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Celebrating 140 years of purpose

Shall we dance?

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,

President of the British Union Conference

'I will build you up again, and you . . . will be rebuilt. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to the dance with the joyful.'
(Jeremiah 31:4, NIV)

When I worked as a local church pastor, I attended workers' meetings organised by my local conference on a quarterly basis. It was always inspirational to hear how the work of God was progressing in different parts of the region.

I was also always fascinated by the way the organisation was structured and the administrative processes that were used in the meetings. We were introduced to policies, procedures and financial matters in these sessions, in addition to the nurturing aspects.

I found myself waltzing in the 'dance with the joyful' as I experienced the blessings of ministry, but also sought to avail myself of the 'tango' of the mundane aspects of life as a pastor.

Now, in my role as the President of the British Union Conference, I still find myself dancing to a variety of tunes, often with different timing and opposing beats. And not only do I do this, but so does the organisation, which must adhere to the often-clashing tunes of church, charity, and corporation.

To ensure that there is synergy and harmony between the three, recently the Executive Committee of the British Union Conference voted a first iteration of an organisational 'Value Proposition'.

The ultimate mission of The British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (BUC) is evangelistic at its heart. Its desire for preparing souls for the kingdom of God is fixed and unshakeable.

The British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists empowers the mission and provides supporting infrastructure across the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and the Republic of Ireland (henceforth referred to as the BUC territory). It provides support and guidance to two conferences and three missions within the territory. Our portfolio extends to seven schools and assets estimated at circa 300 buildings, including church buildings, residential properties, and other real estate. Within its sphere of influence, the BUC also has governance responsibilities – of varying degrees – for more than ten companies and charities. The BUC currently has a workforce of over 400 in addition to its nearly 500 retired employees.

The British Union Conference operates as a church, charity and corporation, and is underpinned by policies, legislation, and guidelines.

In addition, the BUC office is the contextualised extension of the General Conference (GC) operating in this territory. The GC has delegated authority to the BUC, to act on behalf of the GC in this field and govern the BUC territory. As a result, the organisation must comply with the GC's policies.

Our desire is for the BUC to be understood as the inspiration, the filter, the guide, and the curator of the BUC territory.

As I read through this value proposition, I am excited to be led by a God who is able to ensure that His mission to save the lost is given centre-stage in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland; and I am humbled that He enables us to govern the British Union Conference as a church, charity and corporation so that His work on earth can be completed and we can go to live with Him, where we will dance with Him forever.



Editorial

by Dusanka Rancic,
Editor

EDITORIAL



Dear reader,
I had an idea for this editorial. I wanted to write about the importance of having a clear purpose in life; and I have written it . . . but I hesitated to send it further. After reading it, it felt like some homework essay. The words were there, but something was missing. So, for several days while doing other things, occasionally I would pray to God to inspire me and show me what was missing. And then, on Monday morning, inspiration walked right through the Stanborough Press's door. What was missing from the editorial was this testimony.

That morning was dark and gloomy. It was pouring outside. At the Stanborough Press, we were all focused on our assignments, probably thinking that we would rather be in our warm house with the blankie on. But then a lovely couple came and made a big book purchase. The order was definitely not for personal use. The purpose was to reach others with the message of hope. The word spread from office to office, and you could see that it made

our day. We all felt encouraged. Suddenly, whatever each one of us was facing did not matter. We were reminded of our purpose.

This couple, led by the Holy Spirit, set a goal that will leave a positive mark on the world. Their purpose was clear.

You have probably heard the story of Catherine the Great and the rose bush. Years ago, a Russian czar, while walking through the palace garden, noticed a guard standing in an odd corner of the garden. The czar looked around, wondering what was so important in that particular spot that required special protection. Even the guard couldn't answer that question when the czar asked him. The guard was simply following his orders. He'd done it the way it had always been done. After consulting the royal archives, the mystery was solved. Many years before this event, Catherine the Great had planted a rose bush in her garden, and she ordered a guard to protect it since it was fragile and valuable to her. So, one hundred years later, when the rose bush was long gone, the guards were still protecting the now barren spot.¹

Do you understand your purpose? Is it clear enough? Or you are standing like the soldier in the story without understanding why you are here, what you are guarding, and what your role is in this world?

In Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) God says, 'For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' This verse reflects the idea that God has a specific plan and purpose for each one of us, one that is filled with hope and blessings. It serves as a reminder that our lives have meaning and direction, even in times of uncertainty or difficulty. Believing in this promise can provide comfort and encouragement as we navigate through the challenges and opportunities of life.

In a world where many people struggle to find their purpose, this verse offers reassurance that there is a divine plan for our lives. It encourages us to trust in God's guidance and to have faith that our lives have a greater purpose beyond what we can see or understand. God's word is a source of strength and inspiration for those seeking clarity and direction in their journey of faith and purpose. Let our purpose be to serve God by serving others with love and compassion.

¹<https://www.actsweb.org/articles/article.php?i=1285&d=2&c=5>

Let's Talk!



Want to leave a comment
or ask a question?
Use the QR code or email
editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk

Stanborough Press Open Day
8 September – ***SAVE THE DATE***





Women impacting their churches and communities

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,

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

The BUC Women's Ministries Department continues its series on spotlighting influential women.

Elisabeth Sangüesa is a woman who is making a positive impact, both nationally and internationally. I caught up with her recently for an interview:

SPM – Elisabeth, please give us a brief overview of your life to date and your current role.

ES – I am originally from Spain and a third-generation PK. I am the only girl of four siblings, and I have been working in publishing for thirty-seven years, thirty of which have been for the church: first in Spain as Designer, Production Coordinator and Marketing Director, and fourteen years ago I came to the Stanborough Press where I started doing international sales. Eight years ago, I was asked to be the General Manager.

SPM – You are the first female manager of the Stanborough Press. This is a significant milestone, as the Press was established in 1884. Please share with our readers what it's like to be the Press Manager, and give us an insight into what an average day and week look like in your role.

ES – I guess it is a big responsibility and a privilege to carry the mantle after 140 years of existence. Reading manuscripts, travelling to visit customers abroad, preaching appointments in the UK, training of lay evangelists, chasing payments from churches and other institutions, deciding what titles need to be published, meetings with

administrators and directors at all levels, and ensuring that policy is followed are just a few of the tasks that managing a publishing house requires. I do not get bored!

SPM – During the COVID-19 pandemic, you held the reins and had to take on an additional role as you steered the Press successfully through those very difficult and uncertain times. Please share with our readers what that was like and the lessons learned.

ES – I will not lie: it was very hard having to find salaries for twenty-two members of staff while all churches were closed, as our only income stream comes through our sales. However, the Lord blessed us and we were able to continue serving thanks to the website (www.lifefsourcebookshop.co.uk), which was launched just one week before lockdown, and the faithfulness of the members. We had to be creative and really look at our core business/services. I thank God for the tremendous team we have at the Press.

SPM – You have been instrumental in supporting a number of female writers and publishing their books at the Press. Please tell us about that.

ES – Women play a very important role for the Press, both as readers and

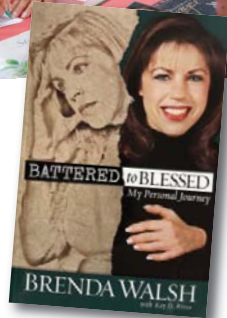


authors and even as part of the management team. It was a pleasure to help establish Susan Kirlew and Renée Richards as authors, for example, and to give further visibility to established writers like yourself, Anne Pilmoor, Karen Holford and Brenda Walsh among others.

SPM – I remember attending Press Open Day in 2019 when your team hosted a platform spotlighting UK female authors and arranging a panel discussion for them to talk about their 'writer's journey'. What instigated this decision, and what feedback did you receive from this event?

ES – It was a fantastic experience that many enjoyed. It came about because we realised that more and more women were keen to share their stories and did not know how to go about it. We have a lot of talent in the UK, and we are happy to support and promote new authors – even if they do not publish with us!

SPM – There has been much debate around Christian women in leadership positions, especially as it relates to ministry. What are some of your observations and convictions in relation to this?



SPM – With the call to be more relevant in our evangelistic outreach to the community, how is the Press adapting to sharing Christ in an increasingly secular world?

ES – I firmly believe God has given different gifts to all. Having a diversity of opinions, world views and leadership styles and a wider range of experiences can only enrich our ministry, our churches and our institutions. I am convinced that many committees would benefit from having a greater female presence.

SPM – What would you say to females in any leadership role who are currently facing challenges specifically because of their gender?

ES – Every role comes with challenges of its own, and it is true that we, as female leaders, must navigate a number of extra hurdles. We live in an imperfect and sometimes unfair world. Men and women usually have different leadership styles, and, as my father advised me, it is best not to concentrate on comparisons with others, but on doing your best and playing to your strengths. I believe that, as women in leadership, we can make a difference, and I would suggest we put our efforts into working on that.

