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Messenger

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In the name of love



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100 days of blessings

by Pastor Kirk Thomas,
BUC President



I commemorated 100 days as the President of the British Union Conference while attending the General Conference Annual Council in October. It was a humbling and sombre moment as I reflected on the groundwork that has been done since 2 July in our territory while looking forward to the task ahead of us over the next five years.

What have we done so far?
Change is inevitable; once that is established, moving forwards can be executed with focus. As an administration, our first task was to ensure that there is **unity of purpose** throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, and this is established by being 'grounded in the Bible and focused on the mission'. We are here to bring the good news of a soon-coming King, and to bring hope not only in the future, but in this present life. We must never forget that our structures and systems, important, necessary and inescapable though they may be, are valid only insofar as they assist us in fulfilling our call to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

We have also brought all the leaders in our territory together for training, networking and sharing.

Grounded in the Bible
Each Wednesday at midday, all office staff and guests are invited to meet in the President's office to pray based on Scripture. Our prayers are not only for our work, but also for the field. We pray for each of our entities, including our schools, and we offer prayers for issues in our community or the geopolitical situations in our world.

Focused on the mission
It is easy to 'do church', 'run the church', consider staffing requirements for new leaders, and even reorganise the office. These are management tasks. But 'one thing I [we] do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I [we] press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3:13, 14, ESV). Our goal is greater than leading the BUC: it is to ensure that we empower every entity, pastor and member towards the 'upward call of God'.

Jesus left us a promise and a mandate: 'But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses . . . to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth' (Acts 1:8, AMPC). We are all called to the higher ground of service and mission, and not simply to hoard the blessings of our Maker to ourselves.

So, what's next?
While at the Annual Council, I was blown away by this quote from the Spirit of Prophecy which was on the screen during the Monday session: 'You are entertaining too limited ideas of the work for this time. You are trying to plan the work so that you can embrace it in your arms. You must take broader views. Your light must not be put under a bushel or under a bed, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. ***Your house is the world***' (Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pp. 208, 209, emphasis supplied).



This fits into our vision of doubling our membership within the next five years. Yes, it's a big idea in nations that are largely secular, but we believe that with the commitment of our members to the mission of God, surrendering to His will and purpose and with intentionality, it is possible.

Please continue to pray for the work in this part of the world.

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MISSION FOR ALL

In the name of Love

by Dusanka Rancic, *Editor*



'If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self.'

1 Corinthians 13:2-4, MSG



I was very young when U2's song 'Pride (In the Name of Love)' became popular. I was still at primary school, and we passionately sang: 'In the name of love. . . . What more in the name of love?' I knew nothing about Martin Luther King Jr, whose life and death inspired Bono to write the song, or the meaning behind the lyrics 'one man betrayed with a kiss'. Yet we understood something of its message: the cost of standing up for love and justice.

As I prepared this issue of *Messenger*, which focuses on the topic of narcissistic abuse, the song came back to me. How much suffering, manipulation and harm have been inflicted on others in the name of love and faith? Sometimes, the very words meant to bring hope become weapons used to control, silence and wound.

Do you find it difficult to be around some people, even in the church? You know that someone who corrects almost everything you say, insists on having the right answer, or leaves you questioning your own judgement? Perhaps you find yourself carefully weighing every word, afraid of how it might be interpreted. In Christian communities, such behaviour can be particularly confusing when it comes from people who appear deeply knowledgeable about Scripture, speak confidently about God, and seem convinced of their own righteousness.

Narcissistic abuse is complex, and not every difficult relationship or disagreement is abusive. Yet persistent manipulation, belittling and controlling behaviour can leave deep wounds. When such behaviour is excused through appeals to submission, forgiveness or Christian duty, those wounds can become even harder to acknowledge. Surely, Christ-like love should never require us to accept abuse as the price of being faithful.

In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus speaks of people who claim to have prophesied, driven out demons, and performed miracles in His name, yet hear Him say (NIV), 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' These are shocking words, given that they are addressed to those who consider themselves His followers. Religious activity, biblical knowledge and spiritual authority are not substitutes for a life that reflects His character. Can we speak about Jesus, work for His mission, and defend what we believe to be right, yet fail to show His love to the people standing beside us – or, even worse, hurt them – while convincing ourselves that we are acting in His name?

Perhaps, then, this conversation requires more than identifying the harmful behaviour of others. It also invites us to look honestly at ourselves, and ask the uncomfortable spiritual question at its heart: can we claim to represent Jesus while making the people around us feel small, frightened or never good enough?

Do people feel safe in our presence? Do our words encourage or diminish them? Are we willing to listen, admit when we are wrong, and allow the Holy Spirit to change us? Are we reflecting Jesus in the way we treat others?

This issue of *Messenger* explores a journey of recognising abuse, recovering from its effects, gaining a biblical understanding of forgiveness, and learning how the Christian community can respond with wisdom and compassion. Forgiveness does not mean removing boundaries, restoring trust automatically, or returning to an unsafe relationship. Supporting survivors means listening without judgement, taking their experiences seriously, and prioritising their safety rather than pressuring them to reconcile.

There is courage in acknowledging the truth, and wisdom in learning that love sometimes requires firm boundaries. There is also hope in rediscovering our identity in Christ, whose love does not depend on another person's approval or criticism.

May God open our spiritual eyes to recognise harm, give us the humility to examine our own hearts, and grant us the compassion to become a community where wounded people can find safety and healing. Above all, may we never use the name of Love to justify what Love Himself would never ask us to do.

FEATURE

The cruel reality of na

by Brenda Walsh

Understanding narcissistic abuse, the hidden red flags, and the journey towards healing

The word 'narcissist' has become part of our everyday vocabulary. We use it casually to describe people who love looking in the mirror, talk too much about themselves, post endless selfies, or simply seem overly confident. But narcissism is much more complicated than being self-centred. A profound difference exists between someone who occasionally behaves selfishly and someone with persistent patterns of manipulation, entitlement, lack of empathy and a need for control. At the most severe end of the spectrum is narcissistic personality disorder (NPD), a recognised mental health disorder characterised by a longstanding pattern of grandiosity, an excessive need for admiration, a sense of entitlement, and difficulty recognising or caring about the feelings and needs of others. Not everyone who behaves narcissistically has NPD – and not everyone who has NPD will abuse others. But narcissistic traits can be present in abusive relationships, and understanding those patterns can help victims recognise what is happening to them. The most painful part is that narcissistic abuse rarely begins with obvious cruelty. It is often hidden behind a mask.

The mask can be convincing

A narcissistic person may initially appear charming, generous, confident, spiritual, compassionate, or even exceptionally caring. They may know exactly what to say and when to say it. They can make you feel as though you have finally found someone who understands you completely. This is one reason narcissistic abuse can be so difficult to recognise. The person others see may be dramatically different from the person you experience behind closed doors. Friends may say, 'He would never do that.' Family members may respond, 'He is such a wonderful person.' Church members may say, 'He is such a godly man.' And you may begin questioning your own reality: *Maybe I am too sensitive. Maybe I misunderstood. Maybe I am the problem.* This confusion is often part of the abuse. Narcissistic abuse can involve emotional manipulation, gaslighting, intimidation, humiliation, isolation, financial control, verbal abuse, silent treatment, threats, withholding affection, and repeatedly shifting blame onto the victim. Over time, the victim may lose confidence in their own judgement and begin walking on eggshells simply to keep the peace.

When the mask is Christian

There is another layer of confusion when narcissistic abuse occurs within a Christian relationship or community. A person can know Scripture, attend church, pray publicly, quote Bible verses, serve in ministry, and appear deeply spiritual while privately behaving in ways that contradict the character of Christ. Religious language can even be used as a tool of manipulation, such as: 'God says you have to forgive me.' 'You are supposed to submit.' 'A Christian wife shouldn't question her husband.' These statements can leave victims feeling spiritually trapped. But forgiveness does not mean pretending that abuse never happened. Grace does not require us to remain in an unsafe environment. Submission does not give another person permission to control, demean, threaten or destroy you. And forgiveness does not eliminate the need for accountability. Jesus never asked victims of abuse to call evil good. A Christian response to abuse should reflect truth, justice, compassion, safety and accountability. Sometimes the greatest act of courage is recognising that the person standing behind a religious mask does not represent the character of the God they claim to serve.

The red flags

The most recognisable warning signs of narcissistic abuse are not always the most important ones. Some of the most revealing signs of narcissists are subtle.

- ***They rarely take genuine responsibility.*** An apology may sound sincere, but it is often followed by an excuse, a justification, or a reason why their behaviour was actually your fault.
- ***They rewrite history.*** Conversations and events seem to change depending on what makes them look better. You may remember something clearly, only to be told, 'That never happened.'
- ***They punish boundaries.*** A healthy person may not like a boundary, but they can respect it. A controlling person may respond with anger, attempts to make you feel guilty, silent treatment, threats or accusations when you say no.
- ***They need to control the narrative.*** They may carefully manage how others perceive them while behaving very differently in private.
- ***They use your vulnerabilities against you.*** Information you shared during moments of trust may later be used to embarrass, shame, manipulate, or silence you.
- ***They are charming in public and cruel in private.*** This contrast can be one of the most disorienting aspects of narcissistic abuse.
- ***They make you responsible for their emotions.*** Their anger becomes your fault. Their unhappiness becomes your responsibility. They explain their

rcissistic abuse



bad behaviour as something that you supposedly did.

