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British Union Conference prepares for the BUC Session 2026

A time for reflection, unity and renewed commitment to mission

by Pastor Sam O Davies,
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The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom is preparing for the tenth quinquennial British Union Conference (BUC) Session 2026, an important gathering in the life and mission of the Church across the Union territory.

The Session will take place from 1 to 3 July 2026 at the Atrium Hotel Heathrow, London, where delegates from across the Union will come together to prayerfully review the work of the Church during the past quinquennium and to consider the direction of its mission for the years ahead.

Held every five years, the BUC Session brings together delegates from across the South England Conference, the North England Conference, the Irish Mission, the Scottish Mission and the Welsh Mission, representing local churches and ministries throughout the territory. As the highest decision-making gathering of the Church within the Union, the Session provides an opportunity to reflect on God's leading in the work of the Church and to prayerfully consider the priorities that will guide its mission in the coming years.

During the Session, delegates will receive reports from the Union's departments and ministries, review the progress of the Church's mission across the territory, and participate in decisions that help shape the future work and leadership of the British Union Conference.

While the Session includes important governance responsibilities, it is also a moment of spiritual reflection and

celebration. It offers the opportunity to recognise the faithfulness of church members, pastors and leaders who continue to serve their communities and share the hope of the Gospel throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

The 2026 Session will take place under the theme **'Walk. Love. Do.'** Inspired by the words of Micah 6:8, the theme invites the Church to reflect on what it means to live faithfully in service to God and others – walking humbly with Him, loving mercy, and doing justice in our communities.

The outcomes of a Union session reach far beyond the meeting itself. Decisions made by delegates help guide the mission priorities of the Church and influence the work of the conferences and missions, departments and ministries that support the life of the local Adventist church. In this way, the Session plays a significant role in shaping how the Church continues to serve its members and extend its witness across the country.

'The Union Session is more than an administrative gathering: it is a spiritual moment for the Church to reflect on God's leading in the past and to prayerfully seek His guidance for the future of our mission in the United Kingdom,' said Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference.

Members across the British Union Conference are invited to keep the forthcoming session in their prayers. As delegates gather to deliberate and make decisions, we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the discussions and strengthen the Church's unity and commitment to Christ's mission.

Further updates and information about BUC Session 2026 will be shared on the BUC website in the weeks ahead.



Leadership that transforms

by Dusanka Rancic, *Editor*



I'll never forget that night, shortly after moving to a different town. Following a long day of meetings in a part of the country far from my house, exhaustion settled in as I began the drive home. I entered the saved destination marked 'home' into my satnav, started the car, and trusted the road ahead. Nearly an hour later, surrounded by unfamiliar signs and distant towns, a quiet realisation dawned: *Something isn't right*. I had been driving with intention, but in the wrong direction – back to my old house! What should have been a two-hour journey home turned into a four-hour odyssey.

Leadership can feel like that. We can be focused, committed, hardworking, yet still drift off course. What we need then is not more effort, but a turning, a decisive redirection towards the right destination.

The turn that leads to transformation

The Bible captures this idea of turning with remarkable depth. In Ezekiel 18:30, 31 (NIV), we read the call: *'Repent! Turn away from all your offences. . . . Get a new heart and a new spirit.'* The Hebrew verb used here, *shuv* (שׁוּב), means 'to turn back', or 'to restore'. It is not a minor adjustment – it is a complete change of direction.

God calls for a decisive turning – of heart, mind and life; for an internal renewal that reshapes who we are. While this is essential in our relationship with God, it is also necessary in leadership.

Transformational versus transactional leadership

Transactional leadership operates on exchange: *'Do this, and you will receive that.'* It is efficient and often required, but it rarely changes people. As Luke 6:32 (NIV) reminds us, *'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?'*

Transactional relationships stay within the boundaries of mutual benefit, like an employment contract.

Transformational leadership, however, goes deeper. It seeks to inspire, to elevate, and to change. It calls people not just to perform tasks, but to grow in purpose and identity. As Peter Northouse explains in his book *Leadership*, 'Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals . . . [it inspires] followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them.'¹ It is about developing people, not just directing them. And, while the transformational leader inspires his or her followers to accomplish great things, both the leader and followers grow in the process.

Whereas transactional leadership produces compliance, transformational leadership produces commitment, and often a complete reorientation of life. The transformational leader 'engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality . . . , is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential'.²

A biblical model of transformational leadership

We see the clearest expression of transformational leadership in the life of Jesus Christ. His leadership was built not on control, but on calling, serving, and transforming. In Matthew 4:19 (NKJV), He calls ordinary fishermen and says, *'I will make you fishers of men.'* He does not simply assign tasks – He reshapes identity and purpose. And, in John 13:34, 35, He points to inner transformation expressed through outward acts of love as the true mark of His followers.

Jesus embodied what leadership research³ later articulated: transformational leaders model the way of life and values, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, encourage people to grow, care for individuals, and build trust. He did not merely lead people somewhere – He changed who they were becoming. And, through transformed individuals, He transformed communities . . . and, ultimately, the world.

Leadership that calls for a U-turn

Reading this editorial, you may already be thinking of someone else who should be transformed – but pause for a moment and consider yourself first. Each of us leads and impacts others every day. Before we can guide others, we must be willing to *shuv* – to do an about-turn, to re-align, to be transformed ourselves.

Like me on my late-night drive, it is possible to be sincere and still be heading in the wrong direction. The moment we recognise it, we have a choice: keep going or turn around. Transformational leadership chooses to turn around.

In this issue of *MESSENGER*, we explore leadership through six important lenses: transformation, authenticity, compassion, servanthood, spirituality and adaptivity. Each offers valuable insights; yet at the heart of them all lies this deeper calling – not simply to lead, but to lead in ways that truly transform lives.

¹To learn more about transformational leadership, see Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, 2022), pp. 185-220. The quote is from p. 185 in the ninth edition. ²*Ibid.*, p. 186 ³Referring to the research done by Bennis and Nanus (2007) and Kouzes and Posner (2002, 2017a) – see Northouse, pp. 198-201.

Authentic leadership: integrity of heart, skilful hands

Robert Osei-Bonsu, PhD, *General Vice President, GC*



Authentic leadership is Spirit-formed integrity that aligns a Christian leader's life with public choices, relationships and purpose. Highlighting humility fosters respect and trust, strengthening discipleship and faith when leaders act truthfully, serve humbly, and promote accountability. Scripture validates leadership through Christlikeness. Jesus rejects status-driven power and redefines greatness as service (Mark 10:42-45).

For Adventists, identity and witness are intrinsically linked. The General Conference's mission statement (10 October 2023) emphasises that we as disciple-makers serve as loving witnesses and fulfil our mission through Christlike actions. Thus, authentic leadership is inherently missional, guiding us to make Christ visible through words and Christlike methods.

Scripture is the standard of our character. Consequently, outcomes do not justify character failures, and strategy cannot replace holiness. The Bible evaluates both actions and the object of worship. Authentic leadership is thus characterised by Gospel-shaped congruence, uniting personal identity before God, relationships with others, and commitment to mission.

Psalm 78:72 highlights that leadership requires both integrity of heart and skilful hands. Integrity involves motives, discipline and repentance, while 'skilful hands' refers to organisational wisdom, especially in protecting the vulnerable, demonstrating that character must precede influence.

Nehemiah demonstrated integrity under institutional pressure. As governor, he declined to exploit his office, because the people were already burdened. Authentic leadership employs authority to alleviate burdens rather than accrue privileges (Nehemiah 5:14-19).

The British Union Conference articulates these strategic values: integrity, servant leadership, trust

and accountability, and valuing people. Here, 'authenticity' represents a public commitment, requiring leaders to serve as examples, act with accountability, and focus on developing individuals rather than merely managing them.

Leadership research supports this approach, defining authentic leadership in terms of self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and an internalised moral framework, ensuring alignment between values and actions, particularly under pressure (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Paul demonstrates such authenticity in Acts 20. It is characterised by humble service and financial integrity.

The meta-analysis by Gardner et al. documents the rapid expansion of authentic leadership research and its relation to positive leadership theories. Authenticity must be rooted in moral substance and disciplined practice, not reduced to a slogan (Banks et al., 2016).

Three specific practices enable church leaders to embody authenticity: timely, truthful and kind communication, rather than spin or selective disclosure; balanced listening prior to decision-making; and visible alignment with the organisational mission. Authority must be exercised to serve, protect and develop others, instead of securing comfort, loyalty or control. The authentic leader seeks counsel, weighs evidence and owns mistakes, rather than cherry-picking data and blaming others.

There should be **timely, truthful, open, candid and kind communication** in our board work, member meetings and conflict resolution. **Balanced listening before decision-making** is critical. We must hear the strongest version of another person's concern and make decisions accordingly. This means inviting dissenting perspectives into committees to prevent decision-making from becoming an echo

chamber. Furthermore, **visible**

alignment with the mission is necessary. Leaders should evaluate whether their decisions prioritise disciple-making and individual development over mere activity.

A simple monthly self-audit can help leaders maintain alignment. What truths have been avoided? Who has not been developed? Where has authority been used for personal benefit rather than the community?

Authentic leadership is inherently personal, but not exclusively private. Instead of relying solely on the virtue of individual leaders, churches should cultivate organisational cultures that nurture integrity.

The GC emphasises respect for human dignity, fairness, safety and transparent communication – and recommends that church territories adapt these ethics locally. In the British Union, authenticity must be reflected in safeguarding cultures, financial controls and fair processes for addressing concerns.

Effective collaboration between departments is essential. Supported by transparent governance; routine accountability through independent checks; and intentional leader development, it fosters confidence and a shared commitment to integrity and competence.

Authentic leadership prioritises faithfulness over impressiveness. Leaders must act transparently and bear scrutiny – not due to perfectionism, but as a reflection of their commitment to Christ. Leadership should be characterised by integrity of heart and skilful hands, embodying the Gospel in words and actions.

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Leading with compassion

Karen Holford, TED Director of Family, Children's and Health Ministries



God is the ultimate compassionate leader. As the Good Shepherd, He compassionately cares for His sheep (Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34). He compassionately works through the cosmic conflict between good and evil to rescue us and live with us forever (John 14:1-3). God described Himself to the children of Israel as compassionate (Exodus 34:6, 7), and King David describes Him as compassionate in Psalm 103. All the love in the universe starts in His heart (1 John 4:7). Jesus compassionately healed the blind, raised the dead, touched the leper, blessed sticky children, and, ultimately, died on the cross because of the magnitude of His love for us. Spiritual leaders, inspired by Jesus, demonstrate God's compassionate character through their interactions with others.

So, what is compassion? Compassion is more than kindness. Compassion is the act of relieving the suffering of others by doing something, however small, to bless them (Matthew 25:31-46). Neuropsychologists have discovered that when we empathise with people, the pain networks in our own brains are activated. Experiencing too much empathy can cause burnout. However, God designed us so that acts of compassion stimulate the reward networks in our brains. We are blessed with peace, joy, love and gratitude whenever we reach out to bless and comfort others.

The Harvard Business Review commissioned Rasmus Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter to study

compassionate leadership in 2022. They studied 15,000 leaders from around the globe and 150,000 of their colleagues. The results were astounding. Compassionate leaders are far less likely to suffer from burnout, 200% less likely to resign, and 14% more efficient in their work than their less compassionate counterparts. When we treat others with compassion, they feel safe, happy and appreciated. They are also far less likely to be disgruntled at work, and more likely to collaborate with colleagues and remain loyal to the organisation. Compassionate leaders are not a soft touch. They blend compassion with wisdom when making tough decisions, because people are our most important resource.

