

# Messenger

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in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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## Jesus is Coming, I Will Go!

**Creative Writing for  
Evangelism celebrates  
tenth anniversary**



# 'Jesus is Coming, I Will Go!'

## 62<sup>nd</sup> General Conference Session

As we write this article, the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Conference (GC) is taking place in St Louis, Missouri, USA, with the theme of 'Jesus is Coming, I Will Go!' A large sculpture was placed on the stage, forming the words 'Will Go', so that anyone standing next to the sculpture becomes the missing 'I' and therefore symbolically accepts the call to go. The session started on 3 July as up to 2,800 delegates from 212 countries were welcomed by church officers and heard a devotional by Pastor Mark Finley, and it will finish on 12 July. By the time you read this there will be more news, which we will share in next month's issue of *MESSENGER*, but here are a few highlights that we are already aware of.

### A new president

Erton Carlos Köhler, since April 2021 the GC Executive Secretary, was recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the delegates to become the GC President, replacing Elder Ted Wilson. Of the 1,909 delegates voting, 1,721 voted in favour of Köhler. A Brazilian of Germanic descent, Köhler is the first South American to hold this position; he holds a BA in Theology and an MA in Pastoral Theology (he is currently working on his DMin), and in addition to English he also speaks Spanish and Portuguese.

Within 20 hours of his election, having thanked Elder Wilson for his service, Pastor Köhler delivered a sermon titled 'Boldness in Mission' on 5 July, as scheduled in his previous role as GC Executive Secretary, in which he called on church members to embrace a renewed sense of mission, urgency and boldness. 'Despite our differences,' he said, 'we are still one family, united by our faith and our mission.'

### GC officers

Assisting Köhler will be Pastor



From top left: Erton Carlos Köhler, incoming GC President; Pastor Richard E. McEdward, Executive Secretary; Pastor Paul Douglas, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer; the seven vice-presidents of the GC; Dr Daniel Duda, re-elected TED President; Pastor Robert Csizmadia, TED Executive Secretary; Nenad Jepuranovic, TED Treasurer.

Richard E. McEdward as GC Executive Secretary and Pastor Paul Douglas as GC Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. McEdward had been serving as President of the Middle East and North Africa Union Mission since 2016, and before that he was Global Mission Centre Director and Associate Director of the Institute of World Mission. Commenting on this new role, McEdward shared, 'It is humbling to be asked. . . . We will strive to live up to the trust you have placed in us and to keep mission foremost in our area of responsibility.' Douglas, having been re-elected to his role, thanked God for the continued privilege to serve in that capacity, saying, 'I don't believe I am worthy, but I am willing.'

The seven vice-presidents of the GC were voted as a group, and they included Audrey Andersson, an incumbent in the role, who until the previous session in 2022 had served as Executive Secretary for the Trans-European Division. Born in Ireland

and raised in a pastor's family, Andersson developed a heart for ministry from a young age. She was honoured with the General Conference Woman of Excellence Award in 2016 and the British Union Conference Women in Leadership Award in 2020.

On 9 July fourteen departmental directors were also elected for the 2025–2030 term.

### Trans-European Division

Thirteen Division presidents were elected on 7 July, including Dr Daniel Duda, who was re-elected as Trans-European Division President, a role he has held since the previous session in 2022. His fellow Trans-European Division administrative officers, Nenad Jepuranovic and Pastor Robert Csizmadia, were also re-elected to their roles of Treasurer and Executive Secretary respectively.

For more information on the atmosphere and what's been happening during the Session, see [gcsession.org/news/](https://gcsession.org/news/).