- ***They create confusion.*** You may find yourself constantly analysing conversations, wondering what you did wrong, and trying to predict their moods.
- ***They gradually isolate you.*** This may not begin with, 'You can't see your family.' Instead, it may sound like, 'Your sister doesn't really care about you,' or 'Your friends are putting ideas into your head.'
- ***They alternate affection and rejection.*** Warmth, praise, affection and promises may suddenly be replaced with coldness, criticism or punishment. Then, just when you are ready to give up, the loving version of the person returns. This cycle can create a powerful emotional attachment known as a trauma bond that is extremely difficult to break.

And perhaps one of the biggest red flags is this: you no longer recognise yourself. You used to be confident; now you second-guess everything. You used to laugh freely; now you carefully measure your words. You used to trust your instincts; now you question your own memory. You used to feel secure; now you are constantly trying to avoid the next explosion. That transformation deserves attention.

Why leaving can be so difficult

People sometimes ask, 'Why didn't you just leave?' However, this question assumes that leaving is simply a physical decision, whereas in reality it often isn't. There may be children, finances, a home, a church community, fear, threats, years of emotional conditioning, or genuine love for the person you hoped your partner would become. There may also be a tremendous amount of self-doubt. Narcissistic abuse can gradually erode people's confidence until they no longer trust themselves enough to make a decision, especially whether or not to leave. That is why telling someone, 'Just leave' can be deeply hurtful and unhelpful. Victims need safety, support, information and someone who believes them. If physical violence, threats, stalking or immediate danger is present, professional and emergency support should be sought. Emotional abuse can also escalate, and safety planning with a qualified domestic-violence professional can be crucially important.

Healing begins with truth

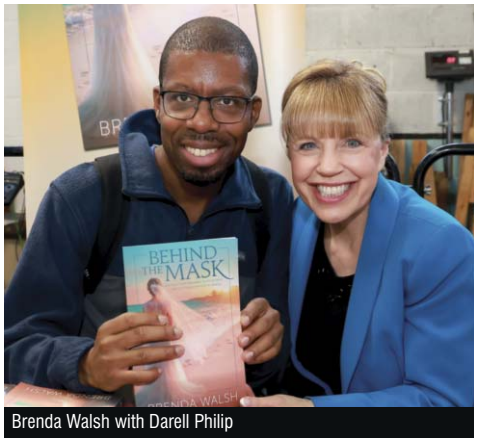
Healing does not begin when everyone else finally believes you. Healing begins with education, learning to identify the abuse you suffered and understanding that it was wrong and that it was not your fault. You do not have to minimise it because someone else had a difficult childhood. You do not have to excuse it because the person goes to church. You do not have to keep explaining yourself to someone committed to misunderstanding you.

Healing often includes learning about boundaries – perhaps for the first time. It means understanding that 'no' is a complete sentence. It means discovering that peace does not have to be purchased with your silence. It means rebuilding relationships with safe people. It may mean working with a trauma-informed therapist or counsellor who understands emotional abuse and coercive control. And it means grieving. You may grieve the relationship you thought you had; the person you thought they were; the family you hoped to build; the years you cannot recover. Grief is not failure: it is part of healing.

There is hope

Narcissistic abuse can leave you believing that your life will always feel this way . . . but it won't. Even if you have spent years walking on eggshells, you can learn to stand firmly again. The person who has been silenced can find their voice. The person who has been told they are worthless can rediscover their value. The person who has been made to question their reality can learn to trust again. Healing can also become a journey of rediscovering how much God loves you. His love is not manipulative. His grace does not demand that you tolerate abuse. His truth does not require you to deny your pain. And His character is not reflected in someone else's cruelty simply because they use His name.

Sometimes healing means stepping out from behind someone else's version of you and discovering who God created you to be. The mask your abuser wore was convincing. No matter how long the deception lasted, the truth remains the truth. You were not created to live in fear or be controlled. You were not created to disappear so someone else could feel powerful. And God does not want you to suffer abuse. There is a way forward, and that is through the healing power of Jesus Christ, for He is the only *Healer of Hearts*.



Brenda Walsh with Darell Philip

When love becomes control:
recognising narcissistic abuse

by Pastor John Francis, *BUC Family and Children's Ministries Director*



Introduction
Over recent years, through my role as Safeguarding Lead in the North England Conference and now in my new ministerial role with the British Union Conference, I have become increasingly aware of behaviours that can damage individuals, families, churches and ministries.

Among leaders, members and, sadly, at times within ministry circles, I have encountered concerning patterns including manipulation, excessive control, intimidation, blame-shifting, misogynistic attitudes and narcissistic tendencies. When persistent and harmful, these behaviours should not simply be dismissed as personality differences or interpersonal conflict.

Not every difficult relationship or strong personality is narcissistic, and not every disagreement is abuse. Narcissism exists on a spectrum, and occasional narcissistic traits do not mean someone has a narcissistic disorder. Narcissistic personality disorder is a recognised mental-health diagnosis requiring assessment by a qualified professional. This article, focuses on narcissistic patterns of behaviour and their impact on others.

What is narcissism?
Narcissism can involve excessive self-focus, a strong need for admiration or recognition, and difficulty recognising or responding appropriately to others' needs and feelings.

Someone displaying strong narcissistic patterns may have an inflated sense of importance, feel entitled to special treatment, seek control or admiration, struggle with criticism, and find it difficult to accept responsibility. Behind outward confidence, there may also be sensitivity to criticism, rejection or loss of control, sometimes resulting in defensive, manipulative or retaliatory behaviour when status, image or authority is challenged.

The important issue is not simply someone's personality. **It is the repeated pattern of behaviour and the impact that pattern has on others.**

When love becomes control
Healthy relationships allow people to speak, question, disagree, and maintain appropriate boundaries. Narcissistic patterns can gradually turn relationships into a struggle for power and control. This may include needing to be right or have the final word; demanding excessive loyalty or admiration; refusing responsibility or shifting blame; becoming hostile when challenged; manipulating situations or people; undermining confidence; humiliating or intimidating others; controlling decision-making; and using position or authority to silence disagreement.

These behaviours may develop gradually. Someone may initially appear confident, charismatic, persuasive or highly capable. Over time, however, relationships can become centred on meeting that person's needs, protecting their image, or avoiding their displeasure.

The impact on others
Repeated criticism, blame, manipulation or dismissal can gradually erode confidence. People may question their own judgement, apologise for things that are not their responsibility, or become increasingly anxious about how the other person will react.

Gaslighting can be part of this pattern, where someone's recollection, perception or understanding of events is repeatedly denied or dismissed. Blame-shifting occurs when responsibility is consistently redirected onto someone else. Over time, people may become isolated, confused and less willing to speak up.

Narcissism and spiritual abuse
These patterns become particularly concerning when personal authority is confused with spiritual authority.

Spiritual abuse can occur when Scripture, faith or leadership is used to control, silence or manipulate others. Warning signs may include demanding unquestioning obedience, presenting personal opinions as God's will, discouraging questions, requiring secrecy, using Scripture to shame others, or creating a culture where a leader is beyond accountability.

The danger is that people may believe that challenging unhealthy behaviour is equivalent to challenging God; but no human leader is beyond accountability.

Christian leadership is not domination. Jesus modelled servant leadership – characterised by humility, sacrifice, compassion and service.

What does Christ-like love look like?
Paul reminds us that love is patient and kind; it does not dishonour others and is not self-seeking (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5). **Love does not need to control. Love does not humiliate. Love does not manipulate Scripture to get its own way. Love does not demand unquestioning obedience. Love welcomes appropriate accountability.**

The question for our churches and ministries is not simply, 'Who is right?' but: 'Does the way we are treating one another reflect the character of Christ?'

Recognising narcissistic patterns is not about labelling or diagnosing people. It is about recognising unhealthy behaviour; protecting those who may be vulnerable; strengthening accountability; and creating church communities where people are safe to speak, question, disagree, and seek help.

Our places of worship should be places where power serves people, leadership protects people, and love never becomes a weapon of control.

The church that hurts or the church that heals?

by Pastor Les Ackie



There are few categories of people for whom Jesus' Messianic mission (Luke 4:18) is more relevant than victims of abuse; and no community has a greater responsibility to fight for the oppressed than the church of the living God. It is therefore incumbent on believers to embrace the mission of the Master. Victims of abuse need to know that God is on the side of the oppressed. Isaiah counselled, 'Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow' (Isaiah 1:17, NKJV). Combating the scourge of abuse is everybody's responsibility. We cannot remain indifferent. Justice should compel us to 'speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves' (Proverbs 31:8, NIV).

Sadly, well-meaning ignorance can make bad situations worse. Victims can be guilt-tripped into staying with abusers by church leaders with erroneous views on submission, suffering and forgiveness. To tell victims to 'endure their lot in life, be a good wife, submit more, and pray harder' pours spiritual abuse on top of the physical, emotional and psychological abuse they already suffer. Research indicates that the more submissive a victim becomes, the more emboldened the abuser becomes. Perpetrators need accountability, not appeasement. Churches have a spiritual, moral and ethical responsibility to educate themselves to rightly divide the Word on the biblical response to those in need.

