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# Messenger

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# What then? What now? What next?

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau,  
BUC Stewardship Director



I grew up as an Adventist in a large London church where large evangelism campaigns were conducted on a regular basis. These often resulted in what we would now class as ‘mass baptisms’. There were more than seventy candidates when my brothers got baptised in that same church. And if there was joy in heaven over ‘one sinner’, there was dancing and rejoicing over threescore and ten that joined our local congregation.

Imagine a congregation with more than seventy young people today in the UK and Ireland! That would be awesome, wouldn’t it!

But, a few years after that spectacular event, most of those people, especially the young ones, no longer worshipped in the congregation . . . or any congregation. And the thriving church that I grew up in, with young people spilling into the streets on youth days and having to be at church before 10.30am or you wouldn’t get a seat, is significantly emptier. Gone are its glory days and the ‘high days in Zion’.

Some alive today will remember Pastor George Vandeman, who conducted meetings in the Coliseum Theatre, ‘which seated 2,000 people’, between 1952 and 1953. His presentations became so popular that on some Sundays he presented two or three sessions in a day, each to a full house. ‘Vandeman also helped to establish the New Gallery Centre, an evangelism centre for the Adventist Church in London’ (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*).

Others recall the days of Pastor Dick Barron, who, thirty years later in 1982, conducted campaigns in Highbury Field in North London. Reports on the front page of this very publication hailed the event as ‘Immense! Monumental! Colossal!’

Hundreds of candidates were baptised.

But we cannot sit on the laurels of our past evangelistic successes. We need to adapt our methods for the twenty-first century. And, while we must never dilute the uniqueness of our message, the methodologies and strategies need to be open to change.

When we look around and see the condition of the world, we are reminded of the last lecture that Jesus gave His disciples, just before He ascended into heaven. He said, ‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth’ (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

## Reflecting Hope

During the last five years, one of the methods the BUC has used to be evangelistically relevant was the **Reflecting Hope** initiative. Birthed from the General Conference’s ‘Christ for Europe’ programme, Reflecting Hope encouraged the churches that were involved in the initiative to think broadly about evangelism. While traditional methods of evangelism were used in many places, other areas chose alternative methods. **The Scottish Mission** created a special experience in which five pastors, including one from the General Conference, cycled hundreds of miles by bicycle to bring encouragement and the hope of Jesus Christ and His soon return to the people in the Scottish Highlands and Islands region.

A lay evangelist, Michael Garkov, trained hundreds of people in smartphone evangelism as part of Reflecting Hope across the Union territory, teaching them to connect with people who requested prayer. And the project still has a dedicated website ([www.reflectinghope.org](http://www.reflectinghope.org)) with a list of the Reflecting Hope Experience sites and resources. When asked about the impact of the Reflecting Hope initiative, **Dr Augustus Lawrence**, BUC Evangelism Director, said, ‘Over the past few years, the membership of our church has increased, and I praise God that the Reflecting Hope initiative played a significant role in encouraging our members to get up and “GO”.’

## What next?

The General Conference has designated 2027 as the year for outreach, specifically utilising media. As of early 2026, we are now in a digital supermajority world, with more than 6 billion accounts on the internet.<sup>1</sup> Our mandate – to ‘go into all the world’ – can be fulfilled by connecting with people in the privacy of living rooms, on the train and in parks. God has opened doors for us to connect with the thousands of friends we have on our social media pages. Dr Augustus Lawrence and his counterparts in the conferences and missions, together with Pastor Christian Salicanu, Principal of the Adventist Discovery Centre, are in the process of planning a new initiative for 2027. Let’s pray for them to encourage intentional evangelism through new and emerging technology.

<sup>1</sup>[www.brandingasia.com/internet-users-top-6-billion-social-media-becomes-a-supermajority-and-ai-users-pass-a-billion/#:~:text=A%20social%20media%20supermajority,non%2Dusers%20two%20to%20one](http://www.brandingasia.com/internet-users-top-6-billion-social-media-becomes-a-supermajority-and-ai-users-pass-a-billion/#:~:text=A%20social%20media%20supermajority,non%2Dusers%20two%20to%20one)



# Called to go

## Why literature still matters in intentional, people-centred evangelism

by Dusanka Rancic,  
Editor



In Isaiah 55:10, 11, God offers us a simple but powerful picture. His word is like rain and snow. It does not fall by accident. It soaks into the soil, nourishes seeds, and quietly does its work. Only then does it return.

God promises that His word will never return empty.

This assurance is deeply comforting, especially for those of us who work with words every day. We edit them, format them, proofread them, debate commas and layouts. And then we send them out into the world – printed on a page, bound into a book, posted online, or tucked into a calendar.

We don't always know where they land or who reads them. We rarely know what God does with them. Yet Isaiah reminds us that when God's

word is released, something always happens, even when it appears quiet or unseen. Ordinary pages often have extraordinary journeys.

The publishing ministry, at its heart, is never just about producing material. It is about sending seeds. And seeds are small: a *FOCUS* article read on a train; a devotional opened during a difficult season; a calendar on a kitchen wall, glanced at while waiting for the kettle to boil; a sentence that lingers longer than expected.

Sometimes readers tell us what those seeds mean to them. These responses may seem light or casual, but they remind us of something essential: *real people* are on the other side of the page; and Christian publishing has never been a one-way conversation. From Paul's letters to the testimonies shared in church publications today, God has always used His people to reach the world.

### Evangelism with intention

In this issue of the magazine, we are focusing on evangelism, on making disciples of Jesus in a changing world. The Church today uses many methods: digital evangelism, literature distribution, community outreach, education and ministries like ADRA, where compassion itself becomes a living sermon.

Each method matters. But none of them are effective without intention.

Giving books to strangers may work, but lasting impact often comes when we give the *right* book to the *right* person. That requires us to listen and understand people's questions, culture, needs and hopes.

Literature evangelism is not about scattering paper indiscriminately. It is about thoughtful, prayerful sowing, trusting God to guide both the seed and the soil. While the Church has recognised publishing as a strategic evangelistic tool since its very beginning, we reaffirm that writing and storytelling are not just skills. They are instruments for discipleship. Even more, authors, editors, designers and literature evangelists are all part of the same journey of faith, trusting God to use their combined efforts.

### Faithful in the sending

Sharing literature still matters because words shape faith; stories nurture hope; and truth still needs careful, loving messengers. It matters because behind every printed page is a ministry that requires God's guidance, wisdom and creativity. And we know that our words would be just ink and pixels without God; but with Him they become comfort, conviction, invitation and transformation.

While statistics show that fewer young people want to be part of an organised faith community, there is a growing interest, especially among Gen Z and Millennials, in reading and exploring the Bible.<sup>1</sup> They also seek methods to share their faith. When a young church member takes inspiration from the *MESSENGER* youth column 'Young Voices Amplified' and creates a faith-based Instagram platform for her peers, Isaiah 55 comes alive before our eyes. The word goes out, and then it grows.

Isaiah does not say the word returns quickly, loudly or visibly. He simply says it returns after accomplishing its purpose. Some seeds sprout immediately. Others rest underground for a long time.

Our role is not to control the outcome, but to be faithful in the sending. Christian publishing and literature evangelism are not about filling shelves; they are about filling lives with hope, truth and the presence of God. By His grace, the words He sends will never return empty. And, as Scripture calls us to share the Gospel, we are reminded again that each of us is *called to go*.

<sup>1</sup>Barna, 6 November 2025, 'How Millennials and Gen Z Are Driving a Bible Reading Comeback' – [www.barna.com/trends/bible-reading-trends/](http://www.barna.com/trends/bible-reading-trends/)

# ‘Can these bones live?’ – a call to restoration

by Pastor Augustus Lawrence, *British Union Conference Evangelism Director*



**P**ew Research (2025) highlights a rapid, sustained decline in UK Christianity, revealing that the country is no longer predominantly Christian. In 2025 alone, over one in three people left Christianity, often joining the ‘no religion’ category. As of 2025, Christians are outnumbered by those with no religion. This is a sharp drop from a few years ago, when 59% of the population in England and Wales identified as Christian. The decline is most pronounced among young people. This trend reflects a broader, long-term shift across Europe where the religiously unaffiliated are increasing, often resulting in countries like the UK and France losing their Christian majorities.<sup>1</sup>

## Why is this decline happening?

There are several reasons responsible for this decline, including interconnected social, demographic and cultural factors.

Firstly, one of the most significant factors is generational change. Older generations, who were more likely to identify as Christian, are being replaced by younger generations with much lower rates of religious affiliation; as each generation passes, fewer young people adopt a Christian identity.

Secondly, one can almost feel the tremendous impact of secularisation and modernisation as they erode the social and institutional influence of religion over time.

Thirdly, there is a heavy weight of historical trauma and loss of faith due to the world wars of the twentieth century, which dealt a significant blow to religious faith in Britain. As a direct effect of these wars, many were left asking how a loving God could permit such suffering. Over the decades, doubts were reinforced, creating what historians describe as a religious wasteland across Europe.



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Fourthly, and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic forced churches to close during lockdown, disrupting regular worship patterns. Many who stopped attending church during this period did not return. While the pandemic cannot account for the long-term trend, it likely accelerated the decline by breaking habits of attendance that had already weakened.

In summary, fewer adults are identifying as Christian, while an increasing number are identifying with other faiths or claiming no religious affiliation. What is crippling is that many on this journey of decline have developed an impression of God as mean, distant, harsh or cold.

## The divine invitation

In light of these sobering statistics, we must look to the entirety of the Bible. Across both the Old and New Testaments, we observe God’s remarkable way of restoring that which appears to be broken, reconnecting it with a renewed sense of divine purpose. This theme calls us to hold tight to God’s promise to revive, restore and renew. One may wonder what reading Ezekiel’s ‘emotional thermostat’ had when he stood in the Valley of Dry Bones and the Lord asked him, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ (Ezekiel 37:3,

NKJV.) Perhaps a mixture of emotions overwhelmed Ezekiel – from initial despair to feelings of complete hopelessness. Yet, ultimately, he became able to hope and trust in God’s ability to bring about life and restoration, even during a hopeless situation.

My impression is that when God asks, ‘Can these bones live?’ it is an invitation for Ezekiel to participate in a transforming journey of spiritual growth. It is a missional invitation to a people whose faith was in a ‘dry spell’ – cut off and hopeless, crying, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ There was an undeniable reality of spiritual decline, a decline that likely left Ezekiel grappling with despair.