Hougaard and Carter identified seven key strategies of compassionate leaders, and they are all biblical principles: treat others how you would like to be treated; empathise with others by 'walking in their shoes' and listening carefully to their stories; be generous; ask yourself how you can bless others and not cause distress; if you need to redirect someone, do so in love; empower people to discover their gifts and develop their potential; and teach others that true joy comes from showing compassion to others. These strategies can help all of us to serve with love and excellence, demonstrating God's character to those with whom we work and live.

Stanford University's CompassionLab discovered that compassionate leaders believe they have a responsibility to relieve the suffering of others. They identify

people who might be suffering, listen to their stories, empathise with their distress, and act to relieve it. They respond quickly so that people do not have to suffer alone for a long time. They generously use the full range of resources available to help them, and continue to support them in their crisis, adapting their response to meet the person's changing needs (Worline & Dutton, 2017). This is the same sequence of responses that we find in the story of the good Samaritan. Jesus shared the key principles of compassion in one of His most famous parables.

When we focus on God's loving compassion, study compassion in the Bible, and identify His love in our lives, our capacity to show His compassion for others increases. We act like good Samaritans, quick to identify other people's distress so that we can relieve their suffering. We listen to people so that we can discover their needs and do everything we can, as quickly as possible. And we know that anything we do to relieve their suffering will bless them and us, because God designed compassion to bring us joy.

Each one of us makes the world a better place through acting with compassion towards each person we encounter at work, home and church, blessing them with our encouraging words and supportive actions. How can we work together to create the compassionate communities that Jesus intended? What if the Adventist Church were famous for its compassion, so that hurting people came to us to find relief from their suffering? What if each person became a compassionate leader in their own sphere of influence?

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Servant leadership as Christian praxis: a theological perspective

by Sung Kwon, PhD, Dmin, Associate Professor of Leadership at Andrews University



Questions of identity, origin and purpose shape both personal faith and leadership practice. Within Christian theology, identity is not self-generated, but derived from belonging to God. Scripture affirms believers as ‘a chosen people, a royal priesthood’ who live under God’s calling and mission (1 Peter 2:9, NIV). This theological grounding reframes leadership as stewardship rather than self-promotion.

Christian leadership, therefore, is fundamentally an expression of discipleship, rooted in humility, service and obedience to Christ.

Jesus Christ provides the definitive framework for servant leadership. The cross stands at the centre of Christian faith – not only as the means of redemption, but also as the clearest revelation of God’s leadership ethic. Jesus led through humble, sacrificial and self-emptying love rather than coercive power (Horton, 2012). His own words define leadership in service-oriented terms: ‘The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve’ (Matthew 20:28, NIV).

Christian disciples must imitate this posture. Jesus’ call to deny oneself and take up one’s cross daily (Luke 9:23) challenges leadership paradigms that prioritise influence, control and recognition. For Christians, leadership is not a quest for authority, but a commitment to faithful service. To lead is to follow Christ’s example of loving obedience and relational engagement.

Servanthood functions as the theological foundation for all church leadership roles. Regardless of spiritual gifts or organisational position, servanthood remains central. Leadership that lacks it may become self-referential, hierarchical and spiritually misaligned (Tan, 2006). Without genuine humility, leaders may inadvertently misuse authority and elevate institutional success over people.

Contemporary ministry contexts often struggle with this tension. While leadership literature

frequently emphasises strategy and effectiveness, fewer resources focus on servanthood itself. Christian leadership must resist the temptation to adopt purely corporate models that prioritise efficiency and numerical growth without attending to spiritual formation and relational care. Servant leadership redirects attention towards faithfulness, communal wellbeing and Christ-centred mission (Stearns, 2009).

Jesus’ ministry illustrates the outward-facing nature of servant leadership. He consistently ministered among the marginalised, the poor, the excluded, the suffering and the needy. Compassionate engagement preceded proclamation, creating trust and opening hearts to transformation (Conn & Ortiz, 2010). Ellen G. White (1909) emphasised that Christ’s method – mingling with people, desiring their good, demonstrating sympathy, ministering to their needs, and gaining their trust – remains essential for effective ministry.

The church’s mission extends beyond verbal proclamation to tangible demonstrations of God’s love. Scripture affirms that believers are created in Christ to do good works to benefit others (Ephesians 2:10). Service is not optional outreach, but intrinsic to Christian identity. Churches are called to improve social conditions, model justice, and reflect kingdom values within their communities.

When churches focus primarily on internal systems, programmes or survival, they risk losing meaningful connection with the surrounding communities (McNeal, 2009). Research suggests that many outside religious institutions perceive faith communities as detached or judgemental rather than compassionate (Sider et al., 2002). Servant leadership challenges churches to move outwards, embodying presence and empathy rather than distance and control.

Leadership research reinforces many principles consistent with

servant leadership.

Building on the work of

Burns (1978), Kouzes and Posner (2007) identified practices that include modelling values, inspiring shared vision, challenging existing processes, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. These behaviours emphasise relational trust, empowerment, moral credibility and shared responsibility.

Within Christian contexts, such practices align naturally with biblical servanthood. Leadership effectiveness is measured not by hierarchical authority, but by communal flourishing and transformational impact. Servant leaders evaluate faithfulness through dependability, empathy, timeliness and tangible evidence of care.

Servant leadership is theologically grounded and missionally faithful. Anchored in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, it calls leaders to reorder their priorities around humility, service and love expressed through action. The credibility of Christian leadership is ultimately measured not by institutional success, but by transformed lives and healthier communities. When leaders embrace servanthood as the core of their identity, they participate more fully in God’s redemptive work. Servant leadership, therefore, is not simply a leadership style – it is the lived expression of Christian discipleship.

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Spiritual leadership

Pastor Christian Salcianu, *Adventist Discovery Centre Director*



When a plague devastated Athens in the sixth century BC, its leaders tried everything: medicine, politics, religion. Nothing worked. Finally, they called on a wise man named Epimenides, who gave them a startling diagnosis: the problem was not a lack of devotion, but an excess of certainty. They had built altars to every god they knew, and yet faced something beyond any control. The city of Athens recovered only after honouring an *unknown god*. Centuries later, the apostle Paul declared that the *unknown god* of their anonymous altars was the very God he had come to proclaim (Acts 17:22-26).

Imagine the number of temples and altars dedicated to leadership.¹ In today's landscape there are 66 models of leadership and 1,500 definitions of leadership. And yet we are in a crisis of leadership. You may have felt it too. What is missing?

Many of us serve on a church committee or volunteer in the community. You may lead a small team or manage a larger office. One temptation is to believe that leadership theory is for CEOs, pastors and conference or union administrators. When called to lead, you may head towards the usual shelf of gurus and motivational speakers. The Athenians did just the same . . . or, rather, failed in the same way.

I suggest that you consider spiritual leadership. A good starting place is to ask: 'When I lead, what is my foundation? Who gave me the vision, the mission, the strategy? Who set my agenda? Who is leading me?'

Researcher Louis Fry offered the canonical definition of spiritual leadership as being the values, attitudes and behaviours that motivate both ourselves and others through a sense of *calling* and *membership*.² While these two words may sound very 'churchy', they have an application for any context.

At its core, spiritual leadership centres on three interconnected

elements: *values* – what you believe and are committed to at a deep level; *calling* – a sense that your work has meaning and makes a difference; and *membership* – a culture of genuine care, appreciation and belonging. A spiritual leader leads from moral power, awakens meaning, and builds a culture where people feel understood and cared for.

You may never have thought of spiritual leadership in these terms. For many, spiritual leadership means to start and close a meeting with a prayer, to quote Ellen White with ease, or to have a Bible verse posted for any challenge. Spiritual leadership is about leading from your moral power. Henry and Richard Blackaby insist in their landmark work *Spiritual Leadership*: 'Holding a leadership position in a Christian organisation does not make you a spiritual leader. Nor does working in a secular occupation preclude you from being one. *Spiritual leadership is not an occupation: it is a calling*. Christian businesspeople – physicians, educators, politicians and parents – should be spiritual leaders.'³

From a biblical perspective, spiritual leadership is about who leads you. If you are Spirit-led, you will be a spiritual leader indeed. The apostle Paul anchors this plainly: 'Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires' (Romans 8:5, NIV; see also Galatians 5:25). Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide His followers into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13) – not only in the sanctuary, but in the boardroom, the classroom, the ward, the home, in that world that 'cannot accept' the Spirit of God (John 14:17, NIV; see 1 John 5:19).

Dr Skip Bell, in his conclusion to *Servants and Friends*, puts the stakes clearly: 'To lead without the presence of the Holy Spirit denies the biblical foundation of leadership.' The alternative he commends is this: 'We go with the Holy Spirit, guided by His counsel, taught through His

providential instruction, empowered by His presence and gifts, filled by His intimate indwelling presence.'⁴

To be a spiritual leader, you do not need a new election, a higher title or a larger platform. You need clarity about your values, calling and membership. You are a spiritual leader when as a nurse you treat your patients as image-bearers of God; when as a line-manager you protect the dignity of your team; when as a parent you raise children leading by example; when as a volunteer you show up, week after week, because something deeper calls you.

That is spiritual leadership. And it begins the moment you decide to be led . . . by the Spirit.

¹Christian Salcianu, *Beyond the Known Altars* (HIM Research Institute, 2026): <https://himresearch.org/beyond-the-known-altars/>

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The Chief Emmanuel Officer

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau, *BUC Stewardship Director*



If you want to test a congregation's spiritual fortitude, simply announce an unvoted change to the Worship Service start time. We love routine. But the gospels reveal that Jesus rarely maintained the status quo. He was the ultimate adaptive leader.

Professor Ronald Heifetz of Harvard suggests that leaders face two types of problems. *Technical problems* are fixed with current know-how (for example, feedback from the PA system, fixed by turning down the gain and glare at the sound desk). However, *adaptive challenges* are more complex, as they require people to change deeply held values and behaviours. *Treating an adaptive challenge like a technical problem is a primary cause of leadership failure.*

Let's explore several ways Jesus applied adaptive leadership.

First, an adaptive leader must regularly 'get on the balcony'. When sweating on the dance floor of leadership in the British Union Conference, you only see who's bumping into you. Leaders must step back to see the bigger picture and evaluate the system.

Jesus mastered this. He didn't launch His ministry with a PR campaign or a committee meeting. Before healing anyone, He walked into the Judean wilderness for forty days of gruelling isolation (Matthew 4:1-11). To prepare for the ultimate adaptive challenge – saving humanity – He had to anchor Himself in His Father's will, refusing

to let the urgent applause of the crowds and the pressing needs of humanity hijack this salvific mission.

Second, understand that change upsets people, making you a target for resistance. Jesus knew this. Commissioning His disciples to disrupt the spiritual status quo, He said: *'I am sending you out like sheep among*

wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves' (Matthew 10:16, NIV).

Being 'wise as a serpent' means understanding your environment. You must prayerfully read the room, anticipate resistance, and strategically advance the mission without being devoured. Crucially, this must be paired with being 'harmless as a dove' – disrupting the system without manipulation, maintaining pure, godly motives that might challenge people but that nobody can condemn.