Compassion is not simply a desirable Christian quality: it reflects the very character of God. If the church is to represent God faithfully, compassion must therefore be at the heart of its response to wounded people. Compassion involves recognising suffering; empathising with the person who suffers; being willing to remain present with uncomfortable emotions; and, ultimately, acting to alleviate suffering. To be moved with compassion means to love not only 'in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth' (1 John 3:18, NKJV).

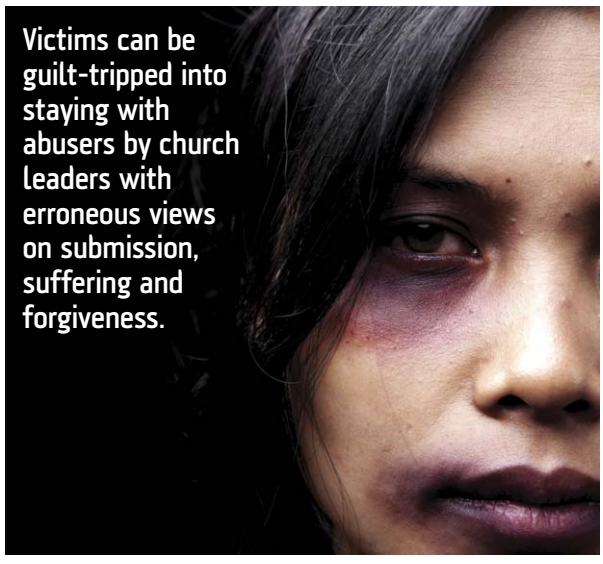
Victims of abuse do not always arrive at church with cuts and bruises; often they come with bruised and broken hearts. For the church, therefore, compassion begins with learning to recognise those who are hurting, including those whose suffering may be hidden. A compassionate response begins by receiving disclosures as credible and serious rather than requiring the person to persuade us that something happened. We do not need to be experts, but we do need to be present. We can remain calm, ask open questions, and listen – not only with our ears, but with our eyes and our hearts. Sometimes the most powerful ministry is surprisingly simple. Words such as 'I'm sorry you went through that,' 'I'm here for you' and 'It's not your fault' can help to create a safe space where someone feels seen, heard and valued.

This points towards the need for churches to become genuinely trauma-informed communities. Such churches prioritise safety, practise confidentiality and accountability, respect survivors' choices, teach sound theology, train those who provide care, and pursue Christ-centred, grace-oriented ministry. This does not mean replacing professional clinical intervention. Trauma-informed ministry has important limits that may require signposting to agencies and organisations that can provide the support the church cannot.

Every church should have clear policies and procedures for disclosures of domestic abuse, and leaders should be trained to respond appropriately. Worship leaders can speak out against domestic abuse in preaching, teaching and prayers. Members should know whom to approach when ready to disclose abuse, and resources should give victims clear guidance about their options.

What, then, would it look like for the church to become a genuinely safe place for people who have been hurt? It would be a community where victims know they will be heard rather than doubted; protected rather than pressured; supported rather than blamed; and accompanied rather than abandoned. At its best, the church offers something profoundly important: healing relationships. We are often wounded in relationships, but relationships can also become places of healing. Through patient presence, empathy, safety and practical love, Christians can embody something of the compassionate heart of God.

Jesus said, 'By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35, NKJV). Nowhere is that love more powerfully demonstrated than in the way we respond to those whose hearts have been broken.



Victims can be guilt-tripped into staying with abusers by church leaders with erroneous views on submission, suffering and forgiveness.

Forgiveness – blessings and boundaries

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



British author C. S. Lewis once stated: *'Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.'* I can relate to that statement! Learning to forgive the people who caused me harm has been a painful and challenging journey. Yet, in embracing forgiveness, many blessings have ensued. What God taught me in the process has been priceless.[1]

My work in teaching on forgiveness both nationally and internationally highlighted the fact that nearly all of us find it challenging to forgive, regardless of the diverse situations and traumas encountered. Forgiveness is possible, but it is a process; that's why I emphasise the fact that it's a journey. In one course I facilitated, titled 'The Forgiveness Journey Experience', I worked with a counsellor to enable attendees who had experienced traumatic life events to explore their forgiveness journey in depth. Subsequently, it was heartening to hear the testimonials from individuals whose lives had been transformed as they released the bitterness and unforgiveness they had previously held on to, allowing God to heal their hurts.

Forgiveness and its benefits

One definition of forgiveness describes it as 'the decision to let go of resentments and thoughts of revenge' and to untie yourself from thoughts and feelings about the offence committed against you.[2]

Different pieces of research reveal the wellbeing benefits in individuals who were able to forgive. An article by the Templeton World Charity Foundation titled 'Largest-Ever Study on Forgiveness Shows Decreased Anxiety and Depression' states: *'The resulting science sends a clear message that forgiveness works. It has a significant impact on mental health, physical health, and on our relationships to one another at the interpersonal and even societal levels.'*[3]

Other research from Johns Hopkins highlights: *'Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge rewards for your health, [including] lower risk of heart attack, improved cholesterol levels, boosted sleep, reduced pain, lower blood pressure, [and] reduced anxiety, depression and stress.'*[4]

A journey towards forgiveness

Identify your feelings and triggers: If you have been wounded by betrayal, hurt or abuse, and are currently experiencing unresolved emotions, express how you are feeling and the struggle you are experiencing with forgiveness. Writing your feelings down or sharing them with a trusted individual can be therapeutic.

It can also be helpful to identify what triggers the memories and negative emotions connected to the painful event. Ask yourself:

- What brings you back to the memory of what happened to you?
- What brings back negative emotions connected to the painful event?
- What makes you feel angry, resentful or vengeful?

Recognising these feelings and triggers can help you understand what you are experiencing and identify areas where you may need support.

Seek support: Seeking professional help and counselling is essential if you are traumatised by what has happened to you. Prayer support and spiritual nurture are equally important in addressing unresolved issues. You do not have to walk through the journey of healing alone.

Reconciliation, trust and boundaries: Romans 12:18 (NKJV) states: 'If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.' As Christians, we can still forgive someone despite the hurt they have caused us, even when that individual does not apologise. Reconciliation, however, requires both parties to acknowledge the hurt, seek resolution, and rebuild trust.

When an abuser gives an apology, stating, 'I am sorry; this will not happen again,' it is easy to accept the sincerity of that statement, and the trusting victim may feel compelled to give them another chance. However, rebuilding trust comes with evidence of change. It also requires the protecting of the vulnerable and the safeguarding of individuals from further harm.

Placing healthy boundaries is essential to shield individuals from further harm. For example, in an abusive relationship, a woman may have left her marriage due to domestic violence. Even though she forgives her husband, she may decide not to return to the marriage in order to protect herself and her children from future violence, especially if her husband's behaviour remains unchanged.

Forgiveness brings healing

It was Mahatma Gandhi who said: 'If we practise an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, soon the whole world will be blind and toothless.' Embrace the words of Eva Mozes Kor, a Holocaust survivor: 'Forgive. See the miracle that can happen.'

[1]This led me to deliver the 'Forgiveness Is Healing' course, bespoke seminars and accompanying resources, including a book called *The Healing Power of Forgiveness* – *https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/the-healing-power-of-forgiveness/.*

[2]Katherine Piderman, Staff Chaplain at the Mayo Clinic – *https://motherrr.com/help/topics/forgiveness/forgiveness-letting-go-of-grudges-and-bitterness/*

[3]*www.templetonworldcharity.org/blog/REACH-forgiveness-study*

[4]*www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/expert-qa/forgiveness-your-health-depends-on-it*

Ellen G. White Youth Symposium

Elizabeta Gagic, *Ellen G. White Research Centre Assistant*

Photos by Anja Cikac



Pastor Rory Mendez



Pastor Dwain Esmond

More than 200 young people gathered at Newbold College of Higher Education on 11 September for the Ellen G. White Youth Symposium, united by a desire to discover and better understand the voice of God – a voice that spoke clearly in the past and continues to speak meaningfully to people, cultures and generations today.

Pastor Rory Mendez, Director of the Ellen G. White Research Centre at Newbold College, opened the event by explaining the significance of its thought-provoking title, 'God Has a Big Mouth', saying that it 'expresses a simple but profound truth: God is not silent!' He invited attendees to explore the conviction that God's words, spoken in the past, still speak to us today. Whatever means He uses to communicate, God's voice deserves to be heard, understood and taken seriously.

Each presenter brought a distinct energy, contribution and perspective, while remaining united in highlighting a central truth: humanity lies at the very heart of God's concern and design. Central to this conviction is the belief that God communicates with humanity, including prophetically through human channels.

The symposium began with a historical perspective from Pastor Ian Sweeney, Chair of the Trans-European Division (TED) Board. The programme then moved through a series of engaging and memorable presentations. Dr Theodore Levterov, Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate, in his presentation 'Ellen White and the Chocolate Experiment', encouraged participants to discover Ellen White's writings for themselves through personal engagement and study. Drawing on the familiar experience of tasting chocolate, he suggested that the best way to form an informed opinion about Ellen White is to 'try' her writings – to read them personally. As with chocolate, he suggested, once you have tried them, you may find yourself wanting more and wanting to explore more deeply (page 10).

Pastor Dwain Esmond, Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate, addressed another challenge in his presentation 'God, Please Shut Up!' The provocative title explored humanity's difficulty in listening to God's voice and responding to His message. The challenge, he explained, is not necessarily that we dislike the messenger – in this case, Ellen White – but that we may struggle with reminders of our sinfulness, shortcomings and need for change.