## A missional question for the BUC

But the Lord asks Ezekiel, ‘Can these bones live?’ Can these dried, hopeless bones be restored? Similarly, is there hope for the people of the BUC? The God of the Bible presents Himself to His creation as One who seeks a relationship in love. How do I know? I know because God initiates a relationship with Ezekiel by asking a question that draws him into relational proximity. God presents Himself as One who refuses to give up on the condition of His people. ‘Can these bones live?’ should be understood as a missional

# Re-Imagining Disciple Making Seminars



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question. God has a sending nature. Consistent with His nature, He sends Ezekiel out for mission. While specific commentaries may not explicitly phrase it this way, we can rely on the fact that it is in God's nature to send His people out. Here in Ezekiel, God is attempting to forge a community from a group that looks hopeless. Love is at the centre of this, because that is who God is. Like Ezekiel, God is explicitly sending out the nearly 47,000-strong British Union Conference as disciple-makers to preserve life, guaranteeing that His presence will never depart from them. God sends His people out to do mission.

Brian Edgar, in *The Message of the Trinity: Life in God*, notes that mission is God's business. However, as time progressed and the church became more powerful, mission emerged as an activity conducted by the church rather than the work of the Trinity. According to Edgar, we are participating in the *Missio Dei*. This means that God is a missionary; mission originates in God.<sup>2</sup> This participation requires us to be transformed, adopting new practices. Head, heart and hands are

forged together in an unbreakable chain. What begins in our head will soon find its way into our heart and eventually come to be expressed through our hands.<sup>3</sup>

### Revival and restoration

In Ezekiel 37:3b (NIV), the prophet gave his response as to whether the bones would live: 'Sovereign LORD, you alone know.' Whether or not the mission we are sent on will be a success is known by the Lord. What is required from those who are sent is their heads, hearts and hands. But will the mission be successful? Ezekiel 37:5 (NIV) says, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.' The implication is clear and precise: those who have been sent on the mission require spiritual renewal. Personal transformation and revival must accompany any physical change. Just as God's breath transformed Ezekiel's valley of dry bones into a living community, the Holy Spirit can and will reinvigorate our spiritual habits, relationships and mission. In obedience, Ezekiel 37:10 (NIV) records, 'So I prophesied as he

commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army.' The implication for the BUC is that God calls us and restores us so that we will thrive as a union with renewed purpose. The BUC will stand up as a mighty army that will thrive and succeed. This union will rise again, rooted in God's promises through prayer, devotion, Bible study and fasting.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 43:19 (NIV), 'See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.' I challenge each disciple-maker to embrace this season with love and expectancy, believing that restoration is not just a word or a possibility, but God's intended purpose.

<sup>1</sup>Conrad Hackett, 'Has there been a Christian revival among young adults in the U.K.?' Pew Research Centre, 23 January 2026

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 390

<sup>3</sup>Stanley Grenz, *Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), p. 130

# Unity in Christ: a call to oneness for mission

by Peter Oppong-Mensah, Stanborough Press Production Manager



**Free but not cheap:** Liberty and freedom are expensive. Since Adam and Eve's fall, humanity has been enslaved by sin, and its wounds are evident: pain, sickness, brokenness and ultimately death. God desires to deliver us from every burden, every sorrow, and 'there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying' (Revelation 21:4). \* True, lasting restoration can only be found in the Lord, who leads His children to freedom in the promised land, just as He led the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan.

When the Israelites grumbled on their journey, they faced many unnecessary challenges, and many did not make it. Could anything prevent us from reaching the promised kingdom? Of course! But we are stronger to overcome, by the grace of God through Christ Jesus, if we stick together.

Salvation is God's gift of grace, but it cost Christ His life. The best response to this grace is unity with God and with one another. Jesus prayed earnestly that His followers 'all may be one . . . that the world may believe that You sent Me' (John 17:21). The church will fulfil its mission if we are one.

**Called to love; called to forgive:** The church must be a place of belonging and safety for all; a place of healing and restoration. Without love expressed in action, unity is impossible. The people of God, coming from years of spiritual slavery, are not perfect. We each carry our own pains, weaknesses, habits and fears. This is why we sometimes offend each other. And this is why we should learn to forgive. Coming together is good, but we will not stay together for long without forgiveness. Scripture calls us to be 'bearing with one another, and forgiving one another . . . even as Christ forgave you' (Colossians 3:13).

God set the example for us to follow. He has always been gracious, merciful, patient and forgiving towards us. We, therefore, must follow His example. Christlike love is the only pathway to unity. 'By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35). Let us come together in love and learn to live together by forgiving one another.

It would be very naïve to deny the existence of barriers to unity. In our multicultural communities we encounter cultural clashes, misunderstandings, even lingering prejudices, so we must work to embrace things we are not used to. However, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13). We can do it through Christ. There's therefore no excuse.

In Christ's kingdom, there is no caste system, no hierarchy of worth. We are all God's children, purchased with the same precious blood. Whether rich or poor, tall or short, black, white or any shade between, God is no respecter of persons, and His children should reflect the same spirit.

**Hope:** Is there any hope for the

church in a divided and troubled age, for you and me? Emphatically, yes.

Jesus' death accomplished everything necessary for our full restoration. While hanging on the cross, He declared to the repentant thief, 'You will be with Me in Paradise' (Luke 23:43). His final cry – 'It is finished!' (John 19:30) – confirmed that the work of salvation was complete. The door to full restoration was open. His resurrection proves that He has overpowered sin and death. God is sovereign, all-powerful and unchanging. This is good news for everyone: Jesus saves!

He gave us the map to heaven. We cannot succeed by walking according to our own preferences – there's no other way than His. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me' (John 14:6).

Now is the time for deep personal reflection. There is no middle or neutral ground. Joshua's ancient call echoes urgently today: 'Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve' (Joshua 24:15). Choose Christ; choose life!

**Prayer for the church:** The church is made up of individuals – you and me. If we choose Christ, we choose unity over disunity and love over hatred. We choose the mission to go into all the world and proclaim the good news that Jesus is coming again, as our name, 'Adventists', echoes. May the Lord help us to lay aside every barrier that divides; forgive as we have been forgiven; and walk together as one family under our Lord Jesus. May our hearts be united in Him who is faithful. May He make us one. And may His will be done in our lives, in our churches and in our communities until He comes. If you agree, say, 'Amen!'

\*Scripture quotations in this article are from the New King James Version.

# The ultimate goal: forming disciples, not just children

by Pastor Emmanuel Asamoah



Sarah looked at her son's graduation photo, his smile full of promise. She had successfully raised a respectful, accomplished young man. Yet a quiet question lingered in her heart: *Have I raised a disciple?* In that moment, she understood the subtle but profound difference between raising good children and forming lifelong followers of Jesus.

Many Christian parents measure success by visible metrics – good behaviour, academic achievement and church attendance. While these have value, they can distract us from the ultimate goal Jesus gave: 'Go and make disciples' (Matthew 28:19, NIV). Our parenting finds its deepest purpose when we understand that we are not merely raising children: we are forming disciples who will carry God's kingdom into the next generation.

## The discipleship difference

A well-raised child knows how to obey rules; a disciple understands the heart of the Lawgiver. A well-raised child behaves properly; a disciple loves righteousness. A well-raised child achieves personal success; a disciple seeks God's kingdom above all else.

The biblical narrative consistently points to this distinction. Eli raised sons who knew the rituals of the temple but did not know the Lord (1 Samuel 2:12). In contrast, Hannah offered her son Samuel back to God, and he became a prophet who listened to God's voice from childhood. The difference was not in their knowledge of religion, but in the orientation of their hearts towards God.

## Shifting our parenting paradigm

Discipleship-focused parenting requires a fundamental shift in our approach. Instead of asking, 'How can I get my child to behave?' we learn to ask, 'How can I help my child develop a responsive relationship with Jesus?' This transforms everyday moments into opportunities for discipleship.

### Practical pathways to discipling your children:

1. **Point everything to Jesus:** Connect daily lessons back to Christ's character and teachings. When teaching honesty, share how Jesus is Truth. When discussing kindness, explain how Jesus showed compassion. Make Him the reference point for all values.
2. **Pray for spiritual sight:** Regularly ask God to give you insight into your children's spiritual needs and gifts. Pray not just for their protection and success, but for their spiritual awakening and commitment to God's purposes.
3. **Share your faith journey authentically:** Let your children see your own relationship with Jesus – your questions, your moments of relying on grace, your experiences of God's faithfulness. This models what it means to be a lifelong learner of Christ.
4. **Commission them for God's work:** From an early age, speak into your children's potential to serve

God's kingdom.

Affirm their spiritual gifts and create opportunities for them to exercise those gifts in meaningful ministry.

### Pragmatic actions for church communities:

1. **Celebrate spiritual milestones publicly:** Create ceremonies that recognise spiritual growth – first scripture memorised, first sermon notes taken, first ministry involvement. This reinforces the concept that spiritual development matters most.
2. **Provide intergenerational ministry opportunities:** Structure service projects and mission trips where children and youth serve alongside adults, learning through practice what it means to be Jesus' hands and feet in the world.
3. **Equip parents as disciple-makers:** Offer training that helps parents move beyond behaviour management to heart transformation, teaching them how to nurture their children's relationship with Christ.
4. **Share stories of faithful discipleship:** Regularly feature testimonies – both from Scripture and from church members – of people who followed Jesus wholeheartedly at every age, inspiring families to pursue radical discipleship.

**A prayer for our families:** *Lord Jesus, You call us to make disciples, beginning in our own homes. Align our parenting with Your eternal purpose. Help us to see our children as You see them – not as projects to manage, but as disciples to nurture. Give us wisdom to point them always to You, trusting that You are faithfully at work in their hearts. Amen.*



# The immune system and wellbeing, part 2 – the impact of stress

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



A large body of research continues to point to the adverse outcomes of chronic stress and how it compromises our immunity.

### The long-term impact of stress

An online article from the Cleveland Clinic published on 1 December 2023 and titled 'Yes, There Is Such a Thing as Stress Sickness' explained numerous ways in which stress affects the immune system.<sup>1</sup> In the article, Dr Leonard Calabrese, a clinical immunologist, highlights the impact of the stress

hormone cortisol. He points out that stress causes our bodies to produce higher levels of cortisol. As he explains: 'Over time, when your body reaches chronic stress, your body can get used to having too much cortisol in your blood. And this opens the door for more inflammation.'

The article goes on to state: 'Chronic stress decreases your body's lymphocytes – the white blood cells that help fight off infection. The lower your lymphocyte level, the more at risk you are for viruses, including the common cold and cold sores. This is when you can start experiencing a "stress-induced sickness". Your immune system starts to feel weaker, so it can't fight against infections or diseases as well.'

