ministries director, was the guest speaker for the day. His theme was about the importance of prayer in our lives, sharing illustrations from his own life of answered prayer.

Thank you, Pastor Juan, for your ministry. We are hopeful that COVID-19 is coming to an end and would welcome a future visit from you – in person next time.

We also look forward to further programmes arranged by Molly and Alastair. Being teenagers themselves, we thank them for their dedication to the Youth Department at Weston.

MAUREEN REES



Molly and Alastair sharing their talent pre-COVID-19



Trans-European Division Spring Meeting New Strategic Focus on Mission and Teamworking

by Pastor Victor Hulbert

With particular focus on mission, media, the Bible and theological training, as well as reaching children, youth and millennials, the Trans-European Division (TED) Executive Committee voted two new directors and adjusted the scope of assignments for those so far voted to office for a further term.

The primary aim is to enhance the ability of directors to work together in teams, matching goals and mission objectives across departments.

- A Mission and Evangelism director will be sought to coordinate and integrate, both vertically and horizontally, all aspects of mission, evangelism and disciple-making.
- A Media and Online Ministry director will be invited to join the team following clear evidence that online ministry, in all its forms, is now even more essential than in previous years.

- A new Health director will soon be sought, as the TED are currently studying how our Adventist health emphasis can make the best impact within the 22 countries of the TED.

Throughout this process of strengthening the team, which the TED aims to complete by November 2021, mission-minded individuals with experience are being invited to serve, because of their skills and their ability in the area of team-building, within the context of the diversity of the TED membership. Mindful of the budget, but with the need for impactful leadership, the total staffing on completion will be reduced by one director budget and by four support staff budgets.

Finally, the eleven lay and two pastoral members elected to the Executive Committee were also chosen because of their particular skill sets and experience that can help guide the forward movement of the Division.

Departmental directors

New to the TED are Pastors **Maureen Rock** and **Dejan Stojković**.



Pastor Maureen Rock currently serves as principal of the British Union Conference Adventist Discovery Centre (ADC). Her four years there have seen innovation with new and updated courses, an emphasis on online learning and a development of strong links between the Bible school and the local church. She also comes with a rich business background, working first as a training director, then as director of the Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council,

and finally as director of a consultancy, before developing a strong call to ministry. Rock started in pastoral ministry in 2010 and then joined the ADC in 2017. This rich wealth of experience gives her a good background to serve as Stewardship Director.



Pastor Dejan Stojković loves youth ministry and serves with a strong ability to reach across boundaries, seeing each person as a child of God. Stojković started ministerial life on a church revitalisation project in Cornwall, UK, before serving as a youth pastor at Stanborough Park Church. In 2012 he became Teens' and Student Ministries Director at the South England Conference (SEC) before being voted as British Union Conference Youth Director in 2017. He is an innovator, a fast thinker, and a

deeply spiritual man. His love of gadgets and technology doubled his workload during the COVID-19 pandemic, as, among other things, he developed online learning for Pathfinders. His love of media will also be a strong asset as he takes on the role of Youth Director.

Daniel Duda is well known for his teaching skills and engaging theological discourses. Currently serving as Education Director, Adventist Mission Director and Field Secretary, adjustments mean he will swap Adventist Mission for an emphasis on theological and Bible training. This focus will include pastoral and elders' education, church members' Bible training, and mobilisation.



Karen Holford is elected for a second term as Family Ministries Director, adding Children and Women to her portfolio. With extensive education and experience, Holford is a practising family therapist and former SEC Family and Children's Ministries associate director. She is both a networker and a rich provider of resources.



Patrick Johnson is also elected for a second term, caring for Ministerial, Sabbath School, Personal Ministries and Chaplaincy. A pastor of pastors at heart and in practice, Johnson has worked closely with both Family and Health Ministries over the past five years to provide resources and training for pastors, with a particular emphasis on well-being. He will also continue his development of the seven competencies for ministers and church elders.



Communication and Media Director, **Victor Hulbert**, is

currently working with reduced capacity. Currently the TED President delegates communication duties as appropriate. The TED officers are keeping the matter under review and will provide a direction based on consultation with the field presidents and as soon as appropriate. A media think tank in August this year and the future appointment of a Media and Online director will help focus the supportive nature of the department.



With work on the strategic framework still developing, the aim is that by November the appointments of a Health director, a field secretary, a Media and Online director and a Mission and Evangelism director will be completed.

The three TED officers will be elected at the General Conference Session in June 2022. Until that time Raafat Kamal will keep PARL and Nenad Jeuranović will keep Trust Services as part of their portfolio. Audrey Andersson, who has a strong background in publishing, will also serve as Publishing Director.

Four associate officers were elected to office for a further term:

Associate Executive Secretary: **Dean Papaioannou**

Associate Treasurers: **Giles Barham, Mack Tennyson and Wederly Aguiar**

Greece and Cyprus
The strategic framework calls for a special emphasis on outreach in areas of the TED where the church is small. Highlighted in the document are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Greece, Greenland, Iceland, Kosovo and Montenegro. While most of these are served by a local union, Greece and Cyprus are attached directly to the TED.

Claudio Gulyas is elected for another term as Greek Mission President. He will be joined by newly elected Secretary-Treasurer, **Yannis Vrakas**. Having served as the Greek Mission Associate Secretary-Treasurer

since 2016, Vrakas's mission focus, skills and competencies have turned him into an extremely effective local leader.

Branislav Mirilov is also elected for another term as President of the Cyprus Region, with **Dean Papaioannou** continuing as Secretary-Treasurer.

Executive Committee
The TED Executive Committee comprises all union presidents, TED officers and directors, and a combination of eleven lay members and two pastoral representatives. These are crucially important to the mission of the TED, as they survey the work of the Division through different eyes. The aim is for a range of diversity and skills.

A number of lay members are members of their own Union executive committee. Overall, their skill base encompasses university lecturers, medical professionals, business leaders, teachers, a lawyer, and an expert in conflict resolution.

The two pastors, Matthew Herel (BUC) and Lidija Runić (SEEUC), bring a younger breath of air to the committee. As well as being an exemplary pastor and a member of the BUC Executive Committee, Herel has a BA Honours degree in Journalism & Sociology and an MA in Theology from Newbold College, while Dr Runić holds degrees in Information Technology and Nursing as well as a DMin from McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago) and an MDiv from Andrews University. She pastors two churches in Belgrade and lectures at the Belgrade Theological Seminary.

Also added to the committee for the first time are the conference presidents of any union that has 10% or more of the total TED membership. This addition will add to the balance, oversight and diversity of the overall committee. This means that the North England Conference and South England Conference presidents become members of the committee.

Executive Committee lay representative on behalf of the British Union Conference: **Alison Awuku** (member of Wokingham Church)

'Today's vote is part of the

culmination of a two-year process of consultation that now helps us move forwards with our carefully formulated framework vision,' states TED President Pastor Raafat Kamal. 'I thank the Lord for the team we have worked with over the past six years – both in the office, and around our eleven unions and three attached fields.'

Kamal personally thanked all those who had been involved in the current process through think tanks, consultations with the union presidents and others, and, most recently, the work of the Nominating Committee. The committee as a whole gave recognition to those who have retired or who are stepping back from their current service.

A report of the Strategic Framework, as well as the complete document, is available on the TED website: ted.adventist.org.

Pastor Victor Hulbert serves as the Communication and Media Director for the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.





by Sharon Platt-McDonald

Men's health

One NHS health emphasis week during June was Men's Health Week. Leading Men's Health Week is the Men's Health Forum. Its purpose is twofold:

1. To heighten awareness of preventable health issues
2. To encourage men and boys to seek professional advice and help for health challenges

Highlighting some common facts about men's health, the Men's Health Forum lists the following:¹

- On average, men die 3.7 years earlier than women.
- Men go to the doctor less than women.
- Men are three times more likely to die from suicide than women.

They also list five lesser-known facts related to men's well-being:

1. In the UK, 1 in 5 men die before the age of 65.
2. The peak age for male death from suicide is age 45-49.
3. Men are 67% more likely to die from most of the common cancers that affect both sexes.
4. Men are nearly twice as likely as women to die prematurely from diabetes.
5. The reason men don't go to the GP is that they don't want to take time off work.

For a detailed explanation of these facts, visit:

<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/news/five-surprising-and-shocking-facts-about-mens-health>.

An article in *The Lancet* on global health (01/01/21) carried the caption: 'Sex Differences in COVID-19 Fatality: Do We Know Enough?'² Authors Nabamallika Dehingia & Anita Raj wrote: 'Global data indicate higher COVID-19 case fatality rates among men than women.'³

Reporting on the COVID-19 sex-disaggregated data tracker, authors Dehingia and Raj state:

'Most countries with available data indicate a male-to-female case fatality ratio higher than 1.0, ranging up to 3.5 in some cases.'³

Highlighting the disparities in men's well-being, the Men's Health Forum has called for a health strategy, stating:

'A strategy . . . will enable the many challenges around prevention, care and outcomes in both the physical and mental health of men and boys to be addressed in a comprehensive and systematic way.'⁴

Men's Health Week focus⁵

The five aspects of the Can Do challenge that ran for the week were:

- **Connect** – connect with other people.
- **Activity** – move your body.
- **Notice** – take notice of the environment around you.
- **Discover** – learn something new.
- **Offer** (or give) – do something for someone.

That's great advice for everyone.

Good health!

