

Messenger

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The house that Jesus builds



**Pastor Claudiu Popescu of the
Scottish Mission deepens his
faith in God in the Himalayas**



The house that Jesus builds

by Pastor Eglan Brooks,
President of the
British Union Conference

Travel through the territory of the British Union Conference to worship and fellowship with different congregations in various sacred spaces. Some of these buildings are large and imposing – a reminder of the glamour of centuries-old Christianity with stained glass windows and delicately crafted woodwork, where the church in the United Kingdom had ultimate authority.

Several of our congregations own modern edifices specifically for the glory of God. Others have purchased warehouses and converted them into places of worship. Many of our congregations worship in the halls of schools, leisure centres, libraries and even shops.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when church buildings were forced to close, we held services at home with our families, those in our bubbles, and online in local congregations, often with

... a reminder of the glamour of centuries-old Christianity with stained glass windows and delicately crafted woodwork ...



hundreds or thousands of other worshippers on virtual platforms.

A house of prayer and joy

In Isaiah 56:7, God said that He would make the worshippers 'joyful in my house of prayer . . . for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people' (KJV). God's house, the house that Jesus builds, should be one of continual and consistent prayer. Where two or three are gathered together, prayer should be a central act of worship, for 'prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.'¹ As we enter

God's house of whatever size and shape, in person or online, wherever we are, we should be excited to spend time with Him with other believers.

Of course, God is always with us, because 'where can I flee from your presence?'² But there is a specialness about gathering together for worship, for 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD,'³ and 'a day in Your courts is better than a thousand [anywhere else].'⁴ It is also a significant place of praise, for we acknowledge that 'the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.'⁵

A house of confession and repentance

After the temple dedication and celebrations, God appears to Solomon at night to let him know that when the land is overrun with pests or disease or drought, 'if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.'⁶

The house that Jesus builds will be infused with confession and repentance. We will say, 'Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'⁷

A house of testimony and community

Our coming together should include testimony as well as fellowship. When Paul was converted after his Damascus Road experience, the Lord spoke to him and said, 'I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.'⁸ Not only in our services, but also through our fellowship, our testimony will encourage others who may be struggling. Hearing how the promises of God are fulfilled in the lives of His believers and their families encourages those who may be discouraged.

The house that Jesus builds has a solid foundation, for 'upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'⁹ It is not built with earthly hands, but its builder and maker is God.

'We should remember that the church, enfeebled and defective though it be, is the only object on earth on which Christ bestows His supreme regard. He is constantly watching it with solicitude, and is strengthening it by His Holy Spirit.'¹⁰

In 2025, let us always enter the house that Jesus builds in an attitude of prayer, with a spirit of joy, ready to confess our sins and ask for forgiveness, with the testimony of a transformed life willing to witness for our Master.

¹Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 93

²Psalms 139:7 (NIV)

³Psalms 122:1 (KJV)

⁴Psalms 84:10 (AMP)

⁵Lamentations 3:22, 23 (ESV)

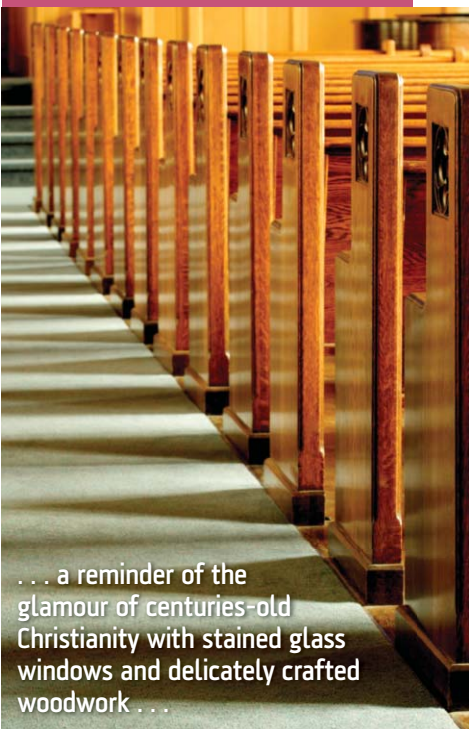
⁶2 Chronicles 7:14, 15 (KJV)

⁷Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)

⁸Acts 26:16 (NKJV)

⁹Matthew 16:18 (KJV)

¹⁰Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 396



Editorial

by Dusanka Rancic,
Editor



Dear reader,
The year 2025 is unfolding swiftly, and we are in its second month already. February is often called the month of love. *But where is the love?* Can we see it clearly in all the suffering that surrounds us?

Whether we see it or not, we need to show it, to reflect it.

Over the last two weeks I have witnessed floods in the area where I work and live. Additionally, I was listening to the news of the destructive power of floods in many other parts of the world. Moreover, many of us were following the news reports concerning deadly and destructive fires in the Los Angeles area. Countless images of the blazing flames of fires scattered across the region and the firefighters desperately fighting to make a difference will stay imprinted for a long time in my head. Numerous structures have been destroyed, including homes and businesses, and some people have tragically lost their lives. Thousands have been forced to evacuate, and many people are reported missing. Some lost one of the houses they possessed, while others lost everything they had, homes that had belonged to their families for several generations.

People were caught off guard by the pace at which the fire spread. The strong Santa Ana winds helped to fuel the flames,

and people felt helpless to change the course of events.

I've already seen many social media posts and even heard some sermons fuelling bad theology and a poor understanding of God and His love. While many are quick to quote the Bible and offer explanations for why this is happening in California, assuming that they fully understand the way God operates, I urge you to take another approach: the one of compassion and love.

One pastor said that confusion and fear were spreading among the residents of the Los Angeles region like the flames of the fire that was consuming everything in its path. People were petrified, and they still are. It's not random that one of the most often-repeated commands in the Bible is 'do not be afraid.'¹ And this is where I see our role – not to judge, but to bring hope and healing to those who suffer; to tell them not to be afraid, and that God will see them through in His wisdom and love. Our role is to help those confused and in pain by reflecting God's character of love.

"We are shifting our worship experience from sitting in church to actually helping people in our community," said Roscoe Shields, pastor of Valley Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church² from the Los Angeles area.

While living in the midst of these terrifying events where we could witness the powerfully destructive and gloomy side of things, I encourage you to envision another possibility. Let's pray for all the people affected. Let's pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the fire of God's love to this dry and dying world.

If the flames of God's love would spread across this world as fast as those fires carried by Santa Ana's winds, what a delight that would be to watch. In the darkness of this world, we should be those burning embers, spreading fires of love to wherever we land, carried by the power of the Holy Spirit. The first disciples set the world on fire for Jesus. Let's continue carrying the baton of His love until He comes again.

Keep the fire of God's love burning in your heart and in the community that you guard.

*'The fire of love stops at nothing –
it sweeps everything before it.
Flood waters can't drown love,
torrents of rain can't put it out.'*
(Song of Solomon 8:6, 7, MSG)

¹In its various forms (see for example Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 24:6; Luke 2:10)

²<https://adventist.news/news/adventist-churches-in-la-unite-to-support-victims-of-palisade-fires>



A happy/blessed new year

by Pastor Reinder Bruinsma



In my native Dutch language we either wish people a ‘happy’ or a ‘blessed’ new year. Protestants prefer to use the term ‘happy’, while people with a Catholic background tend to opt for ‘blessed’. I like both concepts: human happiness *and* divine blessing.

Let me briefly share with you what a happy and blessed new year means for me:

Recently I watched a TV programme about the dozens of homeless people in a nearby town. They told their sad stories. They no longer had a roof over their heads (in many cases, through no direct fault of their own), nor enough income to buy food. I realised that I would not be able to feel happy and blessed without having these basic necessities of life.

Good health is a blessing and a close companion of happiness. This realisation was reinforced by health reports from family and friends, and from many others whom I know well. As I see and feel advanced age slowly creeping up on me, my daily dose of pills has gone up and doctors’ visits have become a bit more frequent. To remain reasonably healthy in 2025 would certainly be a precious blessing and a source of happiness.

In our part of the world, we have enjoyed a long period of peace. But in recent times, in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip, every day many lose their lives. Elsewhere in the world, wars

continue to kill and maim. Reports of violence from around the world remind me that peace is a prerequisite for a happy and blessed existence.

Just a few weeks ago, my wife Aafje and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary. Each time we celebrate that we have been happily married for another year, we are reminded that many of our relatives and friends did not have a similar privilege. A happy and blessed new year is a year together with our lifelong companion.

A happy new year will be a year in which we can enjoy the love and companionship of family and friends. It is something that becomes more meaningful as the years go by. And, as time passes, it becomes more urgent to do all we can to restore relationships that have become strained or disrupted. It will give added happiness when such efforts are successful.

Financial security is most definitely also an important aspect of happiness. As 2025 begins, I trust that my pension payments from the state and from the church will keep coming. Sometimes I dream of a sudden windfall – enabling me to go with my wife on a cruise to the Arctic waters, or to put a serious amount of money in the bank accounts of our children – but a sense of gratitude for all that we have soon overrules those fantasies.

Being retired has many

advantages. One is that one has more freedom than before in choosing what projects to work on. I hope that 2025 will be another year of active retirement, with the creation of some new books and regular articles and blogs.

Many people are perfectly happy if they never travel further than 50 miles from their home. I thoroughly enjoy travelling, seeing new places and revisiting places that hold pleasant memories. It would certainly give us pleasure to see our grandchildren in Sweden again in 2025 and enjoy some further travel. An important aspect of a happy and blessed life is a continued enjoyment of culture, and we hope that 2025 will not disappoint us in this respect.