The article further cautions against unresolved and prolonged stress, explaining that 'high stress levels also can cause depression and anxiety, which also can lead to higher levels of inflammation. In the long term, sustained high levels of inflammation point to an overworked, over-tired immune system that can't properly protect you.'

### Chronic stress and disease

The Institute for Functional Medicine, in an article published on 26 February 2025, draws on data from several research studies to answer the question posed in its title, 'How Does Stress Affect Immune Function & Disease Risk?'<sup>2</sup> The article introduction states: 'In recent years, research has suggested that stressful life events and stress that persists long-term may contribute to immune health imbalance and increase risk for disease development, from cancer to heart disease to autoimmune conditions.'

Citing previous studies gathered during the COVID-19 pandemic and its stress impact, the article explains: 'Some evidence suggests that stressful life events may influence nervous system and hormone-related changes, among other biological responses, and that these changes can ultimately impair immune function.'<sup>3</sup>

The increased incidence of disease from chronic stress is replicated in evidence arising from other research studies. This is evident in an article from *Springer Nature* published on 10 October 2025, titled 'The Multifaceted Impact of Stress on Immune Function.'<sup>4</sup>

The abstract of the article states: 'Experimental evidence suggests that

the duration of stress is a pivotal factor influencing dysregulation in the immune system caused by stress. While it was reported that acute stress prepares the organism to deal with challenges and can benefit the body, chronic stress is detrimental. It can lead to more frequent infections, prolonged inflammation, and even cancer progression.'

### Recap

Sterling Hospitals provide an easy-to-read comprehensive outline on the topic in their online article published on 4 December 2024, titled 'How Stress Weakens Your Immune System and What You Can Do About It'.<sup>5</sup>

Explaining the link between stress and the immune system, the article states: 'Stress and the immune system are intricately connected through complex physiological mechanisms. When you encounter stress, your body activates the "fight-or-flight" response, releasing stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline to prepare for immediate threats. While helpful in short-term situations, prolonged or chronic stress can disrupt the immune system's normal functioning.'

For stress management techniques and treatment options, read the full article at: [www.sterlinghospitals.com/blogs/how-stress-weakens-your-immune-system-and-what-you-can-do-about-it](http://www.sterlinghospitals.com/blogs/how-stress-weakens-your-immune-system-and-what-you-can-do-about-it).

### Good health!

<sup>1</sup><https://health.clevelandclinic.org/what-happens-when-your-immune-system-gets-stressed-out>

<sup>2</sup>[www.ifm.org/articles/psychoemotional-stress-immune](http://www.ifm.org/articles/psychoemotional-stress-immune)

<sup>3</sup>Boris N. Tizenberg, Lisa A. Brenner, Christopher A. Lowry et al., 'Biological and Psychological Factors Determining Neuropsychiatric Outcomes in COVID-19', *Current Psychiatry Reports*, vol. 23, article 68 (October 2021)

<sup>4</sup><https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11033-025-11134-6>

<sup>5</sup>[www.sterlinghospitals.com/blogs/how-stress-weakens-your-immune-system-and-what-you-can-do-about-it](http://www.sterlinghospitals.com/blogs/how-stress-weakens-your-immune-system-and-what-you-can-do-about-it)



# Love that reaches out; service that brings hope

by Abigel Gordon and Petrian Menzies, writing for ADRA-UK



youth event; a Women's Ministries department organised a community tea party; and a church music department held a winter concert for an emergency appeal. Some churches organised 5K walks together, while others supported individual initiatives – like a father and son running a local half-marathon. These activities not only raised vital funds, but also showed local communities that our churches care deeply about people in need. And the best part is that you can contribute towards the ADRA Annual Appeal by doing what you enjoy.

The time has come: a new opportunity for people to come together in support of communities in the UK and around the world through the 2026 Annual Appeal. Launching on 28 March, this year's annual appeal centres on the theme of 'See. Love. Serve', highlighting love that reaches out and service that brings hope.

## Everyone can play a part

All of us can play a part in supporting the ADRA-UK Annual Appeal. Children, teens, youth, adults, families, church departments and even whole conferences can get involved in ways that suit their interests and abilities. It is always inspiring to see individuals and families step up creatively. There was a family of four who, while on holiday in Spain, completed a multi-day fundraising walk along a pilgrimage route. The children wanted to raise awareness of ADRA's work, so they set up a JustGiving page, shared daily photos and videos, and raised over £2,000 online through their efforts.

Across the country, we saw a wonderful variety of ways in which people support ADRA. An ADRA youth ambassador hosted an ice-cream stall at a Scottish Mission

## Why your support matters

With your help this year we'll continue strengthening communities through education, health, sustainable livelihoods and emergency response efforts.

This includes:

- **Ensuring access to education:** Giving children the chance to learn, grow and build a better future.
- **Feeding families:** Providing essential food supplies to those facing hunger.
- **Building resilience:** Equipping communities with education, skills and resources for a

sustainable future.

- **Providing safety:** Assisting refugees, women and children fleeing violence and persecution.

*Funds raised will help communities in countries such as India, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Thailand, Zambia and more.*

*£10 could provide access to a personal hygiene kit for a family of four.*

*£20 could provide a simple school kit – notebooks, pens, a pencil case and a backpack – so a child can attend school with dignity and the tools to learn.*

*£50 helps us to respond to disasters immediately.*

## Join us in creating lasting change

We're so excited to see the impact we can make together! By supporting the 2026 ADRA-UK Appeal, you become a living expression of love that reaches out and service that brings hope. Each time you give, you help to feed families, educate children and restore communities. Thank you for your compassion and continued support.

Together let's reach out to share this powerful message: 'You are not forgotten. You are seen. You are loved. And we will continue to serve you.'

To donate, visit our website at <https://adra.org.uk/> or scan the QR code.



# The best mum in the world

by Shade Henry

Do you think your mum is the best mum in the world?

Not all of us have great relationships with our mothers, but those of us who do have probably bought a card with this phrase or even said it out loud in moments of joy and gratitude towards our mums. As I look down at my months-old daughter, dribbling on her play mat – who spent last night being held by my own mother so that my husband and I could get some sleep – I hope that one day she'll be able to feel the same way about me as I do about my own mum.

In August last year, I spent 40 hours having contractions before eventually giving birth. The following Sabbath, as I fed my daughter for what felt like the 1,000<sup>th</sup> time that week, I was reminded of Isaiah 49:15 (NIV): 'Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!'

I laughed to myself as I thought of the times I had felt abandoned or forgotten by God. Even after one week of nursing my newborn, she was indelibly imprinted on my mind, and even more on my heart. There isn't a moment of the day that passes when she doesn't occupy some part of my thoughts, and I suspect it will be that way for a very long time.

We are often reminded that God is our Father, but this text in Isaiah likens God to a mother in a powerful prophetic metaphor that reminds us not only of the inescapable, unending and overwhelming love of God, but also how specific and personal that love is.

As we step into a spring season – a season of fresh starts and renewed hope – many of us carry the weight of the period gone by. These past several months have been challenging for me and my family in various ways, and



maybe they have been for you too. But the beginning of a new season is a reminder that God continues to walk with us, offering new mercies, new opportunities and new beginnings. If you feel insignificant, unimportant or overlooked, be reminded that the best mum in the world couldn't even come close to having the love God has for you. You are not forgotten. You are held, remembered, and forever part of God's infinite plan.



## Honouring our mothers

We rise in honour of our mothers.

Presiding over our formative years with unwavering love and attentive care, they offered us their sacrificial nurture which helped us to thrive.

Taught by God before they taught us, they wove into our existence a tapestry of heritage, hope and aspirations, fortifying us to embrace God's purpose for our lives so that we could excel as He ordained.

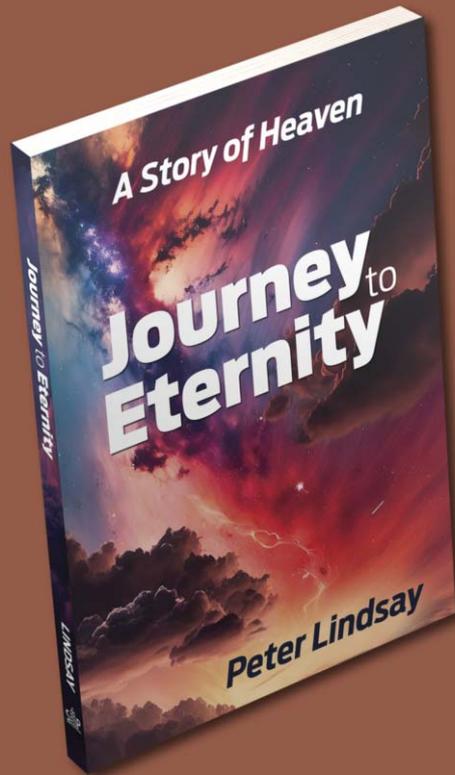
Shaped by their wisdom through divine insight, their fervent prayers enveloped our hearts, blessed and cultivated our minds, and embedded scriptures and godly values, enabling us to face a hostile world with courage, grace and integrity.

Thank God for our mothers.

Sharon Platt-McDonald,

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

# The Book of the Month



## Journey to Eternity

Most of us carry quiet questions about Heaven. We imagine Heaven in fragments: what it will be like; whether it will feel like home; whether we will finally understand.

In *Journey to Eternity*, the familiar boundaries of time and earth dissolve as Liam and his friends experience Christ's return, walk through Heaven, and watch as the earth is made new. They walk among angels, glimpse unfallen worlds, and taste the fruit of the tree of life – not as spectators, but as participants in God's unfolding story.

This story for young people, based firmly on the prophecies of the Bible and the writings of Ellen White, speaks gently to the longing we rarely put into words: the hope that eternity will be more real, more loving, and more beautiful than we dare imagine.



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

## Built underground

by Dara Dare

We all love visible progress – new roles, new habits and tangible wins.

However, nature challenges this idea. Spring is a season associated with growth and renewal, but it is also when nature reminds us that even when things seem quiet, life is developing beneath the surface.

Paul encourages us in Colossians 2:7 to let our roots grow down into Jesus and to build our lives on Him. Most trees hide their roots, but the moment a storm hits, their depth is revealed. Just like a tree, what is unseen – your spiritual depth, character and daily choices – determines whether you flourish when the season changes or when the winds of exhaustion, disappointment, heartbreak or delay start to blow. Depth determines survival.

Consider the Chinese bamboo tree. For nearly five years, there is no visible growth above ground. Yet during that time an extensive root system is forming beneath the soil. Then, in the fifth year, it can grow over 80 feet in just a few weeks. It doesn't grow rapidly because of what happens in that moment; it grows quickly because of what was built in secret. The breakthrough is simply the unveiling of years of hidden preparation.