¹<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/news/five-surprising-and-shocking-facts-about-mens-health> ²[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancgl/article/PIIS2214-109X\(20\)30464-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancgl/article/PIIS2214-109X(20)30464-2/fulltext) ³The study authors cite the following website: <https://globalhealth5050.org/covid19/> ⁴<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/petition-mens-health-strategy> ⁵<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/can-do-challenge>



Earth and Soul 3

by David Wright

'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth' (Isaiah 5:8, KJV).

Genesis records how God scooped up a handful of soil, breathed life into it and created the first human being. Adam was formed from *adamah* – the Hebrew word for earth or soil, found in the Old Testament more than 200 times. It also tells us that the first humans were then placed in a garden to *abad* (to work/serve) and *shamar* (to protect/care for) it. From the beginning it seems that we humans were expected to 'look after the humus'.

With world leaders beginning to recognise the inextricable links between climate change and the health of the natural environment, soil diversity was probably high on the G7 agenda in Cornwall this month. Soil occupies less than 8% of the Earth's surface, yet represents 25% of its biodiversity. A handful of healthy soil contains more organisms than there are people on the planet, yet intensive farming, deforestation and industrial activity continue to accelerate its loss in every country in the world. A third is now so severely degraded it is unable to support food production; a further 10% is converted annually to desert; and, with the world's population living in urban areas set to reach 68% by 2050, even more will disappear under asphalt and concrete.

Providing 95% of our food and most of our antibiotics, storing water, preventing flooding and recycling vital nutrients, soil also plays a major role in capturing carbon that would otherwise escape into the atmosphere. During lockdown, Adventists will not have been surprised to hear increasing evidence presented about the positive impact that



being in nature, walking outdoors and gardening have on our health and well-being – helping reduce depression, anxiety, and fatigue, providing enough aerobic exercise for whole-body workouts, and reducing heart risk while nourishing our spirit. What might surprise you, however, is that regularly 'getting our hands dirty' while working in the garden, planting seeds, growing vegetables or weeding brings us into contact with beneficial bacteria. These trigger the release of serotonin and norepinephrine in our bodies, which in turn can strengthen our immune system, helping fight infection more easily. No wonder NASA insist their astronauts nurture seeds while hurtling through space – it lifts their mood and eases stress.

Anything we can do to ensure the planet's soils remain as healthy as possible not only slows climate change, but keeps us healthier too. Choose to support soil-friendly farming and locally grown organic produce, reject peat-based compost, use only natural fertilisers and pest control, and reduce and compost food waste. For those without gardens or allotments – consider sharing with others, volunteering locally, growing more plants indoors, in the back yard, along pathways, on the balcony or in window boxes. Eco-therapy leads to eco-health.



ADRA's Displacement WASH Project, Mozambique

by Pastor Bert Smit

For me, the world is an idyllic place right now. As I stand at my desk in my home office, I am kissed by the summer breeze, tickled by the grey squirrel scurrying up the nearby tree, and, of course, the sun is shining. I am reminded of the short verse, *Pippa's Song* by Robert Browning:

God's in His heaven –
All's right with the world!

But for so many, many people the world is far from 'right', and is in fact a very fragile space. I stand here and read that since 2017, due to insurgency in Mozambique, more than 700,000 people have been displaced in Cabo Delgado, its northernmost province. A further 64,099 people were internally displaced after an attack in Palma, which is 32 kilometres from the border with Tanzania, in March 2021.

These figures represent a third of the population that are internally displaced from their homes. This, of course, increases instability and exacerbates pre-existing high levels of chronic malnutrition. It is very likely that malnutrition may continue to soar.

Of those people who are internally displaced, the vast majority (85%) are currently housed with relatives and family members. However, with the continual rise of internally displaced persons there is an urgent need for food aid and 'WASH' (water, sanitation and hygiene). There is also the need for assistance with shelter, as overcrowding is a growing concern.

Recently, the number of cases of cholera and COVID-19 in Cabo Delgado has decreased, but there is a need to remain vigilant, as the area remains vulnerable to outbreaks of disease.

As I read about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Mozambique, I

have mixed emotions. I am deeply saddened for the hundreds of thousands of people who have lost their homes and livelihoods. I am particularly concerned that 43% of them are children, and I think about my own grandchildren.

But I am also deeply encouraged and humbled by the work that ADRA is doing to alleviate the suffering. There are several development pathways that ADRA is engaged with in Mozambique. However, one major initiative is the Displacement WASH Project. Here we continue activities to construct latrines and drill boreholes.

You are probably wondering how you can help and assist the work that ADRA is doing all around the world. One way is to sign a plan for your giving to ADRA-UK by completing a direct debit form. You can find one of these on our website (www.adra.org.uk/donate). You can also call our office on 0303 040 1017 and ask for a form to be posted out to you, if that is more appropriate.

If you just wish to give a one-off donation, you can do this through our website (www.adra.org.uk/donate), by calling the office on 0303 040 1017 and making a card donation, or by sending a cheque to Adventist Development & Relief Agency – UK, Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 9JZ.

ADRA, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency: here to support the world's most vulnerable communities through justice, love and compassion.

(Please note that the ADRA-UK office is open from 10am to 12pm from Monday to Thursday, or alternatively email our office at info@adra.org.uk.)

Pastor Bert Smit currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer for ADRA-UK.



Proposed new constitutions

by Pastor John Surridge, Executive Secretary, British Union Conference

This summer, if all goes to plan, we should have a number of sessions – where, among other things, new constitutions will be on the agenda.

Hundreds of hours of work have gone into preparing the proposed new constitutions, with numerous committees and individuals being involved in the process. The work starts with the constitution committees, and then there is negotiation back and forth with the Trans-European Division and General Conference, along with consultation and approval by Conference and Union executive committees. However, final approval for the constitutions has to come from the delegates at the respective Conference and Union constituency meetings, which we refer to as 'sessions'.

But let's take a step back and ask: 'What is the purpose of a constitution?' Well, a constitution is the foundational governance document which determines how organisations like ours run. It says who we are, why we exist, what we do, where we are located, and, in our case, how we fit into the wider organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

For us, this last point is very important. Being part of the body of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church gives us identity and purpose. It also gives us much greater influence than we would have if we were just a national denomination. So, if we are to fulfil effectively our mission to reach the people of the United Kingdom and Ireland with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we need to keep a strong connection between us and our parent organisation.

Our constitutions are part of the glue that binds us together across the world. Having constitutions that are in harmony, and that follow the

pattern laid down by the General Conference, means that the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole is more effective in its mission.

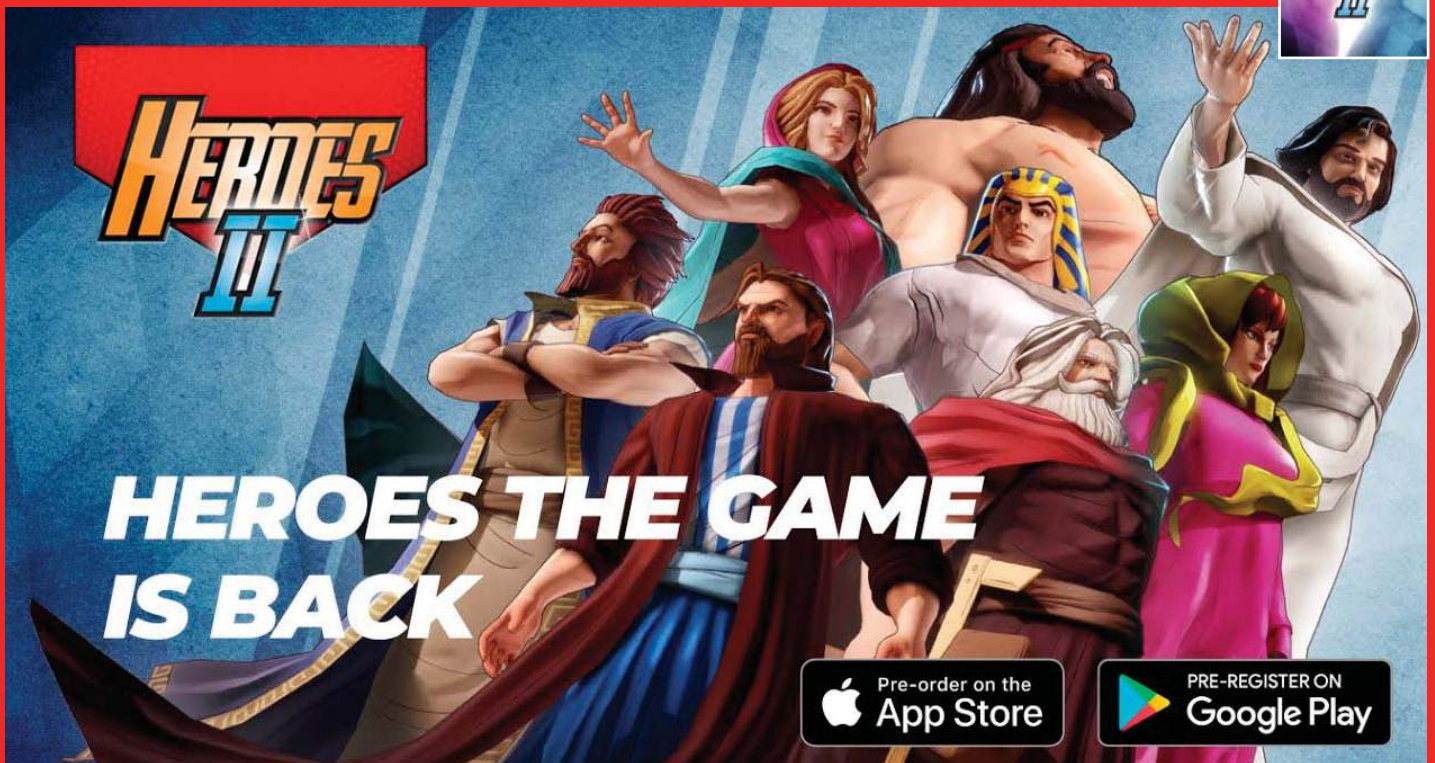
In a way, the precise wording of the constitutions is not as important as this understanding of their purpose. Our aim is to agree on documents which will strengthen the work of the church and bind us together in our common mission.