Finally, 2025 can become a truly blessed year only if I continue my pilgrimage of faith, following in the footsteps of the eleventh-century St Anselm of Canterbury, as my ‘faith seeks further understanding’. Moreover, it would greatly enhance my happiness if I could see my local and global Adventist faith community ‘grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ’.

This is what a happy and blessed new year means for me. I wish you the same happiness and divine blessing as you apply these words to your own life situation at the beginning of 2025.

This article has been adapted from one that was published in Adventist Today.



'I believe I may have met an angel'

by Pastor Michael I. Walker



Edmiza Camblé

The following experience was related to me by Edmiza Camblé, who was recently baptised and received into our church fellowship in Great Yarmouth. Edmiza arrived in the UK from Portugal a few years ago. She found employment at Cranswick Country Foods near Diss in the Waveney Valley of South Norfolk. The incident took place around 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

On her first day at the factory, everything seemed to go well; but on the next day, which was a Friday, things went wrong for Edmiza after she emerged from the changing room around 6pm. It was a cold, rainy evening when she stepped out of the factory. She noticed that the car park was completely empty as she made her way to get the factory contract bus back home: nobody was there apart from two ladies waiting in the smoking area, who informed her that the last bus for Great Yarmouth had already gone! They were waiting for their bus to Ipswich, which arrived shortly after. Edmiza found herself stranded, alone and unable to contact anyone, as her mobile was dead and she had no extra money in her purse. There was no way she could contact her mum, who would no doubt be worried and concerned

when she failed to get home at the expected time; and her children, aged 1, 3 and 8, would be anxiously waiting for her. She was further concerned for her mum, who would be unable to ask anyone for help, as she could not speak English.

As Edmiza stood at the bus stop, she tried to consider her options, but could think of no way out of her situation. She started to panic, and tears began to run down her cheeks. Then she started to pray, asking God to somehow send help. When she opened her eyes, she heard the sound of an engine and could hardly believe what she saw: there was a bus coming. This was a single-decker, whereas the regular bus was a double-decker. The driver asked her if she was alone, to which she replied that she was. As she entered the vehicle, she observed that there were no other passengers. The driver was a friendly, elderly man with white hair. He did not ask her to pay her fare, but asked her where she wanted to go. She replied, 'St Nicholas Road by Sainsbury's in Great Yarmouth.' She sat down on the front seat; and, as they drove along, they chatted for a while, but Edmiza soon fell asleep.

She awoke with a jolt and found that the bus had arrived at her destination. As she alighted from the vehicle she thanked the driver, and in

reply he said, 'God bless!' It was only a short walk to her home, where her mum and children would be waiting. Then a strange thing happened. Although she had been late leaving the factory grounds, she arrived home at the normal time! She had thought she was late, but instead she found that she was on time. How was that possible? Her mum and children showed no sign of worry or concern, because she had arrived home on time, as expected! When she informed her mum about everything that had happened, her mum, who is a Seventh-day Adventist, suggested that the driver could have been an angel sent in answer to her prayer for help. As Edmiza wondered about it, she admitted to me that two things stood out in her mind: first, she worked for that company for a further five months, but never saw that driver again; and second, he had said, 'God bless' as she waved him goodbye on that night and then found herself arriving home on time.

'Is it possible?' she mused. 'I believe I may have met an angel!'

When does discipline become abuse?

by Pastor Les Ackie,
BUC Family Ministries and Safeguarding Director



'It is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm, steady hand and a kindness which convinces the child of your love will accomplish the purpose.'



greater weight in their young minds' (*The Adventist Home*, p. 193).

Contrary to widespread misunderstanding, the traditional 'spare the rod, spoil the child' interpretation of Proverbs 13:24 is not a licence to assault. Rightly understood, the use of the rod should be like that of the Heavenly Shepherd who guides and comforts His flock (Psalm 23:4). Those who feel that God requires them to exact harsh punishments on their children need to re-examine their concept

of who God is.

Hebrews 12:6 (NIV) states, 'The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.' When the motivation of God's love is absent from the heart, abuse is the inevitable result. It is possible to spend too much time forcing our children to be 'good' without helping them to develop internal values from which the correct behaviour stems.

We need to be honest about whether our disciplining is genuinely an outgrowth of a desire to mould our children's characters into the likeness of Jesus, or simply an outlet for our emotional frustrations. Our children should not have to pay the price for our adult feelings of embarrassment, irritation or stress. We must be careful to avoid overstepping the line between legitimate correction and physical abuse. Solomon states, 'Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control' (Proverbs 25:28, NIV). A tendency to take recourse in smacking rather than talking may indicate a failure to nurture an emotional connection with our children, allowing us to understand their hearts rather than react to their behaviour.

Physical chastisement remains a

biblical option utilised by many loving parents. Problems arise when corporal punishment is the only option employed out of emotional reactivity rather than a proportionate, measured response from a loving heart. Our discipline should recognise the dignity of the child in our charge. We are told that children should not be 'controlled under all circumstances by a stick or whip, or by blows with the hand' (*Child Guidance*, p. 251). The reality is that any form of non-physical discipline we choose can become abusive if carried to extremes and administered outside of the context of a loving, grace-filled relationship.

In addition to our moral responsibility, it is also essential to bear in mind that in the UK it is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack the child except where this amounts to 'reasonable punishment'. The Children Act 2004 states that the defence of reasonable punishment is not available if the injury is more than a temporary reddening of the skin. Physical punishment will be considered 'unreasonable' if the child is hit with an implement such as a cane or a belt. Such legal restrictions are often viewed as the 'Nanny State' trying to tell parents how to raise their children. Many feel justified in ignoring these stipulations with the rationalisation, 'We ought to obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29, KJV). However, the Bible also counsels us to be 'subject to the governing authorities' (Romans 13:1, NKJV). We ignore such counsel at our peril.

Ellen White said it well when she commented, 'In order to maintain . . . authority, it is not necessary to resort to harsh measures; a firm, steady hand and a kindness which convinces the child of your love will accomplish the purpose' (*Child Guidance*, p. 283).

Recent reports in the national press about the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of 10-year-old Sara Sharif at the hands of her abusive father and stepmother are heartbreaking to contemplate. Sara's parents were found guilty of murder following a 'campaign of abuse', despite her father's claim that she died after he had 'legally punished' her. The systematic physical and emotional cruelty visited on this innocent child represents the extreme end of abusive behaviour towards children. However, the line between legitimate discipline and physical abuse can be very thin.

The Bible clearly counsels us, 'Withhold not correction from the child' (Proverbs 23:13, KJV). God Himself sets the pattern for the disciplining of children by setting limits on us and imposing consequences for disobedience. However, the key factor in God's discipline is His motivation. Jesus says, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten' (Revelation 3:19, KJV). Ellen White counselled, 'Parents, let your children see that you love them and will do all in your power to make them happy. If you do so, your necessary restrictions will have far

Nature's pharmacy, part 1 – an overview

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,

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



In this issue we commence a new series titled 'Nature's pharmacy', in which we examine the use of natural products medicinally to ascertain evidence of their efficacy, cautions, contraindications, and therapeutic use.

Early beginnings

Over 150 years ago, Ellen G. White wrote: 'The use of natural remedies requires an amount of care and effort that many are not willing to give. Nature's process of healing and upbuilding is gradual, and to

the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice. But in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well. Those who persevere in obedience to her laws will reap the reward in health of body and health of mind.'¹

Current research

A useful book giving comprehensive information on the use of herbs medicinally is *Phytopharmacy: An Evidence-Based Guide to Herbal Medicinal Products*.² Authored by Sarah E. Edwards et al., the publication explores natural products used medicinally for diverse purposes. The publisher's summary, found on the amazon.co.uk website, states the following: 'Healthcare professionals, including doctors, pharmacists and nurses, are often confronted with patients who use over-the-counter (OTC) herbal medicinal products and food supplements. While taking responsibility for one's own health and treatment options is encouraged, many patients use these products based on limited (and sometimes inaccurate) information from non-scientific sources, such as the popular press and internet. There is a clear need to offer balanced, well-informed advice to patients, yet a number of studies have shown that, generally, conventionally trained health practitioners consider their knowledge

... herbal medicines will have an effect on the body, and can be potentially harmful if not used correctly.



about herbal medicinal products and supplements to be weak.'

Explaining the scope of the publication, the summary continues with this overview: '*Phytopharmacy* fills this knowledge gap, and is intended for use by the busy pharmacist, nurse, or doctor, as well as the "expert patient" and students of pharmacy and herbal medicine. It presents clear, practical and concise monographs on over a hundred popular herbal medicines and plant-based food supplements. Information provided in each monograph includes indications, summary and appraisal of clinical and pre-clinical evidence, potential

interactions, contraindications, [and] possible adverse effects.'

Efficacy

Examining the efficacy of any given herbal medicine is important in order to ascertain its safe use and effectiveness in treating specific conditions. This aspect is covered in an article by Johns Hopkins Medicine which can be found via the following link:

www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/herbal-medicine.

In an article by PubMed, titled 'The efficacy of herbal medicine – an overview', Edzard Ernst gives this insight: 'Herbal medicine has become a popular form of healthcare. Even though several differences exist between herbal and conventional pharmacological treatments, herbal medicine can be tested for efficacy using conventional trial methodology. Several specific herbal extracts have been demonstrated to be efficacious for specific conditions. . . . Because of the current popularity of herbal medicine, research in this area should be intensified.'³

Cautions

Highlighting cautions, the National Health Service (NHS) advises: 'Just like conventional medicines, herbal medicines will have an effect on the body, and can be potentially harmful if not used correctly. They should therefore be used with the same care and respect as conventional medicines. If you're consulting your doctor or pharmacist about health matters, or are about to undergo surgery, always tell them about any herbal medicines you're taking.'⁴

In part 2 of this series, we look at how herbal medicines are used, and their outcomes.