Third, because change brings anxiety, leaders must create a safe space to face hard truths. Heifetz notes that leaders must regulate the 'heat'. It must be hot enough to motivate positive change, but cool enough to prevent meltdowns.

Jesus was the ultimate thermostat – incredibly kind, yet undeniably firm. Ellen G. White captures this balance beautifully in *Steps to Christ* (p. 12), saying that *'He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain. . . . He spoke the truth, but always in love.'*

Jesus didn't lower standards for comfort, but enveloped truth in such profound kindness that the broken and marginalised flocked to Him.

Fourth, in *Collaborating with the Enemy*, Adam Kahane notes that we often assume collaboration means sharing identical goals and singing in perfect harmony; but solving deep adaptive challenges requires 'stretch collaboration' – working with people

fundamentally opposed to your mission.

Jesus provided a shocking example in Mark 8. After explaining His ultimate mission to suffer and die, Peter 'dressed him down'. He became the mouthpiece for the status-quo-loving enemy of the cross.

Jesus didn't call a disciplinary committee. He didn't even think of performance-managing him out. Looking Peter in the eye, He delivered the ultimate (politically incorrect) rebuke: *'Get behind me, Satan! . . . You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns'* (Mark 8:33, NIV).

Jesus ruthlessly identified the adversarial mindset, but – in a stroke of stretch-collaboration genius – He didn't fire Peter. He kept the 'enemy' on the team, allowing Peter to learn, fail, and eventually become a pillar of the early church.

As a union, we face a massive cultural shift, frustrating logistical hurdles and a changing landscape. We must remember that we aren't called merely to manage technical glitches. We are called to step onto the balcony of isolation to ground ourselves in the Word of God; be shrewd as serpents, yet pure in our motivations; speak truth with radical kindness; and collaborate with those who stubbornly resist our mission.

If Jesus could use these principles to turn terrified fishermen into global revolutionaries; if He could be 'Emmanuel', God with us, to those who rejected, denied and betrayed Him – He can certainly help us navigate the changing landscape of the British Union Conference in 2026 and be the Chief Emmanuel Officer in our territory.

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Faithfulness at home

by Pastor Emmanuel Asamoah



For those called to ministry, the tension between public service and private faithfulness can feel overwhelming. The relentless demands of ministry – sermon preparation, counselling, administration and endless meetings – often compete with the sacred calling of parenting. Yet Scripture makes it clear that leadership in God’s kingdom begins not with a public platform, but with private integrity, and nowhere is this tested more profoundly than within our own homes.

Biblical context: the home as the first test of leadership: The pastoral epistles establish family life as the primary qualification for spiritual leadership. Paul explicitly states that an overseer ‘must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?)’ (First Timothy 3:4, 5, NIV.) This principle echoes through both testaments, revealing that God measures leadership not by public success, but by private faithfulness.

The Old Testament provides sobering examples of leaders who excelled in public ministry but failed in their homes. Eli the priest honoured his sons above God (1 Samuel 2:29), and their wickedness eventually brought judgement on his household and the nation. Samuel, despite his profound prophetic ministry, raised sons who ‘did not follow his ways’ (1 Samuel 8:3, NIV). Even David, a man after God’s own heart, experienced tragic family dysfunction that mirrored his own moral failures.

In contrast, the New Testament presents family faithfulness as non-negotiable for spiritual leadership. The qualification that an elder must be ‘faithful to his wife’ and have children who ‘believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient’ (Titus 1:6, NIV) establishes that ministry

effectiveness flows from household integrity.

Historical context: early church leadership and household management: The early church understood leadership through the lens of household management. Archaeological evidence from early Christian house churches reveals how family life and church life were intimately connected.¹ The term ‘overseer’ (*episkopos*) carried connotations of household management in the Greco-Roman world. John Chrysostom emphasised that ‘the man who is a good ruler in his own house will also be a good ruler in the church.’² Augustine’s paternal responsibilities shaped his pastoral heart and priorities.

Modern context: the pressure of ministry parenting: Contemporary research reveals the unique challenges faced by ministry families. A 2022 study found that 65% of pastors report tension between ministry demands and family time, while 45% of pastors’ children felt that the church always came first.³ These statistics highlight the ongoing struggle to balance public and private faithfulness.

Your family is your primary disciple-making ministry: While the Great Commission begins ‘in Jerusalem’ before extending to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), for ministry parents, our Jerusalem is our own household. The model of teaching God’s commands ‘when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up’ (Deuteronomy 6:7, NIV) applies first to our biological children before our spiritual children in the congregation.

Sabbath as a sacred boundary: Ministry families particularly need to guard Sabbath rest. Jesus’ invitation to ‘come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest’ (Mark 6:31, NIV) came immediately after the disciples’ successful ministry tour. This pattern of withdrawal after spiritual labour establishes a

necessary rhythm that protects both ministers and their families from burnout.

Pragmatic actions for ministry parents:

- 1. Sacred calendar:** Block family time in your calendar with the same commitment as ministry appointments.
- 2. Ministry-free zones:** Establish certain times or spaces where church business is not discussed.
- 3. Shared ministry:** Find age-appropriate ways to include children in ministry rather than always leaving them behind.

Pragmatic actions for churches:

- 1. Respect boundaries:** Honour the pastor’s family time and discourage expectations of 24/7 availability.
- 2. Provide family support:** Offer practical help like date nights, childcare or family vacations.
- 3. Celebrate family milestones:** Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the pastor’s family, not just church growth.

A prayer for ministry parents:

Heavenly Father, You have called us to shepherd Your flock while nurturing our own households. Grant us wisdom to balance these sacred responsibilities. Help us to remember that our first congregation gathers around our dinner table. When we’re tempted to sacrifice our family on the altar of ministry success, remind us that faithfulness at home is our primary qualification for leadership. May our children see in us not just a public minister, but a faithful parent. Amen.

¹Edward Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013)

²John Chrysostom, *Homilies on First Timothy* (fourth century)

³Barna Group, *The State of Pastors: Navigating a Complex Season* (2022)

A servant first: leadership rooted in God

On page 10 of our February issue, we featured a message from Dr Nicardo Delahaye, Northeastern Conference Executive Secretary, Atlantic Union, USA, that was shared with the British Union Conference Executive Committee at its end-of-term review. Subsequently, Dr Delahaye agreed to be interviewed by our editor, Dusanka Rancic, and you may read their conversation below.

Dusanka Rancic: As a pastor, how do you personally stay rooted in Scripture and prayer while caring for the spiritual needs of others?

Nicardo Delahaye: I've learnt that I can't live on leftovers. I try to meet God in Scripture before I meet anyone else, even if it's brief. Prayer keeps me honest, Scripture keeps me sane, and together they remind me that I'm a servant first, not the Saviour.

DR: What spiritual practices have most shaped your faith over the years, especially during seasons of challenge or transition?

ND: Daily Scripture, honest prayer, and silence. I used to think silence was wasted time. Now I realise that it's where God does some of His best work, especially when my own words have run out. I love driving or walking in silence.

DR: When preparing a devotional message, how do you discern what your audience most needs to hear from God?

ND: I listen before I speak. I pay attention to the season people are in, and I ask a simple prayer: 'Lord, what are You already saying, and how can I get out of the way?' That usually narrows things down quickly.

DR: Is there a particular biblical theme or passage that God keeps bringing you back to in this period of ministry? Why?

ND: Micah 6:8. It keeps me grounded. Leadership can drift into strategy and structure, but God keeps reminding me that faithfulness still looks like justice, mercy and humility, no matter the title.

DR: How do you balance the administrative responsibilities of leadership with the call to shepherd people's hearts?

ND: I remind myself that systems exist to serve people, not the other way around. Spreadsheets matter, but souls matter more. When I lose sight of that, God usually sends a reminder in human form.

DR: What have you learnt about leading faithfully when decisions are complex and the path forward isn't always clear?

ND: Clarity is helpful, but faithfulness is essential. Sometimes God gives direction without details. My responsibility is obedience; the outcome belongs to Him.

DR: What book are you currently reading?

ND: I'm currently reading a leadership book that reminds me how much leadership is really about character. It's humbling, which probably means it's good for me.

DR: What books – besides the Bible – have most influenced your spiritual growth or leadership journey, and why would you recommend them?

ND: Books that integrate leadership with inner life have shaped me most. They remind me that who I am becoming matters more than what I am building.

DR: How do you see Christian books and devotional resources playing a role in forming disciples in today's fast-paced, distracted culture?

ND: They help to slow us down. In a world trained for skimming, good spiritual reading invites us to linger,



reflect, and listen again for God's voice beneath the noise.

DR: What encouragement would you offer to believers who feel spiritually weary or overwhelmed right now?

ND: God is not disappointed in your exhaustion. Rest is not a failure of faith. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is to stop striving and let God carry what you were never meant to hold alone.

DR: If a reader could take away one spiritual truth from your ministry or message, what do you hope it would be?

ND: God is faithful, even when we are tired, uncertain or still figuring things out. Grace does not run out, and God is far more patient with us than we often are with ourselves.

DR: Dr Nicardo, thank you for taking the time to answer these questions for our readers, and may God continue to bless your ministry.

The Book of the Month



Today's Leader

In the twenty-first century, the world still needs inspiring leaders – leaders who help others succeed, live with purpose, and make a lasting difference. Yet leadership today faces a deep crisis of confidence. More than ever, authentic leadership is needed.

True leaders model timeless values such as humility, integrity, wisdom, trustworthiness, patience, active listening and spiritual strength.

Today's Leader invites you to discover 50 timeless leadership principles drawn from the Book of books – the Bible. These principles reveal the ultimate source of wisdom and power for effective, meaningful and enduring leadership.

Discover how faith-based leadership can inspire trust, influence lives, and transform communities.



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.

Spiritual earwax

by Dara Dare



Did you know that a build-up of earwax can gradually reduce hearing?

Sometimes it occurs so subtly that a person doesn't realise how much they've been missing. Sounds become muffled, instructions are unclear, and they ask 'What?' a million and one times before finally hearing (or pretending they did to avoid embarrassment). In some cases, even balance can be affected. What was once sharp and responsive has now become dull and disconnected.

In Hebrew, the word *shema* [shuh-MAH] is interesting: at first glance, it means 'to hear' or 'to listen'. But it actually goes deeper: it means 'to pay attention', 'to give respect to the speaker and act on what is heard'. Throughout the Bible, people are urged to be spiritually attentive: 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear' (Matthew 13:9, NKJV). Listening and doing are two sides of the same coin.

God is not silent. He speaks through His Word, through quiet convictions, through conversations with loved ones, and through circumstances that nudge us in a certain direction. Yet, in the noise of everyday life, God's voice can become background noise. He hasn't stopped speaking: our ears have become clogged.

Spiritual 'earwax' does not build up overnight. It forms gradually, through distraction, constant busyness, neglected quiet time and prioritising everything else above intentional time with God. We hear snippets here and there, but it is not enough, and we miss the clarity and depth that brings transformation. Just like the consequences of physical hearing loss, the consequences are real. We may miss divine warnings, overlook opportunities for growth, or feel spiritually unsteady, lacking peace and direction or generally feeling disconnected from God.

The good news is: what is blocked can be cleared. Cleaning our ears of spiritual 'earwax' requires intentionality. James reminds us to be doers of the word, not hearers only.

Hearing without obedience changes nothing.

Take time to examine your spiritual hearing.

What is drowning out God's voice?

What has He already told you to do?

Don't just hear: respond.