Our current constitutions are now out of date and need revising. As well as complying with the model constitutions provided by the General Conference, they have to conform with local laws and the requirements of the Charity Commission, as well as reflecting the fact that we exist as several interrelated charities here in the UK and Ireland. The proposed revisions have been carefully researched and approved by various bodies, and the current versions are available for anyone to see on the following websites: BUC Constitution and Missions Operating Policies (www.bucsession.org.uk/constitution); NEC Constitution (www.bucsession.org.uk/nec).

These websites are constantly being updated as we receive questions and feedback from interested members. There are some key issues still to be decided by the delegates at the Union and Conference sessions, and these include things like the cap on the number of delegates at a session, and the number of officers from 'higher levels' of the church who should be full members of the Executive Committee.

Whatever is decided at the sessions, our hope and prayer is that the documents agreed upon will help to strengthen our unity and make us more effective witnesses for Jesus Christ.

If you have questions or concerns about the proposed new constitutions, please visit the websites above, or email us at info@adventist.uk.



Bible heroes take over your smartphone

Heroes 2, a videogame app, is bringing the message of the Gospel to younger generations.

On 25 March Hope Channel released *Heroes 2: The Bible Trivia Game*, a free videogame app designed to share the message of Jesus with the world's 2.7 billion gamers. Two years in the making, Hope Channel finally released the app in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese in a global online event, to the delight of a multitude of gamers that were counting down the days until the launch.

Heroes 2 is a Bible trivia game in which the most prominent champions of the Bible challenge your knowledge about their lives. Players journey through the narrative of the Bible, starting with Adam and Eve in Genesis, and ending with John in the book of Revelation. This beautifully designed app, featuring 3D characters, an original soundtrack recorded by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra and a multiplayer mode, is taking the world by storm. In the run-up to the release, the *Heroes 2 YouTube Channel* exploded with videos describing anything from the best strategy to thrive in the game to learning about the lives of each of the 12 heroes. During the weekend after its release, the app was downloaded more than 20,000 times, and it ranks in the top ten trivia games in almost 50 different countries.

Sam Neves, the creative mind behind the project, believes that gaming is the next

evangelical frontier to conquer. With four in every ten people playing videogames, Neves and his team truly are trailblazing in the field of digital evangelism. Along with the app, Hope Channel also released a series of digital Bible studies in which the heroes of the game answer some of the big questions that life confronts each of us with (hope.study/heroes/). A team of digital evangelists are ready to answer questions, offer pastoral advice and pray for any seeking gamers.

Neves believes that *Heroes 2* offers a countercultural take on what it means to be a hero. It is not about having superpowers or a perfect life, like we often see in the movies. 'It is more about character than it is about power. Moses and Esther could not fly or outrun a speeding bullet, but by placing their trust in God they became vessels through which the Almighty made the impossible seem routine and Superman look duller than a 50-year-old butter knife.' The app shares this idea, inviting gamers to join a generation of heroes ready to follow in the steps of Christ. But that's not all! *Heroes 2: The Bible Trivia Game* will be translated into more than 25 languages, and Hope Channel is planning to produce a TV show that will encourage teams from any Christian church or school to test their Bible knowledge through the game. And there is



something for music lovers too! The theme song, 'The Great Battle', wonderfully performed in English and Portuguese by Laura Morena, was released on all digital platforms, including Spotify and Deezer.

For more information, visit: <https://www.heroesbibletrivia.org/en/>.

To download the app (iOS and Android), visit your favourite app store or follow this link: <https://www.heroesbibletrivia.org/en/download.html>.

Heroes 2 – The Bible Trivia Game

MESSENGER staff talk with Heroes Ambassador Vanesa Pizzuto about a new and exciting way to connect with our youth . . .

MESSENGER: What is ‘Heroes 2’?

Vanesa: *Heroes 2* is a smartphone app. It is a Bible trivia game in which the heroes of the Bible ask you questions about their lives. Players start in Genesis, with Adam and Eve, the first heroes who ever lived on earth, and end up in Revelation with the apostle John. It’s a great game, and a fun way to engage with the Bible’s narrative. The best part is that it is completely FREE.

MESSENGER: Does the world really need another app? Why invest so much time, resources, and energy into creating an app (instead of some other tool)?

Vanesa: That’s a great question! Developing *Heroes 2* took more than two years of hard work and commitment from an international team. So, why? Because the world has 2.7 billion gamers. This is a mission field of *epic* proportions. Just to give you an idea, 2.7 billion is, roughly, one third of the world’s population. Again, to contextualise that figure, remember that there are only 2.5 billion Christians in the world. We are talking about a huge mission field! Ironically, this gigantic mission field fits in the palm of your hand. It’s your smartphone! There are 4.7 billion mobile phones in use in the world today. Just imagine what could happen if every mobile phone user received the Gospel of Christ Jesus exactly where he is. This is why we created *Heroes 2*. Once upon a time, when we thought about evangelising, we pictured going to remote and

exotic countries . . . and there is still room for that. But today we have the privilege of reaching gamers with an app that uses a language and style they are most familiar with.

MESSENGER: How did you come up with the name ‘Heroes’?

Vanesa: Our culture is obsessed with heroes. Superhero movies make so much money! They are one of the most profitable and popular movie genres. However, if you look up the word ‘hero’ in a dictionary, you won’t find anything about superpowers: nothing about the ability to fly, or have X-ray vision. Heroes are people, normal people, who manage to do great things because they show courage. This means we ALL can be heroes. And the Bible has plenty of examples of these kinds of heroes: heroes who make mistakes, like Abraham or David (and God used them to accomplish great things anyway); surprising heroines like Ruth and Esther, who had everything against them and every reason to give up, but they didn’t. The heroes of the Bible are great examples because they are *real*. They show us what happens when ordinary people allow an extraordinary God to use them.

MESSENGER: What are some of the new features?

Vanesa: This version of *Heroes* features truly stunning 3D

characters, and more questions than ever before. It also allows you to challenge family and friends by sharing a simple link. *Heroes 2* also has 10 special effects (power-ups) that help you save time and progress faster. One of my favourite effects is the Lazarus effect, because it gives you a second chance . . . you get it? It also includes the background story of each hero and a beautiful, original soundtrack recorded by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra.

MESSENGER: How are you planning to support gamers who want to learn more about the Bible?

Vanesa: Just by playing *Heroes 2*, you will learn a lot about the Bible! However, for those who want to dive deeper, we have developed a series of interactive Bible studies entitled ‘The Big Questions’. In this series, the Bible heroes themselves will answer challenging questions such as: ‘What happens when you die?’ ‘Is God real?’ ‘If God is good, why do we suffer?’ and many other tough questions. The series will be available on hopebiblestudy.org, and we’ll have a team of digital evangelists ready to provide pastoral support and prayer.

MESSENGER: In which languages is the app available?

Vanesa: We’ll release the app in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. However, we want to make it available in many other languages. We are planning to translate it into Albanian, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Marathi, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Ukrainian and Zulu.

By the way, if your readers are good with languages and have a heart for missions, we need their help! We are calling all translators to help us make this innovative digital evangelism tool available to all. If they want to volunteer, they can register here: <https://bit.ly/heroestranslation>.

MESSENGER: How can I download the app?

Vanesa: The app is compatible with iOS and Android, so just visit your favourite app store or our website – <https://www.heroesbibletrivia.org/en/> – and download it for free. For more information, you can contact us at: info@heroes.adventist.org, or on Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram at the following links: <https://www.facebook.com/HeroesBibleTrivia> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVgxbXPSPYU6Klj-JJcT6ew> <https://www.instagram.com/heroesbibletrivia/>

MESSENGER: Vanesa, thank you very much for your time, and may God bless the fruit of all your hard work. We can’t wait to download this game and share it with our friends!

MESSENGER proof-reader’s review of Heroes 2

I’ve always been an advocate for Bible games as a means of helping our youth love the Scriptures, and Bible quizzes are definitely my cup of herbal tea, so I was very eager to get my hands on *Heroes 2* . . . and it does not disappoint! The game is very professionally made, with a polished feel to it, and the mechanics are straightforward and simple.

At its core, *Heroes 2* is simply a Bible quiz. Answering questions quickly and correctly generates ‘manna’, a resource which you can spend on effects to help you in the game, and ‘XP’, which is used to unlock later characters and effects. Answering questions feels rewarding because it helps you to accrue these resources, which then make playing at higher levels possible, giving you more options to facilitate your gameplay. The game is designed to press the same ‘reward’ buttons in your brain that any other snazzy mobile game would do, but it leverages them to help you learn Bible trivia: and, more than that, it stimulates a desire to get back to the Bible and read these stories for yourself.

Sometimes the questions get repeated, which helps embed the right answers into your mind; but it doesn’t feel repetitive, as new characters are also being unlocked with their own sets of questions.