In our own lives, those roots are unseen habits such as time spent with God; prayer that is not dependent on our mood or our circumstances; obedience when compromise feels easier; and consistency when quitting seems more convenient. They are what prepare us for breakthrough and sustained growth.

Roots do not grow overnight; so, this spring, focus on nurturing your roots. This requires discipline without applause. The quiet, hidden work you do now sets the stage for flourishing and blooming in your right season. A fruitful life is never an accident; it is the evidence of unseen depth.

May you be like a tree planted by streams of water (Psalm 1:1-3): not scrambling for validation, not desperate for quick wins, but grounded and secure. This spring should mark a change, and not just in the weather or the amount of daylight: I challenge you to resist the pressure to perform. When life shakes you, your roots will hold you. So invest in depth. Choose Jesus over shortcuts.

Don't measure your life by what is visible; measure it by what is rooted. Your future fruits depend on today's hidden faithfulness.



YOUNG VOICES AMPLIFIED



# SEC Evangelism Expo 2026 – training, vision and impact

by the South England Conference Communications Department

Leaders and members from across the South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SEC) gathered at Newbold College of Higher Education for SEC Evangelism Expo 2026, the Conference's annual forum for shaping mission, setting strategic direction and equipping local churches for the year ahead. Guided by the four-year theme, 'Go SEC: Inspired for Mission', the expo provided an opportunity for church officers and members to engage directly with Conference leadership, reflect on shared priorities, and receive practical training for evangelism and community outreach. This year, the programme placed a clear and intentional emphasis on creating more time for workshops, enabling participants to focus more deeply on hands-on learning and ministry development.

Attendees represented a broad cross-section of the church, including pastors, elders, department leaders, ministry coordinators and local church members from across the SEC territory, alongside representatives from the British Union Conference.

Before the workshops began, brief framing contributions helped set the spiritual and organisational direction for the day. The SEC President, Dr Kirk Thomas, outlined the Conference's strategic focus and mission priorities. He reminded attendees that, while familiar patterns of church life may not return, Christ's promised return remains central, summarising the challenge with the words, 'Normal isn't coming back, but Jesus is.' He emphasised that the church must be willing to pursue God's vision rather than cling to past methods.

Central to this direction is the Conference's mission framework: 'Christ in our hearts, Christ in our homes, Christ in our churches and Christ on our streets'. This framework continues to shape the SEC's strategic priorities and reflects insights gathered through The Big

Conversation, a mid-term town hall event held in October 2025.

The devotional focus was led by the SEC Executive Secretary, Pastor Nathan Stickland, who guided the gathering through a reflective exercise known as 'Prayer Ripples'. Drawing from Scripture and the Conference's strategic direction, he encouraged participants to consider prayers expanding intentionally outward. This began with personal consecration and moved through families, friends, neighbours, communities, church members, church neighbours and civic and national leaders. The exercise reinforced the importance of continual prayer and openness to receiving a fresh vision from God as the foundation for effective mission.

Providing further context, the SEC Treasurer, Ann Swaby, shared a summary of financial stewardship across the Conference. She highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability and responsible resourcing in supporting long-term evangelism and church development, noting that financial resilience remains a key priority in sustaining mission through changing and uncertain times.

With the context set, the expo moved into its core focus of extended workshop sessions. Attendees moved between multiple workshop blocks, making the most of opportunities to engage directly with departmental leaders and trainers. Workshop sessions addressed both spiritual and practical themes, ranging from discipleship and community engagement to digital evangelism, safeguarding, governance and effective church administration.

A key contributor to the day's training was special guest Pastor Sylvia

Mendez, Trans-European Division Director of Mission, Community Services and Women's Ministry. Serving as a guest trainer across three departments, she led sessions within Church Growth and Adventist Mission, Personal Ministries and Women's Ministries. Her workshops included 'Mission as Part of Your Everyday Life', 'Grounded in the Faith for Mission', and 'Women in Mission', each reinforcing the call to see evangelism as a natural, relational and faith-rooted expression of everyday Christian life.

In addition to the departmental workshops, a small number of sessions were delivered by partner organisations. These included an education-focused workshop led by the BUC Director of Education, Lorraine McDonald, and a publishing and writing workshop facilitated by the Stanborough Press. Attendees were also able to engage with a range of exhibitors, including ADRA-UK.

Throughout the day, the atmosphere at Newbold College supported both reflection and collaboration. Conversations continued between sessions as attendees shared experiences, challenges and ideas for mission within their local contexts.

In the closing session, following the conclusion of the workshops, the SEC President encouraged attendees to move forwards with renewed purpose and confidence. The gathering concluded with a unifying call and response of 'Go SEC' – 'Inspired for Mission', reinforcing the shared commitment to take Christ from our hearts into our homes and churches and out onto the streets.

This article was first published on the South England Conference website: [sec.adventist.uk](http://sec.adventist.uk).



Left to right: Pastor Kirk Thomas, SEC President; Ann Swaby, SEC Treasurer; Pastor Nathan Stickland, SEC Executive Secretary

# Evangelism and discipleship in the North England Conference

by Pastor Dan Majaducon

Early this year, the North England Conference embraced a renewed vision for evangelism and discipleship – one that moves beyond event-focused programmes and prioritises what Christ modelled: ordinary believers empowered by the Holy Spirit. This represents a deliberate, piloted and prayerful strategy to cultivate lifestyle ministries grounded in decentralised witness, personal engagement and consistent discipling.

## From event-based ministry to lifestyle discipleship

While large evangelistic events remain part of the Adventist tradition, the NEC recognises that lasting spiritual impact arises not from occasional gatherings, but through ongoing relational discipleship. A ministry built solely on events can foster passivity, leaving ministry to pastors or visiting speakers. In contrast, Christ's method emphasises people, presence and active participation.

## Specific initiatives

Among the NEC's various key evangelistic initiatives are three specific and complementary goals:

First, the NEC aims to establish various small groups across churches, intentionally designed for different age groups – teens, youth, young adults, adults and retirees. This recognises that evangelism is not solely the responsibility of adults: teens and youth are also equipped to become disciple-makers. These groups will serve as catalysts for the replication of additional groups and exponential growth, ultimately functioning as the discipling and nurturing arm of our local churches.

Second, the conference is developing a robust, mission-driven, community-centred approach to church planting – one that moves beyond simply launching a worship service, and is instead rooted in clear missional purpose and meaningful community engagement.

Third, congregations can maximise their evangelistic reach and influence in the community through specialised training in health, Adventist identity, medical missionary work, digital evangelism, current events and prophecy community discussions, among other areas.

## Decentralised discipleship-making culture

A central aim of this evangelism and discipleship direction is to foster a mission-driven, disciple-making culture across the Conference. This involves equipping local leaders and members to engage in relational evangelism, nurture new believers, and sustain ongoing cycles of outreach. It reflects the decentralised model of the early church in Acts, where the Gospel advanced through households, relationships and empowered communities rather than through centralised structures.

The anticipated outcomes are significant. Rather than merely increasing attendance, the focus is on multiplying disciple-makers who can lead others to Christ. This approach builds spiritual resilience, as congregations root their faith in daily practices rather than occasional programmes. Evangelism becomes continuous, integrated into the lifestyle of the church, while a mentoring culture ensures that mature believers guide newer members towards spiritual maturity. Through year-round training, coaching, mentoring pathways and digital resources, the NEC seeks to mobilise every member as an active participant in God's mission, creating a multiplying movement of disciples.

## A vision anchored in Scripture and mission

This direction is not merely strategic – it is biblical. Jesus commissioned His followers not only to preach, but to make disciples (Matthew 28:19, 20), and Paul affirmed that leaders



are appointed 'for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry' (Ephesians 4:11, 12, NKJV). The church flourishes when ministry is shared among its members rather than concentrated in a few. The NEC's approach mirrors this divine pattern: leaders equip, and members actively minister.

Historically, the Adventist movement grew through lay-led Bible work, personal evangelism and small, disciple-making communities. Returning to this model revitalises the movement's foundational roots.

## Reformation revisited: returning to a movement, not a monument

It is important to recognise the historical shift that altered this biblical pattern. Under Constantine in the fourth century, Christianity moved from a decentralised, community-driven movement to a centrally controlled, institutionally managed system. Ministry became concentrated in the clergy, and the laity were largely reduced to passive participants. Although the Protestant Reformation corrected major doctrinal issues, it did not fully restore the biblical operational model in which every believer functions as a Spirit-empowered disciple-maker.

In many ways, elements of this pattern continue within the Adventist Church today. Church life often revolves around formal weekly gatherings in centralised buildings, with 90–100% of organisational energy focused on sustaining a single weekly event.

Our reformation must therefore extend beyond doctrine to include mission and practice. We are called to reclaim the apostolic model that once fuelled the early church and was later overshadowed by the Constantinian shift. In doing so, the church can once again become a vibrant, multiplying movement led by equipped members who actively share the Gospel.

# Paul's Destinations

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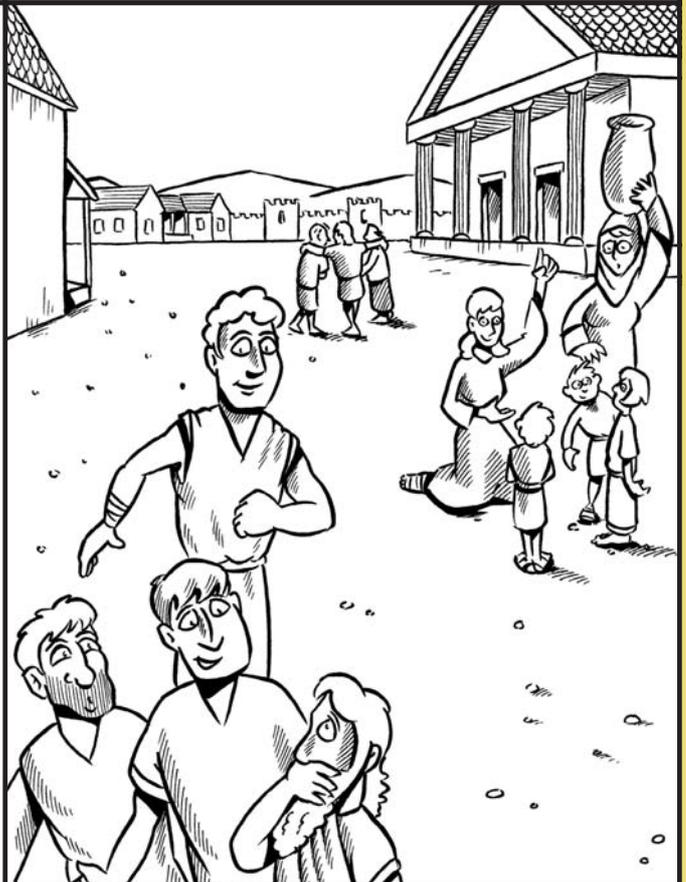
Timothy was a young man who preached the Gospel with Paul.