ES – We continue to produce health and general books, e-books and audiobooks that are aimed at the general public, together with our children's books, which are very highly appreciated in the wider Christian audience. Our *FOCUS* magazine has been updated and a younger set of authors are contributing in order to reach our communities around us. Also, we are preparing books with more current topics, like the recently published *To the Single Mum: God Cares for You Too* and *Seek God's Face: A Prayer Journal for Busy Men*.

SPM – Serving as Press Manager for the past eight years, what are some of the highlights, and how have they shaped the trajectory of this establishment?

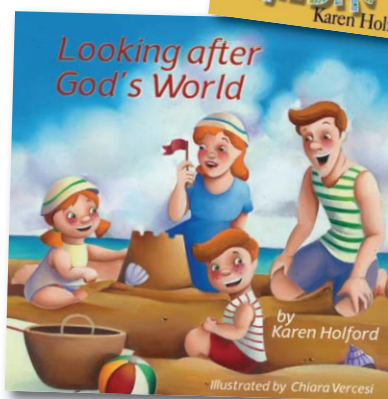
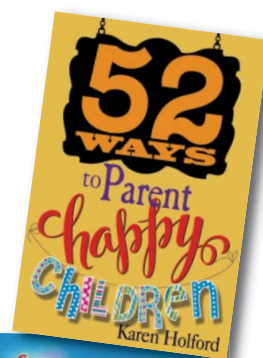
ES – We are working through a generational change, and that always brings some interesting challenges and opportunities. The introduction of our online bookshop LifeSource for the UK and Europe, along with the Autumn House website for the Christian general trade, is opening

up new opportunities. We are also concentrating on finding literature ambassadors in our churches to encourage the nurture of our members and also outreach, as well as opening local outlets. Collaboration with other international publishing houses is allowing us to have a broader variety of titles and authors, as well as expanding our distribution channels.

SPM – What is your vision for the Press, and how you would like to see the ministry and impact of your publications going forward?

ES – To be the main resource provider to all churches in the UK and Europe for nurture and sharing materials. Literature distribution is the perfect tool to have Total Member Involvement in ministry.

SPM – Thank you, Elisabeth. May the Press continue to thrive under your able leadership. We pray for your work and that of your team as you share Christ through this impactful ministry.





Pastor John Surridge announces retirement after 40 years of service

After 40 years of dedicated service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pastor John Surridge, the British Union Conference (BUC) Executive Secretary, has announced his retirement. The official retirement date is set for 8 July 2024.

Pastor Surridge's tenure has been characterised by unwavering commitment, efficiency, leadership, and a profound dedication to the Seventh-day Adventist community in the United Kingdom and beyond. Throughout his years of service, he has left an indelible mark on the organisation, guiding it through various challenges and successes.

As the BUC Executive Secretary, Pastor Surridge played a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the BUC, overseeing administrative matters, and fostering a spirit of togetherness among the diverse constituencies within the Union. His passion for mission and his deep-rooted faith have inspired countless individuals and contributed significantly to the growth and development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and the Republic of Ireland.

The announcement of Pastor Surridge's retirement signifies the beginning of a new chapter in his life journey, one that will undoubtedly be filled with new opportunities and experiences. Alongside him on this journey is his wife, Moira, who has been a steadfast source of support

A well-earned retirement and fresh energy at the BUC

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,
President of the British Union Conference

and encouragement throughout his ministry.

For those who wish to extend their well-wishes to Pastor Surridge and Moira, the BUC invites you to email your messages and any photos to secretariat@adventist.uk by 31 May 2024. Your words of encouragement and support will undoubtedly be a source of comfort and strength as they embark on this new journey.

I want to encourage everyone to keep Pastor Surridge and Moira in their thoughts and prayers as they embark on a new phase of life in their ministry.

BUC Executive Committee elects people to new roles

On Thursday 4 April, the British Union Conference (BUC) Executive Committee convened for a pivotal meeting to elect a new executive secretary and a new stewardship director.

After extensive deliberations and careful consideration, the committee members voted to elect Pastor Jacques Venter as the new executive secretary.

Pastor Jacques Venter is a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist and an ordained minister, born in Springs, South Africa. He graduated from Helderberg College, South Africa in 2000 with a BA in Theology and pastored in the Northern Conference (then Transvaal Conference) before accepting a call to serve as a pastor in the South England Conference (SEC) in 2007.

Venter served in various churches across the SEC until his election as BUC Associate Executive Secretary in September 2018. In this role he served as Executive Secretary for the Scottish, Welsh and Irish Missions

(2018-2022). Additional functions included BUC Human Resources Lead and BUC Pensions Coordinator.

Venter also holds an MA in Theology from Friedensau Adventist University, obtained at Newbold College, and is a certified Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Venter is passionate about missiology, discipleship, and people development. He also loves to share what he learns about God, life, people, and their intersection in vocation. Pastor Jacques and Lara have two daughters, Layken and Jaymee.

As Pastor Venter has been serving as the BUC Associate Executive Secretary, the committee deemed it necessary to also elect an individual for this position in line with the vote taken at the last BUC session in 2021. As such, Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook was voted as the new BUC associate executive secretary.

Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook is an ordained minister who has been serving in the South England Conference for over ten years. He has also worked as the lead champion for *AM URBAN*, a partnership between ADRA-UK and Adventist Community Services aimed at mobilising local churches for community engagement.

McKenzie-Cook has extensive experience in community services, diversity, and prison ministries. Recently he took up the position of Stewardship and Trust Services Director at the SEC. He is skilled in strategic management and decision-making, and his academic qualifications include an LLB in Law, a BA and an MA in Theology, and a Master's degree in Business Administration. To further enhance



Pastor John Surridge



Pastor Jacques Venter



Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook



Mrs Catherine Boldeau



Mr Aftab Barki

his skills, he became a director and trustee for Lambeth and Southwark MIND, a mental health charity, and a trustee for the Luton Friendship Homecarers group. He also serves on various committees, including the SEC Constitutional Committee, the BUC Constitutional Committee, and the BUC working policy group. He was awarded a certificate in strategy execution from Harvard Business School Online.

McKenzie-Cook has also gained valuable external experience by learning from senior executives through his board and advisory positions. He has been mentored by several individuals, including senior executives at PWC, Kids Company, the Medical Protection Society, and War Child UK. He has also been mentored by CEOs from national charities.

The committee also spent time discussing the Stewardship Director position. I am further pleased to announce that Mrs Catherine Boldeau was elected for this role.

Mrs Catherine Boldeau is an experienced, competent and dynamic professional communicator and lecturer. She has extensive experience in the creation, planning, preparation and delivery of a diverse range of projects and training for small businesses and charitable, educational and faith-based organisations, with excellent results. She has a demonstrable track record of client engagement and developing partnerships within each sector, and she is a trained and accredited mediator with strong negotiation and relationship-building skills and a passion for the use of all forms of media in delivering key messages.

Catherine has previously held the role of Communication and

Stewardship Director for the South England Conference, and has worked in a variety of positions within the church as both an employee and a consultant. She has undergraduate qualifications in both English and History, an MA in Creative Writing, an MBA (Entrepreneurship), and a Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership, and is a qualified FE teacher and lecturer. She is a member of the East of England Ambulance Research Interest Group and an active member of Journey of Hope, a group of faith-based peacekeepers in the UK and the USA run by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace.

Her mantra is: 'It is Impossible. It is Difficult. It is Done.' She is married to Dr Desmond Boldeau, and together they have a 21-year-old daughter, Arianne.

Aftab Barki appointed BUC Associate Treasurer

Mr Aftab Barki, Assistant Treasurer of the British Union Conference (BUC), was recently appointed Associate Treasurer of the BUC.

Aftab has demonstrated a remarkable array of leadership qualities, which have been noted in his work. He possesses a visionary outlook, capable of seeing beyond immediate challenges and envisioning the organisation's long-term trajectory of financial stewardship.

Aftab was born into an Adventist family in Pakistan. On completing high school, he continued his education by studying accountancy at Newbold College. After graduating in 2007 with a BSc in Accounting, he worked for the South England Conference for over nine years as a senior accountant before joining the Treasury team at the BUC in 2017. Aftab has supported the Treasury

function at the missions throughout his time at the BUC, recently becoming the Designated Treasurer for the Irish and Welsh Missions. He has also completed his accountancy exams for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

We are delighted to see Aftab's progression as he develops his education, experience, and expertise and his ability to envision the work of the Adventist Church.

When asked about his new role as Associate Treasurer, he said, 'I humbly accept this role, and I am willing to serve wherever God leads. I look forward to developing and implementing financial strategies that align with the BUC's Strategic Plan. The stewardship of financial resources within our organisation is not merely a matter of numbers and spreadsheets; it is a sacred trust that demands the utmost integrity, diligence, and dedication.' Aftab is married to Jasmine, and they have a nine-year-old daughter, Aniyah.

In appointing Aftab, we pray that his development will not cease, but that he will continue to enhance his ability to better assist in the governance of our Union.