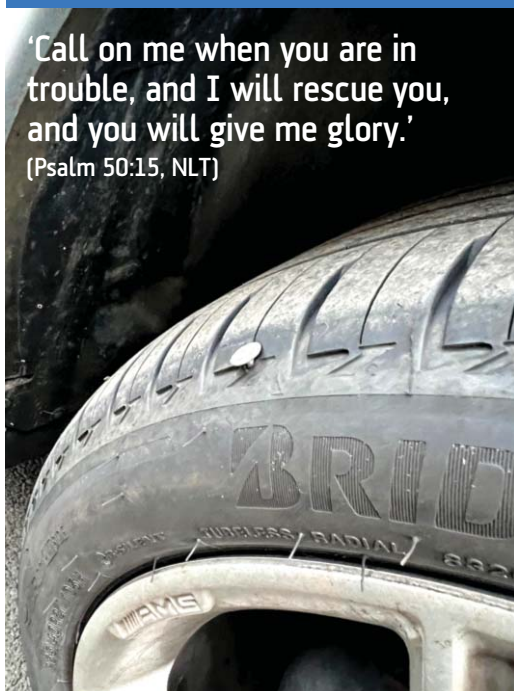


# Editorial

by Dusanka Rancic,  
Editor

EDITORIAL

**'Call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.'**  
(Psalm 50:15, NLT)



Dear reader,

Last winter my husband, David, and I had a few days off work around Christmas; and, since the children were on school holiday, we decided to take them to Scotland. We had an early start on Christmas Day and woke the children up at 3am. With messy hair and half-closed eyes, while holding on to their warm blankies, they were stumbling on their way to the car. We were enjoying the peaceful morning, the clear motorway, and a quiet conversation. Excited to spend some quality time together as a family, we felt at ease.

After several hours of driving, we stopped to stretch our legs and breathe in some fresh Scottish air. And then my husband noticed something a bit unsettling: a huge nail in the front driver-side tyre. This discovery was worrying for several reasons. First, we immediately thought of the safety of our family if we continued the journey. Then, even with the good breakdown cover that we had, we were wondering who was going to come to our rescue and how long it would take to get proper service on 25 December. Finally, we thought of the extra costs that might be incurred. It was a brand-

new tyre, since we had replaced all four tyres a week before the trip.

We spent a few moments considering different options and then went back to the car. We asked God to help us make the right decision. Both of us were calm, although calmness is not my natural reaction in this kind of situation. We looked at each other and agreed – we would continue the journey to our planned destination, the Cairngorms National Park. There we had booked a nice hotel and some ski experiences for the children. So we had at least two or three more hours to drive.

The children were eager to see the snow. It was a refreshing experience for all of us. Every morning, during our visit to Scotland, David and I would pray, talk, check the tyre and continue with planned activities. The nail was there, but the tyre pressure was not changing. Every evening, we were thanking God for keeping us safe and for delaying the inevitable tyre replacement. And, as it always happens when you are having fun, the time flew by, and we were on our way back home. We agreed that David would take the car into the garage right away.

The mechanic commented, 'Oh, a big one,' after seeing the nail. He advised us not to do anything about it, but to wait until the first sign of pressure change before bringing the car in and having the tyre replaced. I was praying every evening, thanking God for delaying this extra expense.

I couldn't remember when I had last been so persistent in praying for something that some might say was so trivial. And God blessed me with a beautiful reminder: **I can do much better than what you are asking Me for.** At first I'd been praying, 'God, help that tyre to hold until we return back home.' Then I was praying, 'God, please delay the need to replace that tyre for at least a month.' But how did God actually respond?

I was working in my office on a random February morning when David called me, saying, 'The nail from the tyre is gone!'

'How do you mean "gone"? I asked.

'Gone; like "disappeared gone" . . . no hole, nothing. Like it was never there.'

What a miracle! If only the two of us had seen it, I might have questioned our ability to assess the seriousness of the situation. But the mechanic saw it as well, and so can you – yes, that's our wheel in the picture. Anyway, we are in July now, and all four tyres on our car are running as new.

Miracles still happen when we pray, but we need to remember not to take our God for granted. We need to recognise His presence in our lives and praise Him for it.