Overall, I’m finding this game immensely enjoyable and would recommend it to our youth (and other ages too)! Five stars from me!

ANDREW PUCKERING





'Lord – grow a people who are faithful, open, available to God'

Core of Adventism 2021

by Divinia Reynolds

In 2004, Pastor Eglan Brooks caught a vision to keep 'the significant teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the forefront of our ministers', elders' and members' minds', and that's how the annual British Union Conference (BUC) programme, *Core of Adventism (CoA)*, came into being. Broadcast this year from Holloway Church over an 8-day period from 1 May, attendance was via Zoom with the theme, '*Christian Living: COVID-19 and Beyond*'. Here's my take-away of memorable lines from each preacher:

Dr Jeffrey Brown, *Ministry* magazine:
'Why Do Trumpets Blow?'

'The last days are like having a baby: the closer we get to the delivery, the greater the pain. Challenging times prepare us to get ready for the Second Coming, when God will take people who look like His Son to live with Him forever.'

Pastor Jefferson Melike, Irish Mission:
'Not Me, But We'

'Selfishness ruins everything' – based on the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). Recognising that, at one time, all of us were prodigals, 'Have a mindset of being prepared to reach out to today's prodigal – love, support and meet them where they are.'

Pastor Ivana Mendez, Scottish Mission:
'Measure for Measure'

We have heard it said, 'Stay home; save lives,' and: 'Hands, face, space.' But Matthew 7:1, 2 invites us to re-enter the world with a new exit slogan, one ready to 'make a difference', sharing God's grace by giving 'a helping hand, a second chance, financial support, quality time. . . . When one day God judges us, He will give us the same measure of grace by telling us, 'Well done. . . .'

Pastor Jonathan Burnett, Chicago, USA:
'The True Source of Strength'

'While we are blessed with a health message, it should not be approached as a source of disunity, as food and drink are not our focus. Our power comes not from "the lifestyle", but from "the Lifeline". The Core of Adventism is Jesus!'

Dr Daniel Duda, Trans-European Division:
'To Whom Shall I Show Kindness?'

'We are all like Mephibosheth people (2 Samuel 4:4): poor, broken, in need of a Saviour. Mephibosheth was shown special kindness by King David, who went out of his way to honour him by giving him a place at his table. Likewise, for Jesus, there is "no distance, no cost too high" to pay for us, restore us and give us a new identity. Everyone is invited to the table of the King of the Universe. We only need to accept the invitation.'

Dr Gina Miller, Adventist Theological Seminary graduate:
'Rise Above the Storm'

What are we to do when we face the storms of life? Like Jesus in the boat, caught on choppy seas with His disciples (Mark 4:35-41), 'RISE above the storm':

Recognise your situation.
Intercept fear with faith.
Speak faith to the situation.
Expect deliverance.

Dr Anthony Kent, Associate Ministerial Secretary (GC):
'Passing On the Torch' and 'A Tale of Two Towns'

Get to know the life of every child in your midst – pray for them 'specifically' and 'intelligently'.

Dr Kent urged people to return to local churches when the doors are open. He pointed out that just as Jesus went from town to town (Luke 4:42, 43), bringing freedom, salvation, healing and forgiveness, we are to take the three angels' messages to the world (Revelation 14:6-12). He ended by throwing down the gauntlet: 'I will go . . . will you?'

These messages harmonised with a chorus of testimonies from individuals who shared their spiritual journey with God during the pandemic. Challenged with employment uncertainty, depression, psychological adjustment, and a COVID-19 'close call', they recognised receiving divine help. Others testified to having 'seen the power of prayer'.

Dion and Dilyn Henry, Altamonte Springs, USA:
'Commitment Through Crisis'

They encouraged couples to set goals and adjust plans in realistic ways during a crisis, and to remind themselves of why they got married in the first place. 'Honour one another above yourselves' (Romans 12:10, NIV). 'Outdo each other.'

Pastor Leslie Ackie, BUC Family and Children's Ministries Director:
'Principles for Healthy Relationships'

Examining a variety of concepts such as emotionally intelligent parenting, establishing family worship, and the need to practise forgiveness as hurts arise over time, Pastor Ackie encouraged those grieving to give themselves space, care for themselves, and seek support. Sharing the promise: 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted' (Matthew 5:4, KJV), he highlighted the importance of our interactions, because, in all we do, we influence each other to develop a character for the Kingdom.

Sharon Platt-McDonald, BUC Health, Women's Ministries and Community Services Director:
'Resilience in Times of Crisis'

Eighty percent of members surveyed reported feeling more anxious about the future than ever before. Proposed solutions: 1. Spend special time with God. 2. Talk with someone about mental health challenges. 3. Look after your body. 4. Think positive. 5. Be more social. 6. Maintain a calm mind. 7. Try journaling. 8. Use gratitude jars. 9. Reflect and pray strategic prayers based on Bible promises.

This year the family emphasis was amplified by the colourful addition of *Children's Core of Adventism*, led by Pastors Rory and Ivana Mendez.

Joined by participants from as far afield as Holland, Trinidad, Guyana, Tobago, Belgium, Jamaica and the Turks & Caicos Islands, *Core of Adventism 2020* had a unique feel.

Pastor Thomas's closing prayer requested that the Lord grow a people who are 'faithful, open, available to God'. This will indeed be remembered as a refreshing time of 'reaffirming faith'.

SEC Camp Meeting 2021 report

by Donnet Blake & Don Roberts

The South England Conference (SEC) held its second virtual camp meeting from 31 May to 5 June 2021. The Conference built upon the experience and success of last year's inaugural virtual event, which was organised three months into the COVID-19 pandemic and the first UK lockdown. The week-long event of online presentations, sermons, Bible studies, testimonies, departmental workshops and music adopted the SEC's four-year theme – 'Making Disciples, Building Communities'. This year, all age groups held their own scheduled programmes. In addition, a British Sign Language YouTube channel was created for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

The adult programme had an online global audience of almost 100,000 during the week, and featured nine keynote speakers from the SEC and further afield.

Each day Camp Meeting began at 7am with Morning Manna – a time of prayer, testimonies and inspirational messages featuring Dr Jongimpi Papu, President of the Cape Conference in South Africa.

Keynote speakers also featured during the daily evening Commitment Service. On Monday, the director of Asian-Pacific Ministries of the North American Division, Pastor VicLouis Arreola III, explored 'The 3 Ingredients for a Successful Church'. Tuesday's sermon, by Pastor Ivana Mendez from the Scottish Mission, examined the character of doubting Thomas.

On Wednesday, Isle of Wight Pastor Adrian

Peck spoke on 'What a Church Community Should Be Like'. The following day, Pastor Donnette Blake, of New Dimension Church in Brooklyn, New York, chose as her topic 'Community of One'. Dr Eric Walsh from California preached on Friday with a message entitled 'Playing with Darkness'.

One of the innovations this year was Friday's virtual Communion Service. It was conducted by the SEC President, Dr Emmanuel Osei, and Pastors Sophia Peart and Terry Messenger. Church members were encouraged to have communion emblems ready to enable them to participate from home.

Other programmes included a five-day Bible study series with Pastor Robin Lewis; daily health presentations by a former NEC health director, Dr Anthony Espinet; and morning devotionals presented by Pastors Sorin Petrof, Nerine Barret, Steve Thomas, Matthew Herel and John Melki.

As with traditional camp meetings, the main highlight of the week was the Sabbath programme, which began with the conclusion of Dr Papu's Morning Manna series. Sabbath School was taken by Croydon Church. They held a live interactive study hosted by Elder Johnny Saul and Pastor Royston Smith, who shared thoughts and comments on 'The New Sanctuary' from a panel of virtual contributors and the online audience.

The sermon during Divine Service was delivered by Pastor Roger Hernandez, the Ministerial & Evangelism Director for the

Southern Union Conference, USA. Hernandez titled his message, 'The Remnant'. He distinguished four characteristics of the saved in Revelation chapter 7: multicultural expression; clarity on the Gospel; high tolerance for pain; enthusiastic service. In closing, he stated that 'ultimately Jesus wins, and those who follow Jesus win also.' The audience were then encouraged to use the online chat to express their desire to be among the saved.

Pastor John Bradshaw, the president of It Is Written, the international media evangelism ministry based in Tennessee, presented the afternoon sermon, which focused on the need for members to 'take the Gospel locally to the homes and communities in which they live'. He asked for churches to be places that bring healing and hope, like the river in Ezekiel 47. Bradshaw went on to invite those listening to 'make disciples for Jesus, and help your church to be a faith community where people are loved and accepted'.

After an evening concert featuring a variety of musical talent from across the SEC, Pastor Steve Riley from Trinidad gave the final commitment sermon, titled, 'Can I Get a Witness?' Riley spoke on Acts 1:8 and Jesus' call for us to be witnesses to all people. He asserted: 'The doors of the church must be wide enough to welcome sinners from the uttermost.' He concluded with an appeal to the listeners and viewers to have the courage 'to take the stand for Jesus' through making disciples and building communities.

SEC Camp Meeting 2021 was brought to a close with a vote of thanks by Dr Emmanuel Osei, who recognised everyone who contributed to making the event a Spirit-filled success.

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE
CAMPMEETING 2021

Making Disciples, Building Communities

31 May-5 June
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Fanaticism and conspiracy theories

The mid-May Adventist Virtual Global Camp Meeting hosted by the General Conference was held to help the world church grow together for worship and teaching. Over the next few pages, we share summaries of three presentations we trust will be of interest to *MESSENGER* readers.