Good health!

¹*Counsels on Health*, p. 90

²Sarah E. Edwards, Ines Rocha, Elizabeth M. Williamson, Michael Heinrich, *Phytopharmacy: An Evidence-Based Guide to Herbal Medicinal Products* (Chichester, UK; Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2015) – see <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/10774981>.

³<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16011726/#:~:text=Even%20though%20several%20differences%20exist%20between%20herbal%20and,been%20demonstrated%20to%20be%20efficacious%20for%20specific%20conditions>

⁴www.nhs.uk/conditions/herbal-medicines/

What's your motto?

by Sandra Golding, ADRA-UK CEO



When you hear the word 'motto', what comes to mind? Do you have a guiding principle or a belief that inspires you each day? At ADRA, our motto is 'Justice, Compassion, Love'. It's rooted in the timeless words of Micah 6:8 (ESV): 'He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'

This motto often comes to mind as I go about my day, gently reminding me of the values that ground us. How can we embody justice, compassion, and love – not just in the work we do with our projects, but also in how we treat our families, our neighbours, and even the strangers we cross paths with?

It's a question worth reflecting on, and one that can spark meaningful change in our everyday lives. What's your motto? How does it guide the way you live and love?

Justice

At its core, justice reflects something we all value – fairness, equity, and a sense of moral rightness. It's about balancing the needs of society while upholding the dignity and rights of every individual.

Deep down, most of us feel a strong desire to see wrongs made right. When someone causes harm, it seems natural to want justice in the form of accountability. In the Bible, however, justice goes beyond punishment. It's about *restoration*. Restorative justice focuses on advocating for people, healing brokenness, and doing what we can to restore dignity and hope.

God's heart beats for justice. Again and again, we see this in the Bible, where He shows His deep compassion for those who are

suffering, especially the poor and oppressed.

To truly love others as we love ourselves, we can't stop at kind thoughts or good intentions. Real love means taking action – working to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a full, flourishing life, free from oppression.

When we seek justice, we reflect God's own passion for a world where everyone can experience life as He intended – whole, thriving, and full of hope.

Compassion

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines compassion as 'a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate their suffering'. But compassion is so much more than a feeling – it's a choice to act, to reach out, and to make a difference in someone's life.

When we show compassion, we reflect the heart of Jesus in beautiful and practical ways. We give, not out of obligation, but because we recognise that God has already provided abundantly for our needs. It doesn't take much to make a meaningful impact on someone's life – small acts of kindness can bring great hope.

As Proverbs 19:17 (TPT) reminds us: 'Every time you give to the poor you make a loan to the Lord. Don't worry – you'll be repaid in full for all the good you've done.'

Compassion isn't about the amount of money spent; it's about the love behind the act. As J. C. Watts Jr wisely said, 'Compassion can't be measured in dollars [or pounds] and cents [or pennies]. It does come with a price tag, but that price tag is love.'

When we love others in this way, we become a tangible expression of God's care and kindness in the world.

Love

God has an incredible gift He wants to share with the world through each of us, and that gift is *love*.

As Colossians 3:12 (NLT) says: 'Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.' This verse paints a beautiful picture of what it means to embody God's love. Just as we choose what to wear each day, we're called to 'clothe' ourselves with these qualities. The way each of us wears them will look a little different, reflecting our unique personalities and situations. But one thing remains constant: when we put on tender mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, God's love becomes visible to those around us. It shines through in the way we treat others, the way we respond to challenges, and the way we reflect His heart in a world that desperately needs it.

Love isn't just a feeling; it's a gift we share through our actions. When we wear love daily, we become living expressions of God's grace and goodness.

Touching lives through love and action

At ADRA, our work touches the lives of millions of people around the globe. With a presence in more than 120 countries, we are committed to making a meaningful impact wherever we're needed most.

Our on-the-ground approach allows us to respond quickly during times of crisis, delivering immediate assistance to those in need. But our work goes beyond emergencies – we



Youma and her two eldest daughters during one of the food distributions.



Coumba on the left (the beneficiary), her son on the right, and her granddaughter Mariem in the centre, displaying her sewing certificate.

build true partnerships with the communities we serve, working hand in hand to create lasting change and a brighter future.

Together, we're transforming lives, one step at a time.

Empowering lives in Mauritania

ADRA-UK is making a profound impact in Mauritania through the Improved Livelihoods and Shelter (ILS) project, designed to support individuals and families affected by leprosy. By providing vocational training, cash transfers, and food distribution, this initiative is helping families like Youma's build a brighter future.

Youma, a 37-year-old mother, is raising her four daughters – aged 16, 13, 10, and 2 – alone in a small makeshift shelter. Life has been challenging; but, thanks to funding from ADRA-UK and the work of ADRA Mauritania, Youma's family has been receiving vital support through the ILS project.

For a year Youma has received basic food staples such as rice and oil,

along with financial support through quarterly cash transfers. She shares, 'My standard of living has increased under this project.'

With the cash support, Youma has started a small business dyeing fabric with her daughters in the traditional way to make melhfás – the vibrant, flowing garments worn by women in Mauritania and Western Sahara. Selling these melhfás generates an additional 3,000 Mauritanian ouguiya (MRU) per month – about £59 – which she saves towards building a latrine and a small kitchen. In remote desert areas, where open defecation is common and poses serious health risks, these facilities will dramatically improve her family's hygiene and safety, providing a more dignified way of living.

Thanks to a second cash transfer of 4,500 MRU (£89), Youma has launched a second business, purchasing a second-hand fridge to sell cold drinks and vegetables to her neighbours. Through this project, Youma has not only increased her

income, but has also been able to continue sending her daughters to school, ensuring they receive the education they need for a brighter future.

Meet Coumba, a 67-year-old widow who lives with her children and grandchildren. Life hasn't been easy for Coumba, who struggles with limited mobility and relies on her family for care; but, through this project, a new chapter has begun for her family.

Coumba's granddaughter, Mariem, was given the chance to take a sewing course at ADRA Mauritania's vocational training centre. Over six months, Mariem learnt how to design patterns, cut fabric, and sew beautiful dresses, bags, and more. This training gave her the tools and confidence to master a trade and create a future for herself and her family.

In addition, Coumba and her family received cash and food assistance through the project, helping them meet their daily needs. With the cash support, they purchased a sewing machine so Mariem could start her own small business. Now, Mariem's creations are helping to support her family and bring hope for a brighter tomorrow.

By equipping individuals with practical skills and essential resources, we're helping them regain independence, rebuild their lives, and support their families. Together, we're creating opportunities and offering hope to those who need it most.

Become an ADRA Angel and make a lasting impact

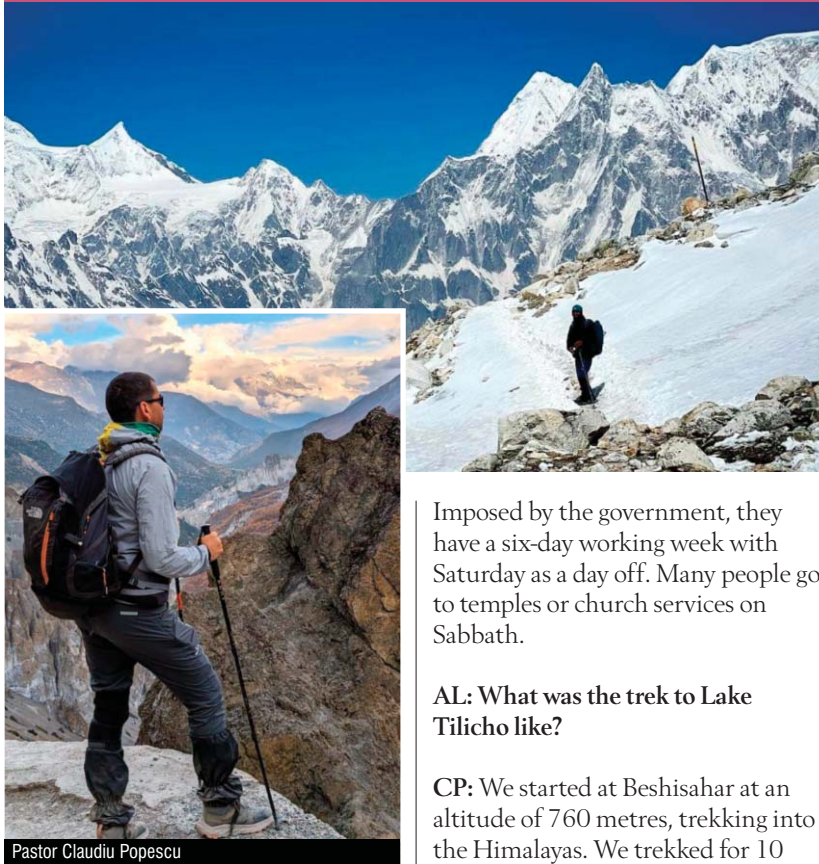
By becoming an ADRA Angel monthly donor, you're sending a powerful message to those we serve: 'I see you, and I'm here to help you get back on your feet.' Your regular support provides vital resources to individuals and families in need, helping them rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

It's easy to get started! Simply visit adra.org.uk/donate and scroll down to set up a direct debit.