Lecturers from Newbold College – including Dr Jan Barna, Dr Laszlo Gallusz and Pastor Rory Mendez – shared their expertise generously, helping participants to see the larger picture and make connections between the writings of Ellen White and Scripture. Their presentations provided historical, theological and biblical context, encouraging the audience to look beyond isolated statements and consider the broader message.

The final presentation was given by Pastor Steve McKenzie, who explored the work of the Holy Spirit through a vivid and memorable illustration. His creative and engaging sermon brought the programme to a meaningful conclusion.

The symposium ended on a joyful note with songs of praise to God, led by the Glasgow Choir alongside several individual musical contributions. The music brought participants together and provided a fitting conclusion to two days of reflection, learning and fellowship.

As Pastor Ian Sweeney reminded the audience, the God who has a big voice also has a big heart.

Ellen White's prophetic gift and chocolate: *the case for reading her writings for yourself*

by Dr Theodore N. Levterov, *Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate*



Ellen White and chocolate may seem unrelated, yet they have something important in common. A seminar can explain how chocolate is made and what distinguishes one brand from another . . . but even the best description cannot communicate taste. For this to be revealed, at some point the wrapper must be opened and the chocolate must be tried.

The same is true of Ellen White. We may study her biography, examine her claim to the prophetic gift, or listen to her admirers and critics . . . yet none of these can replace a personal encounter with her writings. Ellen White put it well when addressing scepticism towards her gift in 1863. She wrote: 'Some are unacquainted with me and my labours, and they are very sceptical of anything bearing the name of visions. This is all natural, and can be overcome only by experience.'[1]

A ministry centred on Jesus

Readers who approach Ellen White with an open mind may be surprised to find out what was the centre of her prophetic ministry. Her primary role was to lead people to Jesus. That emphasis began with her first vision in December 1844. After the Great Disappointment, many Millerite Adventists had lost confidence in Christ's return. Ellen saw the Advent people travelling towards the heavenly city safely as long as they kept their eyes 'fixed on Jesus'. Their prophetic expectations required correction, but Jesus had not abandoned them, the vision revealed.[2]

The same Christ-centred message appears in Ellen White's last known letter, dated 14 June 1914. She wrote to Martha Andrea Creeper, a young Adventist publishing worker in Hamburg who struggled with guilt and uncertainty about God's acceptance. Ellen White urged her to 'look to Jesus'. 'It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me,' she wrote. This letter gave Martha renewed hope. She continued serving the church's publishing work for decades, helping prepare materials for young readers.[3]

For Ellen White, directing people to Jesus also meant directing them to Scripture. She did not present her writings as a replacement for the Bible. 'Little heed is given to the Bible,' she observed, 'and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.'[4] Her writings serve their proper purpose when they awaken a desire for God's Word and point readers to Christ.

The fruit of reading

Can reading her writings make a practical difference? In a study reported some years ago, Roger Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr compared Seventh-day Adventists who regularly read Ellen White with those who seldom or never did. Frequent readers were more likely to report a close relationship with God, assurance of salvation, regular family worship and involvement in Christian witness. The findings suggest that 'regular reading of Ellen White's materials does make a positive difference in Christian life and witnessing.'[5] While statistics alone cannot prove prophetic inspiration, they do invite us to examine the fruit. Ellen White's writings offer spiritual counsel meant to be read and lived out.

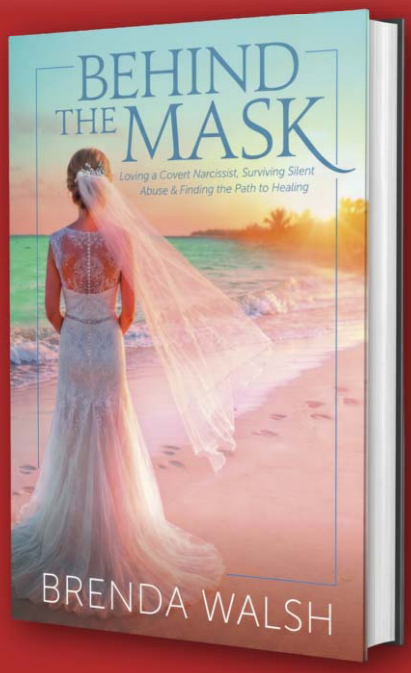
An invitation to read and share

OneVoice27, a worldwide Seventh-day Adventist mission initiative, offers a timely opportunity to put that principle into practice. As the church prepares to mark two thousand years since Christ's baptism and the beginning of His public ministry in 2027, all members are being invited to read (or re-read) Ellen White's classic work on the life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*. Few books display her central passion for Jesus more clearly.[6] The goal is not simply to gather more information about Jesus, but to enter more deeply into fellowship with Him. And, after reading the book, consider sharing a copy with someone who has not yet accepted Christ.

A seminar can describe a chocolate, but only tasting reveals its flavour. In the same way, the most honest evaluation of Ellen White begins when we open her writings and read them for ourselves. Her enduring invitation is to know Jesus, trust His love, follow His Word, and share His amazing grace with others.

[1]Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), p. 382
[2]Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), p. 14
[3]Ellen G. White to 'My Dear Sister', Letter 2, 14 June 1914; see also: Tim Poirier, 'My Dear Sister: Ellen White's Last Letter', *Adventist Review*, 9 February 2025 – *https://adventistreview.org/experiences/heritage/my-dear-sister/*
[4]Ellen G. White, 'An Open Letter', *Review and Herald*, 20 January 1903, p. 15
[5]Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings Jr, 'Who Reads Ellen White?' *Ministry*, October 1982, pp. 10-12
[6]OneVoice27, 'OneVoice27: Mission for All', accessed 13 September 2026 – *https://cdn.onevoice27.org/onevoice27-presentation-compressed.pdf*

The Book of the Month



Behind the Mask

Behind the Mask is Brenda Walsh's personal story of surviving narcissistic abuse. She did not write the book simply to tell others what happened to her, but to help others who may still be suffering in silence. They need to know there is hope.

Brenda believes her story can help others recognise the warning signs, understand the devastating effects of narcissistic abuse, and begin their own journey towards healing. Narcissists can be male or female: a family member, a spouse or partner, a friend, a co-worker, a boss . . . even someone sitting beside you in church.

God sees beyond the mask. He sees the tears no one else sees, the wounds hidden beneath the smile, and the battles fought in silence. He knows the truth, even when others don't. Brenda's prayer is that *Behind the Mask* will remind anyone who has experienced narcissistic abuse that their story does not have to end with what was done to them. With God, healing is possible. There is life after the manipulation, peace after the chaos, and hope after the darkness. And sometimes the first step towards healing is simply having the courage to finally see what was hiding behind the mask.

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.lifesourcebookshop.co.uk****.*

Unshakeable worth

by Racquel Robinson

If you came across a high-value bank note on the ground, would you want it? I'm certain you just exclaimed, 'Absolutely!' Well, what if that same note were trampled on and soiled – would you still want it? You see, the money does not change its value no matter how soiled it is. It's the same with us: our value and identity remain unchangeable, no matter what we do or fail to do.

We see this so clearly in the parable of the prodigal son. When the younger brother came to himself and decided to return home, he thought himself no longer worthy to be called a son – he had to be a servant. His value, he thought, was performative – his value and identity changed based on what he did or did not do.

His older brother was angry when his father celebrated his return. The angry older brother exclaimed that he had done everything right, but never once had his father thrown a celebration for him. Again, he thought it was performative; that his value and identity were found in what he did.

Both were believing the enemy's lies! Oh, how often we fall into the traps of our adversary! We accept and believe the things that we were taught growing up or how we were socialised. We neglect to see the beauty of the good news that God's love is unshakeable and that our worth is therefore also unshakeable.

Look at what God said about Jesus in Matthew 3:17 (NKJV): 'And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ' This is so beautiful and freeing! Jesus had not started His ministry yet. This affirmation was proclaimed loudly before He turned water into wine: no miracle had yet been performed. No one proclaimed Him as the Messiah until that day when John the Baptist said it. Yet His Father and all the hosts of heaven joined in the declaration: 'In [You] I am well pleased.'

A solid sense of self in Christ includes knowing that you are already seen, loved and chosen, independent of what you do (or not). Know who you are. Know whose you are. Today, boldly, grab hold of abundant life. Believe and live, knowing that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. For, truly, when you know your God-given value and worth, you are free.


. . . the money does not change its value no matter how soiled it is.

CAKES, BAKES & DESSERTS

32 mins

8 portions

Pumpkin & Raisin Cupcakes

As a child I did not like pumpkin. Even when I tried to smother it with butter (which was not encouraged by my parents) I still had to force it down. When I became an adult I travelled to the USA many times on business trips and discovered that Americans use pumpkin to make desserts. I was a bit hesitant to try it at first, but now I am a fan.

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Line a muffin tin with cupcake cases.
3. In a medium mixing bowl mix together the cooked **pumpkin**, **canola oil**, **soya milk**, **sugar** and **vanilla**.
4. When this is thoroughly mixed, sift in the **flour**, **baking powder**, **baking soda**, **cinnamon** and **salt**. Use a fork or whisk, not an electric mixer, to mix the dry ingredients in.
5. When thoroughly mixed, pour in the **raisins** and stir well.
6. Pour mixture into the cupcake cases, filling each space about two-thirds full. (The cupcakes will rise quite a lot, so don't overfill the cupcake cases.)
7. Bake for approximately 22 minutes, or until a toothpick placed in the centre comes out clean.