Timothy would help Paul in any way he needed.



Timothy helped to build the church in Ephesus.



Because of Timothy, the message about Jesus spread far and wide.

Taken from *Heroes of the Bible – New Testament*.

To purchase yours, follow this link: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/heroes-of-the-bible-new-testament-colouring-book/>

## Faith and mission in a secular age: how Scotland's Adventist churches are thriving with love 'Gratefully Received, Abundantly Shared'

by Pastor James Botha, *Scottish Mission President*

Scotland, mirroring a broader societal trend observed across Northern Europe, is increasingly identified as a highly secular nation. Factors such as growing affluence, shifting cultural norms and evolving societal values have contributed to a noticeable decline in traditional religious observance and engagement. Yet, within this landscape, the Adventist Church in Scotland is not merely surviving, but thriving, propelled by a strategic vision: 'Gratefully Received, Abundantly Shared'. This guiding principle serves as a foundational ethos, inspiring local congregations to thoughtfully embrace the opportunities and resources they are given, and, in turn, to generously distribute hope, health, fellowship and spiritual insight through diverse and impactful community initiatives across the nation.

This vision is manifested in practical, community-centric approaches that bridge the gap between the church and a secular society. In Aberdeen, the church acts as a dynamic hub of communal sharing. Its 'Warm Places' initiative gratefully welcomes young people during school holidays, offering study spaces, recreational activities like table tennis, and nourishing meals, thereby abundantly sharing a safe and nurturing environment. A unique Sunday morning musical school shares the gift of music education, teaching community members to read music and play the piano, culminating in concerts that unite families and friends. Furthermore, the collaborative 'Open House' project, run weekly with a local Methodist church, gratefully embraces 20-30 individuals, many of whom navigate challenges such as mental health issues or substance abuse. Here the church abundantly shares a haven for relaxation, recreation and (crucially) the development of

authentic, trusted relationships that transcend traditional barriers.

Beyond Aberdeen, Irvine Church's 'Thursday Project', now in its second year, stands as a testament to consistent and heartfelt engagement. Gratefully receiving individuals who seek connection or spiritual solace, the church abundantly shares hope through Bible studies, prayers and warm fellowship. The recent baptism of an individual whose journey of transformation began within this supportive community offers a powerful narrative of faith at work in a secular age. The emphasis on physical well-being also features prominently. Health expos, such as those passionately organised by Dunfermline Hope House Church, Dundee Church and Crieff Church, exemplify the 'Abundantly Shared' aspect of the vision. By gratefully embracing opportunities like the annual Bruce Festival or local shopping centres, these churches provide free screenings for essential health indicators like blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and BMI. Engaging activities like the smoothie bike promote fitness and nutrition in a fun, interactive manner, complemented by the distribution of free books on health and spirituality, demonstrating a holistic approach to community well-being.

The commitment to meeting diverse community needs continues through initiatives like the Crieff Church's 'Bumps to Tots' toddler group. Celebrating a decade of service, this group gratefully receives the trust of local families, abundantly sharing a relaxed, friendly space for up to 40 children and their caregivers, thereby fostering crucial connection and mental well-being for parents. Community support gratefully allows these volunteer-led sessions to flourish, featuring lively sing-alongs and the annual abundant sharing of

the Easter story through 'Real Easter Eggs'.

Addressing more profound societal challenges, Glasgow Church's health expo powerfully partnered with two vital local charities, 'We Are With You' and 'Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs'. Gratefully collaborating, the Impact Glasgow team abundantly shared support and interventions for those affected by addiction, engaging more than 200 people during their week-long event. Edinburgh Church members leveraged the bustling, secular atmosphere of the world-famous Edinburgh Fringe Festival, gratefully engaging with diverse crowds to abundantly share messages of faith, hope and kindness, distributing gift bags that sparked warm responses and heartfelt conversations. Finally, in Inverness, the dedicated efforts of a Global Mission Pioneer have led to significant growth. By gratefully fostering authentic friendships within the community, the church has abundantly shared discipleship and relational evangelism projects, leading to a growing Adventist community and notable inclusive events like the Gospel Fest, which brought the wider community together through gospel music.

These collective efforts underscore how the Adventist Church in Scotland is strategically navigating a secular landscape. By embodying the 'Gratefully Received, Abundantly Shared' vision, congregations are addressing immediate community needs, building bridges, fostering genuine relationships, and sharing their faith through acts of service, compassion and meaningful engagement, demonstrating a vibrant and relevant presence in a modern secular society. Thanks to funding from the BUC Mission Board and the Scottish Mission, these strategic projects became a reality.



# Scottish Mission training day inspires church leaders to lead with vision and integrity

by the Scottish Mission Communication Department

Bringing together church leaders from across Scotland, the Leadership Skills Training Day offered inspiration, practical resources and mentoring to strengthen ministry and community leadership.



On 1 February, more than 100 church leaders from across Scotland gathered in Dundee for the Leadership Skills Training Day. The programme combined keynote presentations with targeted advisory sessions for treasurers, youth leaders and Pathfinder coordinators, providing practical tools and spiritual guidance for leadership. The Stanborough Press was also there with books and relevant resources to support the event.

With a warm welcome from Pastor Jimmy Botha, President of the Scottish Mission (SM), the day began on a note of intentional leadership, followed by a concise overview of Scottish safeguarding legislation from Hellevi Walker, SM Communications Manager. Covering the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, her presentation highlighted the legal and moral responsibilities of churches in

protecting and nurturing the vulnerable, reinforcing the fact that faithful ministry requires attention to both people and policy.

Dr Dan Serb, Principal of Newbold College, explored the heart of empowering leadership, emphasising that true leadership is about shaping people and culture, not just managing tasks. Reflecting on the spiritual purpose behind ministry, he asked, 'Why do we do what we do?' and answered, 'To create a community that restores the image of God in humanity.' He encouraged us to lead with vision, focus, integrity and purpose while mentoring others and fostering a culture open to innovation, quoting Michael Fletcher: 'Don't build people to build the house. Build people, and the result will be that the house gets built.'

Pastor Christian Salcianu, Director of the Adventist Discovery Centre, built on these themes by exploring vision, mission and strategy through vivid biblical examples – from Moses at Sinai to Paul in Corinth. He emphasised clarity in purpose, inviting leaders to translate divine vision into practical steps, align mission and strategy with God's calling, and engage teams in shared commitment to foster a culture of alignment and purpose.

Cathy Boldeau, BUC Stewardship Director, highlighted the importance of aligning resources with God's mission and introduced the Union's first giving survey and stewardship consultation, inviting leaders to engage with initiatives that support mission planning and accountability.

To offer a brief respite after the content-rich morning programme, Pastor Max McKenzie-Cook, Executive Secretary of the Scottish Mission, led a light-hearted quiz

based on the *Church Manual*. The exercise drew laughter and friendly competition while reinforcing the guidelines that underpin church governance and practice.

Advisory sessions for treasurers, youth leaders and Pathfinder coordinators provided opportunities for planning, discussion, problem-solving and sharing of best practice. Youth leaders were especially encouraged by the presence, support and mentoring of Pastor Marcel Ghioalda, Trans-European Division (TED) Youth Director and former Scottish Mission pastor, appreciating his insight and passion for youth ministry.

Reflecting on the event, Pastor Botha said this year's training day marked 'a gentle but significant' shift in format from previous years. 'This change is, in itself, good news. It reflects a growing Scottish Mission and the need to respond thoughtfully to that growth,' he commented. He added that the day clearly demonstrated the deep commitment of local church leaders to the mission God has entrusted to them. Their care, professionalism and active engagement with church life, he said, are laying 'a strong and hopeful foundation for the future of Adventist ministry in Scotland'. Pastor Botha also highlighted the growing shared understanding among leaders that 'what we have gratefully received, we are called to share abundantly.'

The Scottish Mission leadership and the event-planning team extend their heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended, the presenters, and Oy'Nissh Grandiece with the kitchen team for their dedication and hard work. Feedback from the day will help shape next year's training, and the team look forward to building on this successful event.



Pastor and Mrs Lowe with family and friends

## Pastor Don Lowe celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

On Thursday 5 February Pastor Don Lowe celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at the care home where he now lives in Wokingham. He was joined by his wife Kathleen, his four children and other family members, some of whom had travelled from as far away as Scotland. The care home provided decorations and an enormous cake, which was shared with the other residents as they joined in the celebrations.



Pastor and Mrs Lowe

Formerly President of the South England Conference and a field secretary at the Trans-European Division, Don Lowe is visited regularly by pastors and friends from the Newbold community, as well as from further afield. He was joined on his birthday by Pastor

László Liebhardt, a long-time friend and pastor of the Winchester church where Don used to preach regularly. He also received a large card from the Newbold church, with a multitude of personal messages, along with a congratulatory card from King Charles and Queen Camilla.

Although he is no longer able to pursue his retirement hobby of violin making, Don enjoys keeping in touch with family and friends, and regularly joins online church services via YouTube.

PASTOR JOHN SURRIDGE

## Joyful ordination service at Chelmsley Wood

Joy, reverence and a strong sense of unity filled the sanctuary as members of the Castle Vale and Chelmsley Wood Seventh-day Adventist churches gathered at Chelmsley Wood on 31 January 2026 for a special ordination service. The occasion marked a meaningful step forward for both congregations as leaders were prayerfully set apart for service and fellowship was affirmed.

A congregation of approximately 70 members and friends gathered in strong support, creating an atmosphere of encouragement and prayer. Worship began with prayer and song, followed by a scripture reading delivered by Elder Bryan Allen, grounding the service firmly in God's word.

Led by Pastor Swaby, the service unfolded with warmth, dignity and spiritual depth. In his thoughtful counsel to the ordinands, Pastor Swaby encouraged them to approach ministry with humility and resilience, reminding them that service to God and others involves growth, learning and sometimes mistakes. He urged them to remain faithful, teachable and anchored in Christ as they carry out their responsibilities.

Ashley Allen (Castle Vale) was ordained as an elder, affirming his calling to spiritual leadership and pastoral care within the church. He was joined by Rhonda Bryan and Kate Harris, who were ordained as deaconesses to serve the Chelmsley Wood congregation, committing themselves to ministries of care, support and practical service.