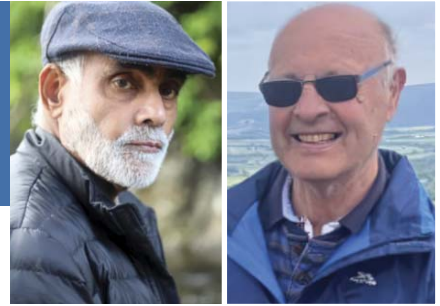
Clear the distractions.

Tune in.
Shema.



Faith and fulfilment: challenges, realities and opportunities for church retirees

by Drs Des Boldeau and Paul Tompkins, *Chaplains to the BUC Retirees*



‘They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.’ (Psalm 92:14, NIV)

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the BUC has a growing ministry to its community of nearly five hundred denominational retirees: former administrators, church school/college teachers and headteachers, pastors and Bible workers, office support staff, treasurers, publishing house, care/nursing home and food factory workers, departmental leaders and others, including retired missionaries. Wherever they worked, our task is to help keep them connected and supported in their retirement years.

They are an inspiring group who we keep in contact with digitally and also at twice-yearly get-togethers. We edit and share a monthly newsletter called the *Pilgrim*. As current chaplains to the retirees, we decided to look into the current state, needs and future considerations of our retired workforce community.

The ensuing survey was conducted between July and October 2024. It was sent to all on the retiree list and gained just under a hundred completed questionnaires. After compiling the responses, we worked with a consultancy (Driving Impact) to produce a report, which was presented to the BUC Executive Committee in December 2025. We are grateful for their time and support.

We are guided by our commitment to honour the dignity of every stage of life, and sought to listen attentively to those who have dedicated their lives in service to God, the Church, and the broader community. The following is a synopsis of this report, which aims to guide stakeholders, policymakers and the Church as an employer in making informed decisions that will positively shape the retirement experience

now and in the future.

It soon became clear that every retiree is unique. While many have had positive experiences, there are many who are struggling financially, spiritually and socially. For church workers, retirement is not simply about stepping away from responsibility – it is about stepping into a new chapter of faithful presence, service and purpose.

The findings identified the need for a strategic approach to cater for the social, emotional, spiritual and financial needs of our retirees. We cannot list all that the survey has shown, but a few are as follows:

- A good percentage are lonely and not socially connected; some feel left without a church community.
- There are those who are struggling to manage with the inflated cost of living; there is a disparity between those who ‘have’ and those who ‘have not’.
- Some felt that there was little financial planning support from the church, and that they had to go to other religious institutions to get this. A third stated that a retirement pack would have been helpful, with a further 17% stating that they did not feel prepared for retirement.
- Some are struggling to meet their monthly expenses, and several have had to take up work to supplement their pension – 28% did not have enough finances to be comfortable for the remainder of their retirement.

There is a strong desire to continue ministering post-retirement. Following retirement there can be both a loss of identity and a feeling that retirees are no longer of any use to the organisation, somewhat akin to being ‘left on the scrapheap’. They have a limitless amount of

experience to share with the next generation. There is much that they have to offer.

Recommendations

The role of community, family and faith has never been more vital. Strong social connections, opportunities for volunteering and inclusive community support contribute to a more positive and fulfilling experience for our retirees. This could be helped by:

1. Resourcing the creation of a retirees’ department. It is a mammoth challenge for two part-time retired chaplains to do this on a national level for close to 500 current retirees.
2. Reviewing and updating the BUC’s information and procedures to help church workers prepare for retirement.

A policy outlining the strategy and procedures for retirement needs to be created, and it should include a timeline for retirement, with preparatory resources made available to prospective church retirees.

Church retirees across the UK are navigating an increasingly complex landscape marked by rising living costs, healthcare pressures, digital exclusion and widening inequalities across regions, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

Retirement marks a significant life transition – a season of both opportunity and challenge. For many, these later years offer freedom, time for family and deeper relationships.

As faithful stewards of the retiree community, we are called to walk alongside our retirees with compassion, wisdom and hope, ensuring that they continue to be valued members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Potential obscenity legislation Ban for children online – national consultation

by Dr Brighton Kavaloh,
SEC Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Coordinator



In response to a tidal wave of demands for under-16s to be banned from using some social media platforms, the Government has recently been thinking of regulating the obscene materials that children are currently exposed to online. The House of Lords has welcomed this, and on 2 March the Government launched a National Consultation Call for Evidence for the public to respond, which closed on 26 May 2026. The main purpose of this article is to raise awareness of this crucial issue.

Case studies have shown that social media has both positive and negative impacts on children and adolescents. However, the Government is considering ‘potential age restrictions on social media and other services such as gaming sites and AI chatbots, restrictions on addictive design features and risky functionalities, and better support for parents and families’.¹

In order to familiarise yourself with the Government’s overall position, I invite you to access the two links in the footnote for this paragraph.²

The brain development of a child is a critical factor to seriously consider when assessing the risk for harm. Children and adolescents from 10 to 20 years old are undergoing a highly sensitive period of vulnerability in processing information with explicit content. The Government invited 10-21-year-olds to take part in its consultation and stated that social media warrants additional scrutiny.

In March 2024, the Government’s Department for Education published guidance for

schools entitled ‘Online Safety: Children Exposed to Abuse Through Digital Media’. To find out more, please access the link in the footnote for this paragraph.³

Two years on, it is appropriate for the Government to revisit this issue through consultation to safeguard children and adolescents.

In the UK, there are mainly two legal schools of thought on obscenity law: the ‘Hicklin test’ and the ‘aversion argument’. According to the Right Honourable Sir Alexander Cockburn, Chief Justice, the Hicklin test of obscenity is this: ‘whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences’.⁴ However, the Right Honourable Lord Denning, Master of the Rolls, OMPC, DL, KC, criticises this definition, saying that it ‘can be used skilfully to obtain an acquittal by this piece of sophistry: if the likely readers are those who are already depraved and corrupt, this item will not make them more so: but if the likely readers are just ordinary sort of folk, they will be so revolted that they will be turned away from it. This argument is called in the cases the “aversion argument”’.⁵

Which one of these two legal definitions resonates with you? Suffice it to state that when the Obscene Publications Act 1959 was amended (not necessarily repealed), it provided for the defence for the first time the argument that publication of obscenity can be recognised to be in the ‘**public good**’ on the grounds that it is in the interests of ‘**science, literature, art or learning or of the other general concern**’, according to Section

4(1A). This has led to calls for a legal reform to address its implications and ramifications. However, prior to 1959, it was an offence in common law.

The way forward for children online

1. You may need to acknowledge areas on social media that have proved positive for children rather than merely restricting their access to it without providing alternative and encouraging solutions.
2. Children and adolescents should be intentionally encouraged to read printed books, and not to exchange them for being glued solely to digital media and its trappings (AI included).
3. Above all, children should be instilled with biblical principles and values so that with God’s help they can testify, like Job, ‘**I have made a covenant with my eyes**’ (Job 31:1, NKJV) and can overcome seductive images online. Note the counsel from Ellen White in *My Life Today*, p. 85: ‘Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. . . . You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your eyes, ears, and all your senses, if you would control your mind and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul.’

I would like to express my thanks to each of you who participated in this crucial government consultation, and God bless you all.

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/growing-up-in-the-online-world-a-national-consultation>

²The ‘National Consultation’ link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLHIUDFaIA8> and ‘Growing up in the online world’: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/growing-up-in-the-online-world-a-national-consultation>

³<https://tinyurl.com/mux9837a>

⁴Regina v. Hicklin, L.R. 3 Q.B. 360 (1868)

⁵Court of Appeal, Regina v. Commissioner of Police of Metropolis, Ex parte Blackburn and Another (No. 3) 16 November 1972, 17; 27

Look up Exodus 19:1, 2. How many months did it take to get to the mountains of Sinai?

It was here that God called Moses to climb the mountain and be given the Ten Commandments. Aaron was left to look after the people. Aaron had felt brave when with Moses. Now he was by himself, Aaron forgot to ask God to help him. Some bullies wanted to worship the Egyptian gods. They surrounded Aaron in such a threatening way he was too scared to say no. What should Aaron have done in this situation?



- Find the words hidden in the grid of letters.
 - The words are hidden vertically, horizontally, up and down.
 - The words can be found reading both forwards and backwards.
 - Some letters will be used more than once.
- Lightly cross each word out, one letter at a time, so that you are still able to read the other words that could be using the same letter.
 - When you have found all of the words and crossed them out, write down the leftover letters, in order, from left to right and moving downwards one row at a time.
 - These letters, in order, form the answer.
 - We have found two words to help you get started.

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

Israelites	Golden Calf	Jacob
Isaac	Bowed	Egypt
Mountain	Down	Great
Idols	Punishment	Levites
Aaron	Nation	Anger
Offering	Moses	Dancing



If you are bullied, remember to pray for God to help you find someone to help you. Ask your school teacher, or phone Childline 0800 11 11 or Kidscape 08451 205 204, or look up www.kidscape.org.uk for more information on how to stop bullying.

Taken from Little Stars activity book.

To purchase yours, follow this link: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/little-stars-activity-book/>.

Dawn Thompson

Courage to welcome: standing with refugees through faith and action

by Sandra Golding, ADRA-UK CEO

Every year, World Refugee Sabbath (the third Sabbath in June) reminds us that behind every statistic is a human story – a parent protecting a child, a family fleeing violence, a young person searching for hope. This year’s Refugee Week theme, *courage*, is especially powerful. Refugees demonstrate extraordinary courage every day: courage to leave home, courage to survive uncertainty, and courage to begin again in unfamiliar places. Yet courage is not only required of refugees. It is also needed from those who choose compassion over fear, welcome over suspicion, and action over indifference.

Scripture repeatedly calls God’s people to care for the stranger. In Deuteronomy 10:19 (ISV) we are reminded to ‘love the foreigner’. Jesus Himself experienced displacement when His family fled to Egypt as refugees. Refugee ministry is therefore not simply humanitarian work: it is an expression of Christian discipleship.

Today the world faces the highest levels of displacement ever recorded: ‘One in every 67 people on Earth is now forcibly displaced’ (UNHRC). Wars, persecution, poverty and climate disasters continue to uproot millions of people from their homes. Across the globe, communities are struggling to cope with growing humanitarian needs. Yet, amid these challenges, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) continues to stand alongside refugees and displaced people, offering practical support, dignity and hope.

Having visited the Mae La refugee camp, I have witnessed the life-changing work of ADRA-UK in partnership with ADRA Thailand. Meeting those affected and hearing their personal stories was humbling and deeply moving.

ADRA’s support enabled participants to access vocational training offering practical skills and renewed opportunities for the

future. This included training in baking and cooking, IT and sewing – skills that can help restore dignity, confidence and greater independence for themselves and their families.

What makes ADRA’s response unique is our global network of churches, volunteers and humanitarian workers already embedded within affected communities. This allows help to reach people quickly and compassionately.

Across Europe, ADRA teams have helped refugees access emergency accommodation, language support, trauma counselling and assistance with integrating into new communities.

However, working with refugees is more than emergency aid. It is about restoring dignity and rebuilding lives. Many refugees arrive having lost homes, careers, possessions and loved ones. Some carry deep emotional wounds after surviving war or persecution. Courage, for them, often means taking one small step forwards each day. It means learning a new language, enrolling children in school, searching for work if they can, or trusting strangers enough to accept help.