In appointing these four individuals to their new roles, in keeping with our strategic directive, we were mindful to ensure that they will be adding experience, education and expertise as individuals who will enable and encourage envisioning as we work together to pursue our vision. Pastor Venter, Pastor McKenzie-Cook, Catherine Boldeau and Aftab Barki are on fire to see the work of the Lord executed with excellence in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. We wish them well in their new roles, and pray that God will lead and guide them.



Stewardship starts with the ‘whom’

by Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook

Let me tell you a story: in the heart of our beloved community, amid the gentle embrace of a fictional Seventh-day Adventist church, a rich tapestry is woven from the threads of our collective journey.

Let me introduce you to a fictional Adventist member – Sarah, a beacon of compassion and creativity whose story intertwines with ours like a symphony harmonising with a melody. With her youthful exuberance and unwavering dedication, Sarah embodies the essence of what it means to be a steward of our faith. But to truly understand Sarah’s journey, we must delve into the depths of who she is – her hopes, her dreams, and the nuances that make her an invaluable community member.

Sarah is a young woman who has begun her professional career as a lawyer. Her parents converted to Christianity when she was a teenager and eventually got baptised, compelled by the generosity and the love of God. This ignited her sense of purpose to help the most vulnerable

in society; to give a voice to those who might not have one of their own. She found that the church and its capacity to love matched her own calling to do good, just as Jesus did good. She, in turn, gave back by offering free legal advice to asylum seekers.

Consequently, her worship on Saturdays was powerful, because she felt deeply connected to God. She felt that her calling was encouraged and supported by the church. In turn, she received joy and satisfaction from the fact that this was a community of believers living out God’s will in their lives.

As you can see, Sarah’s story extends beyond the realm of duty. It delves into the depths of her soul, exploring the motivations that drive her to give of herself so generously. Driven by empathy and compassion, Sarah’s heart beats in rhythm with the needs of others. She gives not out of obligation, but out of a deep-seated desire to make a difference in the lives of those around her. Sarah’s contributions to the church family flow not just through monetary means, but through the richness of her presence, her service, and her unwavering commitment to our shared mission.

But Sarah’s story is not hers alone. It’s a reflection of the countless narratives that intertwine to form the mosaic of our community. But there is also an inherent danger here.

There is a danger that the church and its membership become misaligned. As a church, we could be seen to be taking the generosity of our membership for granted. Could it be that we forget who makes up our community? What are the consequences if we do forget? What if we become complacent and think that our community will always provide their time, talent and tithe? Those are poignant questions that speak to inherent risks. Conversely, what if we remember whom we have in our churches? How can we remind ourselves and others of the deep sense of faith – faith like Sarah’s, faith that connects us to our church and our community with a sense of compassion? How can we tap into our membership’s rich faith and love, and avoid the pitfalls that would disconnect us from the true principles of stewardship? We have more than 40,000 members in the British Union Conference, and each person is unique in age, background, faith journey, and experience. They have different gifts and talents, and connect with God in different ways. Getting to know them deeply and intimately is a journey we need to consider taking in order to help build a church not only for now, but for the future. Stewardship means more than managing what God has given us, because first we may need to ask ourselves if we fully understand whom God has given us.





The purpose of the Union

by Wederly Aguiar, *BUC Treasurer*

In the second instalment of Faith and Finance, the multifaceted nature of the British Union Conference (BUC) was explored as it operates within the realms of a church, a corporation, and a charity. With this framework in mind, understanding the structure of the Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland becomes more relevant.

First established in 1902, the BUC was formed to create an impact in the British Isles from the already fervent movement of Adventism that was sweeping the United States of America.

From the first records of 1903 that show a humble membership of 1,160 and an annual tithe of £3,080 across the newly formed union, the BUC has grown significantly, yet the purpose of the BUC and the benefits of having a centralised system of leadership in the British Isles might have been lost over time.

According to policy, the purpose of the BUC 'is to proclaim the everlasting Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to teach the commandments of God as the supreme rule of life, and to persuade people to become His disciples and

responsible members of the church and to support charitable work which is in harmony with the doctrines and principles of Seventh-day Adventists'. Beyond these stated purposes, the BUC serves as a guiding force, providing support and advice to its subsidiaries, which include its membership, two conferences, three missions, a publishing house, seven school institutions, and more than 400 employees.

The centralised structure, inherited from the General Conference, has been in place since the inception of the BUC, proving effective in ensuring consistency in operations, policies, procedures, and standards across all subsidiaries.

By establishing consistent policies and procedures, inefficiencies can be identified and rectified early on, enhancing the overall quality and reliability of services offered by the organisation. Moreover, the centralised structure offers a robust platform for risk management and mitigation.

By having clearly defined lines of responsibility and accountability, potential risks can be identified, assessed, and addressed in a systematic manner, meaning that this proactive approach to risk management not only safeguards the interests of the organisation and its stakeholders, but also fosters a culture of resilience and adaptability in the face of uncertainty as best practices and lessons learned can be disseminated to subsidiaries, driving organisational growth and development.

Centralisation also provides a framework for strategic decision-making as consolidating

decision-making at the organisational level enables the BUC to align its activities with its overarching mission and vision. This ensures that decisions taken at various levels of the organisation are coherent and consistent, contributing to the achievement of long-term strategic objectives.

This kind of cohesion also facilitates resource allocation and management across subsidiaries. By pooling resources at the organisational level, the BUC can optimise resource utilisation and allocate funds strategically to support initiatives that align with its strategic priorities, allowing for more efficient use of resources and enhancing the organisation's ability to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges in the external environment.

While centralisation may be perceived as potentially inhibiting creativity and agility, the reality is far more nuanced and dynamic when managed adeptly. Centralisation acts as a catalyst for innovation by providing a fertile ground for cross-pollination of ideas and the exploration of novel approaches to complex challenges by promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing among subsidiaries. By breaking down silos and encouraging cross-functional teamwork, centralisation can foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

By leveraging the strengths of centralisation while mitigating its potential drawbacks, the BUC continues to foster a culture of open communication, empowerment, and continuous learning, ensuring that the benefits of centralised leadership are maximised while addressing its limitations.



The parable of the sower

Prepare the soil

by Dr Jeff Couzins

In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, Jesus spoke about four types of soil: the wayside, representing those who lack understanding (verses 4, 19); stony places, representing those with superficial belief (verses 5, 6, 20, 21); thorny ground, representing those who are distracted by worldly concerns (verses 7, 22); and good ground, representing those who hear God's word and bear fruit (verses 8, 23).

These soil types are analogous to people's hearts, worldviews, or level of receptiveness to God's word. When we go door-to-door, or conduct evangelistic preaching, we look for people who are 'good ground' – ready to receive the Word of God.

The challenge in the twenty-first century is that society is changing rapidly.

When I was a child, almost everyone believed in God and attended church. As children we typically asked each other, 'Which church do you belong to?'

The answer was, generally, Church of England, Methodist, or Roman Catholic.

Today, when I ask my neighbours about their beliefs, I get a wider range of answers, including Wicca, paganism, atheism, Islam, and Buddhism.

What that means is that the good ground of receptive hearts is shrinking. If we keep on looking for people who are good ground, we are

going to find fewer and fewer people to share the message with.

And that is just what we are seeing – fewer and fewer people are interested in what we have to offer.

This reflects what Jesus asked in Luke 18:8 (NIV): 'However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?'

That doesn't mean we should give up searching for lost souls. Ellen White says, 'Ways will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the past, but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism.'¹

The challenge is real, and we need new and innovative methods of sharing the Gospel.

In the ten years from 2011 to 2021, more than 8 million people in the UK disconnected from God. That's equivalent to 16,000 people a week on average leaving the Christian church.

This loss of church members is the result of strident secularism, popular alternative spiritualities, and apathy towards organised religions.

People in the post-Christian society have many choices before them – rejecting absolute truth and orienting towards indifference, or picking from the supermarket choice of beliefs available in the twenty-first century. An upshot is that it is important to recognise that people may not be interested in what the church has to offer.

People need to be receptive to God's word in order to respond positively to our outreach efforts.

Jesus also spoke about receptiveness to God's word elsewhere. In some regards, Matthew

7:6 reflects the teaching of Matthew 13:4-7. Nothing will come of spreading the seed – the holy word of God – unless we diligently communicate in ways the hearer can understand.

For instance, in Matthew 7:6 (NKJV), Jesus said, 'Do not give what is holy to the dogs.'

Is that what we have been doing?

Question: do dogs understand what we do from day to day?

Dogs may understand simple commands like 'Sit', 'Paw', 'Come', 'Roll over', and so forth, but are they able to comprehend anything about the everlasting Gospel in vocabulary and language that we communicate with?

The same challenge can occur in cross-cultural communication – people may not understand what we are saying and doing – even though it's clear to us.

Unless we first prepare the ground for planting the Gospel seed, we may have as much success as if we were communicating with dogs – there would be no understanding of what we are trying to say.

The Western world has transitioned to being mainly secular, as well as becoming religiously and culturally diverse. This calls for new and innovative methods and approaches in Christian ministry.