As each ordinand received the charge, the moment was marked by solemn joy and affirmation. Through the litany, the ordinands pledged faithfulness to God's church, a willingness to share their gifts and talents, and a commitment to work collaboratively with others. In response, the congregation publicly committed their support, pledging to pray for, encourage and stand alongside them in ministry.

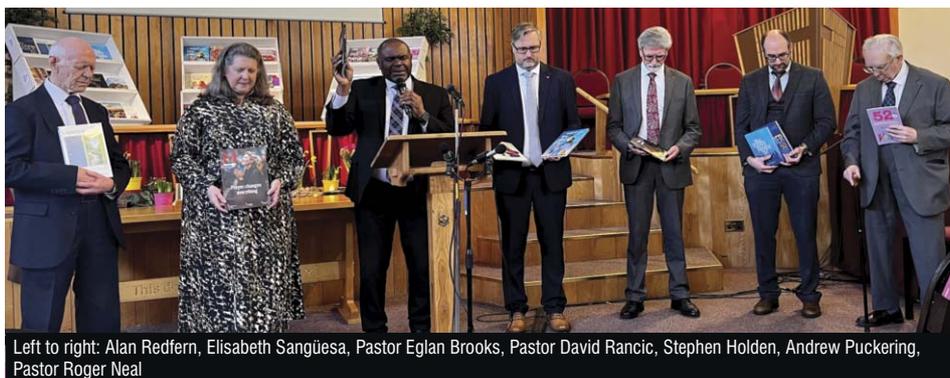
The elders from all parts of the NEC were present: Paul Monroe (Wolverhampton), Levon Johns (Nottingham), Brian Allen (Castle Vale), Cliff Lewis (Erdington), Joseph Caines (Kings Norton) and Philip Jackson (Handsworth) laid hands on the newly ordained, offering prayers of consecration and inviting the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit upon their lives and service.

The celebration continued with the right hand of fellowship being formally extended to Beverley Crooks (Castle Vale) and Horace Blackburn (Chelmsley Wood), warmly affirming their welcome, unity and shared commitment within the church family.

The service was enriched by music presented by Jacquie Halliday-Bell.

The service concluded with prayer and a closing song, leaving hearts encouraged and spirits uplifted. This ordination service stood as a powerful reminder that ministry is a shared calling – strengthened by faith, sustained by community, and carried forwards through love, collaboration and faithful service to God.

DR JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL



Left to right: Alan Redfern, Elisabeth Sangüesa, Pastor Eglan Brooks, Pastor David Rancic, Stephen Holden, Andrew Puckering, Pastor Roger Neal



## Pages of hope: Grantham Church celebrates the power of literature evangelism

Grantham Seventh-day Adventist Church stepped into 2026 with energy, purpose and a heart for mission. The opening weeks of the year were filled with inspiring guest preachers and vibrant activities serving children, youth, older members, the homeless and the wider community – evidence of a congregation eager to serve. Yet on 31 January the focus turned in a special way to a ministry that has quietly shaped lives for generations: the publishing work.

Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference, took time from his demanding schedule to attend Grantham's book-blessing service – an occasion dedicated to recognising the crucial importance and enduring relevance of literature evangelism. His presence underscored a powerful truth: printed pages still carry the Gospel into homes, hearts and hands in ways few other ministries can.

Joining Pastor Brooks on the platform were Elisabeth Sangüesa, General Manager of the Stanborough Press; Pastor David Rancic, Grantham's resident minister; his wife, Dusanka Rancic, the Stanborough Press Editor; and Andrew Puckering, a Grantham elder and Assistant Editor at the Press. Together, they represented a shared commitment to spreading the everlasting Gospel through the printed word.

In a heartfelt moment of dedication, Pastor Brooks prayed earnestly for God's blessing upon the work of the Stanborough Press – particularly the impact of its new releases. He asked that every book, every page and every message would find its way to searching souls, bringing hope, clarity and transformation. He then delivered a thought-provoking sermon entitled 'Mind Transplant'.

Following a nourishing potluck meal and warm fellowship, Elisabeth Sangüesa and Pastor Brooks led an informative afternoon session focused on church organisation and the vital role of literature ministry within the mission of the Church. The discussion highlighted how publishing remains not merely a supporting ministry, but a frontline evangelistic tool – one that extends the Church's reach far beyond the pulpit.

MESSENGER STAFF



### Be an ambassador for Christ

The Trans-European Division Field Secretary, Pastor Ian Sweeney, was the special guest speaker at Hackney Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath 10 January 2026. The former British Union Conference president was warmly welcomed by Hackney's resident pastor, Vaughn

Thorpe, who also ministered in song with a rendition of 'It Took a Miracle'.

In his sermon, entitled 'It's Complicated', Pastor Sweeney showed through the book of Esther the intricate ways in which God can navigate His people through the complexities of life with all its complications and disillusionments. Although God is not mentioned by name in the book of Esther, one can see that He was clearly at work behind the scenes, saving the Jewish nation by intervening in what would have been a holocaust.

'For us, life is often made more complicated through the poor, ill-thought-out choices we make; yet, in His mercy and grace, God still reaches out to us in love and calls us to be His people, sharing the hope of Christ's coming with the world,' Pastor Sweeney shared.

During the afternoon service, Pastor Sweeney, who also wears the hat of Director for Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, gave an interactive presentation which addressed the question: 'What if Adventists ran the UK?' He concluded that every human should use God's gift of freedom of choice wisely and responsibly, and that we should stand against persecution and injustice, as this is what it means to love our neighbour, which in turn demonstrates our love for God.

Paraphrasing Ellen G. White in *Ministry of Healing*, Pastor Sweeney said: 'Christ's method alone will give true success. He mingled with men, showed His sympathy, ministered to their needs, won their confidence, and then bade them to follow Him.' Pastor Sweeney then encouraged us to do the same: 'For, like the apostle Paul and the disciples of old, we too have been called to be ambassadors of Christ and to share His love with everyone, for God is love.'

DARELL J. PHILIP, PR AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT, HACKNEY SDA CHURCH



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Widowed in the UK**

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[www.be-lifted.org](http://www.be-lifted.org)

### Finding your feet after the loss of a spouse?

In an article reflecting on his own bereavement, Mike Tucker, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor from *Faith for Today*, describes the death of his wife as ‘the most difficult loss of my life’ and speaks honestly and openly about the depth of pain, the sense of disorientation, and the long road of adjustment that followed. He highlighted the fact that grief is not something to ‘get over’, but something we learn to live with, carrying love and loss side by side. His words remind us that grief is not a weakness, but a reflection of deep love, and that everyone’s experience of grief is unique. There is no right or wrong way to feel while bereaved; there’s no fixed timeline, and no single pathway through grief.

Saying a sad goodbye to your forever friend and partner – your ‘significant other’ – is a devastation that many people have faced, and many will continue to suffer until that Great Day when sin and death are no more. It is a universal human experience that leaves heartbreak and anguish: shattering and reshaping identity – leaving the surviving spouse with an absence that words often fail to describe. Sadly, in our Western culture, discussions around this topic are often taboo.

*Be Lifted* is a peer support group practising grief ministry, created for both widows and widowers in our congregations and our wider communities, because no one should have to face this journey alone. We are blessed to have with us a retired bereavement counsellor, Andrew Wynn, who advises that staying connected with others and ‘resisting the tendency to isolate and internalise grief’ offers us ‘a reduced risk of succumbing to depression’. Our mission, therefore, is to provide a safe and caring online space where people can connect and walk alongside others who truly understand the trauma and devastation of spousal loss, who together are strengthened by our faith in the promise of eternal

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life for ourselves and our loved ones.

In February and March of 2026, we have teamed up with an Atlanta Seventh-day Adventist church to host our *Grief Share* programme. This is an online series exploring loss and bereavement that offers the opportunity to share with and uplift others suffering the loss of loved ones.

#### Getting started

##### Join us

Please use the QR code at the bottom of this article to complete the online form. It is free to join. Your information will be respected; it is private and secure, and the form is essential for safeguarding purposes and for your protection.

##### Explore our resources

You will receive access to our member-only spaces, including our *WhatsApp* group and private *Facebook* group, where you can interact and discover support and ways to help yourself.

##### Reach out

If you have questions or simply need to talk, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach our Grief Buddies directly at: [ukbelifted@gmail.com](mailto:ukbelifted@gmail.com) and [www.be-lifted.org](http://www.be-lifted.org).

KAREN HAM-YING AND TEAM





## 2026 BUC Session Notification

Notice is hereby given that the tenth quinquennial session of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will take place at the Atrium Hotel London Heathrow, Great South-West Road, Feltham TW14 0AW, from Wednesday 1 to Friday 3 July 2026.

Notice is also given that proposals to modify the constitution of the British Union in harmony with the General Conference model constitution will also be presented. Delegates will receive documentation in advance of the session.

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7 March	Filipino International	After Sunset
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21 March	Hampstead	After Sunset
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29 March	Huddersfield	10am-2pm

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

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Back row, left to right: Pastor Clayton Maurede, Pastor Berhanu Tsehaye, Ishu Singh, Dishante Samuels, Annyah Samoy, Michelle Garande, Sahil Kumar and David Richards; front row, left to right: Stanford Alexander, Lanval J. O'Garro, Monika Singh, Angela Samoy, Mya Hyatt and Jacqueline Richards

## Heaven rejoices with Southall as ten souls baptised

On 10 January 2026, Southall Seventh-day Adventist Church witnessed a moment of profound spiritual significance as ten individuals publicly declared their faith in Jesus Christ through baptism. It was a sacred and joyful occasion, marked by praise, thanksgiving and a deep sense that heaven itself rejoiced over lives surrendered fully to Christ.

The baptismal service formed the heart of a special celebration, reminding the congregation that every soul is precious in the sight of God. Family members, friends and church members gathered in unity, bearing witness to the transforming power of the Gospel and the miracle of new life in Christ.

The service was led by Southall Church's newly appointed pastor, Clayton Maurede, who delivered a compelling and thought-provoking sermon entitled 'What Is Your Choice?' Drawing from the Scripture readings in John 3 and John 15, Pastor Maurede challenged the congregation to examine their personal response to God's loving invitation.

Referencing Nicodemus's encounter with Jesus, Pastor Maurede highlighted humanity's tendency to choose darkness rather than light, despite the light offering true

life and freedom. Like Nicodemus, he explained, many come to Jesus cautiously, yet Christ lovingly invites us all to step fully into the light. 'Nicodemus needed the light,' he reminded the congregation, 'and so do we.'