This year’s Refugee Sabbath theme also challenges churches to examine how courage can shape our own response. In a world where refugees are often discussed through political arguments or negative headlines, Christians are called to see people through the eyes of Christ. Welcoming refugees may sometimes feel uncomfortable, but courage grows when faith moves into action.

What could courage look like? It may mean listening to someone’s story without judgement, supporting a refugee charity,

organising community meals, helping newcomers practise English, or simply offering friendship. Often, the most meaningful gift we can give is human connection.

Refugees bring gifts, skills, culture, resilience and faith to the communities where they settle. Around the world, refugee communities contribute to churches, schools, healthcare systems, businesses and neighbourhoods. Their stories are not only stories of suffering, but also of perseverance, faith and renewal.

On World Refugee Sabbath, remember that courage is contagious. The courage of refugees gives churches courage to welcome them. The courage of volunteers inspires generosity in others. And the courage to act with compassion, even in difficult times, reflects Christ’s love to a hurting world.

As ADRA continues to serve displaced people worldwide, we are reminded that hope often begins with one act of kindness, one open door, and one community willing to say: ‘You are not alone.’

May refugees find safety, dignity, friendship and God’s love in action in our churches.



ADRA Lebanon Bekaa Valley field visit
Photo courtesy of ADRA Lebanon



Refugee Camp Thailand – Myanmar border
Photo courtesy of Quentin Campbell



Empowered to lead: the lasting impact of 'Let Them Flourish'

What happens when an event doesn't just meet expectations, but hits every single 'sweet spot' for growth? From 17 to 19 April, Newbold College of Higher Education was transformed into a hub of intensive learning during the 'Let Them Flourish' national conference. For the 90+ leaders, educators and parents in attendance, it was a masterclass in shifting from the theory of inclusion to the reality of creating true places of belonging.

The core of the conference was built upon twelve practical workshops and profound plenary sessions designed to challenge existing mindsets. From the meticulous planning to the deep intentionality of the curriculum, delegates were provided with the tools to support those with diverse needs. The impact was immediate. One regional leader shared, 'This is the best training conference I have ever attended on this topic. . . I can see a shift in my approach in making a change back home.'

The training moved beyond surface-level advice, diving into the 'how-to' of cultural change. Another attendee noted that the insights shared by keynote speaker Dr Shaun Brooks propelled them to face challenges in their own churches. This wasn't just information: it was an activation of local advocates ready to champion intentional belonging in their local churches and communities.

All of the high-calibre workshops and plenaries received an overwhelming average score of 9 to 10 out of 10. Delegates gave clear and consistent one-word feedback, saying they felt 'empowered', 'inspired', 'informed' and 'equipped'.

The 'Let Them Flourish' movement has only just begun. The training has ignited a sense of responsibility to ensure that belonging is never treated as an optional extra, but as a central mission. 'Creating Belonging' days and regional training will ensure that the momentum from this weekend serves as a blueprint for the future. We are moving forwards with a renewed commitment to listening, learning, and building environments where every individual – regardless of their needs – can truly flourish.

For 'Creating Belonging' Sabbath programmes, seminars, workshops or retreats, contact info@asna.info or letthemflourishinfo@gmail.com.

SOPHIA NICHOLLS (ASNA CEO), LORRAINE MCDONALD (BUC EDUCATION DIRECTOR), PASTOR LES ACKIE (BUC POSSIBILITY MINISTRIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR) AND CRAIG YOUNG (UCY)

'Easter on the Hill': a powerful evening of music and community

Camp Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomed a congregation of approximately 300 people on 4 April for its uplifting 'Easter on the Hill'



evening filled with music, reflection and community spirit. The programme, expertly led by Anthea McLaughlin-Brown and Ashley Mitchell, centred on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The event was thoughtfully organised by the Music Department, led by Dr Christine Burt, whose vision and dedication brought together a rich and inspiring programme.

The proceedings were beautifully opened and later closed by Camp Hill Praise, whose heartfelt ministry set a reverent and worshipful tone throughout the evening. A highlight of the concert was the outstanding performance by the Town Hall Gospel Choir, whose thirteen female singers had been practising for weeks, under the leadership of Colin Anderson. Formed in 2007, the choir has grown under his experienced direction, ministering at Westminster Abbey, Symphony Hall Birmingham and Birmingham Town Hall, as well as in Paris and Portugal. An engaging interview conducted by our young Rebecca Madzadzavara revealed Colin's passion for developing choirs and his commitment to travelling to nurture musical excellence. His story inspired young people to explore their own gifts and callings.

The evening was further enriched by Scripture readings from the youth, Eden Burt and Chelsy Sketchley, along with exceptional contributions from Unlimited Praise, Joyous Melodies and a children's choir, whose sincere and enthusiastic performance warmed the congregation's hearts. Michonne Palmer-Brown's rendition of 'How Deep the Father's Love' aptly led into the evening's message by Camp Hill's Pastor Jermaine Swaby, who reminded us that God's love for us, expressed through the crucifixion and resurrection, shows that there is hope for our world.

The congregation, which included friends, families and visitors from other churches and faith backgrounds, responded with enthusiasm and appreciation. 'Easter on the Hill' therefore served as a meaningful community outreach event.

Following the programme, attendees gathered over light refreshments, creating a warm and welcoming space for fellowship, connection and shared reflection. The evening stood as a testament to what can be achieved through collaboration, dedication and a shared commitment to ministry – leaving a lasting impression on all who attended and pointing hearts towards the hope found in Christ. Special thanks were given not only to those taking part, but to the music committee, the PA team and others who worked tirelessly in the background. The programme can be found on Camp Hill Church's YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HeaWjYOWWhM&t=4972>.

DR JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Packed programme of Easter joy at Grantham

Easter weekend was made amazingly special at Grantham Seventh-day Adventist Church this year by the Personal Ministries Department, led by Jenny Johnson, which organised a multi-sensory celebration of the



crucifixion and resurrection from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. A flower festival, a peg-figure diorama, an Easter trail narrated by the church's children, the quarterly Communion Service, choir items and acting in 'Resurrection Rock', and an afternoon tea all formed part of this wonderful weekend in which the whole church came together to reach out to the community, who were invited to come and join in the celebration with us. This touched local residents with the Gospel message, and we pray for God's blessings in future outreach projects. You can see a *tedNEWS* video about it all at <https://ted.adventist.org/news/interactive-easter-experience-reaches-local-community/>.

ANDREW PUCKERING

Easter story brought to life at Stanborough Park



A powerful and immersive retelling of the Gospel story unfolded before a captivated audience at Stanborough Park this Easter. Diana Sabatier and Douglas Spinelli, a missionary volunteer from Brazil, decided to organise an outdoor Passion play for the end of March – an immensely ambitious project.

Nearly forty individuals attended the auditions, including Demi Idowu, a former Stanborough Park Secondary School student and now a professional actor, who prayerfully accepted the role of Jesus. Over ten weeks, volunteers worked to perfect the acting, sound, lighting, costumes, props and event coordination. Sourcing Roman armour and props, constructing a tomb from carved materials, choreographing performances with schoolchildren – every detail was carefully considered. Even contingencies for unpredictable weather were addressed. Promotional banners were displayed along St Albans Road.

On 29 March, anticipation built among the audience. The cast gathered for prayer, dedicating the production to God.

Indoors, dramatic scenes depicted key moments from Jesus' ministry before the audience was invited outdoors, becoming part of the unfolding story. Guided through the park by Roman soldiers, attendees entered a bustling marketplace. Children danced, traders called out their wares, and Jesus arrived, greeted with palm branches and cries of 'Hosanna!'

At the Last Supper, Jesus washed His disciples' feet



and revealed His mission through the bread and wine before Judas departed into the night. In Gethsemane, the audience witnessed Christ's anguish in prayer. In Pilate's court, the nearly-

400-strong crowd watched as Jesus was condemned.

The crucifixion scene, set against the backdrop of the park, was deeply moving. As the music of *Via Dolorosa* played, Jesus was led to the cross. The reactions of His mother, Mary Magdalene and His disciples reflected profound grief and loss. At the moment of His death, a simulated earthquake shook the scene, and the centurion declared, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.' Silence fell across the audience.

The final scene returned the audience to the church, now transformed into the garden tomb. Then an angel rolled away the stone and a radiant figure emerged – Christ, alive! The audience responded with spontaneous applause and celebration.

This theatrical production provided a vivid reminder of the Gospel. The Easter story is not simply about tradition: it is the account of a God who bore the suffering of a broken world and rose again to give us hope beyond the grave.

BUC COMMUNICATIONS AND PASTOR JAMES SHEPLEY, STANBOROUGH PARK CHURCH'S SENIOR PASTOR

PHOTOS BY DAN SABATIER



A faithful farewell at Watford Town

Sabbath 18 April was both a joyful and poignant occasion for members of Watford Town Church as they gathered to bid a heartfelt farewell to Pastor Lorance Johnson and his wife, Joan Johnson, on the occasion of their early retirement.

The service marked the conclusion of Pastor Johnson's ministry in Watford, which began on 1 April 2023 and officially concluded on 18 April 2026. It was a significant moment as Pastor Johnson led his final Communion Service, inviting the congregation to reflect deeply on the significance of Christ's sacrifice, faith and unity – central themes throughout his pastoral ministry and leadership.

With over thirty-four years of denominational service, Pastor Johnson's final sermon, aptly titled 'Final Words',

carried both weight and inspiration. He reminded the congregation that the church today stands at a spiritual threshold, drawing a powerful comparison between today's uncertain world and the experience of the Israelites on the brink of entering the Promised Land.

In the context of an increasingly secular and postmodern society, he urged members to remain faithful to God's Word; to move forwards, steadfast and hopeful, reminding them that their strength lies in maintaining a positive outlook as they trust in God's divine guidance.

Prior to Pastor Johnson's message, Pastor Vaughn Thorpe (local minister for the Wood Green and Hackney churches) offered a tribute to his colleague in ministry through a powerful meditational song.

After the service, the church family gathered together for a special fellowship lunch, where a delicious meal was enjoyed in honour of the Johnsons. The atmosphere was warm, appreciative and reflective, with heartfelt tributes shared by individuals of all ages, highlighting the profound and lasting impact of Pastor and Sister Johnson's ministry in Watford.

While their departure brings a sense of sadness and loss, the legacy of their faith, dedication, committed service and spiritual leadership will continue to influence the church community for years to come.

Watford Town Church remains committed to being a place to belong, believe and become in Christ.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

A tribute to Pastor Graham Allcock

With deep gratitude, the British Union Conference and the Welsh Mission share the news of the retirement of Pastor Graham Allcock from active ministry and from his role as President of the Welsh Mission.

Pastor Allcock's ministry has been characterised by faithfulness, steadiness and a clear commitment to the mission of God. Over many years of service, he has given himself wholeheartedly to pastoral ministry, leadership and the advancement of the Church's mission.

His journey in ministry includes ten years of service in the North England Conference, twelve years with Adventist Frontier Missions, and the past five years serving as President of the Welsh Mission. In each of these roles, he demonstrated dedication to the work of the Gospel and deep care for the people he served.

Throughout his ministry, Pastor Allcock provided thoughtful leadership and pastoral care, strengthening congregations and encouraging members in their faith. His contribution also extended beyond local church leadership to the wider mission field, where he offered pastoral support as well as strategic and operational oversight to mission initiatives and missionary families.