Ellen White noted that the work of Adventists is to 'first meet the temporal necessities', and 'then find an open avenue to the heart' where we can 'plant the good seeds of virtue and religion'.² In other words, we need to spend some time preparing the ground first.

¹Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 25

²Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 227

Health markers: assessing your well-being profile – part 3

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,

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

Lifestyle impact on blood pressure

This issue of Enhancing Health explores natural ways to maintain good blood pressure.

In an article titled 'Nonpharmacologic Interventions for Reducing Blood Pressure in Adults With Prehypertension to Established Hypertension',¹ the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) makes the following statement: 'Single interventions including Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension (DASH; ranked first), aerobic exercise, isometric training, low-sodium and high-potassium salt, salt restriction, [and] breathing control . . . are associated with effective reduction of systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure.'

Diet is key

We take a brief look at the aspect of dietary impact with the recommended guidance for lowering blood pressure.

Vegan and vegetarian diet

Highlighting the impact of diet on reducing blood pressure, an article published in May 2023 by the NCBI carried the headline 'Plant-Based Diets Reduce Blood Pressure: A Systematic Review of Recent Evidence'.² In the segment headed 'Recent Findings', it states: 'The overwhelming majority of intervention studies demonstrate that plant-based diets result in lower blood pressure readings when compared to diets that are based on animal products.'

These findings were mirrored in an earlier large-cohort study in the UK, which was the first to examine dietary impact on hypertension. The researchers concluded: 'The Epic-Oxford study included more than ten thousand British subjects and showed that vegans presented the lowest levels of hypertension and blood pressure (BP), while meat-eating individuals presented the highest ones.'³

A comparative analysis was made with a US study on Seventh-day Adventist dietary lifestyle: 'Likewise, in arbitrarily selected subjects from the Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2) cohort (comprising almost one hundred thousand Adventists in North America), vegans and vegetarians presented lower BP levels than the individuals eating meat.'⁴

DASH diet

Emphasising the importance of the DASH diet, the Mayo Clinic published an article on its website entitled: 'DASH Diet: Healthy Eating to Lower Your Blood Pressure'.⁵ The DASH diet is explained as 'a healthy-eating plan designed to help prevent or treat high blood pressure, also called hypertension. It also may help lower cholesterol linked to heart disease, called low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.'

Giving an insight into essential nutrients and food groups, the Mayo Clinic states: 'Foods in the DASH diet are rich in the minerals potassium, calcium and magnesium. The DASH diet focuses on vegetables, fruits and whole grains. It includes fat-free or low-fat dairy products, . . . beans and nuts.'

Listing foods that are limited, they further highlight: 'The diet limits foods that are high in salt, also called sodium. It also limits added sugar and saturated fat, such as in fatty meats and full-fat dairy products.'

A great brochure explaining the DASH diet can be accessed at the following link: www.bloodpressureuk.org/media/bpuk/docs/PP_Summer2021_AC_18_6_web2.pdf.



ENHANCING HEALTH

Specific foods

The NCBI has identified specific foods that can assist in helping to lower blood pressure, including aged garlic extract, beetroot juice, olive oil, and teas such as hibiscus.⁶

Salt impact

'Eating too much salt raises the level of sodium in your blood. Too much sodium means water is absorbed into your blood. This increases the volume of your blood and therefore your blood pressure.'⁷

The Mayo Clinic gives the following guidance on reducing salt:⁸

- Read food labels and choose low-salt or no-salt-added options.
- Use salt-free spices or flavourings instead of salt.
- Don't add salt when cooking rice, pasta or hot cereal.
- Choose plain fresh or frozen vegetables.
- Eat less restaurant food. When eating at restaurants, ask for dishes with less salt and ask not to have salt added to your order.

The next issue takes a look at exercise and weight management.

Good health!

¹www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7792371/

²www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10224875/

³pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12372158/

⁴www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3443300/

⁵www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20048456

⁶www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5338151/

⁷zoe.com/learn/natural-ways-to-lower-your-blood-pressure

⁸www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20048456

PROVERBS 3

FORGET NOT
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ACKNOWLEDGE
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C M P L E A S A N T N E S S E A R T U S

Caribbean-style Casserole

Tropical sunshine meets the UK in this easy-to-follow and tasty dish. This is great to make if you want something quick and easy that your children will enjoy. Growing up in the UK has exposed me to many British dishes. My parents are Jamaican so I had to put a bit of a Jamaican twist on this.

- 1 Put **vegetables** in a casserole dish – chopped **onion**, **scallions**, sliced **plantain**, **thyme** and diced **potatoes**.
- 2 Pour **ketchup** with four cups of warm water over the vegetables. Sprinkle with **all-purpose seasoning**.
- 3 Add **vegan margarine**. Cover the dish.
- 4 Cook the dish in the oven on 325°F (162°C or gas mark 3) for 30 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

Serve with rice.



DINNER



Shopping list

Potatoes – 4, diced
Plantains – 2, sliced
Onions – 2, chopped
All-purpose seasoning – 1 tsp
Ketchup – 4 oz or 110g
Vegan margarine – 2 oz or 50g
Salt – to taste
Carrots – 3
Vegetable oil – for sautéing
Thyme – 2 oz or 50g (fresh or dried)
Scallions or **green onions** – 2



New ADRA-UK CEO

by the BUC communications team

The British Union Conference (BUC) Executive Committee is pleased to announce Sandra Golding as the new CEO for ADRA-UK. With a career spanning over fifteen years within the international development sector, Sandra has contributed as both a business consultant and a director.

Bringing a wealth of experience, Sandra has actively engaged with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in the UK and the USA. Her professional journey has taken her to diverse regions, including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, where she has championed causes related to children's education, women's economic empowerment, resource mobilisation, communications, and marketing.

Sandra has collaborated with notable organisations, including the International HIV and AIDS Alliance, ADRA International, CARE International UK, Save the Children UK, and Feed the Minds, showcasing her commitment to

impactful work in international development.

Sandra's commitment to community service is underscored by her previous volunteer role as an area coordinator on the South England Conference Women's Ministries Council. Furthermore, her contributions extended to collaborating with the BUC, North England Conference, and Trans-European Division Women's Ministries, which provided her with opportunities to address audiences in the UK, Europe, and the USA.

Her dedication to knowledge dissemination is evident in several publications on social enterprises and women's empowerment. Sandra's expertise has garnered recognition, with national and international media outlets featuring in *Charity Today*, the UK's leading charity news publication, and *Nepal Live Today*, an online news portal in Nepal.

Sandra's influence extends to the airwaves, where she has served as a guest speaker on UCB Radio and Premier Radio. Additionally, she has



served as a presenter on Life Radio UK.

Through her multifaceted contributions, Sandra continues to leave a lasting impact in various social development and communication spheres.

Sandra takes up her role in June. She said, 'I am looking forward to joining ADRA-UK and engaging with the churches in the UK. Additionally, I look forward to working with the team at ADRA-UK as we continue to impact the communities where they work, changing lives. We are all ADRA, and we can all make a difference!'

Joint event:
SEC, ADRA-UK,
Stanborough Park Church &
Hertfordshire MIND Network

In aid of
Hertfordshire Network

- Bouncy Castles
- Face Painting
- Animal Farm
- Live music
- Bag-a-bargain
- Food on sale

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SUNDAY 26TH MAY 2024

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Hackney's ten days of prayer: simple ways to prioritise our faith this year

All over the globe, millions of Seventh-day Adventists took part in the world church's ten days of prayer programme (10-20 January 2024). This year's theme, 'Priorities of Faith', looked at how God wishes us to put Him first, and what strategies can help us to draw closer to Him in this fast-paced world.

Sabbath 13 January saw Hackney Church full to the brim with regular members as well as visitors from around the UK and abroad. During the ten days of prayer, our church met both in person and on Zoom to pray, read devotions, and reflect on how God is working in and through us.

After Elder Jacqueline Otokpa's sermon, members and visitors testified about feeling revived and rejuvenated because they had been more intentional in their prayer life that week, with one saying, 'I experienced a spiritual awakening.'

Sister Zinze Bishop shared her devotional readings with her mum, who believes in God but is not yet baptised. Her mum, who has an autoimmune illness, expressed how much she enjoyed the readings and felt a stillness overcome her which could only have come from God.

Elder Jacqueline stated how Jesus has been with her and her family during many challenges, including when her firstborn son had a car accident last year. Thankfully he left the hospital with only a few scratches and was not hurt. Her husband and son were both in attendance, and her son gave a heartfelt prayer as he lifted up the youth in supplication.

Hackney Church also has a prayer line that runs daily (5.30am, 12.30pm, and 6.30pm, as well as the 247 Boiler Room and the Nordic Revival SDA prayer group. Having 'prayer spaces' has been helpful for those who suffer with anxiety. Giving time to pray and connect daily with friends allows us to grow spiritually and encourage others to do the same.