Pastor Maurede admonished the body of Christ to love God not only for His blessings, but also for who He is, allowing that love to shape every decision. Emphasising Jesus' words, he urged believers to let the world know that 'the love of God constrains us.' This love, he said, compels believers to live boldly, faithfully and unashamedly for Christ.

The baptisms were conducted by both Pastor Clayton Maurede and Pastor Berhanu Tsehaye, Area 6D Coordinator, adding to the reverence and joy of the occasion. Each baptism represented a public declaration of faith and a commitment to walk in newness of life with Christ.

With clarity and conviction, Pastor Maurede declared that choosing Jesus means choosing life. 'If you want life,' he reminded the congregation, 'Jesus says, *choose life* – and be bold in your decision.' The baptismal candidates stood as living testimonies of individuals sold out to Jesus, choosing faith over fear and light over darkness.

In addition to the baptisms, the church family also joyfully welcomed newly transferred members, Brother David and Sister Jacqueline Richards, who were officially received into the Southall church family. Their arrival was celebrated as another blessing, strengthening the bonds of fellowship and unity within the congregation.

As each candidate entered the waters of baptism, the church rejoiced, celebrating not only what God had done, but what He continues to do through transformed lives. The service concluded with praise and gratitude, affirming that this was not an ending, but the beginning of a lifelong walk with Christ.

Indeed, heaven rejoiced, and Southall Church was blessed to witness the power of God's redeeming love at work – ten lives changed, hearts committed, and a church renewed in hope, love and purpose.

ULANDA ALEXANDER  
(PHOTO BY NANCY ALMEIDA)

## Seventeen baptised across Northampton district!

The Northampton district rejoiced as seventeen precious souls publicly declared their faith in Jesus Christ through baptism in the month of December 2025.

On 13 December, at Northampton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, eight candidates led by Pastor Chenjerai joyfully entered the waters of baptism in a Spirit-filled service that celebrated God's saving grace. Family, friends and members united in thanksgiving as new believers affirmed their commitment to Christ. Heaven rejoiced again when three more individuals responded to an appeal for baptism during the same service, testifying to the moving presence of the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, Northampton Community Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated a new beginning on 20 December 2025 with the first baptism at its new Broadmead Community Church location. Nine candidates, mostly youth and Pathfinders, were baptised following a powerful message by Evangelist Simba Muhau, 'What Are You Leaving in the Water?' The service featured inspiring music, heartfelt testimonies and touching family moments, including a message from Canada celebrating three grandchildren's decisions for Christ.

The day concluded with a warm welcome into church membership, renewed fellowship and grateful hearts. Truly, heaven rejoiced as the Northampton district witnessed lives transformed and dedicated to walking with God. To God be the glory!

MICHAEL OBISESAN AND HAZEL LEACOCK





### Praise the Lord and glory be to Almighty God!

God has blessed the projects of His faithful people at Newbold International Church (NIC), rewarding their hard work with rejoicing at the baptism

of Taras Osadciuk on the premises of Reading West Seventh-day Adventist Church.

On another recent occasion, Newbold International held a special thanksgiving service to build bridges with its local community, inviting the Mayor of Bracknell Forest, Cole Janet Cochraine, to attend. With humble appreciation, on behalf of the church's leadership team, Pastor Andrei Balan and the local church treasurer presented the Mayor with a very special gift – the Bible and a loaf of bread, a token of gratitude, friendship and appreciation.

The church also held a musical concert, at which many people from the local community listened as talented young musicians presented a unique performance. The offering that was taken up went to refurbish two churches in Ukraine. To God be the glory!

The work will go on, and big plans are being made. Church members meet daily at 8.30pm on Zoom for Bible studies and prayer – everyone is welcome! They also hire Newbold's gym for the youth, which lets them bring the young people together to enjoy sport in a safe environment. Vitaliy Poneatovskiy, Mihail Bala, Serghey, Vitaliy, Roman, Vasiliy Yunak and a few others among the youth are eager to do more for their community, and the ladies are always happy to prepare a warm meal and share unique dishes – fellowship lunches are simply the best! As the saying goes, teamwork makes the dream work!

Newbold International's work continues as the church members reach the community, experiencing God's mercy through difficult challenges. For 2026 they have big plans to promote the Seventh-day Adventist Church's unique spiritual values, including the celebration of their local church's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May.

ANDREI BALAN

## Adventist leaders help shape national conversation in Parliament on community-led neighbourhoods

On 4 December 2025, the House of Commons hosted a significant national gathering titled 'Building with Communities: What Is Needed and What Is Possible – The Future of Integrated Neighbourhoods'. Led by the One Vision charity under Enoch Kanagaraj, BEM DL, a Seventh-day Adventist member and founder and CEO of One Vision, the event brought together leaders from the NHS, academia, national charities, local government, community organisations and the faith sector, reflecting a deep alignment with the Adventist principles of service, compassion, justice and whole-person care.

Adventist representatives stood in Parliament in the spirit of Jeremiah 29:7 (NKJV): 'Seek the peace of the city . . . and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.' As Ellen White wrote (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 143), '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."'

Sharon Platt McDonald, the British Union Conference Health, Women's Ministries and Adventist Community Services Director, brought a profound spiritual perspective to the discussions, emphasising that community wellbeing aligns closely with the Adventist mission of holistic ministry, as Jesus ministered to the whole person and modelled a compassionate, community-centred approach.

Matt Turmaine MP, Member of Parliament for Watford, stated that the gathering showed how to 'build fairer and more compassionate neighbourhoods'. A highlight of the programme was the recognition of One Vision's partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, championed by Heather McLean, which serves people of all backgrounds and faiths.

This gathering demonstrated that faith can play a transformative role in public life. Through the Christ-centred values of compassion, justice, humility and service, Adventists continue to make a meaningful contribution to the wellbeing of British communities.

ENOCH KANAGARAJ, BEM DL

## Crieff Church's Italian feast

The Bible is clear about the importance of fellowship with one another, and throughout the gospels we see Jesus practising fellowship through the sharing of a meal.

Many of us participate in a potluck lunch after our Sabbath service, but the congregation of Crieff enjoyed a very special feast together on the evening of 31 January. This special night was proficiently organised by Malcolm Logan (with the help of his wife Angela and son Finlay) as part of his Social Secretary role at church.

Around sixty-five members of the church came together for an Italian-themed night of good food and fellowship. Each table was named after an Italian city and decorated with fun fact cards and photographs of that city. The Logan family also went above and beyond to make this event as inclusive as possible for families that were unable to attend physically.

Caterers Bill and Liliias McGuigan put together an incredible Italian feast that was very much enjoyed by all who attended.

The congregation of Crieff are grateful to the Logan family for all the effort and planning that went into such a successful and memorable evening.

May we all find opportunities this year to engage in fellowship with our church family.

MARIANN COWIN



## Tottenham Lighthouse: Daniel & Revelation Seminar

The Tottenham Lighthouse Prayer Ministry is holding another Bible series, following the successful completion of the last one in December 2025, 'Is the Bible Still Relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?' This new Bible series is a 'Daniel and Revelation Seminar' held from 7 to 8.15pm every first Sunday of the month, starting in February and ending in May 2026. The dates are 1 February, 1 March, 5 April and 3 May.

The speaker is Pastor Dr Robert Wright, Assistant Professor in the School of Religion and Theology at Northern Caribbean University (NCU), lecturing at both undergraduate and graduate levels. He is no stranger to

us, as he participated in the last Bible series. Pastor Wright is also the Director of the Ellen G. White SDA Research Centre at NCU.

It is a well-recognised fact that studying the Bible and prayer cannot be separated. As we read the sacred pages of the Bible, we learn that our ultimate role model, Jesus Christ, though sinless, made prayer a priority in His life. Mark 1:35 (KJV) states, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' Luke the physician, who was attentive to details, pointed out something that Matthew and Mark had missed about what Jesus did before choosing His twelve disciples: 'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles' (Luke 6:12, 13, KJV).

Studying Bible prophecy gives us greater hope and trust in God, who is omniscient and omnipotent. Nothing is hidden from Him. This should fuel our zeal to connect with our Saviour in prayer, to seek guidance from Him to interpret Scripture and the prophecies revealed. This will give more urgency to our prayer life, as it reinforces our faith and obedience 'to the only wise God our Saviour' (Jude 25, KJV).

So join the Tottenham Lighthouse Prayer Ministry from the comfort of your home using the link below, every first Sunday of the month until 3 May, and invite others. It is a prophecy seminar not to be missed!

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85978536464?pwd=m10mSz8bkGGOFUxjD96HHeVUdYnlNC.1>

Meeting ID: 859 7853 6464

Passcode: 911974

By phone: (+44) 020 808 06592

MAXINE DONOVAN, PRAYER MINISTRY



## 'United to Serve in Love and Obedience'

Church members and visitors marked the first Sabbath of 2026 by uniting in fellowship and prayer during Hackney's Prayer Day on Sabbath 3 January. The theme – 'United to Serve in Love and Obedience' – highlighted the importance of putting faith into action through obedience to God, which then leads on to providing loving service to others. In alignment with the day's

theme, Sabbath School superintendents Vivian Nelson and Brenda Nelson led the congregation in reading scriptures while the prayer team called the church to pray in small groups.

The Hackney Prayer Ministries leader, Eileen Philip, encouraged the church to work together in unity and loving service during 2026, and a room was set apart for any individuals requiring prayer throughout the day. In his sermon, entitled 'Lock, Stock and Barrel', Elder Irvine A. Lauder, visiting from New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church, admonished the congregants to respond to the call of mission for Christ in sincerity, truth and loving obedience. 'The purpose of sermons is not only to comfort the conflicted, but to also conflict the comforted,' he emphasised. 'Being a Christian is a full-time occupation. We are to follow the Holy Spirit step by step and recognise how wonderful it is to be born again.'

Immediately after Divine Service, a session of prayer led by Hackney's prayer team ensued, with scriptures read and prayers offered in connection with the day's theme.

DARELL J. PHILIP, HACKNEY SDA COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

## Tottenham Lighthouse: practising 'Radical Generosity'

The title of the final topic of the 10 Days of Prayer, 'Radical Generosity', accurately describes the work that the members of Tottenham Lighthouse do for their community, year after year, rain or shine. In October 2025, Tottenham Lighthouse Church celebrated five years of running the Food Hub on Tuesdays and Sabbaths. Also, 2 March 2026 marks three years since they started the 'Sharing the Love' Outreach Centre on Thursdays, a drop-in centre for people to get refreshments and support, socialise, and experience friendship evangelism.