Our first is by Dr Torben Bergland, MD, Associate Director of the General Conference Health Ministries Department, who was invited to give some insight into the increasing problem in both church and society of fanaticism and conspiracy theories.

Jack was a 48-year-old Christian who was married with three children; he'd been struggling with severe depression when he lost his job and began contemplating suicide. When his wife and pastor encouraged him to ask his physician for an antidepressant, Jack resisted, saying, 'I just need to have more faith in God's healing power.' Jack also rejected his wife's suggestions that he seek mental health counselling, saying: 'Those immoral, anti-God psychotherapists can't be trusted.' Unfortunately, his pastor agreed with him. Six weeks later, Jack committed suicide. Jack's case is poignant when we realise that it most likely would have been prevented had he not refused treatment.

The above example happened before the current coronavirus pandemic, but it has relevance in today's world, because it demonstrates how seemingly pious thinking may prove to be detrimental. Ellen White's strong counsel against fanaticism should be listened to. She said:

'As the end draws near, the enemy will work with all his power to bring in fanaticism among us. He would rejoice to see Seventh-day Adventists going to such extremes that they would be branded by the world as a body of fanatics. Against this danger I am bidden to warn ministers and lay members' (*Gospel Workers*, p. 316).

The apostle Paul seems to be writing of our days when he writes: '*For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather round them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths*' (2 Timothy 4:3, 4, NIV).

Is this where we are today? You may find support for whatever view you happen to hold on YouTube and other social media; but we ought to be careful with what we fill our minds with. Remember: 'Junk in, junk out.' Don't allow yourself to turn away from truth and be carried away by myths.

In their attempt to flee from their inescapable human condition of fallibility, fanatics and conspiracy theorists reject the possibility that they might be wrong, claiming

for themselves the attribute of infallibility that truthfully only belongs to God. Sometimes the less competent and educated someone is in one area, the more confident they are. Conspiracy theorists often not only reject the opinion of experts, but even think they have better knowledge. Being able to google something doesn't make you an expert. Sufferers of the Dunning-Kruger effect, they lack even the knowledge of how limited their knowledge is.

Some fanatics and conspiracy theorists seem to be obsessed with the work of the devil, studying it and preaching it rather than Christ. However, what we need to know is what Christ is doing – for us, with us, and through us. Whenever someone is focused more on the devil than on Christ, that should be a red flag. Listen rather to those who preach Christ.

Why do people adopt conspiracy theories? Conspiracy theories thrive in an atmosphere of uncertainty, especially during significant, large-scale events.

Conspiracy beliefs are associated with feelings of powerlessness and anxiety. There is a relationship between conspiracy thinking and narcissism – an exaggerated self-view accompanied by the need for external validation. Conspiracy theories allow people to feel that they are in possession of rare, important information that other people do not have, making them feel special and thus boosting their self-esteem.

There is also a correlation between

conspiracy thinking and lower levels of education and income, and also with having weaker social networks.

Ellen White had a profound understanding of these issues. She says:

'It is the desire and plan of Satan to bring in . . . people of narrow minds, who are critical and sharp, and very tenacious in holding their own conceptions of what the truth means. . . . Through the work of a few of this class of persons, the whole body of Sabbath-keepers will be designated as bigoted, Pharisaical, and fanatical. The work of the truth, because of these workers, will be thought to be unworthy of notice' (*Evangelism*, p. 212). This is serious. It impacts our ability to reach out to the world.

So what is the solution to fanaticism and conspiracy theories? This is Ellen White's counsel to Elder Haskell: 'God calls His servants to study His mind and will. Then when men come with their curiously invented theories, enter not into controversy with them, but affirm what you know. "It is written" is to be your weapon' (20LIMs, Lt 191, 1905, par. 18). 'Those who labour for Christ should be men and women of great discretion . . . void of fanaticism, void of rashness and impetuosity . . . men of thought, of solidity of character, men who fear and love their heavenly Father. . . . Let the people see you exalting Jesus, and hiding self' (*The Review and Herald*, 26 April 1892).

When people are not at peace with themselves, with others, and with God, they will often be at war with the world. The best antidotes to fanaticism and conspiracy theories are education and humility. 'Those who are close students of the Word, following Christ in humility of soul, will not go to extremes. The Saviour never went to extremes, never lost self-control, never violated the laws of good taste' (*Gospel Workers*, p. 317).

To see Torben's presentation in full, go to: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ttn7cixc6pyqvqe/Health-17-Bergland-Fanaticism.mp4?dl=0>





The secret of healing our land and causing Heaven to smile

by Dr Barry Black, Chaplain to the United States Senate



Hello; I'm Barry Black, the 62nd Chaplain of the United States Senate. The emphasis of this Global Camp Meeting is on revival and reformation. As we look at our church, are we having in it the kind of revival that our Saviour desires?

There is a scripture passage – Romans 12:1, 2 – that gives us a blueprint for experiencing a close encounter with Jesus that will ignite revival and reformation.

'I plead with you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies [your hands, your feet, your eyes, your ears] as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world' (author's translation) – or, as a popular paraphrase puts it: 'Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould.*' Don't copy the fashions of the world, but 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may know what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God' (author's paraphrase).

Each of us can experience a close encounter with Jesus by understanding the following important points.

1. If you're going to experience that close encounter with Jesus, comprehend that true worship is offering your body in service to Him. I wonder what would

happen in terms of reviving your neighbourhood, your nation, if each member made offering his or her body in service to Jesus a priority.

Your daily activities involve worship when you recognise that you are salt and light to your generation. Your body becomes God's instrument. That is why Paul refers to the church in 1 Corinthians 12 as the body of Christ. Some of us are eyes; I'm probably a mouth; some of us are ears; some of us are feet. As the hymn says, 'Draw me nearer. . . .' He wants us to draw nearer to Him – offering Him our bodies as a living sacrifice.

2. We must expect to become a new person in Christ Jesus. 'If anyone is in Christ, he [or she] is a new creation. Old things are passed away; all things are become new.' (2 Corinthians 5:17, author's paraphrase.) It is as splendid as a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. Be transformed – a metamorphosis – by the renewing of your mind: there's the key to becoming a new creature. Jesus said in John 17:17: 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth' (KJV). How often do you have a spiritual meal by getting into the word of God? I love to pray the Scriptures, and I recommend that you learn to do the same.

All you need is to open your Bible and read *slowly*. When something arrests your attention, talk to God about it. The power of temptation is not nearly as great when you have the Word of God inside you. In Psalm 119:11, the psalmist wrote: 'Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You' (NKJV). If you're going to be that new person in Christ, you need to make sure that you hear the word of the Lord.

3. 'Be not conformed to this world.' 1 John 2:15-17 puts it this way: 'Love not the world, neither the things of the world. For if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him [or her]. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life – is not from God' (author's paraphrase). In Romans 7:18, 19 Paul says: 'For I know that nothing good dwells in me. . . . For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.' Plato describes the human will as a charioteer with two headstrong horses, each pulling in the opposite direction. There is an uncivil war going on inside each of us. 'But oh,' cries Paul in that same chapter, 'I thank God that through Jesus Christ I have been set free' (author's paraphrase).

You can experience a close encounter with Jesus by comprehending that true worship is offering to God your body – every part of you – in service. You can experience a close encounter that will ignite revival by becoming a new person in Jesus Christ, transformed by the renewing of your mind. You can expect to experience that revival by refusing to be conformed to this world. And you and I need to experience that encounter finally by really seeking the will of God for our lives and for His church.

Here is my challenge to you. On a daily basis, if you are truly serious about revival in this great church, I want you to make a commitment to say, 'God, I want so much to experience today a close encounter with Jesus and what You have promised in Luke 11:13 – the gift of Your Holy Spirit.'

Then end your prayers with a petition: 'Thy will be done.' If you want to put your prayer on steroids, get the gift of the Holy Spirit living inside you on a daily basis. That is your daily homework assignment for all the years to come. I really believe that if we do these things daily, we're going to see a physical and spiritual healing of our land and of our world that will cause heaven to smile. Are you willing to do these few simple things? Ask daily for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and daily praise God and say: 'Thy will be done.'

God bless you.

*J. B. Phillips New Testament



Literature: an impetus for revival and reformation

by Pastor Adam Ramdin, North England Conference Youth Director

Since history began, the written word and the spoken word have been the two most powerful media for changing the world. The written word has formed the bedrock of the great revivals of history.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always had a close connection with the literature ministry, which is not unique to our church. The Bible has inspired and changed lives, and is the most translated and printed book in history. 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables' (Habakkuk 2:2, KJV); 'Blessed is he that readeth' (Revelation 1:3, KJV); and 'Write: for these words are true and faithful' (Revelation 21:5, KJV) give a biblical mandate for sharing what's written. Writing changes lives.

One of the key characteristics of the dark ages was the prohibition against translating the Bible into local languages. The dark ages were enlightened by John Wycliffe translating a copy of the Bible; John Huss and Jerome preaching in the language of the people; and Martin Luther's movement of reform, aided by his German translation of the Bible and the Gutenberg printing press.

The printing press enabled the Reformation to go viral. Luther's 95 Theses, for example, were reprinted and distributed throughout the country. William Tyndale followed with an English translation of the Bible, which had a lasting impact on the English language. The printing press removed control of written material from the Catholic Church. The Reformation gathered pace, and Protestantism

became embedded in Europe.