Prioritising our faith really matters to God. When we pray and meditate on His Word, we begin to make our homes and churches 'Houses of Prayer Everywhere' (HOPE).

SISTER ZINZE BISHOP, HACKNEY SDA CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS



Investing in Pathfinders: a blessing to the community

At the Pathfinder/Adventurer Induction Service on Sabbath 17 February, Holloway Church unveiled their newest investment: a set of Pathfinder Drum Corps kits. Led by Pastor Mario Phillip and Holloway elders, the congregation joined to dedicate these instruments to God.

Pastor Phillip marked the occasion by reaffirming the church's commitment to the spiritual and musical development of their youth. His words echoed the congregation's hope and faith that the Pathfinders would continue to inspire and bless the community. He encouraged the Pathfinder drummers to approach their drumming with dedication, passion, and a spirit of humility, knowing that their talents had the power to uplift souls and bring joy to those around them.

As the dedication concluded and the Pathfinder drummers took their place behind the drums, a sense of purpose and unity filled the sanctuary. As the Pathfinders' drum team continues to minister to the community, their rhythms will serve as a reminder of God's presence and blessings.

HOLLOWAY COMMS

Stratford Church health outreach

On Saturday 27 January 2024, Stratford Seventh-day Adventist Church's Community Ministries team continued its longstanding and thriving partnership with Newham Council, holding its first of three annual health outreach events for 2024.

The team set up health-related stations dealing with blood pressure, heart health and weight checks, among others. Areas for private discussions around better lifestyle choices also proved very popular. A station led by Elder Anslim Narinesingh, focusing on prostate cancer care, was well attended throughout the day! There were healthy culinary delights on offer, and the team gave advice on how to prepare healthy, enjoyable foods and the necessary ingredients.

Newham Council Libraries are very lively on a Saturday, and Chioma Onyedinma-Ndubueze (Stratford's prayer leader) and Ann-Marie Brown used this outreach opportunity to engage with members of the local community.

Lastly, a big 'well done' to the Community Ministries leader and team for all their efforts and hard work – they all represented Stratford Church in a positive and energetic way!

MONIQUE, STRATFORD COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



St Patrick's Day 2024

Did you wear green on 17 March? Some of our members did, and some didn't. What they did do was sow seeds of truth about Patrick and Bible truths at the parades.

The Celtic Connection is one of the most popular books that our teams distribute. It's a small but powerful book that resonates with the Irish people.

Our last copies had been distributed in January, and funds were needed to print 5,000 for this year. Discover Truth team members started faithfully praying for the Lord to provide the funds for this year's outreach.

The prayers were thankfully heard and answered. Donations from the Irish Mission and generous individuals covered the cost. The Stanborough Press promptly printed and delivered the 5,000 books. These were then distributed to the Discover Truth teams and their local churches.

We are pleased to share that some Pathfinder and youth groups joined us in distributing the books this year. We hope that more young people will get the opportunity to experience literature evangelism in our future outreach.

Teams distributed the books at parades in nineteen



Cork



NMF youth in Shannon

towns and cities across Ireland.

We also had team members visiting California and Malta on the day. They shared the *Celtic Connection* books with people there too!

Please pray with us that the Lord will use these silent witnesses; that their readers' hearts will be moved to want to discover truth in the Bible, and that they will be ready to meet Jesus when He returns.

If you are interested in supporting this work with your time and/or donations or would like to be part of next year's outreach, please email us at info@discovertruth.ie for more information. And if you are looking for resources for yourself, or to share with others, go to www.discovertruth.ie.

May the Lord continue to richly bless the work of reaching His people in Ireland with His message of love and hope!

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

'Reaching, reclaiming and serving others through social media'

With 60,000 followers on TikTok, 20,000 on Instagram, and 10,000 subscribers on YouTube, Croydon Church has built a strong, global social media following and a passion for sharing the Gospel via digital channels. Croydon members asked themselves, 'How can we use social and other media to reach the unreached? What content has worked well in connecting with non-Adventists? How often do you need to post new content?' Today, Croydon's regular viewers include people from North America, Europe, and Africa, with the majority joining in the early hours of their morning from the United States.

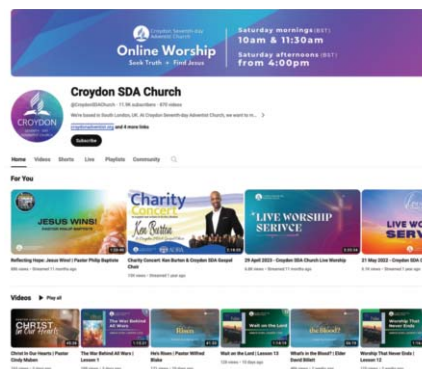
Ryan Daly, who has been running social media video campaigns since 2022, talks about the importance of 'consistency, involving members of all ages from seniors to children to youth, and delivering high-quality videos'. For Ryan, consistency means posting daily, including daily reels on Instagram, usually in the evening when Croydon's audience, largely made up of 25-34-year-olds, are online. It also means responding quickly to comments, questions, and direct messages from viewers. Live Sabbath School broadcasts with moderators on YouTube and livestream also keep the audience engaged in regular, ongoing dialogue.

Instagram reels from Elder Saul (in his nineties) have reached over 100,000 views multiple times, with one follower going as far as flying from Canada to meet Elder Saul in person; and a sermonette by Mistry Burnett, 10 years old at the time, has had 6 million views – but their videos need to have good sound quality to be heard. Ryan partners with Croydon SDA's audiovisual team for top-quality sound.

Social media allows people to learn more about our faith in an informal, familiar setting. Videos about the Sabbath and tithing typically generate a lot of discussion. Croydon has received many questions from viewers, including 'Why is Saturday the Sabbath?' and 'I'm going to an Adventist church for the first time: what should I wear?' Viewers have also shared that since engaging with Croydon's social media content they have visited their first Adventist church in person.

Croydon wants to do yet more: for 2024, Croydon has established a production team to extend its online presence. Jesus' method of building relationships, showing sympathy, meeting a need, then sharing the Word still applies. Using social and other media is yet another channel to apply this method to reach people near and far.

AKOSUA KUDOM, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA TEAM



Slightly outside the box

On Saturday 13 January, the Teens Ministry and social team hosted a quiz night – an evening of fun with an element of outreach.

There was a Bible round, but it wasn't exclusively a Bible quiz, as it would have been difficult to use a Bible quiz for outreach. We expected between six and eight teams: when fourteen teams registered, we realised adjustments would be needed. Had we enough space in our church hall? We ended up with seventeen teams, an overwhelming response. Praise God!

Of those teams, eleven had at least one non-Adventist visitor, and all it took was the incentive of five bonus points per visitor. Two teams had three visitors each (impressive, as each team had only four members). A wonderful evening of outreach was enjoyed by all, including the visitors, who are waiting for the next time! We shared some refreshments (courtesy of the social team) as we mingled and met a few new friends. They realised that Christianity can be joyful; we can have fun; our church is a warm, safe and welcoming space. The teens had a lovely time and would take part again. Some would even invite their friends.

Some questions were more challenging than others.



Some over-sixties took part, waging war against cognitive decline.

People respond to different approaches. We have watched the table tennis club grow from strength to strength. They have attended concerts in our church, and on quiz night they entered a team.

Outreach takes many forms – use whatever means you have at your disposal – just do something. God will use us and bless our efforts. As we move forwards this year with outreach in mind, let's think 'slightly outside the box'.

'Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." ' – Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143

CROYDON CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS



'Precious Lives . . . No More Knives'

Our home town of Croydon has taken centre stage in the media for the wrong reason. Far too many lives have been cut short, leaving a legacy of heartache. The entire community pleads, 'No more knives!' yet blades continue to wreak havoc on our bloodstained streets. Understandably, residents no longer feel safe.

Many have been vocal about this. We stood in solidarity with our community. On Sunday 11 February we hosted an art competition under the theme, 'Precious Lives . . . No More Knives'.

The Teens' Ministry team congratulates the winners of the three age categories: 8-12 years, Miriam Cabral; 13-17 years, Chloe Francis; and 18+ years, Deborah Nero-Adeoye, who spent time in research to give tribute to those who had fallen to the blade. The names of real young people and their ages at the time of death surrounded a mother cocooning her son, trying to protect him as long as she possibly could. This piece was a collaborative tribute by Deborah and her daughter, Kemi.

Our 12-years-young poet, Jabez Hoyte, penned two poems, worthy of prime placement. Kristian delivered an original spoken-word piece with such conviction. Our resident poet laureate,

Shaniqua Benjamin, presented two poems that spoke volumes and turned the torchlight on the heart of the matter.

The high point of the afternoon was the presentation by Jermaine Wong, who shared his family's experience of losing their son to knife crime in October. Amid his pain, the peace of God is his portion.

Everyone had the opportunity to contribute to two murals. Heartfelt messages were etched into the canvas: handprints, hearts and flowers filled spaces where words seemed insufficient.

Sharon Douglas and Ben Dantzie, recognising the causes of anti-social behaviour, offered guidance, tips and signposts on the theme of conflict resolution.