At Christmas, Sophia Charles, leader of the Adventist Community Services team, treated the people coming to the Food Hub and Sharing the Love with a lovely meal and gifts. George McGhan showed 'Radical Generosity' by providing the ingredients and cooking the meal free of cost. Sophia and her team were pleasantly surprised by the turnout of more than 120 persons at the Food Hub on 24 December. In addition to the food and gifts, free SIM cards were offered, as Tottenham Lighthouse had successfully applied to the National Databank. In total, the church has issued more than seventy-four free SIM cards.

To feed the people coming to Sharing the Love the next day (25 December), George McGhan again showed 'Radical Generosity' by supplying the ingredients and cooking a sumptuous meal for a second day running, saying, 'Even if there is one person coming, I want him/her to have something to eat.' The volunteers fed thirty-three people with the big pots of food.

However, the 'Radical Generosity' of George McGhan and his family did not end there. As he was taking the pots to the car, he spotted one of the regulars to the Food Hub at the bus stop. He went over and asked if he would like some of the leftover food. The man said he would, and George invited him into the church. In conversing with the man, George McGhan found out that the man was homeless and had planned to sleep on the bus – his usual practice. However, the buses were not running, and it was bitterly cold. George McGhan could not leave the man in the cold, so he spoke to his wife and took the man home. The man slept at their home until 11am the next day. The homeless man was full of thanks and commented that this uninterrupted sleep was the best he had experienced for months. Normally, he would wake up when the bus reached the terminus and then he would go on another bus to continue his sleep. We have so much to give God thanks for.

Ellen G. White wrote, 'Search heaven and earth, and there is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is made manifest in works of mercy to those who need our sympathy and aid. This is the truth as it is in Jesus' (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 137). Let us all practise 'Radical Generosity'.

MAXINE DONOVAN, PRAYER MINISTRY



Sophia Charles and two community members



## Giving Hope at Christmas

After months of planning, the Giving Hope team, a group of dedicated volunteers from the Hope Community Seventh-day Adventist church, hosted their annual Christmas community events on 21 and 25 December to give back to the elderly, vulnerable families and lonely members of the community from High Wycombe and the surrounding towns. This ensured that those who might otherwise have spent Christmas alone were able to experience festive joy, share a meal, and celebrate the birth of Christ together.

On 21 December, sixty elderly guests were welcomed into Cressex Community Centre for a three-course Christmas meal to reduce the isolation often experienced by elderly and impaired individuals during the holiday season. The team arranged transport to and from the venue for all the guests using a minibus and church members' own transport. The meal, prepared by a professional chef, included a roast dinner with all the trimmings, and was accompanied by carol singing and the joyful popping of Christmas crackers.

The service and entertainment were clearly well received, resulting in very positive feedback from the community. One volunteer shared that 'seeing all of the guests interacting and enjoying the meal and festive programme, including the carol singing,' made it a very memorable day.

The second event, held on Christmas Day, was part of an established tradition for Hope Community Church. The Giving Hope team and volunteer network worked with a catering company early on Christmas morning to prepare 200 portable Christmas meal packages to be delivered by the church members and volunteers from the community to homes across High Wycombe and the surrounding villages. Volunteers collected the meals from the community kitchen and delivered them to residents in good time for their Christmas lunch (midday), recognising that their contact with the residents living alone, without family or transport, might provide the only interaction those residents receive, the only friendly faces they might see, on Christmas Day.

The combination of both events involved many volunteers from the church and community. With at least thirty 'behind the scenes' volunteers and sixteen vehicles distributing the meals, these events contributed to a great team spirit, bringing the church together with mission in mind.

ELDER LEN WILLIAMS



## Reaching people: the heart of the community

For members of the Mansfield Woodhouse Seventh-day Adventist Church, the past year was filled with events that exemplified the spirit of sharing, caring and uplifting those around them.

On Saturday 4 October 2025, the church held its annual Harvest Festival, a joyful celebration of thankfulness, community togetherness and giving, uniting community members, church members, families and friends to thank God for His abundant blessings and to share them with others. The focus was on how we can contribute to ending world hunger, and the congregation donated a generous amount of food and essential items to the Sherwood Forest Foodbank.

The church's Christmas celebrations began with a community family service on 6 December, with members of the church and the community lovingly donating essential items to the Mansfield Woodhouse Family Hub to be shared among families who needed them during the festive season.

A warm and joyful Christmas dinner took place on 11 December 2025, during which fifty-two people were served meals; forty-eight of them gathered in person to share a meal, enjoy fellowship, and celebrate the season. It was a beautiful opportunity for church members and community members to come together, reflect on the year's blessings, and strengthen their bonds of friendship.

Later in the month, on 20 December, the children and their parents/guardians visited The Beeches Assisted Living Home to spread holiday cheer through carols and the donation of puzzles. Seeing the smiles on the residents' faces as they sang along with the church family was a heartwarming reminder of the power of music and companionship. The home also donated boxes of chocolates to show its appreciation for the church's presence.

Christmas Eve was marked by a carol service, an evening of worship, readings, songs and reflection. The beautiful melodies and uplifting messages set the perfect tone for celebrating Christ's birth. The proceeds from the Christmas offerings were given to support two charitable causes – one in Zimbabwe and one in Mansfield Woodhouse – reflecting the church members' ongoing mission to serve others and embody Christ's teachings in their daily lives.

THE COMMUNITY SERVICES TEAM AND NICHOLAS OKYERE, GLOBAL MISSION PIONEER

**Terence Charles LeCorre (1937-2025)**  
**d. 11 September.**



Terry was born in Calcutta after his great-grandparents moved there from Quimper in Brittany. Attending a tent campaign by Pastor Harris, his grandmother became convinced about the Sabbath and invited her son to attend. Terry accompanied his father, and they were both baptised at the Seventh-day Adventist church in Calcutta by Pastor Down.

After the chaos and violence of independence and partition in 1947, Terry's parents sent him to England in 1955. During the voyage by train and liner, he got into a very close friendship with some Jewish fellow passengers. On arriving in England, he stayed for a couple of months with his aunt and uncle at their home in Amesbury, before entering an engineering apprenticeship in Rugby and Leicester. His parents followed him to England two years later.

Unfortunately, his apprenticeship was interrupted by a very serious bout of appendicitis and peritonitis, and he was hospitalised for nearly a month with a collapsed lung. His recovery convinced his mother to be baptised, and one of the nurses who attended him, Jennifer White, became his wife two years later. Pastor William Frazer officiated at their wedding ceremony in 1963 at the Leicester church.

Their marriage was blessed by the birth of their first daughter, Celine. About two years later, Terry's employer asked him to undertake a project in Denmark, and their second daughter, Kirsten, was born in Helsingør.

On their return to England the family moved to Welwyn Garden City, and Terry and Jenny became members of Stanborough Park Church, where Terry became an elder. A third daughter, Marcella, was born before Terry's employer asked him to work in Switzerland, where they lived for 28 years, becoming members of the Adventist church in Zürich. Terry was a regular teacher in the English Sabbath School class.

Sadly, Jenny developed breast cancer and died in 2010. Terry fulfilled her wish to be buried in England before returning to live there with his children. He moved to Witney and drove to Watford each week to be with his friends in Stanborough Park Church.

Eventually, Terry went into Churchfields Care Home in Cassington, Oxfordshire, where he watched the Sabbath services at Stanborough Park Church through online streaming. It was at this care home that he entered his rest.

Terry was buried alongside Jenny at Finstock Holy Trinity Church on 15 October. The same day, a well-attended memorial service was held at Stanborough Park Church, conducted by Pastor Shepley, with a touching meditation from a close friend, Brian Davison, and a life sketch by Terry's daughter Marcella.

He is sadly missed by his three

daughters, five granddaughters and two great-grandchildren. All look forward to a heavenly reunion.

TERRY

**Pastor David Leroy Burnett (1956-2025)**  
**d. 7 December.**



David was born to Darnley and Muriel Burnett in Barbados on 27 February 1956. The youngest of eight children, he was deeply loved by his family. His sisters doted on him, and he shared an inseparable bond with his brother. As a child, David was energetic and adventurous, often swimming far out into the sea despite his mother's warnings, and playing cricket at every possible opportunity.

David's love of sport remained throughout his life. He followed cricket and athletics passionately, often watching matches on TV, listening on the radio, and checking scores online all at once. In his later years, his love of sport expanded into golf and cycling, which took him across the UK and Europe, often for charity and always with joy.

Creating memories with others was one of David's greatest gifts. He loved to explore, and he regularly travelled across the UK, Europe and further afield to the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and America for the purposes of evangelism, adventure and seeing his beloved West Indies play cricket.

David's father died when he was just 9 years old, and at 12 he moved to the UK with his mother, brother and sister, settling in Stoke Newington. In Holloway, London, he discovered the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and there he was baptised with his mother and sister. His love for God and the church grew quickly, and by 19 he was appointed a church elder.

While working as a taxi driver and colporteur, David met Pauline Angela Cover from Brixton Seventh-day Adventist Church – drawn to her faith, joy and character. They married in 1979 and raised four children: Jonathan, Priscilla, Matthew and Christelle.

Recognising his calling, David pursued ministry, studying at Newbold College and Southern Caribbean University. Ministry became his life's work. For over thirty years David pastored churches across the UK. Known as 'the people's pastor' – present in homes, hospitals, celebrations and sorrows – David championed young people, many of whom entered ministry because of his unwavering support and belief in them.

David was blessed to baptise all four of his children and officiate at all of their weddings. He lived to meet all ten grandchildren, who brought him immeasurable joy.

In 2012 David lost his beloved wife, Pauline. God later blessed him with love again through Angela Joy Hunter. They married in 2013, and her support, companionship, faith and devoted care brought him laughter, joy and peace again.

After a minor stroke in 2019 and several more in the years that followed, David's life

slowed. Though some abilities diminished, his faith and ministry did not. Continued and dedicated support from his wife, Angela, along with visits from his family and church community during this difficult period, filled him with immense joy; and, even in suffering, he continued to praise God.

In December 2025, after a short illness, David was hospitalised with pneumonia, and on Sunday 7 December 2025, with his wife Angela and son Matthew by his side, David peacefully fell asleep.

David lived a satisfied, full and faithful life, and now rests, waiting for that great getting-up morning, when he will never part from his loved ones again. Until then, David's beloved family, ministerial colleagues and church community will carry the memory of his laughter, love, faith, positivity and encouragement in their hearts – always.

MRS ANGELA BURNETT

# Messenger

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## Sunset

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Mar 6	5.50	6.02	5.52	5.58	6.10
13	6.02	6.14	6.05	6.12	6.24
20	6.14	6.26	6.18	6.27	6.37
27	6.25	6.38	6.30	6.41	6.51
Apr 3	7.37	7.49	7.43	7.55	8.04

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