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

# 'Endangered species' – the white working class in the UK Is the church failing?

by Dr Paul Thompson,

MSc (Oxon), PhD, DBA, an entrepreneur and academic published researcher (Kellogg College, University of Oxford)



**'The educational underachievement of white working-class pupils is clear. They are among the most likely to not achieve a pass in English and Maths GCSEs and the least likely to go to university. White pupils are the country's ethnic majority, with 982,950 white pupils eligible for free school meals in 2020.'**<sup>1</sup>

A recent report by the UK parliament has highlighted the issue of educational attainment among poor white British children. The report reveals that such children perform significantly worse in school than their counterparts from other ethnic groups. Poverty is measured in the report using the number of students receiving free school meals (FSM children). The findings indicate that only 32% of FSM white British children attain five good GCSEs, while the corresponding figures for FSM black Caribbean, Indian and Chinese children are 42%, 62% and 77% respectively. The gap in educational achievement between poor white children and their more affluent peers is much larger than the gap between their counterparts from other minority groups. This gap further widens as white children get older.

Although the achievement rates of poor white children have improved significantly over the last decade, the problem is that children from more affluent backgrounds have also improved, leaving the achievement gap unchanged for white children. Today 65% of better-off white children receive five good GCSEs, compared to only 32% of FSM white children, resulting in a significantly worsening achievement gap of 33%. In contrast, poor ethnic minority children have narrowed the gap on their wealthier peers. For Indian and black students the gap between rich and poor is only 15%, and for Chinese students it is 1.4%. It is clear that something is wrong, and the deck seems to be markedly stacked against FSM white British children.

## Culture

This has led some to suggest that cultural differences may be influencing the way poor white British children approach their education. Culture is a powerful force that affects our lives in ways we may not even realise. It influences the way we think, behave and interact with others. Culture shapes our beliefs, values and attitudes, and it plays a significant role in shaping the world around us. Growing up as a child, it was programmed into me that education and good luck were the only two routes out of poverty. I learnt early on that luck was randomised, so I chose education and handed down the same choice to my children. Therefore, it is essential to understand the impact of culture and how it affects our daily lives.

Michael Wilshaw, former Chief Inspector of Schools in England and head of Ofsted, noted a shift in educational underachievement from cities to rural areas and deprived coastal towns. These areas have weak economies, scarce job opportunities and limited access to higher education, perpetuating a vicious cycle of underachievement and 'brain drain'.

## Disenfranchisement

Disenfranchisement means feeling unheard, excluded or powerless, often in politics. It can take various forms. Some of these are:

- **Social disenfranchisement** – this refers to the feeling of being excluded from social networks or certain groups or activities. For instance, a new employee in a workplace may feel that they don't fit in with the existing staff, which may lead to feeling left out

of social events or conversations. Alternatively, someone may feel that they're not accepted or valued because of having a different lifestyle or belief system to those around them.

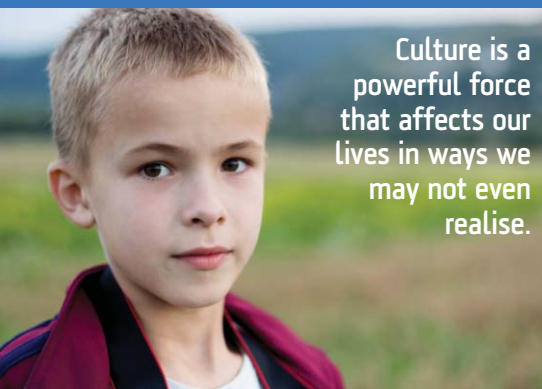
- **Economic disenfranchisement** – this is the feeling of being excluded from economic opportunities and benefits. Those living in low-income areas may feel undervalued and left behind, unable to access the same job opportunities, education or resources as those in more affluent areas. Alternatively, someone who works in a company where the CEO earns a huge salary while the employees struggle to make ends meet may feel that they're not being fairly compensated for their work.
- **Political disenfranchisement** – this means feeling excluded from the political process and decisions, which can impact mental health. To address it, we must recognise causes, create inclusive social networks, and reduce income inequality. It's a reminder to create a more equitable society.