It was encouraging to witness the collaboration of various ministries within our church, as well as with neighbouring churches, West Croydon and Hope Community Beckenham.

We look forward to taking an upscaled version to the wider community in the near future. Get your pencils and paintbrushes out: there's still time to create your own masterpiece.

AKOSUA KUDOM, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA TEAM

Adventist Christian Fellowship holiday in Cyprus – ‘a taste of heaven’

Thanks to the meticulous organisation of Brian Davison, willingly supported by his wife, Cecilia, thirty Seventh-day Adventists were able to experience a two-week holiday of a lifetime from 14 to 28 February in a tremendously comfortable hotel in Paphos, a very attractive, picturesque and historic district of Cyprus.

Each member of the party had numerous stories to share. Quite a few BUC retirees were meeting up for the same experience they had shared several times in previous years. Sadly, this annual trip was rudely interrupted over the previous three years by COVID-19. Those from the Adventist Christian Fellowship, who joined the BUC retirees for the first time, enjoyed the warm welcome, the responsive attitude and the loving attention they received and maintained. This made us all grateful and happy.

The 96-year-old was our wonderful Ed Hammond of Stanborough Park Church. His cheerful smile and manner, and his determination to walk and get exercise every day – supported by two sticks, and at a pace he felt comfortable with – inspired us all to follow his determined example.

At the other end of the scale was 63-year-old Nigel Clark of Leamington Church, who set a great pace with his ability to energetically run at least four miles early every morning, and still be prepared for whatever activity was planned or arranged for that day. Other members of the group swam, walked, or found other ways to exercise to keep fit and active.

The group was intentionally relaxed and laid back about what activities could or should be undertaken. There are so many historic or picturesque sites that it can be overwhelming if too many outings are planned, which may prevent relaxation and friendly communication between the members of the group; so Brian advisedly allowed people to suggest their preferences. When several people made the same suggestion, Brian sensibly made the arrangements for whoever wanted to join the activity, creating several outings that were of enjoyable interest and entertainment value. This enabled people to go on trips that individuals may not have been able to arrange for themselves.

Each evening, after selecting from a wonderful choice of appetising and often nutritious food choices in the buffet-style restaurant, followed by irresistible desserts, the group met together to end the day by sharing a very meaningful worship together. A different speaker was asked each evening to share a message or give a testimony to stimulate and encourage the group audience. The testimonies were particularly thought-provoking and made us appreciate the way God has led each one of us in our journey to the position and age we have achieved.

One testimony was entitled ‘A Taste of Heaven’, following someone’s suggestion to that evening’s speaker that being with like-minded people, having fellowship and harmony every day, and talking about the Lord in everything, just as the disciples did when they were with Him on earth, must be indeed a ‘taste of heaven’. Indeed, it was!

Each person on the holiday made it worthwhile for everyone else to be there. It has been a memorable experience: one that each of us, health prevailing and God willing, wants to repeat in a year’s time!

VANESSA GENT



Happy birthday, Joyce!

Born in 1933 in Londiani, Kenya, Joyce Lowsley lived in Kenya for the first half of her life. A qualified electrician, she became a partner in an electrical appliance business, later owning a smallholding growing crops, raising cattle and tending a vineyard. On leaving Kenya, Joyce spent time in Italy and England before returning to the African continent to look after her mother in South Africa.

In 1989, Joyce returned to England and settled in Grantham, where she met and married Eddie Yates, a member of Grantham Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the year 2000. Joyce and Eddie lived in Burnley for a while before moving back to Lincolnshire; Joyce was widowed in 2018.



Although christened in the Church of England, Joyce attended a Presbyterian Sunday school as a child. Later, she tried the Roman Catholic faith before being baptised during the 1970s in the Pentecostal Church. While living in South Africa, her mother gave her a book to read written by Armstrong (Church of God) and she was convicted about the seventh-day Sabbath. Joyce prayed every day to find a local Sabbath-keeping church and visited the local library, where she learnt that there were three denominations who observe Sabbath. However, the only Sabbath-keeping denomination with a church in Pietermaritzburg was the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Today Joyce is an active member of Grantham’s Community Services and a regular attendee at all church services. Her 90th birthday party was organised by the Community Service Department – not only to congratulate her on reaching this milestone, but also to thank her for her faithful, active service and support of Grantham Community Services.

ELISABETH CARNELL

Head of Social Service Award

On Sabbath mornings Sister Annastacia Chenjerai can be heard sharing with children the finest of stories from all over the world. Children listen to her intently, not wishing to miss an aspect of the object lesson that she shares. The way she carefully narrates each of her stories will tell you two things. One: she loves children; and two: she cares deeply about the family.

Annastacia is a family social worker, and her colleagues have been taking note of how diligently she carries out her role in the community. They say, 'She consistently meets 100% performance statistics, showing a consistent approach to her families. They are regularly seen, and family support meetings take place monthly, ensuring the recommended plan is reviewed and progressed.'

She has also received praises from other professionals about her practice and the support she provides to families. They acknowledge that she is supportive of others on duty and provides informative advice and guidance. Yet at the same time she is not afraid to challenge professionals and even her supervisor to advocate for the children's best interests.

We as Seventh-day Adventists recognise that we are called to be the light in this world. While corrupt forces press from every side, the saints are called to stand up with excellence. Annastacia Chenjerai, a shepherdess and member from the North England Conference, scooped the 'Head of Service Award' for Best Social Worker – for protecting children – at Milton Keynes Council on 19 March 2024.

Her supportive husband, Pastor Pardon Chenjerai, and their family are proud to know that she is making an impact in the workplace. We pray that God will continue to use Annastacia as an asset in the community.

DR PATRICK HERBERT



Burton member recognised with community award

Friday 8 March marked International Women's Day. Burton's Sexual Abuse Rape Advice Centre, which offers support for people in and around Burton, held its first International Women's Day award and presentation day, and among the six nominees was Zena Elcock of Burton-upon-Trent Seventh-day Adventist Church, who won the 'Unsung Hero Award' for the work she has done.

Sister Elcock is a long-standing member of the Burton church. When there were only a few members attending the church and they couldn't afford to rent a building, she opened her home for the members to worship in and kept the church going. Today the church is thriving, with members along with individuals from the community attending. Sister Elcock is known for her hospitality. She welcomes visiting friends and newcomers to her home, extending a warm invitation



to them to enjoy her scrumptious meals.

Within our church Sister Elcock initiated a luncheon club along with others, which she has successfully coordinated for twelve years. Throughout lockdown she cooked from home and continued to feed the community.

We praise God for her humble commitment to the Lord's service.

MARLENE MAHIL



One Vision hosts event for unpaid carers

One Vision, the charity in Watford founded by Seventh-day Adventist member Enoch Kanagaraj, recently hosted an event to support unpaid carers fasting during Ramadan. The chief guest speaker for the event was Dr Hina Shahid, Chairperson for the Muslim Doctors Association in the UK, who spoke with both expertise and empathy. Ramadan, a time of spiritual reflection and devotion for Muslims worldwide, can present unique challenges for unpaid carers who selflessly tend to the needs of their loved ones. Dr Shahid's insight into the intersection of faith and caregiving provides invaluable guidance on how carers can navigate their religious obligations while fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities and taking care of their own health.

Among other speakers were Dr Petras Bahadur (Director of the Global Centre for Adventist-Muslim Relations at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists) and Enoch Kanagaraj (founder and CEO of One Vision), both of whom spoke on the importance of fostering dialogue and a spirit of cooperation, underscoring that the shared values of compassion and service transcend religious and cultural boundaries. One Vision had brought unpaid carers from Muslim communities together to provide health and well-being support, emphasising the importance of mutual understanding and fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

The perspectives shared by Dr Shahid, Dr Bahadur, and Enoch Kanagaraj served to inspire and uplift unpaid carers, reaffirming the importance of their contributions and the support available within their communities.

The Unpaid Carers Project, aimed at providing essential support and resources to those tirelessly caring for their loved ones from ethnic minorities in Hertfordshire, has received funding and support from Hertfordshire County Council. This partnership underscores the council's commitment to enhancing the well-being of its residents by recognising and supporting the needs of unpaid carers within the community. With the support of Hertfordshire County Council, the Unpaid Carers Project can continue its vital work, ensuring that carers receive the assistance and recognition they deserve while they selflessly dedicate themselves to the care of others.

ENOCH KANAGARAJ, ONE VISION CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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Rijswijk, Netherlands

Registration Deadline Extended!

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*excluding site admin fee
**late registration commences 10th June 2024

BAC TO BASICS THE UPDATE

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2024 SM Session Notification

Notice is hereby given that the 12th Triennial Session of the Scottish Mission of Seventh-day Adventists will take place at the AK Bell Library, 2-8 York Place, Perth, PH2 8EP, on Sunday 30 June 2024. Delegates will receive documentation in advance of the session.