Together, we can transform lives and create a brighter future for countless people around the world. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

A mountaintop conversation with Pastor Claudiu Popescu

Pastor Claudiu Popescu recently embarked on an expedition to Nepal, aiming to trek to the Everest Base Camp, Mera Peak and Mount Pumori. However, due to unprecedented heavy rain, his access to the Everest region via Lukla Airport was closed. As an alternative he trekked the Annapurna Circuit, crossing a unique combination of high-altitude landscapes, climates, ecosystems and mountain ranges, as well as many Nepali communities. In this interview, Adina Lupu interviews Pastor Claudiu about the highlights of his experience trekking in the Himalayas.



Pastor Claudiu Popescu

Adina Lupu: How do people in the Himalayas live? What are their occupations, and what is their religion and culture?

Claudiu Popescu: Life in the Himalayan villages is rough due to the mountainous terrain prone to landslides, which makes it difficult to build roads and grow crops. People rely on food brought from the lowlands by donkeys and yaks. They live simple lives but seem content and happy. Nepal is a Hindu state. Most of the people living in the Himalayan region are Buddhist.

Imposed by the government, they have a six-day working week with Saturday as a day off. Many people go to temples or church services on Sabbath.

AL: What was the trek to Lake Tilicho like?

CP: We started at Beshisahar at an altitude of 760 metres, trekking into the Himalayas. We trekked for 10 days, roughly 8-9 hours per day, up to Lake Tilicho, which, at an altitude of 4,919 metres, is the highest lake in the world. En route we slept in tea houses. Here we could order set dishes like porridge, eggs, dal bhat, pasta and soup and have a lukewarm shower. Closer to Lake Tilicho the temperature dropped suddenly, and the wind was cutting through our thick down jackets. The golden rule for a successful ascent is to be on the peak by sunrise when the wind is milder, and you can absorb the quietness of the surroundings and the transition from darkness to light. We trekked from 3am on the last day

of the ascent, and the experience was transformational.

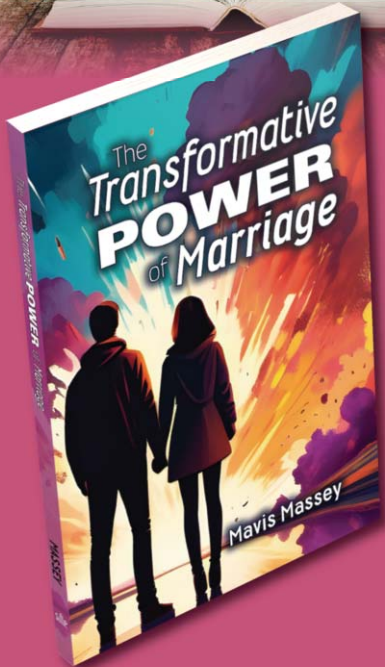
AL: How was the experience of reaching the Thorong La Pass?

CP: The Thorong La Pass is the highest point on the Annapurna Circuit trek and the highest pass in the world at 5,416 metres. It offers views of the Annapurna 1, Gangapurna, and Dhaulagiri peaks, and it used to be a historic trade route. It has spiritual significance for both Hindus and Buddhists due to the Muktinath Temple, considered a holy site by both religions. The trek is physically demanding but manageable.

AL: Describe the journey to reach the highest point on your trip, Tilicho Mountain, at 6,900 metres.

CP: We climbed to three high-altitude camps at 5,800 metres, 6,200 metres and 6,800 metres using ropes, crampons, carabiners, an alpine ice axe and trekking poles to navigate through a combination of snow, ice and rock. The whole experience was something between agony and ecstasy: agony because with each 100-metre gain in altitude was the pain of weather conditions and low oxygen levels that made sleeping in tents fully dressed and with an oxygen mask almost impossible; and ecstasy because, as you stand among the mountains, God's creation feels more meaningful and profound. Each step heightens your awareness of Him, your limits, your strength, and your connection with God and everything around you. I believe that the entire experience reshaped my understanding of God, the world and my consciousness. It's something words can never fully capture . . . an experience that transforms your soul in ways only the mountains can. We had an early start at 3am for the last push to reach the peak; but, after three nights without sleep, low levels of oxygen, and only the instant noodles I had for breakfast, my body ceased to respond, in the sense that I couldn't put one foot in front of the other anymore, so I had to be taken to camp 1 to recover, and I can claim only a bit over 6,900 metres as my victory.

The Book of the Month



The Transformative Power of Marriage

A remarkable testimony combined with Bible-based marriage advice.

Mavis Massey's journey through married life has been anything but ordinary. Her first husband was repeatedly unfaithful, and her second husband was a mentally unstable drug addict. But she found love again, and has learnt a lot about forgiveness, submission, and following God's word. Through all her tragic experiences, God has been forming her character, and now she is ready to share her story . . . and the scriptural counsel she gives to young married couples is all the more credible because of her lived experience. Be inspired and challenged in equal measure as you explore *The Transformative Power of Marriage*.

Mavis Massey was born in South Africa and grew up in a Methodist home. She pursued nursing training in Cape Town from 1986 to 1990, after which she worked in Port Elizabeth, and she became a Seventh-day Adventist at the age of 19. She has been living in Wales with her husband since 2010.



To order this excellent book for yourself or to give it as a gift to someone you care about, call 01476 591700 (8.30am-5.30pm, Monday-Thursday) or visit: www.lifeforcebookshop.co.uk.

Dark desire

by Adrian Samuel



Every journey worth making features challenges; however, there is one whose brooding presence should trouble you.

Describing the enthralling power that threatens every individual, God observes that 'sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it' (Genesis 4:7, ESV).

For you to succeed, you must understand the principles behind why so many before you have lost their battle and strayed from the path.

Desire is a double-edged sword. It is one of Heaven's great gifts to man, granted to steward, cultivate and grow. However, through lack of care and understanding, this same spirit of desire can lose its purity, clouding its original purpose and power.

Samson, the Bible's strongman, exemplifies how weakness develops when we forget two simple lessons: 1. God-given desire is not self-seeking (1 Corinthians 13:5); and 2. Heaven-born desire is directed by God (2 Thessalonians 3:5). Both these verses mention the word 'love'. Love is the fruit of God-given desire, just as sin is the fruit of dark desire. What we plant in the garden of our heart matters.

A desire that is not self-seeking is, by definition, selfless; it ever pours into the community around it, seeking to build it up. Contrary to the narrative of wild abandonment, God expects us to be duty-bound to His cause. Samson's parents knew this and sought a marriage for their son from their own people (Judges 14:3). Although God was still able to use Samson to judge Israel for twenty years, had he listened to his parents, rather than heeding his own desires, He may have been able to accomplish even more for God than he did.

While the fate of a nation may never depend on our Tinder habits, the impact of who we date and marry is immeasurable for us, our families, and the community of faith. What further wonders might Samson have accomplished if his wandering eye had instead been fixed on the glory of God?

'How can you say, "I love you," when your heart is not with me?' asked Delilah (Judges 16:15, ESV). Mimicking the voice of God, the enemy seeks to ensnare us into pledges that would lead to our ruin. Though Delilah's words were mixed with poison, she rightly understood that desire can never be devoted when its interests are torn.

To be committed to a cause, whether spiritual or romantic, we have to let conflicting interests die. To wrestle between these is to be human (Romans 7:22, 23), but to surrender that desire into God's hands in faith is to be Christian.

Desire is like a strong wind. Which way are your desires pushing you?

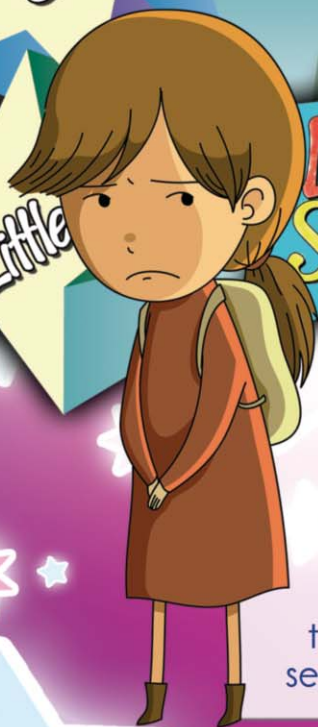
Stars

Activity

Book

Little

Little Stars



Hello Stars!

Have you ever been laughed at while you were at school? Have your classmates teased you for something you did? Noah could relate to that. Before even one drop of rain had ever fallen on



the earth, God told Noah that it would rain so hard that water would cover the surface of the planet, and he would need to build a big ship in order to survive.

Noah didn't doubt God. He listened, and he built.

His friends laughed at him for it. *Poor Noah, they said; he's gone crazy! Water falling from the sky? How would it get up there in the first place? And how would it stay up? As if water could ever fall from the sky! What a joke!*

Yet the Bible reveals that Noah was right. Rain did come, and it covered the earth. And Noah lived, because he trusted God, no matter how silly he seemed to his friends.

Wordsearch

The animals are coming! Find as many animals as you can, hidden inside the wordsearch puzzle.

- DODO
- DOG
- GIRAFFE
- HIPPOPOTAMUS
- KANGAROO
- LION
- MONKEY
- PLATYPUS
- ZEBRA

S P P E S J C U F Y O F W O
 B U Y F J C O H A L A S J S
 N K M F Y Z Y R U S Q J L R
 Z T J A A E F Z I D K Z P T
 L M P R T L K Q F V W G E R
 I F B I L O P N Q G S A X C
 L E F G Q H P G O Z M T I Q
 Z L A P S L I O N M P O H Y
 I I J X G O R D P X Y N W T
 Z S R R L A X O Q P N J F M
 Q Z J G G Z I D N L I T G M
 S V P N B Q I O T T I H Q R
 P L A T Y P U S B V I L J A
 L K Z I Z P T I D W Z Z O R



My promise

Noah, like Lot, was a man who did what was right even though he was surrounded by people who did bad things. When you are with lots of people who do bad things, what will you do? I hope you will choose to do what God wants for your life. Why not make a promise to God, right now, that you'll do exactly that?