With the launch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the written word spread and was translated into local languages. In the late 1700s two great advent awakenings were inspired by the **reading and preaching** of Scripture. The Great Awakening led to the Millerite movement that focused on the return of Jesus, culminating in the Great Disappointment of 1844.

After the disappointment, literature played a vital role in the birth and spread of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The publishing work was extremely effective in early Adventism, both in evangelism and also for unifying believers. Ellen White's 1848 vision showed that her husband should launch a magazine that would be like **streams of light going around the world**. In July 1849 James White took the first steps towards what would become a global publishing ministry.

Ellen White wrote that our publications needed to be **scattered like the leaves of autumn**, and **'if there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public'** (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 390). Our early pioneers understood the power of literature. They knew that **'our publications can go to places where meetings cannot be held'** (Ellen White, *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 8).

In 1853 the Review and Herald Publishing House bought its first printing press. The *Review and Herald* magazine played a key role in the growth of this new movement. It kept

advancing theologically, and helped foster unity. Our early pioneers all wrote books – literature was pivotal.

Missionaries and literature evangelists started taking books and magazines from home to home. The first literature evangelist who took our books to sell, James White, met a young Canadian in the 1880s named George King, who desperately wanted to be a preacher. King's first sermon was a blundering failure, and after a season of prayer it was suggested that he take tracts and books into people's homes and spread the message that way. He accepted this as the will of God, and the next Monday he took a satchel filled with tracts and \$2, and started work. God blessed him tremendously. The next week he was able to sell nearly all his tracts, and soon persuaded the brethren at the Review and Herald to make a special book to sell in the homes – *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* by Uriah Smith.

Literature evangelism grew. Colporteurs travelled, spreading the message, raising up believers and churches. Ellen White said, **'The importance of this work is fully equal to that of the ministry'** (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 8).

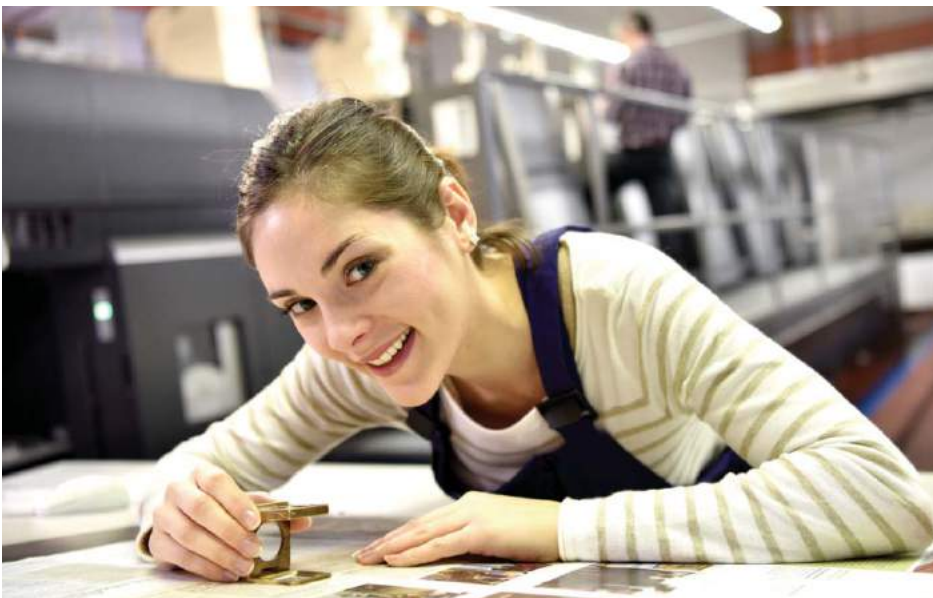
The discovery of a piece of literature in Switzerland prompted believers in Tramelan to send a letter to Battle Creek, requesting a missionary. The church sent J. N. Andrews, who on arrival established a printing press in the French language. As Ellen White had said: **'Our publications should go everywhere – let them be issued in many languages'** (*Christian Service*, p. 149).

As the church expanded to the South Pacific, Africa, Asia and South America, this ministry went also. The ministry of the church has always been strongest when the preaching of the word and local church ministry, the health work, the education work and the publishing work are given equal importance and work harmoniously together.

The literature work evangelises where the preacher cannot go; informs the church; and disciples the church. Spiritual life today must involve written content to feed the mind and soul. The digital revolution shows that the written word is still the most powerful medium to bring revival and reformation in both our lives and the lives of others.

Today more than 20,000 literature evangelists and almost 2,000 workers in publishing houses facilitate the spread of literature to educate and inspire mankind to a better life that reflects God's intentions. Jesus' coming is near. The Gospel will go to every nation, and literature ministry is integral to this proclamation. Ellen White says, **'In a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel [of Revelation 18] who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory'** (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 140).

May you and I commit to reading more for our spiritual growth and nourishment as we seek to be like Jesus, and also to incorporating literature ministry into our everyday life and the witnessing culture of our local churches.



In search of proper education

by Dr George Knight

'I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go' (Psalm 32:8, NASB).



Newbold College – 2015 School of English graduation

Seventh-day Adventists had taken an important step forwards in the adoption of Bell's school in 1872 as the first official denominational school. But the leadership knew that they had to do more. If for no other reason, they required some way to prepare ministers. Up into the early 1870s a young person desiring to become a minister merely watched how the older ministers did things and went out to do the same.

By 1873 James White, the spark plug for every Adventist advance, realised that the denomination needed to do something towards the training of leadership. 'Probably there is no branch of this work,' he told the 1873 General Conference session, 'that suffers so much at the present time as the proper education of men and women to proclaim the third angel's message.' The situation demanded 'more sanctified education in the ministry! My heart rejoices to

know that the Spirit of God is moving upon men of education to come into our midst to take hold of the [educational] work.'

But it wasn't only the preparation of ministers that called for a larger educational vision. The denomination was also being eased into the realm of foreign missions. Thus J. N. Andrews could write in 1873 that 'the calls that come from every quarter, from men speaking other languages, must be answered by us. We cannot do this in our present circumstances. But we can do it if the Lord bless our effort' in upgrading the Battle Creek school. 'We have delayed this effort too long. The time past cannot be improved, but the time still remaining can be improved. . . . Men of other nationalities desire to be instructed concerning' the Second Advent.

The leadership had come to see that they must establish a college, which they would do in 1874. Just before the opening of that

institution, General Conference president George I. Butler penned that 'we see great work before us. . . . We see the time coming when scores and hundreds of missionaries will go from this land to other lands to sound forth the message of warning.' To that end the proposed college needed to educate not only ministers, but translators, editors, and others who could forward the message of the third angel.

Vision is never static. God leads His people one step at a time. When we grasp one level of need, He pushes us to see the next. So it is in every aspect of lives lived for Him.

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

NATHAN'S PONDERINGS



Are we able to talk together – honestly?

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

In one of her books¹ Sarah Knight writes: 'Worrying is a waste of your precious time, energy, and money. And worrying about things you CAN'T CONTROL is the biggest waste of all.' It reminds me of Jesus' words: 'Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?' (Matthew 6:27, NLT.)

While it might be worth pondering on the merits of not worrying about the things you can't control, I really want to ponder on the things we can control.

In a recent article² the *Adventist Review* editor, Bill Knott, calls for our church to be 'refreshingly candid' so as to have 'opportunity for honest conversation in our workplace'. He was talking about denominational employees, but opens this call up to the church at large. Knott tells a story about how a group of leaders had the chance to talk candidly, but they reverted to fudged pleasantries. Knott says,

'We owe each other thoughtful, prayerful honesty about our structures, policies, and practices.'

When our 'structures, policies, and practices' or individuals therein provoke our emotions, if things are out of our control, we should not waste ourselves on worry: but, where our response has influence, we have a duty to each other to be candid in our conversation in order to build integrity.

'A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse' (Mark 3:24, NLT). If we are to have a healthy church in the UK and Ireland, one that experiences more than natural and migratory growth (see my last *MESSENGER* pondering), we need to stop worrying about the things we can't control, and start to have candid conversations about power and autonomy, and consider our responses to develop healthy structures, policies and practices.

I desperately hope for a new day when our organisation in the UK and Ireland will be so structured that we work to our strengths, that we stop seeing entities as the opposition, and realise that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, our church will not look the same as it does now. Or is that what people are worried about?

While worries won't add a single moment to our lives, let us earnestly 'seek the Kingdom of God above all else' (Matthew 6:33, NLT). I ponder over this: what would our church look like if we had these candid conversations? Is it even possible for us to talk like this, or are we so unhealthy, so divided, that all that is left is for us to collapse?

¹ISBN 978-1-78747-619-6 (p. 92)

²<https://www.adventistreview.org/2105-5>

Will Zoom disappear when we return to church?

The second in a two-part series by Kendall Down



In part one we looked at the technology and skills required to set up what is described as a ‘non-participatory’ worship service using Zoom. In part two we discover what is required to set up ‘participatory services’ over Zoom, including the need to ‘speak into the camera’.

Participatory services

The second type of service is the participatory service, such as a prayer meeting or a Bible study, where those attending the service are expected to take part by praying, discussing or some other form of participation. Here the requirements are somewhat different, as a two-way set-up is required.

Zoom is deservedly one of the most popular such programs, but it does require a subscription: otherwise, you are limited to 40 minutes at a time. A subscription is £11 per month if you pay annually. But many other programs are also available, such as Microsoft Teams or Google Groups. All require each participant to have a copy of the program on his or her device. Many older people need help installing and using a new program.