Pastor Jacques Venter (Executive Secretary, Scottish Mission)



British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC AFFAIRS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY TRAINING WEEKEND

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GC PARL Director

Pr Heli Otamo-Csizmadia
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£75 per person if booked by 30 March 2024.
Thereafter £150 per person. Deadline is 19 April 2024

For bookings or more info contact:
kguthrie@adventist.uk / 01923 672251

2024 NEC Youth Events

SYLA Weekend

10-12 May – Hays Wood

NEC Camp Meeting

29 May – 3 June – Yarnfield

Over 25s Camp

12-16 June – Aberdaron

The Big 7

23 June – Birmingham University

Football Tournament

14 July – TBC

BUC Youth Congress

22-27 July – The Netherlands

Junior Camp

4-11 August – Aberdaron

Youth Camp

11-18 August – Aberdaron

Teens Camp

18-25 August – Aberdaron

Students Day

5 October – Windsor Street Church

Winter Banquet

15 December – Double Tree Hilton Hotel



Non-Executive Expert Advisors



The British Union Conference (BUC) of Seventh-day Adventists is excited to extend invitations for application to members willing to serve as Non-Executive Expert Advisors to our trustee board (commonly referred to as the Executive Committee).

The BUC functions as the delegated authority on behalf of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, enabling the creation of policies and practices within our context across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and all adjacent British islands. Operating as a church, charity and corporation, our unique structure within the BUC requires strong attention across all three of these strategic areas to be able to comply with legislation, operate according to best practice, and provide guidance to the conferences and missions.

As a Non-Executive Expert Advisor to the Executive Committee, you'll play a pivotal role in the Executive Committee's governance of the BUC across its territory, providing specialist advice and guidance. Your contributions will be instrumental in sharing good governance practices, supporting the vision and the future of the BUC, and driving positive change in line with our organisational strategic plan.

There are five areas of expertise that we are currently seeking to strengthen our board: **Legal, Compliance & Audit, People, Safeguarding, Assets & Investments.**

These non-executive expert advisors to the board come as a result of the recommendations following the State of the Union town hall meeting held last year. As the Executive Committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the BUC territory, we are seeking applicants who are sympathetic to the ethics and doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Based on our value proposition, details pertaining to the expected education, experience, and expertise of applicants, along with the key responsibilities, are available for each Non-Executive Expert Advisor application pack on our website.

Applications are welcome from individuals who are not employed by the entities (BUC, SEC, NEC, IM, SM, WM), employed by affiliated institutions, or currently serving Executive Committee members.

Term: Roles are fixed-term appointments and will be effective until 2026, which is the end of the current BUC quinquennium.

Commitment: In-person attendance at quarterly Executive Committee meetings will be required, as well as ad-hoc extraordinary meetings taking place outside of regular quarterly meetings.

Role type: Non-executive board role.

Application deadline:

The application deadline is **Tuesday 11 June 2024 at midnight.**

For further information, and to view the application pack, please visit our website:
<https://adventist.uk/who-we-are/jobs/>.



LifeSource book sales

DATE	VENUE	TIME
19 May	Brixton	10am-2pm
26 May – 2 June	NEC Camp Meeting	
23 June	Carmarthen	10am-2pm
30 June	Croydon	10am-2pm

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

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Adventist Students on Campus learn how to bake bread

ASC, or Adventist Students on Campus, is a North England Conference initiative of Adventist students at universities throughout the Midlands and the North of England with a mission on campus. Established as university societies, the main aim is to share the Gospel on campus, to provide support and friendship for students of all faiths, and to promote a healthy lifestyle. One way students at the University of Birmingham are achieving this is by teaching their peers how to bake homemade bread.

On 23 January, led by their baker chaplain, Pastor Obinnaya Iheoma, the UoB ASC society hosted a bread-baking tutorial for twelve



non-Adventist students. The response was extremely positive, with the students enjoying delicious homemade bread, and learning the story behind why Pastor Obi bakes bread every day except the Sabbath. Alongside this connection, the students also received the opportunity to sign up for a charity walk in aid of ADRA, which Pastor Obi hosts yearly.

Campus ministries is about

building relationships – whether that's through providing alternative social activities to the bar crawls and club nights that are prevalent on campus, or just through simple friendships, we strongly encourage our Adventist youth to step up to the challenge and be a part of something big on their campus. Even if your university doesn't have an Adventist society, you can still be a witness. Look at the skills you possess and think how they can be used to benefit your peers. Be friends to those around you. In a world of inauthenticity, an authentic friend is a powerful Christian character witness. Campus ministry doesn't necessarily begin with a Bible study or a literature distribution campaign. It can begin in the small things, with something even as simple as baking bread.

ADRIAN DE LIMA



Wood Green's special Family Day

February has been dedicated to family life, love and relationships at Wood Green Church. Each Sabbath families have led out during Divine Service, with special speakers on family issues. The highlight was an all-day special Family Life programme on Sabbath 24 February, when the Weisey family and friends led out: the praise and worship were led by the whole of the Weisey family.

The service was packed with the glorious music of guest organist Ashley Thompson, who inspired the whole congregation. Nadine Nunes also blessed us with her solo vocal piece just before the sermon.

The guest speaker was Jacqueline Otokpa, SEC Women's Ministries Director. Her sermon focused on the church's responsibility to nurture, support and care for the young people in its midst and in the wider community. She stated that one of the signs or red flags that we need to learn to see in our youth is their gradual emotional withdrawal from society: in other words, becoming more introverted, so that they communicate less and less with family, peers and friends. If signs like these are missed, it can have a devastating long-term effect.

The biblical story of Eli was mentioned, who failed to teach his children discipline and the ways of God. Jacqueline concluded that knife crime and violence are rampant in some parts of this country and that the church must nurture and discipline the children in its care.

After the wonderful Sabbath lunch, there was a men's programme in the upper hall and a women's programme in

the sanctuary, and the women's programme focused on assessing our individual value, noting that our freedom has been bought through the death of Jesus and forgiveness is ours through Him. During this time Jacqueline shared part of her own personal testimony of how she was abused as an 8-year-old child, and how later in her adult life she met Adventists who led her to Jesus and a place of emotional healing. Her conversion experience helped her to see her value, and she emphasised to those present that we are all God's treasures – valued in His sight and loved by Him.

To end the afternoon session, we all read out Bible texts and shared what they meant to us.

Our thanks and appreciation go to our new pastor, Vaughn Thorpe, and to our Family Life Ministries leader, Opal Johnson-Christie, for making this wonderful day possible!

ODELE PRINCE



Folkestone Multicultural Day

On Sabbath 30 March 2024, Folkestone Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kent celebrated a cultural event. The event comprised members and friends from various countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, India, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Spain, Romania, Moldova and of course England. Each one presented an item of praise and worship in the language of their country of origin. Pastor Rio Espulgar, South England Conference Children and Family Ministries Director, supported the event and delivered a sermonette on Jesus' miracle of the five loaves and two fish. Everyone was truly blessed by the event, and they are looking forward to a similar event in the future.

VIOLET NG

Denise Yolande Riley
(c. 1937-2024)
d. 25 February.



Sister Riley was a faithful member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She died peacefully at home on 25 February, surrounded by her loved ones. Denise leaves behind a daughter, grandson, two great-grandchildren and many relatives, friends and colleagues here in the UK and abroad. Her funeral took place on 6 March 2024 in Islington, attended by around 100 family, church members and friends. She was a 'selfless and giving woman'. Sister Laura Osei, Headteacher of Eden Seventh-day Adventist School, commented: 'Denise taught all my daughters to read within three months.' The school has renamed one of its classes 'The Granny Riley Reading Scheme'. Pastor Brighton Kavaloh thanked the family for the privilege of conducting the service.

Sister Zinze Bishop gave the following testimony of her: 'My aunt was known as "Granny" to many – to the children in her family, and to the children in the community whom she taught to read and write. Aunt Denise created pamphlets dedicated to her phonic spelling gems. These lists of words and phrases that she had singlehandedly crafted over the years were unbeatable: by the time her grandson was 2, he was saying words that not even a 5-year-old could pronounce. I soon joined him, and by age 4 my reading was above average.

'At a time when people from the Caribbean had to struggle for work, having this formula meant that Aunt Denise provided her loved ones with freedom . . . although back then we did not know it. For almost twenty years I would see different children coming into the home to learn her methods. I remember one parent in tears because Aunt Denise had got their son, who had been suspended multiple times, to return to school. I heard her thanking my aunt, because now her child was top of his class. She also taught grown adults to read.

'Eden School, an independent Adventist Christian school, was founded by Headteacher Mrs Osei with the support of her loyal friend Aunt Denise, a teacher there. Some of the students are now doctors and lawyers.

'Aside from her gifts with words, Aunt Denise had a heart for Jesus. When I was 17, she began inviting me to her home on Friday nights. At that time I was not an Adventist and loved music and spending time with friends, especially on Fridays and Sabbaths. However, after about a year of declining, one day I said yes. I came in to my aunt's living room and it was full of unfamiliar faces, but they looked pleasant enough, so I joined them.