During his time leading the Welsh Mission, Pastor Allcock served with humility and a spirit of service, seeking to encourage the Church and support its continuing witness across the region. His years of leadership reflect a strong sense of calling and steady perseverance – qualities widely appreciated by colleagues, members and fellow leaders.

As Pastor Allcock now enters retirement, the British Union Conference and the Welsh Mission express sincere appreciation for his many years of devoted service in the Lord's work.

We also extend our warm regards to his wife Pauline and the wider family, praying that this new chapter of life will be filled with God's peace, renewed strength and many rich blessings.

With gratitude, we thank Pastor Graham Allcock for his faithful ministry and commend him to the continued grace and care of God.

PASTOR MAX MCKENZIE-COOK, BUC ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND INTERIM WELSH MISSION PRESIDENT

This article was first published on the BUC website.



Watford Town Church hosts uplifting music day

Under the title 'We Come Rejoicing', Watford Town Church was filled with praise, reflection and joyful fellowship on Saturday 25 April as members and visitors gathered for a special music day showcasing the power of worship through music and testimony.

The day began with an inspiring family service featuring a sermon by Casey Tengende, a 22-year-old undergraduate at the University of Leicester and Teens Leader at Leicester Central Church, whose thought-provoking message drew from the biblical account of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet to emphasise that worship should come from genuine love and devotion rather than convenience, and that individuals should be defined by their worship of Christ rather than their past sins. He also highlighted the importance of creating a welcoming space for worship, noting that while sincere expressions of worship may sometimes attract judgement, they are essential for a meaningful relationship with God.

The service was further enriched by special music from the Back to Basics music group of Aylesbury Seventh-day Adventist Church. Tina Brooks on the piano and David Elysee on the bass guitar beautifully supported the service. The programme was coordinated by the Watford Town youth, who played a central role throughout the day and warmly hosted guests with a nourishing lunch.

The afternoon concert continued the celebration with a wide range of musical and spoken word performances, smoothly guided by hosts Christine Kamara and Dennis Wanguirubi. Echoes, the a cappella group from Luton Central; Miriam and Christel Johnson from Newbold; Aalia Prince from Willesden; and Chloe Blackwood all blessed the occasion with their musical renditions in a programme that featured a rich variety of worship songs.

A particularly reflective moment came as Yaniel Williams presented a spoken word piece titled, 'Dear God, Dear Me', offering a heartfelt expression of faith and personal reflection.

Young people from across the region played a prominent role. Local youth Cerys and Gabrielle contributed their talents, while Ruby and Hannah from Stanborough Park Church brought energy and interaction through a congregational 'Song Association' game that engaged the audience. Hannah (Stanborough Park) and Charity (Watford Town) performed 'He Wants It All', and the group Three in Glory – featuring Ivy, Yaniel and Arianna – joyfully sang 'You Are Holy'. The Watford Town youth also lifted their voices in praise.

The Music Day stood as a testament to the vibrant faith and musical gifts within the community. Through song, testimony and fellowship, attendees were reminded of the importance of using their talents courageously and wholeheartedly in service to God.

KARL JOHNSON



Ghana Adventist Choir Union holds inspiring national convention

From 2 to 5 April, the Ghana Adventist Choir Union in the United Kingdom (GACU UK) gathered for a remarkable national convention, bringing together Ghanaian Adventist choirs from across the country. Under the leadership of Pastor Boakye Asiamah (composer) of London Ghana Seventh-day Adventist Church, the event drew singers and music enthusiasts from London, Reading, Birmingham, Manchester and beyond to Kent Hills Conference and Training Centre in Milton Keynes.

The convention celebrated the 50th anniversary of GACU's unity, heritage and spiritual renewal. Choirs filled the centre with harmonious songs echoing the rich tradition of Ghanaian Adventist choral music, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and strengthening the spiritual

bonds that tie the Ghanaian Adventist community together in the UK.

A highlight was the presence of three distinguished Ghanaian Adventist musicians: Samuel Asare Bediako, Yaw Owusu Asiamah, and Pastor Kingsley Owusu Mensah, along with composers such as Yaw Amoah Afriyie and Padmore Baffour-Awuah. Both musicians led insightful workshops that explored singing with musical notation, vocal training and the historical journey of Ghanaian Adventist music. Their expertise deepened participants' appreciation of their craft and inspired many to pursue excellence in their musical ministries.

The spiritual climax of the convention came during the consecration service led by Pastor Lewis Quaye, whose message left a lasting impact on attendees. His presence added a profound spiritual dimension, reminding all present of the sacred purpose behind their musical calling.

The management of the Kent Hills Conference and Training Centre also attended the consecration service. With evident joy and gratitude, they expressed their honour at hosting such a lively and uplifting event.

As the convention concluded, participants departed with renewed energy, strengthened unity and a deeper commitment to using music as a ministry.

ELDER STEPHEN BOAKYE



2026 Irish Mission Session Notification

Notice is hereby given that the 2026 quinquennial Irish Mission Session will take place at the City North Hotel and Conference Centre, Gormanston, County Meath, K32 W562, Republic of Ireland, on Sunday 14 June 2026, under the theme 'Rooted in Christ, Connected in Love, Sent in Mission'. We ask for your prayers as final preparations are made. Further details can be obtained by contacting contact@adventist.ie.



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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For more information visit www.campmeeting.org.uk

DATE	VENUE	TIME
26-28 June	Newbold Graduation and 125-Year Celebration	
28 June	Hyland House Fête	12-5pm
1-3 July	BUC Session, Heathrow	
19 July	Liverpool Central	10am-2pm
19 July	Bedford Community Event	

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Crieff Aid Projects celebrates 20 years of Christian love

When the G8 Summit of world leaders was held at Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland in 2006, the churches in the nearby town of Crieff displayed banners calling for world poverty to be relegated to history. Being less than 10 miles from Gleneagles, Crieff found itself hosting government officials, protesters and the world media.

Crieff Seventh-day Adventist Church joined other local churches to amplify the Bible's message of care for the poor and hopeless in our world, with 'Make Poverty History' banners appearing on churches and in church grounds around the town.

But after the TV cameras had moved on, the protesters had dissipated and the banners had been taken down, Crieff church member Steve Logan thought, *OK, so what now?* And so was born the idea for CAP – Crieff Aid Projects.

Church members would freely give into a fund to support small-scale aid projects where CAP's limited resources would make a difference to those in real need. Importantly, there would be a personal connection with someone from the church to provide a degree of oversight and reassurance that our financial gift was being used wisely. In addition to the freewill gifts from individual members, the church board voted to support the work of CAP with a grant from church funds where possible.

That was twenty years ago, and to date the funds gifted by the Crieff church family to support these projects has topped £350,000 – an astonishing amount for a church with less than a hundred members.

CAP has assisted many projects, and thousands of people have been blessed. And the support is not solely financial: church members have given of their labour to rebuild homes, build clinics and raise roofs, and many prayers have been offered in support of this expression of Christian love.

Orphanages have been financed in Lesotho and Ukraine; emergency supplies have been provided following disasters in Chad and Beirut; and start-up micro-businesses have been supported in Malawi and the Philippines. CAP has helped build clinics in Romania and toilets in Albania; installed solar panels in Zambia; and electrified a school in Zimbabwe. The sick and outcast in Africa have been treated, and the injured in Ukraine have been restored. The hungry of Beirut and Mexico have been fed, and those displaced by conflict have been supported with provisions, education and rucksacks.

CAP also cares for our neighbours and communities, with a minimum of 25% of the church grant being allocated to local projects. For many years we have partnered with Perthshire Women's Aid to provide for women seeking emergency refuge. CAP has been able to provide respite for carers and has worked with poverty-relief charities to help break the chains of debt. A wonderful local project proposed by one of our young adults is providing haircuts to homeless people.

All of this has been made possible through God's blessings and the willing and generous gifts of this little rural church. These are expressions of care for our fellow people and gratitude for the provisions of a loving heavenly Father. Any church could do this; every church



could do this. As an act of faith and love, we have done this in Christ's name.

Go and do likewise.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



Baptism at Swinton

Heaven is celebrating the events at Swinton Seventh-day Adventist Church on 21 March. At this Portuguese-speaking church, another three souls were baptised as Adalgisa Amaral; Isabel Costa, who is Adalgisa's daughter; and Elisangela Pereira gave their lives to Jesus publicly in a ceremony led by Pastor Romel Ricarte.

The church has been working actively in Manchester, trying to spread the Gospel to everyone, but also focusing on those who speak Portuguese in the city. We have members from Brazil, Portugal, Angola, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe, but we always have English speakers visiting us who can follow the programme via live interpretation.

We rejoice that during the appeal four souls expressed their desire to give their lives to Jesus, and they will be prepared by receiving Bible studies and hopefully be ready for another baptismal ceremony in the coming months.

During the last two years, twenty-six people have been baptised and two professions of faith have taken place at this church. Praise the Lord for their decisions, and please keep praying for us as we search for a larger building to accommodate our growing community. If you want to help and donate, please don't hesitate to contact us.

ELDER ALEX CALDAS

A courageous step of faith: the baptism of Dantè Brooks

The Camp Hill church family rejoiced on 7 February as Dantè Brooks, a university student, publicly committed his life to Christ through baptism.

Dantè's journey has been marked by a clear recognition of the priority of Bible study and careful preparation for baptism. His decision reflected thoughtful conviction, spiritual maturity and a sincere desire to walk fully in God's will. Pastor Winsome Baadjes delivered an encouraging and uplifting sermon, highlighting Dantè's courage in making this life-changing decision. He reminded the congregation that Dantè now places his life in the powerful hands of his best friend, Jesus Christ – who will continue to empower, guide and strengthen him on his journey of faith, with firm determination to make it to heaven. The message affirmed that baptism is not the end of the journey, but the beginning of a committed walk with Christ. The service was richly blessed through heartfelt prayers, meaningful Scripture readings and inspiring songs that invited the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Dantè's favourite hymn, 'Amazing Grace', was

especially meaningful, as it underscored the theme of God's saving love and transforming power. His chosen Scripture readings were beautifully read by his mother, Sister Theresa, and his friend, Nathaniel, adding a deeply personal and touching dimension to the service. Friends and family gathered in strong support, celebrating Dantè's decision with joy and thanksgiving. As Dantè confidently responded to the baptismal vows, the congregation witnessed a powerful testimony of faith, commitment and hope. We praise God for Dantè's decision and pray that his life will continue to reflect Christ as he grows in grace and purpose.

DR JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL



Double baptism at Rainham Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship!

On Sabbath 14 March, the sun shone brightly over Rainham Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship in Essex as two precious souls displayed their love and commitment to Jesus Christ in a joint baptism, which took place at the nearby Rainham Leisure Centre.

A word of encouragement was shared with the teens, reminding them that they are to 'forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I [God] am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I [God] am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland' (Isaiah 43:18, 19, NIV). The young people were advised that as they embark on this new journey their likes, dislikes, wants and desires will change as the Holy Spirit does 'a new thing' in their lives, and that they are to embrace this change with their whole hearts!

After the charge, twins Jacey & Janys Deumani were led from The Royals Youth Centre (Rainham's weekly place of Sabbath gathering) by Rainham's newly decorated SEC Drumming Pathfinders & Adventurers as they made their way to the leisure centre, where the young ladies would be baptised.

Such was the immense excitement, love and support among the biological and spiritual families of the baptismal candidates that several family members travelled from as far away as Glasgow to support this monumental event in their lives!