Many older people already have Skype and are familiar with it for keeping in touch with their families. Skype is free to use and has become more Zoom-like since the pandemic started. You can have almost as many participants, and the time limit is two hours rather than 40 minutes. The only problem is that, in my opinion, the quality, both video and audio, is not as good as Zoom.

To combine real and virtual participants you will need some way of bringing the virtual participants into the meeting. A large-screen television mounted on the wall is an excellent solution, for the real participants can sit in a semi-circle around the screen, and everyone is on the same eye-level. A video projector is less satisfactory; it is noisy, the colours are less vivid, and you really need semi-darkness for its picture to be visible, which is inconvenient for the real participants in the meeting, although I am informed that the most recent projectors are much brighter and less noisy.

A single camera will probably be sufficient, though care should be taken over its placement so that all the real participants are visible to the virtual ones. The best position is either immediately above or immediately below the screen, so that speakers will naturally face the camera when they are looking at the screen.

Recently, Nicola Sturgeon’s husband gave a Zoom interview, and every time he was asked a question he turned his head and eyes off to the left, leading to the suspicion that there was someone else in the room coaching him on what he should say. He claimed that his attention was being distracted by his pet

parrot or by magpies, but I’m not sure if anyone believed him!

In short, the point I am making is that looking into the camera makes the speaker appear honest and sincere; looking to one side – as would be the case if the camera were mounted off to one side, or much higher or lower than the screen – makes the speaker look shifty and evasive. The meeting leader, therefore, should occupy a position directly opposite the camera.

If it is not possible to position the computer and its camera in the ideal position, then you will need a webcam and to know how to force Zoom or Skype to use that camera rather than the one built in.

You will need a good microphone to plug into the computer, one which will pick up everyone in the circle. It would be nice to think that all the participants will speak loudly and clearly enough to be picked up by the computer’s microphone – but they don’t. The ideal position for such a microphone would be suspended just above head height in the middle of the circle, but you might have to settle for placing the mic on a table in the middle of the circle.

- **Simplest:** 1 computer running Zoom (or similar) and equipped with a webcam
- **Simple:** 1 computer, as above, and a large monitor (24”-27”)
- **Clever:** 1 computer, as above, and a large wall-mounted TV or projector
- **Professional:** 1 computer, a good-quality microphone, and a TV or projector

Security

It would be very unwise to publicise the log-in details of your Skype or Zoom meeting. There have been numerous instances when malicious persons have used publicly available log-ins to interrupt church services – shouting profanities, injecting pornography into the stream, and so on. Zoom has slightly better facilities than Skype for screening participants before they join and removing them if that becomes necessary.

Zoom has the facility that people wanting to join a meeting go into a 'waiting room' until they are admitted by the meeting host. This is awkward if the host and the meeting leader are the same person, so there should be someone tasked with monitoring and controlling the 'waiting room' while the meeting leader concentrates on the meeting itself.

As well as cyber-security, there is physical security. Unfortunately, having a large-screen television or a video projector in a church is a magnet for thieves. Not every church and chapel can afford security systems – cameras and movement detectors linked to some remote controller who will investigate any alarms – and, even if they could, thieves can circumvent such precautions.

Most thieves do not want what they steal for their own use: they want to sell it so as to buy drugs. The simplest and most effective security measure, therefore, is to make the object unsaleable!

There was a church in Cardiff where

thieves broke in and stole the central heating boiler. The church invested in an excellent security system, which was monitored by a commercial company. Thieves broke in through an unguarded window and stole the replacement boiler. That was the situation when I was appointed to pastor the church. When I was told this tale of woe I took a screwdriver and scored a big 'X' across the front and both sides of the boiler casing, then used an engraver to write: 'Property of Xxxx Church' in big letters on the front. There were no more problems the whole time I was there, and I believe that boiler is still in use in the church today.

Obviously, you won't want to write on the screen of your television, and bezels are getting thinner all the time. Nevertheless, it would be possible to engrave the church's name deeply into the bezel (and then fill the letters with white paint so that they stand out). You should do the same with laptops, computers, projectors and anything else which remains in the church while it is empty.

By all means use UV pens and smart water and all the things recommended by the police, but simply rendering the object unsaleable will solve nearly all your security problems.

Be the future

I know a little church in England which suffered from a declining and ageing membership. In the end there were just four old ladies, struggling to keep the church alive – and then, within a short time, all four either

died or had to enter old folks' homes. Strangely, they were no sooner out of the way than young people began to attend, and today the church has a thriving membership of 25-30 regular attenders, with half a dozen in the children's class.

What had happened was very simple: although the old ladies were very sincere and dedicated – and I am sure they will receive a 'well done' from the Lord – they had become fixed in their ways. The worship format had not changed since the 1960s, the decor in the building was sacred, and if a young person did happen to attend and suggest any change or the use of new technology, it was rejected with: 'We've always done it like this.' I'm sorry to say that the old ladies had to go before the church could start to thrive.

Of course, the danger is that in forty years' time the same thing will happen, with the young people of today becoming the old, staid people of tomorrow. If we want young people in our church, we have to make sure that we listen to them, involve them, use music and technology that will be attractive to them, and eventually step back and let them take over.

That is not to say that we older ones should abdicate all roles in our churches. The church must be for everyone! Nevertheless, the future lies with those who will come after us, so let's make sure that they are accepted as full members of our churches, and let us so live and be so open to change that, although old, we are part of the future of God's church.

At a glance . . .

- **Ralph Trecartin has been elected the twenty-fourth president of Pacific Union College**, according to the *Adventist Review*. Currently serving as the associate provost and dean of the College of Professionals for Andrews University, he was selected by the Pacific Union College Board of Trustees, and is due to begin his new role on 1 July. Trecartin says, 'Our campus needs to be a place where students love to be and feel like they belong. . . . It's my desire to partner with God and the PUC team as we seek to strengthen our students' faith experience.'
- **A new reconciliation and mediation scheme is being piloted by the Methodist Church**, in partnership with the charity Place for Hope. The Reconciliation and Mediation Pilot Project, running from 2021 to 2023, 'will provide a team of 20 accredited reconcilers and mediators to support groups and individuals at times of change or conflict, and to accompany sensitive or difficult conversations', according to the Methodist Church UK website.
- **The Adventist Church in Australia has also been supporting reconciliation this month with National Reconciliation Week**, which lasted from 27 May to 3 June. According to the *Adventist Review*, 'National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.' The Australian Union Conference has embarked on developing a Reconciliation Action Plan, a framework to measure an organisation's actions to intentionally take steps that work towards reconciliation.
- **A specially built bus for the homeless will soon be touring Belgrade, in a project launched by ADRA Serbia**. Called RoadHome, the bus 'will offer homeless people direct support in the form of better hygiene conditions, which will help restore their dignity, self-respect and hope, as well as long-term support in the form of creating possibilities . . . to get back on their feet and re-enter society', according to the European website *Euractiv.com*. Apparently the RoadHome project 'has sparked interest across Serbia . . . but ADRA has also been contacted by certain officials from Skopje, Macedonia'. Maybe this initiative could be beneficial in other countries too?
- **More than 2,300 new believers have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church** following a recent four-week evangelistic campaign in the Caribbean Union, according to the Adventist News Network. Pastor Claudius Morgan, assistant to the president for evangelism in the Caribbean Union and the keynote speaker of the evangelistic series, says, 'This online campaign brought the entire union together as never before.' The programme ran for five days every week, featured music by the youth, and 'included prayer and Bible study on God's greatness, the Sabbath, Christian lifestyle, the gift of prophecy, baptism, stewardship and more', attracting more than 25,000 viewers every evening, with twice that number on Sabbath.

'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



Ours is not a congregational structure

Whenever the British Union Conference (BUC) Session takes place, with the overall theme of 'I Will Go', BUC President Pastor Ian Sweeney, in his report to delegates, will take the opportunity to help delegates understand the structure of the church in the UK and Ireland, a brief excerpt of which we share here.

President's report (excerpt)

Traditionally, the format of the presidential report would focus on summarising the work and achievements of the various departments over the past five years. However, during this quinquennium, it has become evident that more education is required regarding the role the British Union plays in the life of the church in the British Isles.

Our history

The British Union was formed in 1902, following the 1901 General Conference Session, which saw a major reorganisation of the administrative structures of the church. Before the 1901 GC Session, unions did not exist.

The discussions around reorganisation in 1901 and the following years were undertaken because the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church came to primacy. The urgency of our mission to herald the Second Coming of Christ precipitated the reorganisation.

Before 1901, missional initiatives and approaches were made predominantly from the General Conference headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan. The General Conference could never hope to understand all the complexities of the various people groups, languages, cultures and more across the globe, because one size can never fit all.

The reorganisation of 1902 was for unions, such as the British Union, to support and strengthen the mission and work of their local conferences and missions (and institutions). It was believed that unions were better able to understand the local situation and context for mission, and would report back to the General Conference of both their successes and failures. In a similar vein, the local conferences were to support their local congregations and members, as they are the ones who practically effect the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in their neighbourhoods and communities.

Ours focus is both local and global

With the organisation of unions, the General Conference was able to directly communicate and promote its global mission initiatives. Today, the General Conference communicates its plans and strategies through its thirteen regional division offices, and so the British Union contacts the General Conference through the regional office: that is, the Trans-European Division.

The union works with its conferences/missions to communicate and adapt General Conference initiatives most appropriately and effectively suited for its territory. In turn, the conferences/missions work with their local congregations to have these initiatives adopted and implemented most appropriately within their congregations.