Shopping list

- **Pumpkin** – 2 cups, cooked
- **Flour** – 2½ cups
- **Granulated sugar** – 2 cups
- **Raisins** – 1 cup
- **Canola oil** (or rapeseed or olive) – ⅔ cup
- **Almond (or rice) milk** – ½ cup
- **Vanilla extract** – 2 tsp
- **Baking powder** – 1 tsp
- **Baking soda** – 1 tsp
- **Ground cinnamon** – 1 tsp
- **Pinch of salt**



Taken from *Cooking with Kids*.
To purchase yours, follow this link: *https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/cooking-with-kids-paperback/*

Romans 15:9-21: Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

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



GENTILES	BELIEVING	OBEDIENT
GLORIFY	JESUS	WORD
SING	GOSPEL	DEED
REJOICE	ACCEPTABLE	SIGNS
PRAISE	SANCTIFIED	WONDERS
REIGN	HOLY GHOST	POWER
TRUST	GLORY	FOUNDATION
HOPE	SPEAK	UNDERSTAND

Taken from *Hidden Words 6*. To purchase yours, follow this link: *https://lifesource bookshop.co.uk/product/ hidden-words/*

A gift to the women of Somalia

Women in Somalia, such as Shukri and Sagal, are resilient amid adversity.

All they need from you is an opportunity to thrive.

ADRA-UK Communications





'The context in our country is one of decades of armed conflict that has uprooted and destroyed local communities, depleting basic health, sanitation and education services. As if that was not enough, extreme weather conditions have perplexed us, leading to both severe droughts and heavy floods, ruining crops and killing livestock' (Mohamud Abdullahi, ADRA Communication and Public Relations Officer).

The stark result is one of the highest numbers in the world of internally displaced people, some 3.8 million, close to 20% of the overall Somali population. Most of these people are vulnerable women and children who lack safe shelter, clean water and food.

Despite these challenges, local initiatives, resilience and the spirit of entrepreneurship abound, notably around several commercially viable value chains such as cereals, sesame seeds, fisheries, meat and milk production. These small business initiatives, often headed by women, are many times frustrated by the lack of basic infrastructure, such as access to water for cattle rearing and available and affordable energy to ensure refrigeration for milk and fresh produce.

Shukri in Hargeisa, Sagal in Baidoa and thousands of women like them are the backbone of a dairy sector deeply woven into Somali life. Somalia is the world's second-largest producer of camel milk, with an estimated seven million camels producing more than one billion litres each year. Camel milk is consumed fresh, fermented as *suusac*, and increasingly transformed into yoghurt, ice cream and chocolate by a growing number of women entrepreneurs.

Yet, despite its cultural importance and economic potential, much of this abundance never reaches formal markets. Limited access to refrigeration, reliable energy and water infrastructure and transport keeps many producers and traders trapped at subsistence level.

In the Bible, the prophet Isaiah prophesied of a time when the land would be ravaged by war and agriculture would be wiped out. In that desolate landscape, God's people would survive primarily on pastoral livestock *'because of the abundance of milk they give'* (Isaiah 7:21, 22, NIV). For women like Shukri and Sagal, that ancient connection between milk and survival remains as strong today as it was in Isaiah's time.

Shukri and Sagal approach the nomadic pastoralists in the early hours of the morning, and greetings ensue. Years of trading together have built trust and respect between them. One drop of camel milk is placed on the back of Sagal's hand, and Shukri inspects it carefully for its appearance, thickness and scent. These women are masters of their trade. Through years of handling and selling milk they have developed an instinct for quality that can mean the difference between profit and loss. The milk is approved, a price is agreed, and soon the containers are loaded for the journey to town.

Their story is repeated across Somalia, from Hargeisa in the north to Baidoa and Kismayo in the south. Like thousands of women involved in dairy trading, cereals, fisheries and livestock markets, Shukri and Sagal are the sole breadwinners of their families. They collect products from remote rural communities, transport them to market, and absorb the risks when infrastructure fails. Without reliable transport, electricity, refrigeration, water and access to finance, every day becomes a race against time. If the milk is not sold within hours, it goes sour; during droughts, when herds move further away and milk becomes scarcer, the risks grow even greater. For these women, daily sales determine whether there is food on the table that evening.

Across Somalia, countless women share the same determination as Shukri and Sagal. They have the knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial spirit to succeed, yet too many remain trapped by circumstances beyond their control. Together, we can help to change that.

This November we are doing something NEW. We are launching the first ADRA-UK crowdfunding campaign so YOU can support women's businesses in conflict-torn Somalia: 'A gift to the women of Somalia'. See the QR code for further information and donations. Your gift will directly be used to make women's businesses more sustainable through access to water, refrigeration and solar energy infrastructure. Every gift, large or small, is received with grateful hands from the women of Somalia. As a token of their appreciation, sample containers of sesame seeds will be shipped to you if you so wish, as a memento that you have been a vehicle of hope and opportunity to women in Somalia.*

*To maximise the funds raised, only gifts above £20 will be eligible for a sample container of sesame seeds as long as stocks last.

Scottish Mission celebrates 1,000-member milestone at Day of Fellowship

SM Communications

The Scottish Mission celebrated a significant milestone at its Day of Fellowship on Saturday 26 September 2026, marking the growth of its membership beyond 1,000.

All 730 available tickets at Hope City Church, Dunfermline were reserved ahead of the event, reflecting the continuing growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Scotland and contrasting strongly with the attendance of 400 people fourteen years ago, when Scottish Mission membership stood at just over 500.

Joining members from across Scotland was British Union Conference (BUC) President Dr Kirk Thomas, together with other BUC officers and departmental leaders, who offered their support and encouragement as the Mission continues to grow and develop. A particularly special moment came as five former Scottish Mission presidents – Pastors Bob Rodd, Llew Edwards, Bernie Holford, Paul Tompkins and Jimmy Botha – came together on stage to reflect on the Mission's journey since 1991, when Bob Rodd became president following the reconstitution of the Scottish Mission. Sharing memories from their respective periods of leadership, they expressed gratitude for the many people who have served faithfully over the years, reflecting on how God has worked in ways they could not always have imagined.

They also recalled the resilience demonstrated by churches and members through the COVID-19 pandemic and the growth that has continued since. The celebration also provided an opportunity to look ahead as the Scottish Mission continues its journey towards becoming a conference.



Left to right: former Scottish Mission presidents, Pastors Llew Edwards, Bernie Holford, Paul Tompkins, Jimmy Botha and Bob Rodd



Left to right: BUC President Dr Kirk Thomas, Pastor Shawn Boonstra, SM President Obi Iheoma

Stories of God's provision and transformation

The morning programme featured powerful testimonies from Laura Kazuwa and Alison Wilson.

Laura recalled the difficult period after her family first relocated to Scotland. With her family struggling financially, there came a night when they thought they might go to bed hungry. Unexpectedly, a social worker arrived at their door with two bags of food – a moment she remembered as a tangible reminder of God's provision.

Alison shared openly about her journey from feeling worthless and living without direction, including experiences of violent relationships, to discovering her identity and worth in Christ. Letting Jesus into her life, she explained, brought a transformation that gave her a new sense of purpose and hope.

Guest speaker Shawn Boonstra used Scripture, humour and personal stories to deliver an energetic and engaging morning message, challenging listeners to consider the direction of their lives. Recalling a high-school friend who celebrated scoring a goal before realising he had scored for the wrong team, he warned against reaching the end of life only to discover that we have been 'playing for the wrong side'. He encouraged members to take a three-day soul challenge: turn off the distractions, spend intentional time with God, and ask Him two fundamental questions: 'What's the right way to live?' and 'What's my greatest need?' Drawing on the apostle Paul's ambition to please God, Boonstra ultimately asked: 'Does my life bring a smile to God's face?'

Sharing Jesus authentically

The day's emphasis on purposeful Christian living continued with OneVoice27, encouraging members to find authentic and practical ways of sharing Jesus with the people they encounter in everyday life.

In the afternoon, Boonstra turned to Acts 14:8-17 and the idea that 'God gets there first.' Rather than approaching evangelism as though Christians are bringing God into someone's life for the first time, he encouraged members to listen, build genuine relationships, and recognise what God may already be doing in the lives of those around them. 'What people need is not a religious know-it-all, but another sinner who knows Jesus Christ,' he said.

The afternoon also featured a rich variety of music presented by soloists, choirs and ensembles, reflecting the different ages, cultures and backgrounds represented within the increasingly diverse Adventist community across Scotland. They celebrated how far God has led the Mission while pointing firmly towards what comes next: a growing, outward-looking church committed to multiplying its impact across Scotland.

https://adventist.scot/news/scottish-mission-celebrates-1-000-member-milestone-at-day-of-fellowship

Sunshine, smiles and celebration: Special Needs Camp 2026

Andrew Agnew and Joy Bussey

From 12 to 19 July 2026, the beautiful Glan Yr Afon Advent Campsite in Aberdaron once again became home to Special Needs Camp as we celebrated our 46th annual camp – a mission that continues to change lives.