## Jesus and social exclusion

How did Jesus treat the marginalised, and what did He tell the church? He told us to love them, welcome them and make them feel included.

Here are five marginalised groups towards which Jesus showed love and compassion.

- **Women** – In first-century Palestine, women were expected to stay at home, while men went out to work. It was a luxury for women to study the Bible and learn how to read and write. Despite the gender segregation of that era, Jesus treated men and women equally. He spoke to women with tenderness, healed



Culture is a powerful force that affects our lives in ways we may not even realise.

them, and conferred on them a spiritual status equal to that of men. Jesus' ministry was supported by women, and it was to women that He made His first post-resurrection appearance.

- **The poor** – In ancient Roman-occupied Israel, despite the fact that the majority of people were poor, many looked down on those who were impoverished. Jesus' teachings emphasised God's concern for the well-being of the poor and criticised those who ignored or disenfranchised them. He proclaimed good news to the poor (Luke 4:18a) and declared them blessed, for the kingdom of God is theirs (Luke 6:20). He counselled us to take care of those with special needs in the church and our community: 'But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous' (Luke 14:13, 14, NIV).
- **The unclean** – Much of the Old Testament was concerned with purity. One could become unclean through exposure to potentially contagious diseases in bodily fluids or from eating unclean foods. Once someone was unclean, they had to avoid sacred spaces and duties until they could be purified. To be unclean was to be socially ostracised. Lepers were one of the largest and most stigmatised unclean groups. It didn't help that leprosy was a horribly disfiguring disease. They were cursed with a terrible disease . . . and the loneliness of exclusion. Jesus responded kindly to the man who hadn't experienced physical touch in a

long time (Matthew 8:1-4). He also showed compassion to the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, praising her faith instead of reprimanding her for touching Him despite her uncleanness (Luke 8:48).

- **Oppressors** – The Jews wanted a messiah to defeat their Roman oppressors. Tax collectors, who took people's money for the Romans, were considered the worst sinners. Nevertheless, when a centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant, he believed Jesus could heal him with a word. Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith' (Matthew 8:10, NIV).
- **Racial enemies** – The well-documented hatred between the Samaritans and the Jews dated back centuries. That's why the authors of the gospels and Acts were so enamoured with documenting Jesus' discussions about this group and their exposure to the Gospel itself. When Jesus told a teacher of the law that loving his neighbour as himself was an important part of fulfilling the law, he asked Jesus who his neighbour was. Christ's response was a completely startling parable with a Samaritan as the hero (Luke 10:25-37). Another story that pits Jesus against both racial and gender discrimination ends with the conversion of many Samaritans (John 4:4-42).

#### Breaking down the walls of division

Jesus destroyed the wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles, reconciling both groups to God through the cross. His ministry was about breaking down walls and bringing people together. The church should continue spreading this message of reconciliation.

#### The purpose of branding is inclusion and exclusion

One of the ways in which we may be creating exclusion is through our branding. A Forbes article about the ten golden rules of branding explains that branding creates a niche focus: 'Keeping your message focused for your target demographic will make it that much easier to both create

content around your personal brand and have others define you. . . . The narrower and more focused your brand is, the easier it is for people to remember who you are.'<sup>2</sup> And if your brand does not fit with their social class, this may feel like exclusion.

Unique branding may not be compatible with the mission and message of the church. We should create content around reaching white working-class people. The more narrowly we align our church mission to meet their needs, the likelier they will come to church. We must put our focus and energy into reaching white working-class people. It is clear that there is an urgent need.