There was also great excitement from the local community as the lively group of Pathfinders & Adventurers marched with godly pride, purpose and rhythm, leading their fellow Pathfinders to the main swimming pool. Once inside the leisure centre, much to the delight of the gathered congregation, the management had given the church sole use of the main swimming pool for the occasion. With pastoral support and further words of encouragement, love and motivation, Pastor Anthony Opoku-Mensa guided the young ladies one by one under the water.

Arising to joyous exclamations from their families of 'Hallelujah! Praise God! and Amen!' they also received inquisitive looks and smiles from the Rainham Leisure Centre pool guards!

Once out of the pool, as new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), they returned to the Royals Youth Centre for further Sabbath fellowship and lunch with their cheer-filled supporters, flanked again by the buoyant Pathfinders & Adventurers.

Post-baptism, via a live video recording, Jacey and Janys were asked by their friend from Brixton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 'How do you feel, now you're freshly baptised?'

The twins replied in unison, 'Amazing. . . I've never been better. . . Born again. . . Blessed by Christ!'

We would like to take this opportunity to offer special and heartfelt thanks to the management and staff of Rainham Leisure Centre for their immense support and use of their main facilities.

Rainham Seventh-day Adventist Fellowship meets weekly at the Royals Youth Centre, Viking Way, Rainham, RM13 9YG. Services begin at 10am each Sabbath.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



Stanborough Secondary School makes a case for Adventist education at London Ghana

The Sabbath service at London Ghana Seventh-day Adventist Church on 25 April will long be remembered by the worshippers there. It marked a special occasion as Stanborough Secondary School visited the congregation, presenting a compelling case for the value of Seventh-day Adventist education.

During Divine Service, fifteen students from the UK's only Seventh-day Adventist secondary school, accompanied by several parents and four members of staff led by the headteacher, Jeanetta Liburd, led much of the Divine Service, with three speakers – Hugo, Sizipo and Mrs Georgina Morrison – delivering messages that resonated with those present.

Prior to the sermon, there was a moving cello rendition of 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus' by Mika, accompanied by Mrs Morrison on the keyboard. In her presentation, Mrs Liburd outlined the school's mission, vision and ethos, highlighting its commitment to holistic, faith-based education and announcing that the school's boarding provision, closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, has now been approved to reopen.

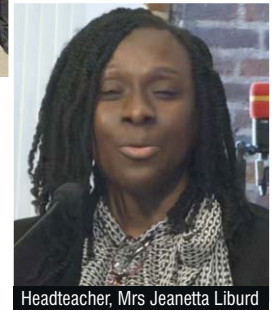
'We are educating for eternity,' Mrs Liburd emphasised. 'In the past four years, twenty-five students have been baptised. Each term we hold a spiritual emphasis week; and, during the most recent one, twenty students requested Bible studies.'

She also highlighted the school's strong commitment to community engagement. Students regularly participate in service initiatives such as supporting food banks, assisting in primary schools, visiting care homes, maintaining local parks, fundraising for the homeless, and preparing meals for those in need.

Music plays a central role in the school's educational experience, as does international engagement, including collaboration with an Adventist university in the United States. Leadership training is another key focus. On the last Friday of each month, the primary and secondary schools come together for a joint assembly where students are given opportunities to preach. Students are also encouraged to take on leadership roles, including prefects, student association leaders, class pastors, presidents, treasurers and music leaders, helping them to develop confidence, responsibility and a sense of purpose.

Addressing concerns about affordability, Mrs Liburd highlighted the availability of grants to support families. She encouraged the London Ghana congregation to consider sponsoring at least one child to benefit from Adventist education, and shared the testimony of a student who joined the school as an atheist four years ago and was baptised last year.

ROBERT KYEI-GYAU, PLAISTOW, LONDON GHANA CHURCH; THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ON THE BUC WEBSITE.



Headteacher, Mrs Jeanetta Liburd



Youth leader moves on

Weston-super-Mare Seventh-day Adventist Church has a vibrant youth department. Once each quarter for the last six years they have organised all the Sabbath services. Young people from many churches in the west of England plus some from as far away as Barnsley and Sunderland have attended. On each occasion there has been a specially invited speaker.

However, the most recent youth day, held on Sabbath 25 April, was a little different. Molly Johnson, who has been the youth leader for the past six years, celebrated her last youth day, as in mid-June she will be marrying and moving north. Many tributes were paid to her for her enthusiasm, organisational skills, musical talents and commitment to encouraging her fellow young people. Pastor Jeremy Tremeer, the current minister, presented her with a large bouquet of flowers and a signed card.

The speaker was Pastor Rio Espulgar, who, until being appointed South England Conference Family Ministries Director, had been Weston-super-Mare's pastor. His message, based on the parting of Elijah and Elisha, was that God's work does not end when a season changes: it continues through new people. The mantle may be passed on, but God remains the same.

Quarterly youth days have not been the only youth activities planned. Molly has also organised youth Bible studies every Tuesday evening on Zoom; a retreat to the Lake District; afternoon Bible studies on Revelation (with Pastor Jeremy Tremeer); trips to the Big Church Festival and the Adventist Youth Congress in Finland; two youth fundraising concerts; and many social events.

The members of Weston-super-Mare Church wish Molly and her husband-to-be, David Benton, every blessing as they unite in service. God's blessing is also sought on behalf of the new leadership team.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



An unforgettable civic visit

On 2 April the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Rachel Lancaster, graciously extended an invitation to the local Adventurers and Pathfinders to come and visit her in her offices, accompanied by their leaders, counsellors and parents.

The Pathfinders felt honoured to be welcomed into such a historic and significant space. The Lord Mayor walked them through the rich history of Coventry, deepening their appreciation for the city's civic heritage.

The Pathfinders entered the Lord Mayor's Chamber, where important debates and deliberations take place regarding the welfare of the city. The Lord Mayor invited the Adventurers and Pathfinders to sing in her chamber, noting that no one had ever sung there before. With joy and confidence, the children sang 'To God Be the Glory', along with beloved Adventurer and Pathfinder songs.

A big thank-you to our designated area coordinator, Levon Johns, and our Pathfinder director, Eunica Chikopa, who took time to connect our club, Coventry Eagles, to partner with the civic programmes.

SITHEMBINKOSI THEMBIE MASIANE, ADVENTURERS DIRECTOR



Men's Ministry Day at Walthamstow

On Sabbath 25 April, Men's Ministry Day at Walthamstow Seventh-day Adventist Church brought together members and guests for worship, fellowship and spiritual inspiration. Held under the theme 'Be the Man – Part 2: Legacy Thinking', the programme encouraged men to reflect on the lasting impact of their faith, character, leadership and influence on future generations.

Inspiring messages challenged the men to lead with integrity, humility, courage and compassion. The theme of legacy thinking reminded attendees that true leadership is not only about present success, but also about building a positive spiritual foundation for families, communities and the church.

A special highlight was the all-male praise team, led by Elder Rohan Alexander. Their blend of youthful energy and experienced leadership beautifully reflected the

spirit of mentorship and unity that the day was intended to promote. The congregation was also blessed by a special musical item from DeAndre Ifill along with Pastor Emmanuel Asamoah and his family.

In a joyful and moving moment, Marlon was baptised. Family members, friends and the church celebrated as he publicly committed his life to Christ.

Another memorable feature was a play titled 'Assets and Liabilities', written by Ryan Peynado, which encouraged the congregation to reflect on the choices, influences and values that shape their lives.

Throughout the warm, welcoming and spiritually enriching programme, men of all ages shared fellowship, testimonies and encouragement, strengthening the brotherhood within the church community. The event also recognised the dedication of those who serve faithfully behind the scenes in ministry and outreach.

As the programme concluded, appreciation was expressed to all those whose hard work and commitment contributed to the success of the day. Men's Ministry Day can be seen on Walthamstow Church's YouTube channel.

COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA TEAM; PHOTO BY MARISKA EDWARDS

Installation of Pastor Clayton Maurede

On Sabbath 4 April, members and visitors gathered at Southall Seventh-day Adventist Church to witness the installation of Pastor Clayton Maurede – but



Back row, from left to right: Elders Tidings Chengeta and Immanuel Belingy, Pastor Nathan Stickland; front row: Chipo Chengeta, Mishael, Shamariah and Micaiah, spouse Tambu, Pastor Clayton Maurede

also to participate in a sacred moment of recommitment.

The message, delivered by South England Conference Executive Secretary Pastor Nathan Stickland, centred on the calling and privilege of service to God, reminding the church that pastoral ministry is a covenant shaped by sacrifice, humility and love. This was framed by the Scripture reading from Luke 12:35-38, which encourages us to be dressed ready for service and keep our lamps burning in continual readiness for Christ's return.

True service, Pastor Stickland explained, flows from devotion rather than obligation. It is not measured by titles, but by faithfulness in the unseen moments – the prayers whispered, the burdens shared, the quiet acts of compassion that often escape public recognition.

The charge was given. During the installation prayer, the leaders extended their hands in blessing, asking the Holy Spirit to guide Pastor Maurede's ministry. Elder Henry Wright offered a moving prayer on behalf of Pastor Maurede and his family, and Pastor Maurede was visibly overcome with emotion – a reflection of the sacred weight and beauty of the calling being affirmed.

As the service concluded, the message was clear: the church thrives when every member embraces the joy of serving God wholeheartedly. Leadership may change, but the mission remains constant – to reflect Christ's love and prepare hearts for His kingdom.

ULANDA ALEXANDER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NANCY ALMEIDA AND ULANDA ALEXANDER

Ordination service and baby dedication at Grantham

Sabbath 21 March was a day of great joy for Grantham Seventh-day Adventist Church as a baby was dedicated to the Lord and an elder and a deacon both had their divine calling confirmed through the laying on of hands. The dedication and ordinations were conducted by the Grantham Church elders (Esme Sutton, Karen Shelbourn, Anthony Cameron, Andrew Puckering and Pastor John Ferguson) and Pastor David Rancic along with Pastor Roger Neal.

The baby Mia Eziyi was brought to the front by her family and dedicated after her parents made a public promise to bring her up in accordance with the counsels of the Lord. She was peacefully smiling, thoroughly enjoying the occasion.

After this, Michal Tomaszewicz was ordained as a deacon. Michal joined the church after finding some inspiring online presentations during the pandemic. He joyfully shares the Lord with his friends and colleagues, and has been serving faithfully as a deacon for some time now.



The elder who was ordained was Sheryl Davidans, daughter of Pastor Cecil and Alma Perry. A woman of God and a lifelong Seventh-day Adventist with much experience of church life, she has been serving faithfully for over a year with wisdom and competence. It has been a joy to see Sheryl accept the calling to serve as an elder and recognise her ministry by the ordination.

May God richly bless baby Mia and her family, and Michal and Sheryl as they serve.

ANDREW PUCKERING AND PASTOR DAVID RANCIC



Data, diaries and divine intervention: SEC Executive Secretary logs in at London Ghana

On 18 April, London Ghana Seventh-day Adventist Church buzzed with excitement as SEC Executive Secretary Pastor Nathan Stickland spearheaded a first-of-its-kind church clerk day – a joyful, heartfelt tribute to the administrators who keep our church life running like clockwork.

Pastor Stickland spent the day offering mentorship and encouragement to our hardworking clerks, past and present. The highlight? A delightful open forum where former secretaries reminisced, sharing stories that ranged from hilarious mishaps to those poignant moments that truly define service.