The conferences/missions achieve this through

their pastors, who are appointed to local congregations by their conference/mission. The *Church Manual* states that ordained pastors are 'not charged with administrative powers as is the president, but they cooperate with him in carrying out the plans and policies of the conference' (*Church Manual*, page 32).

It is clear that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not congregational in its structure. However, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a focus that is both global and local. It is because the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is paramount, in seeking to ensure it is ever brought to the fore, that a conference-appointed pastor sits and chairs board meetings and serves a church she/he may not be a member of. This is why union officers sit on conference/mission executive committees, and why General Conference representatives sit on union executive committees. Essentially, it is all about the mission and ensuring our missional purpose is being fulfilled.

Consequently, the bigger picture of mission is enshrined in the practices and policies of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates on the trust and goodwill of its members. We are a volunteer-structured church. Our operation happens because members volunteer vast amounts of time to church activities, and our income is derived from members voluntarily giving a percentage of their income through tithes and offerings. When tithe is returned, it is returned to the conference/mission.

Nowhere is it stated in Scripture that the conference is the storehouse; and, certainly, things would be different if the storehouse were the local congregation. Larger, more affluent congregations would retain more money locally, and might consider paying their pastors more than they are currently paid. However, Adventists believe, in accordance with our mission, that our message needs to reach all parts of the world!

This is one reason why all pastors in a conference/mission are paid the same salary, whether they pastor an affluent or a poorer congregation. More than this, it is recognised that conference/mission pastors and Bible workers not only serve their congregations, but they assist them in reaching unreached communities and neighbourhoods across the conference/mission territory.

Indeed, some pastors are appointed to be missionary pioneers by their conference/mission, as their appointment is seen as the best approach to bringing our message to unentered territories. Some churches and areas in a conference do not have the financial resources to support salaried workers, so the conference/mission distributes the money across its territory so that all might be reached.

Pastor Michael Desmond Murtagh (1926-2021) d. 25 January.



The start in life was a rocky one for Pastor Michael Desmond Murtagh, known to all as Desmond. He was born in 1926 in Eire to a Protestant mother and Catholic father, but their unstable alliance proved unworkable, resulting in his father abandoning his wife and two young sons. At an early age Desmond had to learn to be resilient, responsible, determined and hard-working: character traits that would see him through his adult life.

At 15 years of age, in 1942, Desmond left his native Ireland behind and travelled to England for employment. Now a baptised Seventh-day Adventist, Desmond found God leading him towards the path of ministry. Six years were spent working on a fruit farm, with Sabbaths requiring a bus journey to worship with like-minded Christians. In those six years Desmond saved enough money to commence his studies at Newbold College, graduating in 1956. It was here that he met and married his wife of 64 years, Alice Margaret Hall, or 'Peggy' to her friends.

In 1956 Desmond and Peggy stepped out in faith to minister wherever they were called: from Cornwall and South England to Belfast and Dublin, and then to Kent, and then to London, where he pastored well over 20 churches and companies. Many hours were spent on his scooter, driving around London, visiting his members, holding meetings and delivering the Lord's message. His final working years found him in mid and south Essex, retiring at the age of 65.

Desmond could relate a colourful tale or two about his ministry experiences, readily accepting the humanness of mankind, acknowledging that we are all sinners in need of a forgiving Father. His conviction, however, that this church, his church, was God's holy vessel never wavered, despite those difficult encounters.

Sadly, COVID-19 took Desmond on 25 January at the grand age of 94, full of good humour and a cheerful spirit till the end. He leaves behind his wife, Peggy; his three daughters,

Janet, Jacqui and Karen (sadly, his son, Neal, died in 2010); seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. Most of all, he leaves behind countless memories of a kind, generous, loving family man, who lived a life of faith and dedication to the God he served all his days.

Till we meet again in the clouds of Christ's return, Dad.

JACQUI STONE

Thelma Thurtle (née Brooks) (1930-2021) d. 18 March.



Thelma was born in Great Yarmouth on 30 October 1930, but her parents separated when she was 6 months old. Her father, Albert, continued to care for her. Then, at the age of seven, she contracted diphtheria, which led to a protracted period in hospital involving daily ice baths and the resuscitation of her heart. In August 1940 her father married Gertrude, to whom Thelma became closely attached. It was wartime, and Thelma was miraculously saved from being killed when a German pilot fired at her as he flew low over the town. She was evacuated to a farm in Nottinghamshire, but later the family moved to Coventry as her father was stationed there as an RAF serviceman. Her brother Brian was born during those war years.

The family returned to Great Yarmouth, where Thelma met and married Douglas. In 1954 their son Andrew was born. Her father died on 7 May 1958, and she helped support the family by holding several jobs. Eventually, after Andy married in 1978, Thelma and Doug went their separate ways. It was painful for her, because she had become a Christian. Her brother Brian had introduced her to Christ by giving her a book about prayer, something she had not really thought much about up to that time; but she felt impressed to pray about a certain problem when she read something in that book. She prayed the words suggested by the author, and suddenly felt her burden lifted. She gave her life to Christ.

In 1990, Pastor David Neal commenced a series of Daniel & Revelation seminars in the Gorleston church on Monday evenings. Along with her sister-in-law, her friend Ernie and

Margaret Hannant, Thelma attended the meetings, and Pastor Neal gave them mid-week Bible studies, resulting in Margaret and Thelma's baptism on 22 February 1992. Thelma had previously introduced Ernie to Christianity, and Ernie would drive Thelma to church on Sabbath mornings and then collect her after the service. Then he started to bring Thelma to more meetings, and was soon enjoying weekly Bible studies, before eventually being received into church fellowship.

Thelma passed away on 18 March, and was buried alongside her father. The funeral service was conducted by Pastor Mark Borrett and Pastor Michael Walker. She was a faithful member of our church for almost thirty years, and we pray for Andy and the rest of the family in their loss. Thelma had two grandchildren: Rebecca and Gary; and four great-grandchildren: Bea, Sadie, Charlie and Jasper. We look forward to the time when Thelma may be reunited with her family at Christ's soon return.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER,
COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

Pastor Ronald John Davey (1932-2021) d. 11 April.



Ron was born on 4 April 1932 to Arthur and Daisy Davey in Aldershot, Hampshire. His father was a regular soldier in the British Army. When Ron was four years old his father was sent to serve in Jamaica. They lived for a number of years in Kingston. Ron remembers the happy times spent there. One memory he had was going to school with his brother Ken, who was five years his senior. On the family's return to the UK they came to live in Nottingham. It was while living in Nottingham that Ron met his future wife, Iris. At that time his brother Ken had started attending a series of evangelistic meetings run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Beeston, Nottingham. At the end of the campaign Ken was baptised and became a member of the church. Like any good Christian, he started witnessing to Ron and Iris. After reading the book *God Speaks to Modern Man* both Ron and Iris decided that they too needed to have God in their lives, and started to attend the local C of E

church, much to Ken's consternation. However, Pastor Eddy Foster told Ken not to be concerned, as the Holy Spirit was leading Ron and Iris into greater light.

Pastor Foster was right. Soon afterwards Pastor Fred Edwards gave Ron and Iris a series of Bible studies, after which they decided to give their hearts to the Lord. They were baptised by Pastor Edwards and became members of the Adventist church in Nottingham. Prior to this, while studying with Pastor Edwards, Ron had asked for Sabbaths off from the firm he was working for. The firm refused his request, and Ron found himself out of work with a wife and by then a young baby son to support. After trying unsuccessfully to get another job, and having only five pounds left in the bank, he was encouraged to take up literature evangelism. After a rocky start he went on to become a successful worker for the Lord.

After a few years Ron was called to leadership in the literature evangelistic work in the south-west of England. Later, God called Ron to the Gospel ministry; so off he went to Newbold College with Iris and by then their three children, Gary, Lorrae and Kerie. Ron was ordained to the Gospel ministry in 1977. He served the church for forty years. He spent many happy years serving in churches in the South England Conference before retiring in 1987, after which he and Iris moved to Walsall to be near their youngest daughter, Kerie, and her family.

A terrible sadness came just ten months before Ron passed away when his beloved eldest daughter Lorrae suddenly and unexpectedly died at her home in Denmark. His faith in a God who loves and a God who cares helped Ron, Iris and the family to come through this heartbreaking loss.

In March and early April of this year, after a short period of illness which confined Ron to his bed, he passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by his family. The funeral service was taken by Pastor Mick Smart, a family friend of many years. Pastor Smart reminded us of the beautiful Christlike character that Ron had shown to his family, friends, and the church family during his lifetime, and that the God Ron

knew and loved is the God who knows and loves us. Ron now sleeps in the sure belief of the resurrection of God's people at Christ's Second Coming.

Ron leaves behind Iris, his wife of 67 years; his son, Gary; his daughter, Kerie; his daughter-in-law, Jennifer, and son-in-law, Clifff; precious grandchildren: Justin, Nicholas, Sophia and Alex; and his good sister, Pat Elias, and all of his family and friends.

Ron was faithful to his Lord and Saviour, and now sleeps, awaiting the call of the Life Giver. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

IRIS DAVEY, ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY

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Sunset

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	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Beif
Jun 25	9.22	9.34	9.35	10.03	10.04
Jul 2	9.21	9.33	9.33	10.01	10.02
9	9.17	9.29	9.29	9.55	9.57
16	9.10	9.22	9.22	9.47	9.50

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