'Each week I came, and I really felt this amazing Presence in the room. Over the months and years I learnt so much about Bible history, and about how much God loved me. I began to trust Jesus and my faith grew. Five years later I was baptised. At 23 I got a job as a secretary for the Conference, and now, aged 37, I am a trained Christian counsellor and foster carer. I love attending church with my family and opening my home for Bible studies and health programmes, just as my aunt did.'

ZINZE BISHOP

Samuel A. Hanson
(1940-2024)
d. 18 March.



On 18 March another stalwart of Peckham Church passed away. Brother Samuel A. Hanson formed a strong part of the Peckham, Plumstead and Longsight church memories, being a very influential figure. He served as an elder for many years in these churches. He was also known to the Brixton, Walsall and Worcester Seventh-day Adventist congregations in the UK, and Knockpatrick Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mandeville, Jamaica. He was a champion of the Spirit of Prophecy and a spiritual leader. He and his wife, Sister Ivy Hanson, often opened their homes to host Daniel and Revelation seminars, prayer meetings, choir practices and Bible studies. He had an imposing physical presence and was a man of enormous practical skills, which helped to build churches not only spiritually, but physically as well, by using his talents as a builder and carpenter to restore and build the beautiful churches that now stand at Peckham in London and Longsight in Manchester. This will forever remain one of his enduring legacies.

While he had an authoritative stance on the pillars of our faith, he also took on the role of games master at many of our church social events. He used his van to facilitate church trips to places as far as Brighton and Edinburgh. As he mellowed in his later years, he became known by the church and local communities as 'Mr Smiley', and would never miss an opportunity to share his faith and tell stories, his favourite being the story of Joseph and his brothers. He was an inspiration to the youth, and taught many how to drive, including his own children.

Samuel was born in the Johnson district, St James, Jamaica on 7 May 1940, the ninth child of Samuel and Loretta Hanson. He attended Johnson Seventh-day Adventist Church and played the church organ. He was self-taught, and also learnt to play the mouth organ and acoustic guitar. He passed on his love of music to his children, and taught all of them the

basics of piano or guitar playing.

He came to England in 1961 and sent for his betrothed to join him in 1962. They married at Lewisham Seventh-day Adventist Church in August of that same year. He leaves behind his beloved wife of 62 years, Sister Ivy Hanson; his six children: Carmen, Paulette, Ellen, Sam, Stephanie and Alycia; nine grandchildren: Matthew, Mikayla, Morayo, Ayanna, Eden, Serene, Joel, Jeshua and Lasian; and two great-grandchildren: Zara and Noah. He is survived by six of his twelve siblings: Ambrosine, Randall, Caroline, Louise, Joseph and Cedric.

He is sorely missed and will be forever in our hearts.

ALYCIA MKWANANZI & CARMEN HANSON-HOYE

Messenger

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Sunset

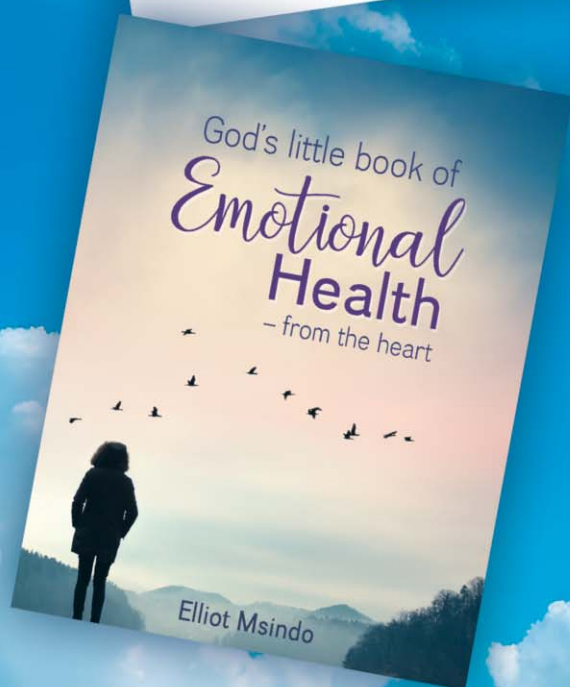
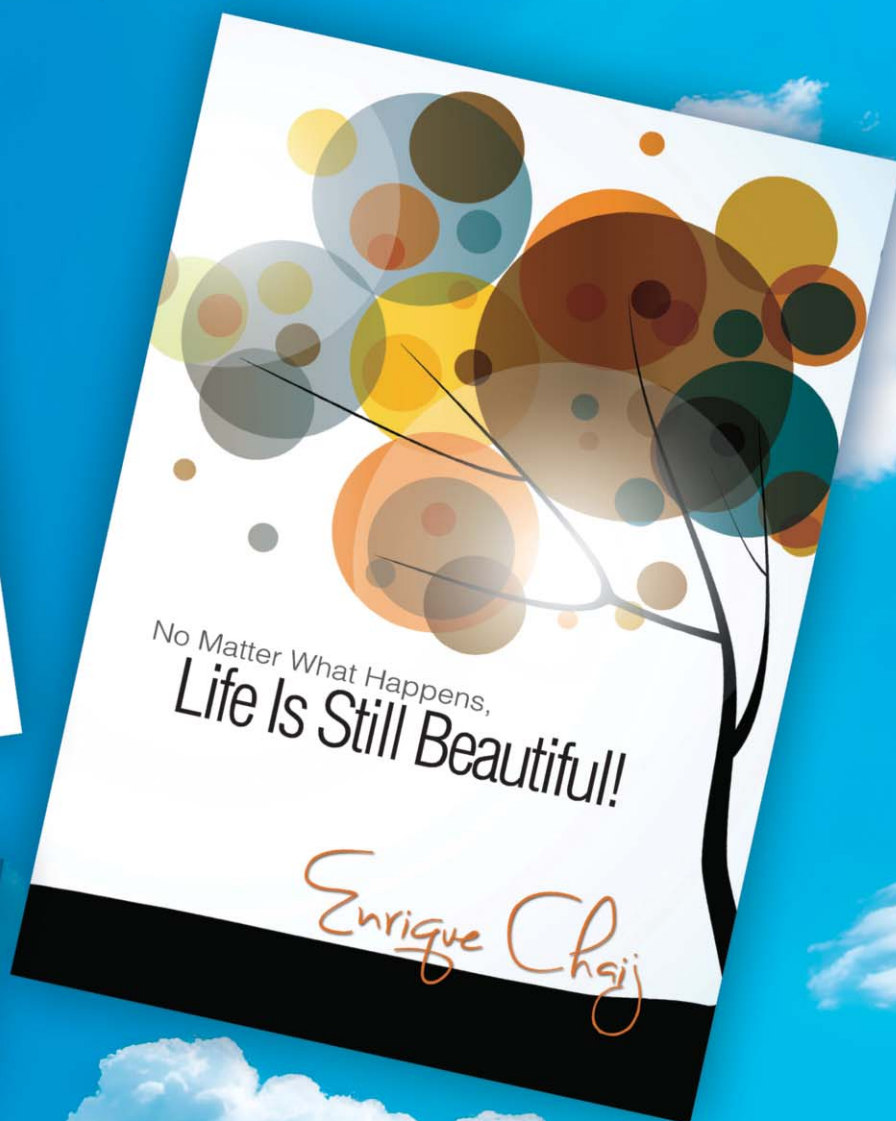
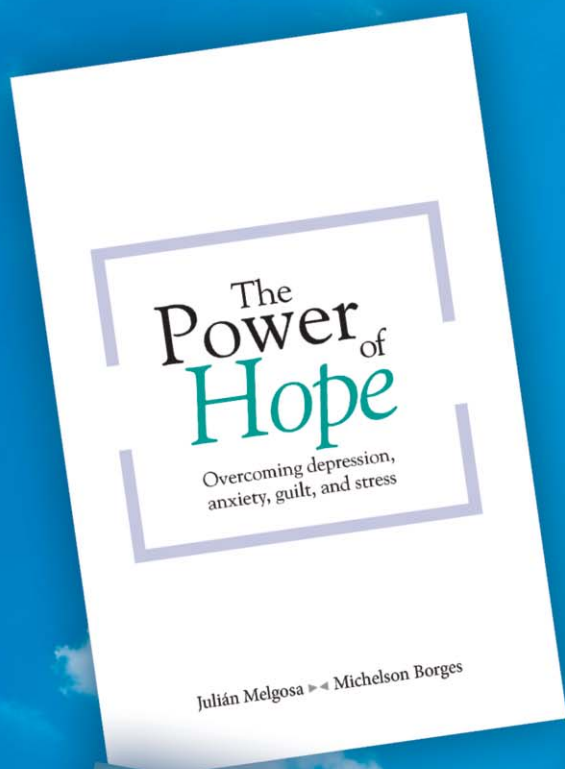
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17	8.50	9.02	9.00	9.24	9.27
24	8.59	9.12	9.11	9.36	9.38
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