I, _____, faithfully promise to do what God wants by doing the right thing, even though my friends may be doing bad things.

DATE

Sorted!

Noah's big ship was called an ark, and God told him to take many animals into it so that some of every kind would survive the flood. Some of them were clean animals, and these came in by sevens. Some were unclean, and they came in two by two. Using the descriptions of clean and unclean animals in Leviticus 11, draw a line from each animal to its correct pen:



Soggy earth

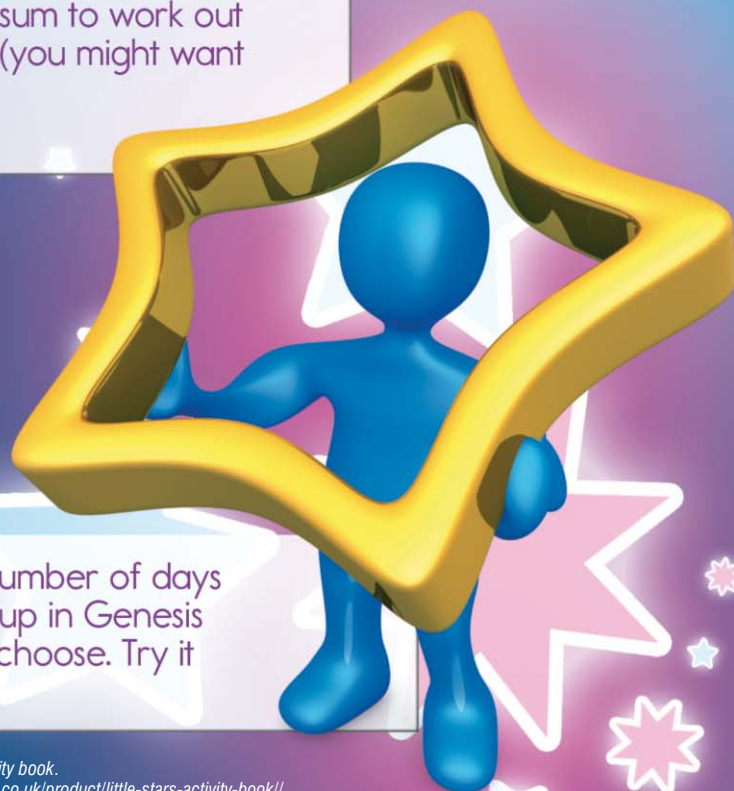
The rain fell for forty days, and water covered the surface of the entire planet. When the rain stopped, the water didn't disappear overnight. Use the following sum to work out how long the water covered the earth (you might want to use a calculator)! Start with any number greater than zero:

1 or more

$$\square \times 2 = \square + 300 = \square$$

$$\square \div 2 = \square - \square = \square$$

The answer that you just wrote down is the number of days the water covered the earth! You can look it up in Genesis 7:24. This works no matter what number you choose. Try it and see!





Brenda Walsh visits Camp Hill

Sister Brenda Walsh, also known as 'Miss Brenda', attended Camp Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church as part of her UK mini tour on 2 November 2024. She told a wonderful children's story about how prayer had changed her family's life when she was a child. It seemed that the attentive children gained an understanding about continuous prayer in our lives.

Sister Brenda was accompanied by Elder Trevor Johnson from the Stanborough Press, and was introduced by Dr Gina Miller.

Sister Brenda is President of the Brenda Walsh Ministries and an accomplished, widely published, best-selling author of many books, including her life story, *Battered to Blessed*.

A beautiful a capella meditational by the Joyous Melodies choir set the scene for a powerful message about the importance of prayer in helping us cope with life's challenges. God's love and care for us as spelled out in the Bible was the main emphasis of the message, but Sister Walsh also emphasised that listening to God is vital. She recounted various stories from her life which demonstrated the effectiveness of prayers and ministries in helping people to find Jesus' love and the hope of salvation.



Brenda Walsh

She spoke fondly of her late father, Pastor James Micheff, who had preached on a 3ABN programme called 'Walking with the Master'. Sister Brenda is one of his three daughters – the Micheff sisters – who sang on every programme and helped develop shows for the network. She is well recognised for her outstanding children's ministries. A

dynamic speaker, she has travelled internationally to speak at churches, camp meetings, evangelistic meetings, women's retreats and meetings of organisations for the prevention of domestic violence and is the host and producer of the popular *Kids Time* and *Kids Time Praise*.

She reminded the congregation that we must choose to be saved, and a request for new commitment to a walk with Christ saw 400 Camp Hill attendees rise to their feet as a special prayer was offered by Dr Gina.

After lunch, an afternoon programme with Sister Brenda was followed by an ABC book sale, including the signing of Sister Brenda's publications purchased by the enthusiastic crowd, who were seeking further spiritual enlightenment.

We pray that her ministry continues as a service to God.

DR JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL,
CAMP HILL COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

London Area Advisory Council's evening of 'Prayer & Pentecost'

On the evening of 21 December 2024, the London Area Advisory Council (LAAC) hosted an online extravaganza of prayers, testimonies and requests for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit as promised in Acts 1:8.

The theme for the Zoom gathering of 'Prayer & Pentecost' was to prepare hearts and minds for the '100 days of 1,000 praises' from 1 January to 10 April 2025 in conjunction with Area 6B & Lewisham SDA Church. Area 6B's Marcelle Moncrieffe, alongside the prayer coordinators and elders of Areas 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D, facilitated a lively, interactive and prayer-filled programme.

Using Acts 1:8, the presenters charged the brethren to replicate the early church's prayer, fasting, and requests for a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the church both locally and nationally as we prepared to welcome in a new year. Powerful testimonies of God's sustaining power, provision, grace and mercy were accompanied by meaningful charges from Pastors Mario Phillip, Lewis Quaye, Otis Lewis and Jude Jeanville.

The highlight of the programme was 14-year-old Tottenham Lighthouse church member Fitz Vernon Jr's animated and biblically sound exposition on the importance of prayer, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and how they can impact the Kingdom. The Zoom chat was lit up with praises of thanksgiving for how God used this teenager to minister to His people!

The 'Prayer & Pentecost' online programme ended with attendees near and far experiencing the mighty and awe-inspiring power of God!

MONIQUE FRANCOIS



ELSOM Full Orchestra



Chikezie Chike-Michael



Gabiella Pedditzi

ELSOM wow audience in end-of-year concert

East London School of Music (ELSOM) students wowed the audience during their end-of-year classical music fundraising concert at Clapton Community Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hackney, East London, on the evening of Saturday 21 December 2024. Under the leadership of the school's Music Director, Fiona D. Pacquette, and her assistant tutors, ELSOM students treated the audience to an evening of inspiring classical music.

The ELSOM Orchestra's rendition of 'Viking' (S. H. Newbold) and 'God Who Spoke from the Beginning' was ably conducted by two young conductors: Kena Roro



Matthew Umole

(Tottenham Lighthouse SDA Church) and Matthew Umole (Clapton Community SDA Church) respectively. The ELSOM Sax Ensemble rendered the hymns 'Day by Day' and 'How Great Thou Art', while two violinists – Hanna Ghitan (Stanborough Park School) and Gabriella Pedditzi (originally from Stanborough Park SDA Church) shone in their respective solo performances of 'Be Thou My Vision' and 'The God of Abraham Praise'.

There were also a number of solo piano items by Emmanuel Asamoah Yeboah and Jakob Rothoff, as well as a clarinet solo by Jason Alder. Brothers Isaac Camron Armstrong (17) and Jalon Aaron Armstrong (15) – who, respectively, sat their Grade 8 and Grade 7 Piano performance exams that month – performed some of their exam pieces at the concert before joining Segun Adetunji to perform 'Gavotte in G minor for 3 violins' (A. Dvorak). Accompanied by their parents, the Armstrong brothers, who travel to London all the way from Carmarthenshire in Wales, are the first among ELSOM's 145 students to have reached the advanced level, setting the bar for the entire school.

Joseph Lipyeat received great applause for his powerful solo rendition of 'Great Is Thy Faithfulness', followed by an equally stunning rendition of 'Oh Holy Night' by Chikezie Chike-Michael, accompanied by pianist Abiodun Falode, who had joined ELSOM staff in October 2024. But perhaps the most moving and captivating performance of the evening was delivered by the Windrush Senior Community Choir: 'I Have a Dream' (M. Donnelly), which evoked memories of Dr Martin Luther King and the resilience of the *Windrush* pioneers who left the Caribbean to assist in the rebuilding of Britain after World War 2.

Dionne Corrodus-Weekes, Director of Dagenham Eagles (who work in partnership with ELSOM), gave special thanks to all ELSOM tutors and students and the attending audience before giving praise to God for His leading during 2024.

DARELL J. PHILIP, LONDON AREA 6C COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
PHOTOS BY THEO GUTHRIE

Hanwell's Possibilities Ministries Day, 9 November 2024

Sister Joan William hosted Hanwell Seventh-day Adventist Church's Possibilities Ministries Day on 9 November, encouraging the church community to value and fully include people with special needs. This was reinforced at the agape meals served in conjunction with Dennilyn McCleod and Carol Fletcher (Community Ministries Department) to regular members and guests – approximately 45 people were present – when Elder Joe Adams appealed for the church to continue practising unconditional love.