At 4.30pm on the opening day, the camp coach – welcomed as usual by Joy Bussey, who ran the camp for more than forty years prior to the pandemic, together with her husband Colin – rolled into the campsite carrying eighteen excited campers, ready for a week filled with fun, friendship, fantastic food and unforgettable memories. Joining them was an incredible team of volunteer staff from across the British Union Conference, including eleven enthusiastic young volunteers from the Irish Mission who, accompanied by Auntie Heather, had travelled overnight to take part.

From the moment the camp began, the Lord blessed us with glorious weather. Day after day, the sunshine provided the perfect backdrop for a packed programme of activities, fellowship and worship.

Each morning began with creative Arts & Crafts sessions led by the wonderfully talented Alva, with preparations and ideas he lovingly put together before camp together with Amanda, who sadly couldn't join us this year. The campers especially loved making colourful kites before flying them in the refreshing Aberdaron sea breeze.

The afternoons were spent exploring the beautiful village and sandy beaches of Aberdaron. Campers made the most of the sunshine by paddling or swimming in the surprisingly warm Irish Sea. There was plenty of laughter during beach games, while the ever-popular sandcastle competition once again showcased some wonderfully imaginative creations . . . and no visit to Aberdaron would be complete without treating ourselves to some delicious locally made ice cream!

One of the week's highlights was our midweek trip to Pili Palas Nature World, where campers delighted in meeting a fascinating variety of animals, enjoying hands-on encounters with creepy-crawlies, and making friends with some wonderfully chilled goats. The excitement continued with our much-anticipated visit to the dodgems, a long-time camp favourite that had both campers and staff laughing from beginning to end.

Of course, Special Needs Camp wouldn't be complete without our traditional banquet and camp concert on











Thursday evening. This year's theme was inspired by the film GOAT, and the Activities Team transformed the hall with fantastic decorations to match. Everyone enjoyed a beautifully prepared themed banquet, including Joyce's unforgettable goat-inspired dessert! The evening then flowed into the camp concert, where campers and staff alike shared their talents through singing, dancing, poetry and music in a joyful celebration of friendship and confidence.

Keeping everyone fuelled throughout such an active week, our wonderful catering team, led by Shirley and Colin, prepared each meal with love, which was appreciated by all.

While there was plenty of fun and laughter throughout the week, Christ remained at the heart of the camp. Each day began and ended with opportunities to grow closer to Him. The camp's padre, Pastor David Rancic, and his team led inspiring daily worships centred on this year's theme of 'Creation'. Our praise sessions, led by Richard and Dan, were vibrant, uplifting and wonderfully inclusive, with campers and volunteers joyfully worshipping side by side as a family.

The week concluded with a peaceful and reflective Sabbath. Following a meaningful praise and worship service and a delicious fellowship lunch, everyone enjoyed a relaxing visit to the breathtaking Whistling Sands Beach, taking time to appreciate the beauty of God's creation and the many blessings we had shared throughout the week. As the camp ended, everyone left with full hearts and grateful spirits, already looking forward with excitement and expectation to what God has in store for Special Needs Camp 2027.

As always, Special Needs Camp was about so much more than activities. It was about building friendships, creating lasting memories, growing in faith, and showing every camper that they are loved, valued and wonderfully made. God's presence could be felt in every smile, every song, every conversation and every act of kindness. Special Needs Camp has always been far more than a holiday. It provides respite for families, friendship for campers, encouragement for carers, and an opportunity for volunteers to share God's love in practical and lasting ways.

Take Andrew, for example. He first attended camp as an 11-year-old alongside his 13-year-old sister, Caroline, helping to support their Auntie Marie. Marie loved attending camp, especially joining in the worship singing, and continued to attend for many years before she passed away in 2021. Having grown up with camp, Andrew understands both the joy it brings and the increasing responsibility involved in ensuring that every camper receives the care they deserve.

From another perspective, Jenny, one of our campers, is the last remaining member of a group of six young people Joy Bussey first brought to Special Needs Camp from the day centre where she taught many years ago. Towards the end of last year, Joy spoke with Jenny's brother, who told her that Jenny had been suffering from knee pain. When he asked why she hadn't mentioned it to the staff at her residential home, her immediate reply was, *'I had to go to camp. I didn't want anyone saying I couldn't go.'*

A heartfelt thank-you goes to those who have faithfully supported this ministry over the years, both past and present, including Eseata Steele, whose nursing care blessed campers for many years; our current camp master, Pastor Curtis Murphy; the camp padre, Pastor David Rancic, for his continued involvement; and Erdington Church and Leamington Mission for their generous financial support. Your tireless dedication, selfless service, unwavering commitment, love, kindness and hard work made this incredible week possible, and together you helped create memories that our campers, their families and our volunteers will treasure for years to come.

If you have ever considered becoming involved, I would encourage you to do so. Whether by volunteering, giving financially, praying or helping in other ways, your support makes a real difference. Together, we can ensure that every camper and family knows there is a place for them; that enough trained and vetted volunteers are available to meet their needs; and that they can arrive in Aberdaron with confidence, knowing that they will be welcomed, cared for, and loved.

'And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ' (Colossians 3:23, 24, NKJV).



Bournemouth Church holds baptisms in the sea

The blazing afternoon sun shone down on members of Bournemouth Adventist Church, family and friends as they gathered on the beach on Sabbath 8 August to celebrate nine souls publicly giving their lives to Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. One candidate's boss even came in support, and saw each person enter the cool waters of the South Coast of England.

The candidates were Rahela Visovan, Isla Van Wyk, Gracie Van Wyk, Airra Mayuga, Faith Gachwe, Bogdan Topala, Tichafara Mwareya, Aporosa Camaibatiki and Mereyani Camaibatiki. It was such an honour for their minister, Pastor Steven Hulbert, to baptise them, assisted by Elder Douglas Vine. The head elder, Emmanuel Freeman, had led them in their baptismal studies with the occasional help of other elders and teachers, and he assisted in handing out their baptismal certificates and welcoming them into membership.

Scriptures were read, songs were sung, and cheers, clapping and shouts of praise were heard as each precious soul emerged from the waters. Beachgoers saw something they hadn't expected that day, which led to some good conversations with the opportunity to share some literature. Rillah and Henry Walls provided ice cream, fruits, water and cake. Congratulations to all those baptised; may the God of all creation bless you always in this life you have chosen in Jesus.

PASTOR STEVEN HULBERT

Central London Church baptism



Back row: four elders; front row: Pastor Colin Stewart, Jiyoun and the four baptised members, Savarnah, Sylvester, Monica and Christine

The very culturally diverse congregation of Central London Church celebrated the baptism of four precious individuals on 15 August 2026. Sylvester, with Romanian roots, had grown up in an Adventist home, began attending Central London Church two years ago, and was nurtured by a strong group of church friends. We give thanks for him. Savarnah, the only London-born person of the group, with Jamaican roots, had been searching for the truth for a while; and, when convinced to keep the Sabbath at home through the study of the Word with her mum, she began searching on YouTube for a Sabbath-keeping church and came across Central London Church. Christine, with African roots, was introduced by one of our serving elders; having come from another Christian faith, she'd been convinced that the Sabbath is the true day of worship. Her family came to the service to witness her baptism. The last person – Monica, an Italian – had been introduced to faith by a friend and soon began attending the early morning Discipleship Class. She's been attending Central London for over a year and was also convinced of the Adventist message.

Following Central London Church tradition, the church member most recently baptised prior to this event, Jiyoun from Korea, was the first to welcome these four new members and present them with gifts. We give God thanks for them and look forward to helping them all develop and grow into their newfound faith. God is bringing His sheep into the fold one by one.

CENTRAL LONDON COMMUNICATION



Left to right: Pastor Ray Patrick, Tavonga, Neemias, Paida, Nicole, Tadi, Jeffery, Caroline, Rungano, Pastor Hope Njoku

Taunton and Chard launch OneVoice27 with baptismal service

On Sabbath 5 September the Taunton church and Chard plant were blessed by the addition of seven new members through baptism and one member by profession of faith. The afternoon service, led by Pastor Hope Njoku, marked the end of a week-long evangelism campaign by Pastor Ray Patrick of Adventist Radio London, who blessed the church with powerful and inspiring messages of revival and hope under the theme 'Fight for Your Life!' He reminded the church that the only thing that matters is Jesus and our relationship with Him, and he used his Sabbath message to uplift Jesus Christ and prepare the church to meet Him when He returns.

Taunton and Chard joined in the launch of the global OneVoice27 General Conference initiative, and it was a great moment of joy to see these eight beautiful souls joining the church, with many others declaring their decision to give their lives to Jesus. We thank God for allowing the church to be part of the great commission of Matthew 28.

PASTOR HOPE NJOKU



Baptism at Aberystwyth

In beautiful sunshine, Andy and Ania Nawrot were baptised in the sea off the west coast of central Wales on 22 August.

Andy, a fourth-generation Adventist who had lapsed and ended up overweight and depressed, started to ask the big questions in life while helping to look after a childhood friend who was dying from cancer. He ended up searching through the Bible and returning to the faith of his youth.

Meanwhile, Ania had been brought up a Roman Catholic, but had been put off church by the corruption she saw in the priest. She still searched for spiritual meaning, but in nature and the New Age movement rather than in any church. While Andy was keeping Sabbath at home and enjoying the peace it brought him, Ania had many questions and was struggling to reconcile conflicting concepts. A Seventh-day Adventist video pointing out the problems with Roman Catholicism caught her interest. She checked Bible references, and things started to make sense. While watching the associated 34-part series, the answers began to fall into place. Bible studies with a Polish pastor over Zoom followed; then church.