The white working class in sociological terms are defined as 'those minimally educated people who engage in "manual labour" with little or no prestige. Unskilled workers in the class – dishwashers, cashiers, maids and waitresses – usually are underpaid and have no opportunity for career advancement.'<sup>3</sup> They are often called 'the working poor'.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to the white working-class British people, for it is they who opened their homes to offer accommodation to my grandmother, who came to Britain as part of the *Windrush* cohort. Without their help I would not have been born in England. Without their help she would have died in the cold.

In the 1960s it was standard to see signs in windows saying, 'No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish'; but these people, having borne the scars of poverty and exclusion, knew the pain of discrimination and opened the doors of their homes and let the Afro-Caribbeans in. It is now time for us to open our hearts and the doors of the church, make room for them and let them in, no matter what this means.

'And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" ' (Matthew 25:40, NKJV).

<sup>1</sup><https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmeduc/85/8504.htm>

<sup>2</sup>[www.forbes.com/sites/goldiechan/2018/11/08/10-golden-rules-personal-branding/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/goldiechan/2018/11/08/10-golden-rules-personal-branding/)

<sup>3</sup>[www.studocu.com/en-us/document/widener-university/introduction-to-sociology/social-class-social-classes/53164263](http://www.studocu.com/en-us/document/widener-university/introduction-to-sociology/social-class-social-classes/53164263)



# 'Your Voice, Your Mission': a church-wide conversation on stewardship

by Pastor Alex Mareniuc,  
South England Conference Stewardship Director



**GOD FIRST**  
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES



## True stewardship begins not with decisions, but with listening.

In May we introduced 'Mission in Motion', a leadership event that reignited the conversation around stewardship, generosity and mission. That initiative was never meant to be the final word. It was the opening sentence in a new chapter focused on giving, involvement and faithfulness to God's purpose.

In October the British Union Conference Stewardship Working Group will launch a territory-wide consultation. This will be both spiritual and strategic: not about policy, but participation; not about raising funds, but increasing faith and walking together in trust.

## The foundation: systematic giving

Though often unspoken, systematic giving is foundational to healthy stewardship. It differs from reactive or sporadic giving that is often driven by habit, pressure or emotion. Instead, it is planned, regular and grounded in conviction. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 9:7, we do not give 'reluctantly or under compulsion' (NIV), but with purpose, as an act of honour and faith.

Scripture repeatedly affirms this principle. Proverbs 3:9 urges us to honour the Lord with our firstfruits. Exodus 23:19 calls us to bring the best of our offerings, not what's left. In 1 Corinthians 16:2 Paul encourages believers to set something aside weekly, establishing a rhythm of God-first generosity.

When embraced, systematic giving shifts stewardship from obligation to discipleship. It's less about fundraising and more about our spiritual walk with the Lord, shaping generous hearts, sustaining ministry, and placing God first in every area of our lives.

## The Combined Offering Plan

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, systematic giving is often

associated with the Combined Offering Plan (COP). This is a model that simplifies how unassigned offerings support mission. Under this plan, loose cash, unmarked envelopes or digital donations, and Sabbath School mission offerings are pooled and proportionally distributed to support local (60%), regional (20%) and global mission (20%).

Designated gifts, whether for a specific project, church or institution, are always honoured. The COP respects the intent of the giving members while ensuring that general offerings are distributed transparently and purposefully.

This plan reflects the same principles as our tithe-sharing system, which supports ministry at every level of the church. Since being voted by the General Conference in 2002, the COP has become the recommended giving model for the global church, and today more than 90% of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination operates under this system.

The Combined Offering Plan arose from a recognition that traditional offering calendars, while well-meaning, sometimes led to fragmentation and unclear priorities. The COP refocuses giving around what matters most: mission. It also supports more intentional stewardship education and builds trust by simplifying the giving process without compromising spiritual depth.

## The consultation process

To ensure this conversation is shaped by real experiences and insights, the stewardship departments of the British Union Conference and its five associated fields – the South and North England Conferences and the Irish, Scottish and Welsh Missions – are jointly conducting this consultation. With approval from all six executive committees, the initiative will run from October to December 2025.