The sermon from Sister Janet White, Area 6D Possibilities Ministries Coordinator, was a unique reminder that we are all 'fearfully and wonderfully made, equal before God'. Despite our different abilities, we can empower families or individuals who have disabilities by providing possibilities – awareness, acceptance and action will encourage them to attend our congregations on a regular basis. Joan Williams invited all present to recognise that 'our disappointment' may often be 'God's appointment'.

Janet White prayed that God would take away any unkind patterns which may have developed in our churches and in our lives and teach us to be more loving and inclusive, quoting Luke 14:13, 14 (NIV): 'But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

SARAH LUBANGA (PRESIDENT, COMMUNITY MINISTRIES FEDERATION, LONDON AREA 6D)





'For Such a Time as This' – SEC end-of-year prayer programme

On 31 December 2024, the South England Conference Prayer Ministry hosted an end-of-year night of prayer, praise and thanksgiving programme based on Esther 4:14. The SEC Prayer Coordinator, Pastor Linda Asare, together with Pastor Michael Njagi Mbui and Sister Janet Hamilton, facilitated an energetic programme filled with presentations from some of the most engaging pastors from the SEC and the USA.

The presenters gave the eagerly awaiting audience encouraging tools to enrich their prayer lives. The programme was streamed across numerous social media platforms, with individuals logging on from as far afield as the USA and Canada!

The purpose-centred sermonettes came from Elder Don Chihwayi and Pastor Don MacLafferty (hailing all the way from Tennessee, USA). Pastor Don used the above foundational scripture to give a practical and interactive demonstration that asked attendees, 'What is your purpose?' Bringing us towards the midnight hour, Sister Ritu Gill from Ilford Central Church highlighted what Esther's purpose was and reminded the audience that, like Esther, 'We too have been called by God to intercede for His people, to be courageous; and, as we do so, God will equip us, His people, for the great time of tribulation that is to come!'



The early hours of 1 January 2025 saw heartfelt testimonies of Christ's saving grace, goodness and mercies taking us into the new year. The testimonies served as timely reminders that Christ will *always* be victorious in our situations!

Elder Clarence Jackson urged us to 'find your Mordecai' – that is, to find someone who will supply godly counsel, guidance and prayer. Likewise, Pastor James Yensen competently supplied a further explosive exposition of Esther 4:14, which was met with a chorus of approval from his audience. The Holy Spirit was certainly in our midst, and attendees were able to begin the new year with the Bible and inspiration!

Finally, Pastor Linda Asare and the SEC Prayer Ministry team take this opportunity to wish the President, all Conference officers, church members and friends a prayer-filled 2025!

MONIQUE FRANCOIS, SEC PRAYER MINISTRY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Knowsley Church receives a double portion of blessings

On Sabbath 19 October 2024, just two months after its formal organisation as a church, both regular members and visitors of Knowsley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Liverpool received a double portion of blessings through the dedicated and godly ministry of Pastor Ian Philpott, Prison Ministries Director of the



Pastor Ian Philpott, Prison Ministries Director, standing with members of Knowsley Seventh-day Adventist Church

North England Conference. In a day of spiritual renewal and commitment, Pastor Ian Philpott led an ordination service and inspired the congregation to embrace Prison Ministries, fulfilling Christ's call to serve.

Reflecting on John 15:16 (NIV) – 'I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last' – Pastor Philpott ordained thirteen dedicated men and women to serve as elders, deacons, and deaconesses. The ordination service took place in the morning, while the afternoon was devoted to encouraging and challenging the congregation to engage in Prison Ministries. Pastor Philpott urged the church to reach out to those whom society may have cast away, quoting Matthew 25:40 (NIV): 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Both the morning and afternoon services served as a spiritual oasis, refuelling and inspiring attendees to carry forward the Great Commission: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . . and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age' (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV).

ROSALIA PENARANDA

Christ-centred families

The importance of Christ-centred families took centre stage at Warrington Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath 26 October 2024 as Pastor John Francis, Director of the NEC Family Ministries Department, inspired members with a powerful sermon and interactive discussions. This programme was especially meaningful, as it emphasised the significance of family togetherness. The church choir offered a special meditational item, *'The Family of God'*.

To thrive as a Christian, we need Jesus at the centre of our home and church family, and Pastor Francis delivered a powerful sermon highlighting the importance of the family altar and modelling behaviours that shape characters for eternity. He emphasised how these values unite the church family in the presence of Almighty God.

The interactive afternoon programme, led by Pastor Francis and his wife, Delivon, encouraged members to understand the hidden needs of their families. A vision of a close-knit and God-centred family emerged, growing richer in the hearts and minds of the congregation. Members left with a deeper appreciation for the family of God and a renewed sense of awe for the greatness of God.

Pastor and Sister Francis concluded the weekend with a safeguarding training session for church leaders at Liverpool Central Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sunday.

ROSALIA PENARANDA



Pastor John and Delivon Francis sharing a joyful Sabbath with Warrington Seventh-day Adventist Church.

'Transformed by the Holy Spirit' – Area 6C's half-night of prayer, praise and worship

The evening of Sabbath 30 November 2024 saw the SEC Area 6C's half-night of prayer, praise and worship, themed 'Transformed by the Holy Spirit'. Ilford Central Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted the in-person and online event, which featured a combination of intercessory prayer sessions; poetry pieces with presentations from Ilford's well-loved resident pastor, Thomas Gill; the powerhouse that is Pastor Clayton Maurede; and the dynamic Pastor Ray Patrick. The evening was ably coordinated by Area 6C Head Elder Anslim Narinesingh of Stratford SDA Church.

Pastor Gill's address, entitled 'The Shining Face of Moses', used Exodus 34:29-35 to illustrate how Moses' commitment to prayer and fasting cemented his relationship with God. Pastor Maurede reminded us to 'put on the whole armour of God'. Pastor Ray used Acts 1:8 to present to the eager audience the 'necessity of prayer, but also the requirement to share our testimonies

of God's hand in our lives'. Pastor Ray also conducted an anointing service, sharing several scriptures to support it.

Between the sermons were moving readings and testimonies from Sister Florence and Brother Ike. Sister Myrtle O'Keefe performed a touching rendition of 'Order My Steps', reminding attendees to surrender to God. The lively testimonies facilitated by Ilford's Sister Gifty Armah showcased God's healing power and mercy, and the youngest to testify of God's grace was 10-year-old Brother Jayden Nzanga of the host church, who thanked Jesus for keeping him from birth up to his tender 10th year of life!

Ilford Church's YouTube stream was well attended, with prayer requests coming from as far afield as the Caribbean and the USA! Around 500 devices were tuned in, and at the time of writing this piece viewing figures have increased to more than 800. Praise God!

Special mention must be made of the hospitality team of Ilford Central, and the harmonious singers and musicians on the night, and a hearty thank-you and God's abundant blessings to Area 6C Coordinator Elder Alex Dhlakama and his team, whose stellar commitment and efforts produced a unique evening of praise, testimony, anointing and a moving of the Holy Spirit! The team practically demonstrated 1 Corinthians 12:12, where Paul reminds the Corinthian church that the body is not one member, but many.

Churches represented on the night included Beckton, Hackney, Ilford, Lighthouse Community Fellowship, Plaistow, Stratford and Walthamstow. Further, Elder Alex is keen for more churches within Area 6C to participate in future prayer activities. If you and/or your church prayer team would like to know more, please contact him via email at Alexfarai@yahoo.com or via telephone on 07443 642 880.

MONIQUE FRANCOIS, AREA 6C PRAYER TEAM



'Back to the Upper Room: Connecting to the Power Source'

During the weekend of Friday 1 November to Sunday 3 November 2024, eighty-three individuals attended a power-packed prayer retreat collaboratively organised by the

Willesden and Holloway Seventh-day Adventist churches at the Kents Hill Park Training and Conference Centre in Milton Keynes. This empowered prayer intercessors for mission within the home, community and church. There were even activities prepared for the children.

As well as Spirit-filled praise and worship led by the youth, there were also powerful messages during the morning and evening sessions presented by four dynamic speakers: Dr Mario Phillip (pastor of Holloway SDA Church), Jumoul Sancho (pastor of Willesden SDA Church), Mark Baptiste (elder of Cambridge SDA Church), and Itamar James (pastor of Luton Central and Luton North SDA Churches).

In his message, 'Focus on the Family', Elder Mark Baptiste delivered an interactive session which offered some practical tips to foster a positive and Christ-centred presence in the home. In addition to quoting Mother Teresa, saying, 'If you want to change the world then go home and love your family,' he said of parents prioritising quality time with their children, 'To the world, you may be just one person; but to one person, you might just be the world.'

Dr Mario Phillip's message, 'House Churches of Prayer', challenged prayer intercessors to revisit and implement the house churches of prayer, which were a common feature of the New Testament church. Dr Phillip said, 'Prayer was the engine room that drove the Gospel to the uttermost part of the world. Our modern-day church will accomplish more when prayer is made central to all that we do.'

In his message based on John chapter 4, 'It's Nice to Be Nice: Empowered by the Spirit for Personal Witnessing', Pastor Jumoul Sancho provided ten principles of personal witnessing: 1. meet and mingle with people; 2. put aside prejudices and engage prospects; 3. expect resistance; 4. offer something that will meet a need; 5. concentrate on meeting that need; 6. be persistent to break down



Prayer retreat group

resistance; 7. go for the family; 8. encourage worship of God in the Spirit and in truth; 9. teach the truth when the prospect is ready for it; and 10. prioritise personal witnessing – it is the best preparation for public evangelism.