This was the first baptism for the Aberystwyth company, and a couple who had been united in marriage for eight years were now united in faith.

GERARD FORDHAM



Pastoral team, from right: Elder Emanuel Henry, Elder Sam Mwangi
New members: Joe Murefu, Sis Enrinate Ngwenya, Malwande Ncube and Cynthia Jepchirchir

Joy and renewal at Reading Central

The Sabbath of 5 September was deeply moving and joyful for Reading Central Seventh-day Adventist Church as a full-to-capacity congregation gathered to witness four individuals publicly dedicate their lives to Christ through baptism. In his first baptismal service since stepping into his leadership role at the church, Pastor Steve McKenzie remarked, 'If Heaven rejoices over one sinner turning to God, then Heaven must be having a big celebration.'

The new members were Joe Murefu, Sis Enrinate Ngwenya, Malwande Ncube and Cynthia Jepchirchir, three of whom were young people. Sis Enrinate Ngwenya, who described her baptism as finally 'coming home', had rescheduled an international flight to ensure she could be present. For continued nurturing, all candidates were assigned personal mentors.

American saxophonist 'SaxMn-KenRyce' and the Reading Central Praise Team blessed the church with praise and worship, and the church family gathered for a fellowship lunch following the service. During a final appeal by Pastor McKenzie, three more individuals stepped forward to signal their readiness to prepare for the church's next baptismal class.

BOIKIE OSUPENG



Left to right: Pastor Jeremy Johnson, Gabe, Sarah, Pastor Adriana Fodor, Elder Jane Wells

Ystrad Mynach Church baptisms

Heaven rejoiced with Ystrad Mynach Church as two new members – Denise and Sarah, born and raised within Christian homes in the beautiful Welsh valleys – were baptised.

It was at a community choir practice that an Ystrad Mynach church member, Loraine, began making friends with Denise, who had already begun her spiritual journey of discovery through reading the Bible. Denise attended Ystrad Mynach Church with her new-found friend and started Bible studies with the local pastor, Adriana Fodor. Immediately the Holy Spirit impressed her to be baptised. After diligent Bible study, Denise gave her life to the Lord on 2 May, becoming the Ystrad Mynach church's newest member. She has already begun to share what God has done for her with others.

At a difficult time in her life, Sarah met Gabe, another of Ystrad Mynach's church members, who became an encouraging and supportive friend. He showed her how depending on God could help her with all the cares of this world. After an invitation to attend church, Sarah became a regular attendee, part of the wider church family. Always enthusiastic about learning from God's Word and reflecting the joy of Jesus, Sarah looked forward to the day when she would be baptised: 18 July. The song 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus' resonated with Sarah, who now joyfully shares her faith.

We praise the Lord for His wonderful work in Denise and Sarah's lives! Let's continue to keep them in our prayers.

PASTOR ADRIANA FODOR (ARTICLE AND PHOTO)



ADRA concert at Day of Fellowship

An afternoon of music at the Grays and Southend District Day of Fellowship raised £1,000 for the UK office of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA-UK) on Saturday 25 July. The special fundraising concert – which brought together singers from Areas 6 and 8, as well as London, to support education, health, shelter, clean water and disaster relief projects internationally – was organised by the Grays Church ADRA Department on their District Day of Fellowship with Southend Church, both churches led by Pastor Sampson Osei Aboagye. Visitors from the Braintree, Great Yarmouth and Thamesmead churches also attended.

From 4.30pm to 6.30pm, the audience enjoyed a varied programme of reflective and spiritually uplifting music, with performances from soloists, groups and choirs. Although admission was free, attendees were invited to support ADRA-UK through a special collection conducted by members of the local Pathfinder club.

During the programme, Vivian Jere, representing the ADRA Department, shared a brief insight into ADRA's work around the world, reminding the audience (adults and children) that money raised by ADRA provides for vulnerable communities overseas and within the United Kingdom.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT



Dedication of Barnsley Church

It was a long time in coming – but on Sabbath 20 June members, friends and visitors gathered at the Seventh-day Adventist church on Doncaster Road in Barnsley to witness the building's dedication. Representing the NEC, Pastors Steve Palmer, Solon Kyriacou and Dan Majaducon attended, as did several past ministers of Barnsley Church.

After a lively Sabbath School study led by Pastor Palmer, the church was called to worship by Barnsley's minister, Pastor Alan Hush. The Barnsley Church choir, led by music leader Irina Pica, gave a beautiful rendition of the Lord's Prayer.

Pastor Dan Majaducon preached on the cleansing of the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19, inviting the congregation to consider whether their religious duties take precedence over their thankfulness to Jesus for His forgiveness and cleansing. The Act of Dedication was led by Pastors Palmer and Kyriacou, with all the congregation responding together as each of the statements of dedication were read out. The morning service was concluded by a benediction offered by the intern pastor, Manami Inada.

After a splendid fellowship lunch, an afternoon programme – introduced by a short message from Pastor Emanuel Bran, British Union Conference Executive Secretary – was enjoyed by everyone. Memories were shared of the beginning of the Barnsley church in 1947 (when the building on Sackville Street was purchased and first used for worship), and of the development and growth that led to the congregation moving to the Doncaster Road premises. Pictures and recollections from members and past ministers were shared detailing the many activities and outreach programmes conducted by the church over the years.

We are grateful to all who contributed to making the day so special, and we thank our Heavenly Father for the way He has guided, protected, and blessed Barnsley Church.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

'Rest, Refresh, Renew'



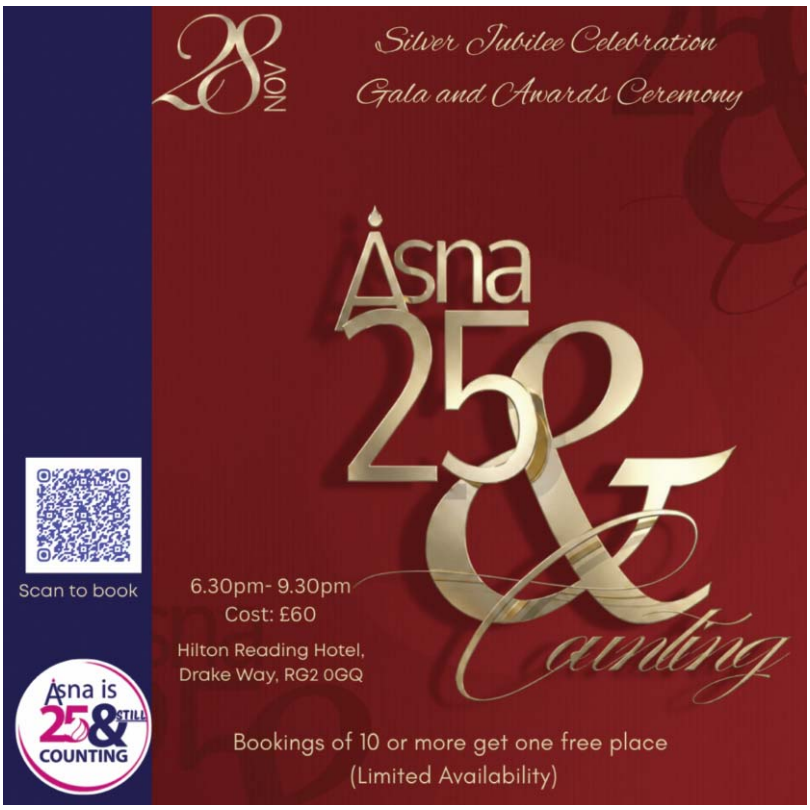
Pastor Rushane Walker

A powerful call to lay down life's burdens and find true rest in Christ marked Sabbath School Visitors' Day at Camp Hill on 8 August. Members and visitors gathered for a day of worship, fellowship and spiritual renewal under the theme 'Rest, Refresh, Renew'. Guest speaker Pastor Rushane Walker travelled from Peckham Church with his family and friends to share in the special programme. His message, anchored in Matthew 11:28, reminded worshippers that genuine rest is found not in a system, but in Jesus Christ.

Drawing on Genesis 2:1-3, Pastor Walker described the Sabbath as God's gift; through Genesis 7:1, he reminded us that God can protect us amid today's challenges, just as He protected Noah; and, reflecting on the invitation to 'come' in Isaiah 1:18 and 55:1, he reinforced the message that God welcomes us with our struggles, disappointments and burdens. Particularly poignant was his encouragement to young people facing pressure – broken homes, a traumatic childhood and feelings of unworthiness can weigh on us heavily, but Christ calls us to come as we are. Pastor Walker emphasised that Jesus does not leave us to carry our burdens alone. He yokes Himself to us, helping us to carry them.

The sermon concluded with a moving altar call, and worshippers responded to the invitation to surrender their burdens in prayer. After lunch, an afternoon programme continued the day's theme, reminding participants to rest and be refreshed in Christ with the renewal of a transformed heart. Special appreciation goes to Sister Winsome Nicholson and her team, supported by Head Elder Erastus, for organising a memorable day.