The pastor noted the ‘secret’ roots of the word ‘secretary’, a perfect reminder of the confidentiality, GDPR compliance and deep spiritual integrity required for the role. We also heard from the wonderful Miss Ruby Dankwah, who marked a decade of consistent service in the role. Miss Dankwah confessed her initial hesitation to take the helm due to her youth, but shared how the congregation’s encouragement had helped her blossom. Long-time stalwart Elder Collins Amofah (the beloved ‘EGACCOM Pastor’) echoed the sentiment, calling his own ten-year stint a distinct privilege.

One thing is certain – no AI algorithm can replace the

warmth, dedication and spirit of amazing selfless service our church clerks bring to God’s vineyard!

RUBINA FOSUA ARTHUR



‘Revive and Stay Alive’ – week of spiritual renewal at Northampton Central

Northampton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church was richly blessed to host Pastor Steve Palmer, President of the North England Conference, for a special week of revival from 12 to 18 April. Under the inspiring theme ‘Revive and Stay Alive’, members and visitors gathered each evening at 7pm for worship and spiritual renewal.

Each service was thoughtfully structured, beginning with uplifting special music, followed by an engaging children’s story that brought spiritual lessons to life for our younger members. But the highlight of each evening were the powerful and Spirit-led messages delivered by Pastor Palmer, calling the church to deeper commitment, genuine revival and a renewed focus on maintaining a living connection with Christ in these last days. His messages challenged and encouraged us that revival is not a one-time experience, but a daily walk with God.

We thank God for using Pastor Palmer as a vessel to speak to His people. Our prayer is that the message will continue to resonate within our church family, leading to lasting transformation in our lives and in our community.

ELDER MICHAEL OBISESAN

Geoffrey Wastling (1937-2026) d. 9 March.



Geoffrey Wastling was born in Hull to Kathleen and Victor Lewis Wastling, active members of Hull Seventh-day Adventist Church. He attended church regularly with his sisters – Joan, Margaret and Brenda. After completing the Voice of Prophecy Bible course, Geoffrey was baptised by Pastor Gillett on 10 September 1955.

Geoffrey met Margaret Dutton at a youth congress in Holland, and they were later married at Bournemouth Seventh-day Adventist Church on 4 September 1962. He dedicated 42 years of his life to nursing, serving as a district nurse known for his kindness, understanding and willingness to help – often being called out while off duty to assist with difficult procedures.

After moving to the Newbold area, Geoffrey became a founding member of the Wokingham church, where he served faithfully as treasurer and vocal board member. His favourite saying was, 'Keep it short and simple.' Each year, the church conducted outreach at the Reading Fair. Geoffrey played a vital role – helping to set

up the pitch, taking blood pressure readings, offering health advice, and sharing his faith through literature. He also supported his sister, Margaret Robertson, the SEC Community Services leader, in outreach missions as far north as Scotland.

In 2001, Geoffrey and Margaret moved to the peaceful village of Farndon in Cheshire, where he made many new friends and attended a volunteer-run day centre weekly. When the local Anglican vicar retired, Geoffrey suggested that his own Seventh-day Adventist ministers might lead Communion services for the elderly and volunteers – a proposal warmly welcomed by all. Since then, Pastor Lawrence and Elder Graham Jones of Wrexham Church have officiated those gatherings.

After a brief stay in hospital, Geoffrey unexpectedly passed away from a heart attack at The Countess of Chester Hospital. Even in his final days, he continued offering wise counsel and seeking ever closer fellowship with his Saviour. Geoffrey leaves behind the wonderful promise found in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are

alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, KJV).

He will be dearly missed by his devoted wife, Margaret, his companion for 65 years; their three sons, Jonathan, Richard and Simon, and their wives; and their grandchildren.

The funeral service took place at Newbold College of Higher Education on 1 April, attended by their family and many friends. A memorial service was held on 23 April in Farndon Village, where Pastor Sinisa of Wokingham and Pastor Lawrence of Wrexham led the congregation in remembering Geoffrey's life of faithful service and love.

MARGARET WASTLING (WIFE)

Eye of the storm

In October 2026, Hurricane Melissa tore across western Jamaica. Homes were shattered and communities were shaken. Among the devastation, a 92-year-old man living with dementia was left in a crumbling, unsafe house, exposed to danger and confusion. What followed was a story charged with excitement, sacrifice and deep compassion – a mission of mercy was born from love.



Moved by faith and intercessory prayer, Dr Steve Thomas travelled to Jamaica soon after the storm, surveying damage and seeking those most in need. Through a providential connection with Denise Brookes-Allen and her links within the community, the Jamaica Rebuild initiative took shape – an effort grounded in service and hope.

Momentum grew. Pastor Vasyl connected Dr Thomas with Elder Hugh Gray, whose skill and generosity proved vital. As a leader in charitable work, Elder Gray gathered a team of young craftsmen – men who gave their strength freely, expecting nothing in return. Others joined, including Jenny Rayney, who sacrificed work and comfort to travel and serve in person. Supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church community and many willing hearts, the team united with purpose.

When they arrived months later, the elderly man's home was overrun with scorpions, wasps and decay. The roof, rotted, leaking and unstable, offered no protection. For someone already battling dementia, it was a place of fear. But the team leaned in with courage, tearing away the broken structure and rebuilding it. Alongside local supporters, they cleared infestations, restored safety, and transformed the space from a place of danger to a place of peace.

The volunteers' sacrifice was given freely; their mission was profound: restore dignity, protect life, and bring hope. The storm passed, but what remains is stronger: love in action.

PASTOR DR STEVE THOMAS

Messenger

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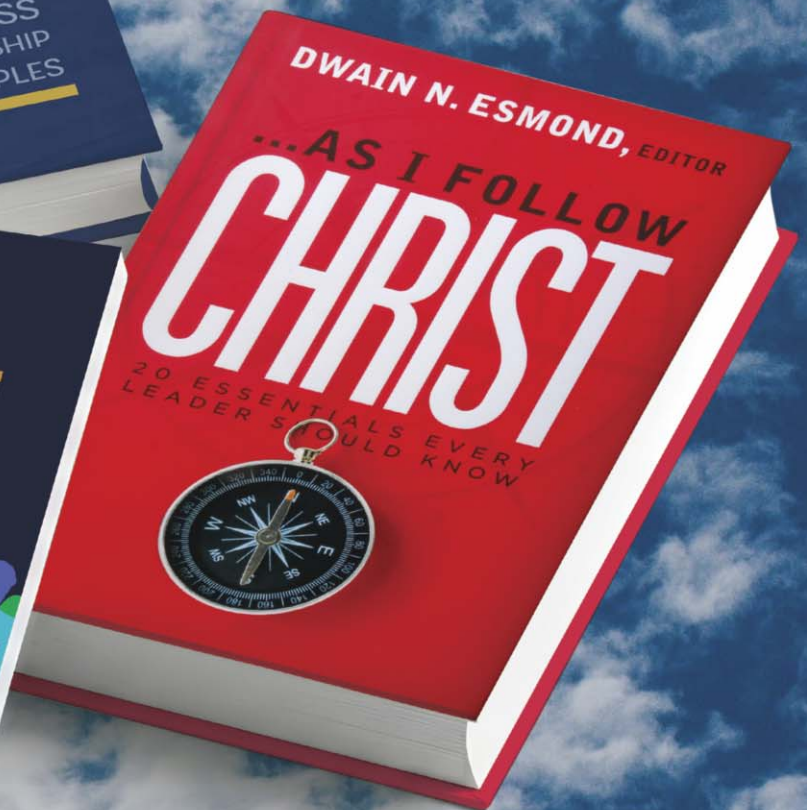
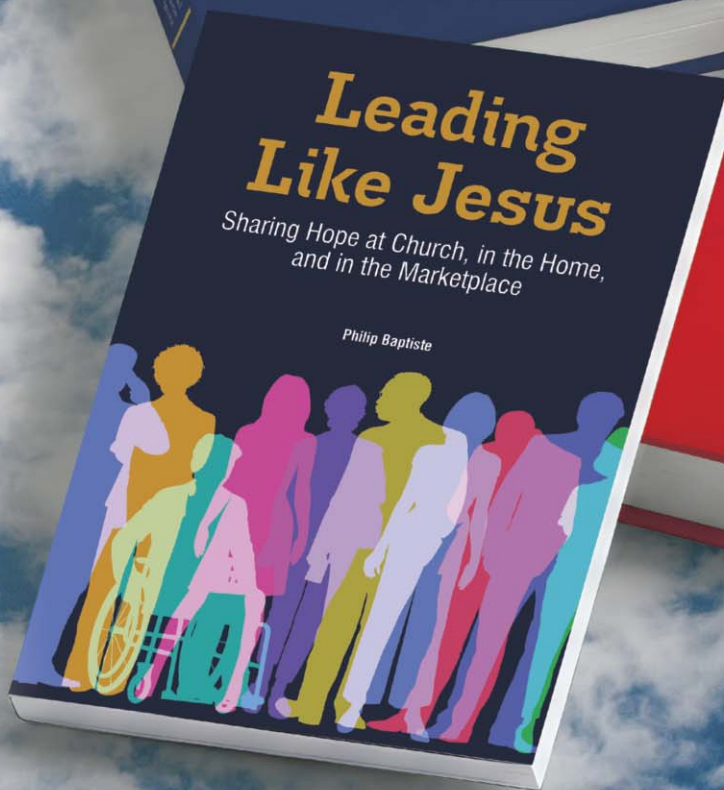
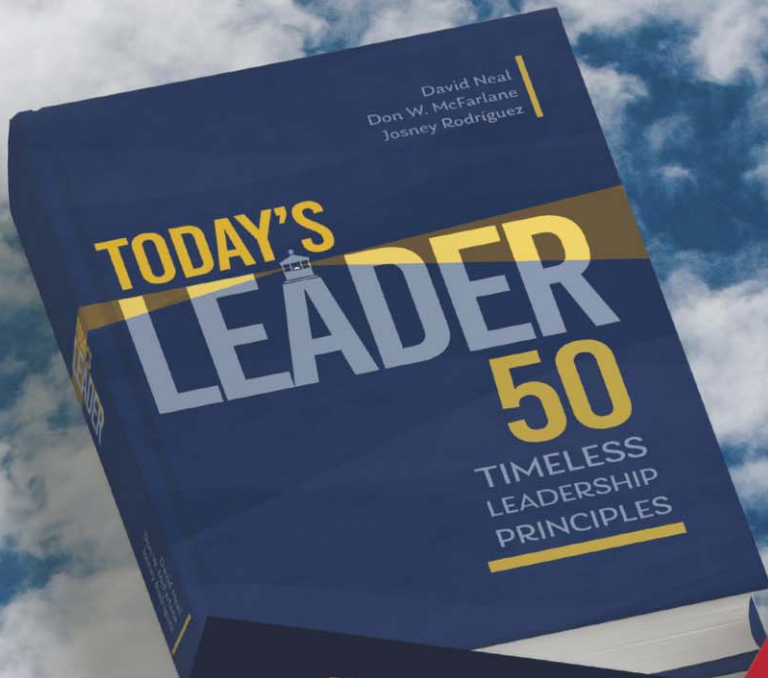
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Sunset

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
June 5	9.12	9.25	9.25	9.52	9.53
12	9.18	9.30	9.30	9.59	10.00
19	9.21	9.33	9.34	10.02	10.03
26	9.22	9.34	9.35	10.03	10.04
July 3	9.20	9.32	9.33	10.00	10.02

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