Pastor Itamar James preached the final message, setting the room ablaze with a dynamic word admonishing prayer intercessors to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit in order to receive their own upper-room experience that would empower them to serve their homes, community and church. 'When God is in your life, the ordinary becomes extraordinary,' Pastor James declared to the jubilation of those receiving the message.

Many testimonies were shared, highlighting the goodness of God during challenging times. The retreat was then brought to an end with a special anointing service in which all prayer intercessors, children and youth were consecrated to God for the purpose of mission in preparation for the Lord's soon return.

DARELL J. PHILIP



Dr Mario Phillip



Pastor Jumoul Sancho

'Marvellous' literature distribution at Redhill

Towards the end of December 2024, the Redhill congregation organised three major literature programmes in the Redhill area and the town centre, combining free literature distribution with choir singing. Hundreds of books and other items of literature were freely distributed to members of the local community.

The final Sabbath afternoon in particular was described by those present as a 'marvel'. Although threatened with bad weather, many books were given out by faithful children and adults even before the choir had started singing. As the choir sang the Lord's praises a gentle rain started to fall, but the literature flowed so quickly that 500 pieces of literature were distributed within the space of an hour, including *The Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ* by Ellen White, along with health magazines and 300 pamphlets.

As a result of these evangelistic initiatives, new contacts have been made and Bible studies have begun! In addition to praising God for His abundant goodness and mercies, Redhill members thank the Stanborough Press staff for the splendid work they have achieved in 2024 and pray that God will sustain them to continue providing literature all through 2025. For their part, the Press staff are humbled and grateful to God to be able to supply the church for all such literature-distribution missionary work. To God be the glory, and may many more souls be won for His kingdom.

PASTOR PETER SAYERS



A joyful community celebration

The festive spirit came alive in Holloway on Saturday 16 November as the much-anticipated Christmas lights switch-on illuminated the Nag's Head on Holloway Road. The event brought together residents, local performers, and special guests in a heartwarming celebration of community and Christmas cheer.

Among the standout performances of the evening was the beautiful singing of the Holloway Seventh-day Adventist Church Choir, whose harmonies captured the hearts of all present. Other talented local acts also graced the stage, creating an atmosphere of unity and joy that resonated throughout the gathering.

The event was graced by the presence of the Mayor of Islington, Councillor Khurana, who delighted attendees by dancing along to the choir's melodious singing. The Mayor's cheerful participation symbolised the sense of togetherness that defines the season.

A former theatre professional and local resident shared

her heartfelt experience, saying, *'I've never heard such good singing, not for a long time! This has made my day. I've been through a lot this year, but listening to the singing has made it all worthwhile!'*

The evening ended with Councillor Khurana switching on the Christmas lights, officially marking the start of the festive season on Holloway Road. As the lights twinkled to life, the crowd cheered, and a sense of hope and joy filled the air.

Holloway SDA Church has a proud history of supporting the Nag's Head Christmas lights switch-on, and the event once again served as a powerful ministering tool to share the love and light of Jesus with the community. The warmth and goodwill of the performances were a testament to the spirit of the season and the church's commitment to outreach and service.

EMEKA NWOKOYE –
HOLLOWAY COMMUNICATIONS

'Two Superpowers of End-Time Prophecy' – Stewardship Day with Elder Tristan Cuniah

The British Union Conference (BUC) Stewardship Revival Week (30 November – 7 December 2024) culminated with a Stewardship Day and a special day of prayer for healing in our churches. During the Sabbath School and afternoon services at Hackney Church, elders, prayer team leaders and church members prayed fervently for healing in our church, both locally and nationally, recognising the importance of restored relationships with each other as well as with God.

During the Divine Service, Siobhan Prince, a recent music graduate, shared a message in song, followed by an even more sobering and critical message presented by the guest speaker, Tristan Cuniah, who is the first elder at Wood Green Church. His message, entitled 'Two Superpowers of End-Time Prophecy', offered a biblical exploration of the prophetic messages in Daniel and Revelation that point to the great controversy between good and evil leading up to the very soon return of Christ. Elder Cuniah reminded the congregants that they had been commissioned to share the Gospel and proclaim the three angels' messages.

The persecution of pioneers of the faith, such as the Protestant reformers, and the Waldenses, who were martyred for their faith during the Dark Ages, starkly reminds us of what to expect during the closing scenes of Earth's history. America and papal Rome were revealed to be the two superpowers of end-time prophecy, and they will present a conflict on liberty of conscience and religious freedom; yet within them are also people whom God identifies as His own, who will leave false ideologies and follow where the Spirit leads. At the centre of the great controversy is worship – worship of the true God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, or worship of Satan, the antichrist and arch enemy of God. 'I'm not here to alarm you, but to alert you to the seriousness of the times that we're living in,' said Elder Cuniah, who then added: 'Prophecy comes not to scare, but to prepare. We have nothing to fear, for Emmanuel (God with us) is on our side and will see us through till the day of His glorious return for us all.'



Elder Tristan Cuniah

DARELL J. PHILIP



Dudley House children show the real meaning of Christmas

The children of Dudley House School put on an amazing performance on Wednesday 18 December 2024, just a week before Christmas. Family, friends and church members had gathered at 6pm in the sanctuary of the Grantham Seventh-day Adventist Church, to which this school is attached, expectantly awaiting the children's annual Christmas production – and every single one of the children, from nursery to year 6, excelled.

This year's production of 'Babushka', a traditional Russian tale, highlighted the importance of spending time with Jesus and focusing less on the mundane chores of life. It also shared the importance of service, as when Babushka helped others, her acts of kindness impacted on Jesus, which the children had discovered through the term's worship.

Children of several faiths and of none attend Dudley House, along with Adventist students, and it is our prayer that God will continue to speak to all their hearts and plant seeds of faith through the Christian education they receive. Well done to all the children, and a very big thank-you to all the hard-working members of staff!

If you would like your child to be blessed by enrolling in this Seventh-day Adventist school, see the school's new website at dudleyhouseschool.co.uk and call the headteacher on 01476 400184 to arrange a visit.

ANDREW PUCKERING

Providing Christmas cheer in Watford

Stanborough Park Church held its annual Toy Service on 14 December, attended as usual by the Mayor of Watford, who accepted the toys on behalf of the needy local families who were the intended recipients of the donations. One local social worker, who attends every year, struggling under the weight of bags of toys, explained, 'They will make such an incredible difference to the families and will bring such joy.' The Pastoral Lead at Beechfield School, another regular, brought along a colleague for the first time, stressing how much the toys will help the school's families and saying, 'I'm here because of this service. . . . The spirit of community to get this together is phenomenal, and Pat is phenomenal.' Tim Whittaker, from the local refugees' group, brought his customary 'shopping list' and thanked the members for their generosity, explaining that the toys would help them to put together the 87 hampers that they needed to provide for their clients.

These were just some of the case workers seen selecting toys for their clients after the service. Some 'regulars' attend the service itself with their bags concealed under the pews, as they know that they will be able to gain first access to the toys! They were soon joined by others clutching cardboard boxes obtained from local supermarkets, who were then witnessed walking away, heavily laden, towards the car park. This year, unusually, the platform was completely stripped of toys, meaning that organiser Pat Walton did not have to round up the leftovers and deliver them personally to a local children's centre.

Last Christmas was the 64th service since the Toy



Service was begun by the late Alf Kelly MBE, who wanted to play a part in helping impoverished local families give their children the same opportunities as their peers at this special time of the year. Since his death in 1996, the tradition has been continued by his daughter, Pat Walton.

This year, although the same number of toys were displayed, they were smaller and more traditional, with the large, expensive electronic toys that had increasingly become a feature of recent years hardly to be seen. This may be an indication of the current economic climate and could be why the display was entirely cleared by the case workers, whose actions demonstrated that there is a continuing need for this well-received service to the community.

While these toys will only go a small way to meet the needs of the large number of local impoverished families, the fortunate recipients were able to ensure that their children enjoyed a much happier Christmas than they had anticipated.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT



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DATE	VENUE	TIME
<i>February</i>		
9	Hyland House	10am-2pm
22	Salford	After sunset
28-2 March	Gain Gen Z, Newbold College	
<i>March</i>		
14-16	Men's Ministry Weekend, DeVere Hotel, Denham	
22	Telford Ghana	After sunset
30	Manchester South	10am-2pm

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

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Weston-super-Mare Church Toy Service

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist church on Locking Road in Worle have regularly supported the work of the Weston-super-Mare Food Bank, particularly with dried and tinned goods donated at the time of their Harvest Festival. Wondering what else they could do to help others at Christmas time, they approached Weston-super-Mare Social Services Department and offered to collect toys, games, books and toiletries for those with restricted budgets.

The church members were overwhelmed with the response to their appeal for donations. Bags and boxes streamed in – not just from church members, but also from their friends and from those who use the church hall during the week. The couple who had volunteered to arrange all the donations around the pulpit area stopped counting after two hundred. Then, on 14 December, more donations



came in as the children of the church added their gifts as part of the church service.

Everything collected was given to Social Services and was placed in the appropriate homes in time for Christmas.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



Adventist pastor brings community together for dialogue

On 7 December Pastor Wilfred Masih convened a public gathering at Elgin Town Hall aimed at fostering peace, respect and meaningful dialogue between people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. Community members and leaders from Inverness and Moray attended to show their support and solidarity for the deeper meaning of such a unique and inspiring event.

The world is becoming more divided. There are so many entrenched conflicts in our world today, and extremists target the general public to cause havoc and mayhem in our lives. Yet, in the middle of this, we are promised in Isaiah 9:6: 'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (NIV).