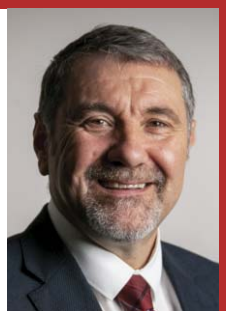
DR JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL





ONEVOICE27
MISSION FOR ALL







New directorial appointments in the North England Conference

At its meeting on 28 September 2026, the North England Conference Executive Committee made two new appointments: Pastor Ian Philpott, who until now has been leading the North England Conference's prison ministries, was appointed Personal Ministries Director, while Pastor Pardon Chenjerai, who has been pastoring the Northampton district of churches, was appointed Family Ministries Director. We join Conference staff in warmly wishing both new directors God's richest blessings as they assume their new roles.

Stanborough Press book sales

LifeSource Christian Bookshop

DATE	VENUE	TIME
7 November	Manchester Gorton	After Sunset
15 November	Hull	10am-2pm
29 November	Yeovil	10am-2pm
5 December	Southampton	After Sunset
6 December	Brixton	10am-2pm

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Established 1902

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A memorable visit

'Together We Thrive' is a twice-monthly interactive community initiative organised by the Community Services Department of Barnet Seventh-day Adventist Church that has been running for just over a year. On 20 August the department, led by Joan Mabb, collaborated with the London Borough of Barnet Prevention and Wellbeing Team to organise workshops from church members and local residents, combining creativity, community and summer family activities. We were also honoured by the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Barnet, who enjoyed learning about all the workshops.

The children particularly enjoyed the face painting, bouncy castle, macramé and other activities. The natural flower arranging and pipe-cleaner flower workshops were also very popular with adults. In addition to this, Citizens' Advice Barnet, the Shaw Trust, Inclusion Barnet and others introduced their services to a wider community.

The day was well attended, and communications are now in progress with the Deputy Mayor regarding help for future growth. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless our church, and that we will continue to grow and shine our lights in the community.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



Fifteen flags, one faith

The Cornwall district, comprising the St Austell, Bodmin and Redruth churches, celebrated International Sabbath and Community Guest Day at St Austell on 15 August under the theme 'One in Christ'. The multicultural gathering brought together members representing fifteen nationalities, providing a vivid expression of Galatians 3:28 (NKJV): *'For you are all one in Christ Jesus.'* Members shared stories of how Adventism began in their respective countries, highlighting the diversity of cultures while celebrating their shared faith and mission.

A special highlight was a prayer led by the children's leader with six children, who prayed for all fifteen nations represented. This reflected the district's commitment to nurturing a faith that embraces diversity and encourages the next generation to become people of prayer and mission.

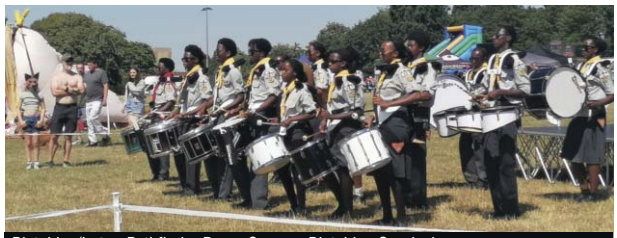
The district was privileged to welcome Pastor Nathan Stickland, Executive Secretary of the South England Conference, as guest speaker. He challenged the congregation to demonstrate unity through service, encouraging members to share the Gospel and meet people's practical needs.

Many visitors joined the celebration. The growing attendance created a joyful challenge: since the church hall could not accommodate everyone during the fellowship meal, two gazebos were erected outside, where members and guests shared food and fellowship.

The afternoon youth programme focused on *'Faith Under Pressure: Choosing Christ over Culture'*, encouraging young people to develop a strong, enduring faith.

The district gives thanks to God for a blessed Sabbath and appreciates the Sabbath School Department, hospitality team, elders, leaders, planning committee and members for their contribution to a memorable celebration of unity in Christ.

GOODLUCK AJUZIE, CORNWALL DISTRICT



Bletchley/Luton Pathfinder Drum Corps – Bletchley Carnival

Evangelism and health expo at local carnival

As it has been for the last few years, West Bletchley Seventh-day Adventist Community Church was represented at the local carnival on Saturday 11 July. Once again, the free blood pressure checks and consultations attracted people to our stall, along with the inviting juicing samples, which opened people's minds to try a more healthful lifestyle. Others were drawn to the colourful, specially commissioned *8 Doctors* brochure based on the NEWSTART health principles (nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest and trust in God), and copies of *Steps to Christ* were shared. The 'energetic performance' of the Bletchley Pathfinder Corps also 'helped to create a fantastic atmosphere for all ages', which was even mentioned in the more than 9,000 copies of the local West Bletchley community magazine.

This event was strategically planned with our health expo in mind, scheduled for the following week, Saturday 18 July, at the community centre where our congregation meets. Many accepted the invitation cards with interest. At the promoted event, the usual service was transformed as we welcomed health speakers Edith Samambwa (SEC Health Ministries Director) and Adelaide Nokuthaba, with a representative stall for each of the NEWSTART letters and a circuit of various health checks. Also present on our 'Trust' stall was the SEC's Cornerstone Counselling Coordinator, Thembie Mapingire.

One community member remarked, 'I remember your programme from a couple of years back!' By God's grace, we'll see him and others again next year.

SYLVONIE NOEL, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT (ARTICLE AND PHOTOS)

Charles Richards (1929-2026) d. 26 June.



Members of Bournemouth Church were deeply saddened by the loss of their dear brother Charles Richards in June, just short of his 97th birthday. As their pastor over the last year and a half, I observed both Charles and his wife Daphne as ever welcoming, both to me and anyone that came their way. They were ever active; even when they struggled to get to church on Sabbaths, they hosted a Wednesday evening Bible study at their house – exemplary people of faith.

Charles was born into a family of church bellringers and started ringing his first bells at the age of 5, having to stand on a chair. He rang church bells right into his nineties. At college Charles befriended a vegetarian girl who went to church on Saturday, so he started studying the Bible to prove her wrong – and ended up a Bible-believing, Sabbath-keeping Adventist!

Charles married Daphne in 1955; they had two children, Deirdre-Ann and Mark, and in the sixties Charles got the whole family into handbells. They played at events across the country, and even abroad in places like South Africa, Holland, the USA and Australia. Charles became a founding member of The Handbells of Great Britain, and to many the family became known as The Ringing Richards.

It is a challenge to condense 97 years of life and faith into a few short paragraphs, but his daughter Deirdre says it best, 'The message our dad leaves is: remember, you are not insignificant; remember to be kind, loving and helpful to each other, and you will be changing the world. And finally he would thank each of you for the deeds and words you have infused and changed his life with; it is likely that he would start by singing you a little ditty and then look you in the eye and say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you." '

PASTOR STEVEN HULBERT

George William Primmer (1931-2026) d. 27 July.



Brother George, a great man of faith, passed away at the age of 94 in July, a dearly loved member of Bournemouth Church. He had a great love of singing, which began as a choirboy at Wilton Church, and could recall many songs from throughout his life. Right up until his final days, when carers or nurses announced themselves, George would immediately sing songs featuring their names.

A good candidate for the design room at the Wilton Carpet Factory, George was very artistic, but the allure of steam trains enticed him to join his grandfather, father and four uncles on the Great Western Railway. He married Elsie in 1955 (having wooed her with his BSA Bantum motorbike, which he later sold to buy land for their bungalow). They had two children, Richard and Linda, and made great use of their British Rail privilege passes. George enjoyed his allotment and created a wonderful doll's house for his daughter, as well as an extensive model railway and a wooden go-kart for his son.

A few years before retirement, George transferred to the Bournemouth Railway Depot in order to return to the Southwest by the sea, before being baptised into Bournemouth Seventh-day Adventist Church by Pastor Robert Vine. He really enjoyed the church community and became a lay preacher. He even did a stint as Father Christmas at the church toddler party in 2004. George lived life to the full; he was proud of his family, married to his wife for 71 years, and never shy about his faith.

You will be missed, Brother George – until we meet again.

PASTOR STEVEN HULBERT



Carmarthen ordination and baptism

On 26 September, Carmarthen Seventh-day Adventist Church enjoyed a high Sabbath. Since it was the thirteenth Sabbath, the day's services began with the participation of all the children in the Sabbath School programme. The Divine Service commenced with the ordination of two deacons (Tino Mututa and Nelson Mgbemene) and the commissioning of five deaconesses (Rachel Nobela, Rani Pawar, Stacy Barrett, Uschi Merten and Grace Naluwagga) before concluding with a communion service. After a hearty fellowship lunch, we rejoiced in the baptism of Evans Onyango, Winnie Odhiambo, Nokuthula Mututa, Fadzai Mbofana, Reuel Nobela, Uchechi Okwudire and Davinelle Speid.

Welsh Mission President Pastor Jeremy Johnson presided over all these services, assisted by Elders Robert Thottimpuri, Sanjay Sathe & Jeremiah Nobela. Carmarthen Seventh-day Adventist Church praises God and warmly welcomes the precious new souls into church membership.

DIAMOND SATHE

Messenger

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Sunset

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		Lond	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Nov	6	4.25	4.37	4.24	4.22	4.38
	13	4.14	4.26	4.13	4.09	4.25
	20	4.05	4.17	4.03	3.57	4.15
	27	3.58	4.10	3.55	3.48	4.06
Dec	4	3.54	4.06	3.50	3.42	4.01

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