Pastor Masih, who strives to build cohesive and harmonious communities, shared his inspiration for organising such events: 'As an Adventist pastor, I follow the example of Jesus, who blessed, healed and interacted with all members of His community, some of whom we may not even entertain. It is my privilege to talk about my faith and my church in a respectful and authentic way with whomever God sends my way.'

Matthew 7:12 tells us: 'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets' (NIV). Establishing new opportunities for community engagement to promote greater understanding and foster better relationships is part of following this Christian mandate.

In his welcoming remarks, Pastor Masih said: 'Today, we recognise our differences but also affirm the common values that we also hold so dear and that

bind us together – respect for one another, care for our communities, and a desire to leave the world in a better place for future generations.'

The gathering featured a keynote address by the guest of honour, Nancy Robson, Vice Lord Lieutenant of Moray, who remarked: 'Events like these remind us of the power of unity during times of division and fragmentation. It is my hope that such gatherings will continue to strengthen our community.'

Another guest, Imam Mustapha, highlighted its impact, saying, 'This is a beautiful opportunity to build bridges and learn from one another's journeys.' Similarly, an Episcopalian Church minister was delighted to be invited and said he had made new friends. Another guest said that next time she would like to invite the public services and business sectors to take an active part in such an event. The gathering concluded with a shared sense of hope and the promise of continued efforts to bring the community closer together. As Pastor Masih answered questions about the Adventist Church, he said, 'Not many people had heard of the Adventist Church, and it was therefore a significant opportunity to promote our beliefs, our church, and a holistic healthy lifestyle.' May each of our pastors and local churches have a similar impact in the communities we serve.

PASTOR WILFRED MASIH

John Andrew Hines (1941-2024) d. 25 October.



John, a second son, was born in Nottingham during World War 2 in 1941 to Dad, a painter and decorator, and an amazing mum, who played a positive role in the children's lives.

His grandparents and Aunt Edith lived next door, so the family were very close. Aunt Edith was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Nottingham and very keen to share her faith with John, whom she took to church each week until he decided that football was more fun. Aunt Edith did not give up, though, and provided lunch and Bible studies on a regular basis. The studies were not particularly appreciated, and so John told his aunt that he would agree to read the entire Bible through if she would give him some peace. By the age of 17, John's reading had brought him to a fascination with prophecies and an ardent belief in God.

John obtained good results in his GCE 'O' level examinations. He worked first as a laboratory assistant and then as a life assurance inspector. In 1964 he enrolled for the ministerial course at Newbold College and completed the BA degree. By that time he had met Wendy Turner, and they were married in 1966, living in Binfield Hall until his graduation.

After graduation John ministered in London, where Andrew, their first son, was born. His next post was in Ipswich, where he partnered with Martin Bell to assist Pastor George Crutchfield in a number of evangelistic campaigns. Peter, their second son, was born there too.

In those days ministerial posts were generally short periods, and John was moved to Eastbourne, Bristol and Chelmsford in quick succession. By then the children were at school, and it was not easy for them to keep settling into new environments, so John decided to change career and did a variety of jobs for a few years. The boys recognised and appreciated the sacrifice he made to enable their consistent education.

Eventually the family moved to Grantham, where John's ministerial gifts were appreciated as a layman in the local churches. The boys were able to complete their education there and take part in the youth activities of the Grantham church. In 1993, after the boys left home for further studies, John was invited to re-enter paid ministry and served the churches in Mansfield, Doncaster, Rotherham, Chesterfield and Barnsley.

During this time in Barnsley, John and the local members were able to buy a plot of land to build a new church, which was a very fulfilling project. As a part of outreach,

John became a prison chaplain, and church members would sometimes accompany him to the women's prison, singing and praying with the inmates.

Sadly, Wendy was no longer part of John's life. In 2002 he married Jean, with whom he spent twenty-two very happy years. Gradually Jean became disabled, and John faithfully visited her in a local care home. The COVID-19 pandemic was a particularly hard time for them both.

John developed his hobbies of drawing and writing, which he shared with family and friends. He was faithful in keeping in touch with long-time friends, who miss his regular phone calls.

It is said of John that he was a 'good man' who did his best and was kind and fair to everyone. He had a fall in October, which required him to be taken to hospital. He died peacefully with his close family beside him.

We look forward to a special reunion when we will meet John again, when Jesus comes to collect His own.

MARGARET ALEN

Ilma Crawford (1927-2024) d. 23 November.



Ilma was born on 13 September 1927 to Florence and Cecil Selwyn. Florence was a housemaid and cook, while Cecil was a cabinet maker in High Wycombe. Her parents became Adventists in the 1930s. In World War 2, after church, they would invite US Army medics home for meals.

Ilma's first job, at 14, was to be a wages clerk at RAF Booker Aerodrome. There she fell in love with Alec Crawford, a dashing Scottish navigator and aircraft engineer. Married in 1952, they moved to Bournemouth. Later, they lived in a cliff-top cottage on the Pembrokeshire coast at Solva. Alec would fish to provide meals. Thence they moved to Ollerton in Nottinghamshire, and finally back to Bournemouth, where Alec worked at Hurn Airport. In their large renovated house they enjoyed such pleasures with their growing family as gardening, boat building, and memorable Christmases. Ilma, a wonderful cook, became a long-term dinner lady caring for many schoolchildren.

After Alec's death in 1980, Ilma bought a Mini car and drove to Scotland, whose beauty she enjoyed deeply. She finally moved to Alderholt, where she enjoyed cooking, reading, knitting, gardening and befriending her village neighbours. She travelled to North and South America, Canada, Europe, and Hong Kong. For years she was the head deaconess at Bournemouth Church and a cook at Oxwich Bay summer camps. She hiked in the countryside, undeterred by rain or snow. She was of that generation whose

motto was, 'Keep calm and carry on.'

Sadly, Ilma passed away on 3 November 2024. The funeral service was held in Bournemouth Church on Friday 13 December 2024. Precious memories of Ilma's life were shared on screen by her family members and friends, and Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt brought us comfort from Romans 8:38, 39. The service concluded with the hymn 'The Lord's My Shepherd'. Refreshments followed in the youth hall.

Ilma now sleeps, awaiting the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection, when we will meet again.

We offer sincere condolences to Ilma's children, Alison, Anne, Rod and Jacqui, and their families.

RICHARD L. VINE

Messenger

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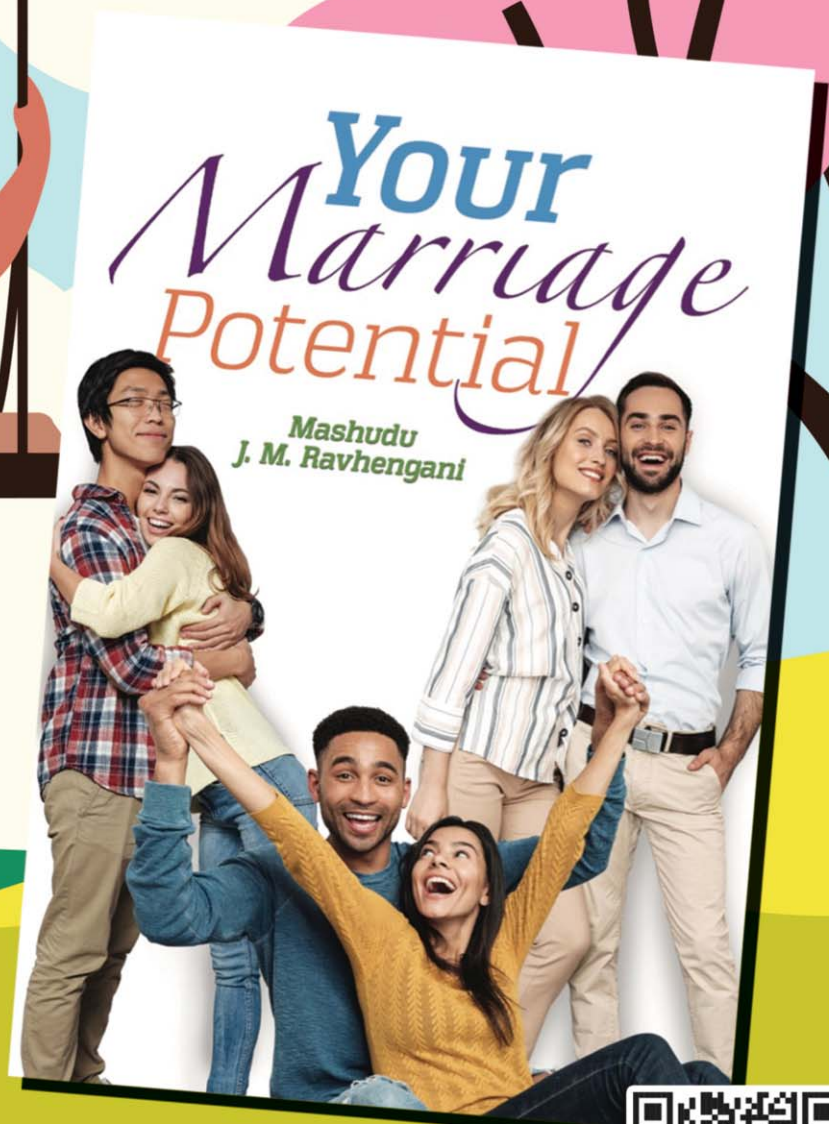
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Sunset

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	Lord	Card	Notf	Edin	Beif
Feb 7	5.01	5.14	5.01	5.00	5.15
14	5.14	5.27	5.15	5.15	5.30
21	5.27	5.39	5.28	5.30	5.44
28	5.40	5.52	5.42	5.45	5.58
Mar 7	5.52	6.04	5.55	6.00	6.12



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