It will include:

- A member survey – an online survey exploring giving patterns, our understanding of stewardship, and our views on the Combined Offering Plan.
- Pastors' conversations – dialogue sessions to gather pastoral insights and lived experiences from local church leaders.
- The treasurers' financial survey – anonymised data from a sample of churches to assess giving trends, expenses and reserves.
- An online resource hub – a digital platform with FAQs, videos and consultation updates to promote transparency and education.

## Your voice matters

This consultation is not a symbolic exercise: it's an invitation to reflect deeply on how we steward God's resources. We want to learn how stewardship is experienced across our churches, what members value in their giving, and how we can grow in clarity, trust and faithfulness.

This isn't about selecting a perfect model. It's about discovering a shared purpose.

Your voice matters – not as a mere formality, but as part of how we discern God's will together. Whether you're a member exploring your place in God's mission, a leader navigating complex realities, or a pastor seeking to shepherd his flock faithfully, your insights will help shape how we honour God through our giving.

In September we will hold a Zoom briefing to introduce the consultation. Following that, everyone will be invited to complete the survey, engage with the resources, and encourage others to take part.

This is your church. This is your mission. And this is your moment to help put stewardship where it belongs: at the heart of discipleship.

# Respect!

by Patrick McKerrow, an alumnus of the London School of Economics



In his feature *MESSENGER* article of 23 February 2024, titled 'Representation', Pastor Nathan Stickland, SEC Executive Secretary, set out what some might find a bit unsettling. The matter of the Pierson Package was not given context; hence it cannot be understood correctly.

Pastor Stickland wrote: 'The Pierson Package emphasises the view that you can't represent me if you are not like me or do it my way.' This view misrepresents the Pierson Package, which is why appreciation of the context is important.

What exactly was the Pierson Package? From the 1940s to the 1970s, Adventist expats from the Caribbean who settled in Britain were prevented from involvement in church management. European leaders failed to acknowledge and to act on their expressed and genuine needs, despite numerous attempts by the expats.

The expats wanted more involvement in church activities; in their minds the mission of the church in the UK was not advancing as rapidly as it should. Therefore, the expats wanted to advance the mission. They did not want to be bystanders, but increasingly their concerns were sidelined by administrators.

Tensions between the white European administrators and the mostly Caribbean expats developed. Some of the actions by white Europeans were perceived as bordering on racism. Church

disunity on racial grounds seemed too real.

By 1974 GC President Robert H. Pierson met BUC President E. H. Foster and the London Laymen's Forum (LLF), which spoke for the expats. For Pierson, the idea of having separate white and black conferences was considered unacceptable.

In the USA, such 'regional conferences' caused problems because they operated on the basis of being separate conferences for whites and African Americans. In racist apartheid South Africa, Adventists had separate churches for the black African population and for the white population.

By 1978 the GC President judged it necessary to attend a meeting at the Adventist-owned New Gallery in London to discuss a way forward. The meeting was chaired by Division President Pastor W. R. L. Scragg. Representatives from the London Laymen's Forum and BUC President E. H. Foster also attended.

The proposals, agreed by all parties, included inviting pastors from the Caribbean to serve in Britain. These expats would help overcome obstacles between white church administrators and the Caribbean expats. The solution was to have a racially integrated policy that addressed the needs of Caribbean expats. An integrated leadership was a positive way forward.

These proposals, effective by 1981, became known as the Pierson Package, and were subsequently voted on and accepted. The result meant having black pastors and workers and the presence of Caribbean expats at the BUC and Conference administrative levels, as well as having Adventist schools and youth centres.

However, the Pierson Package

was not accepted by all white pastors and church members.

Because of the delicate nature of the situation, a white American pastor, Harold Calkins, was elected as BUC President in 1981. The GC President, Pastor Neal C. Wilson, recommended Calkins very highly.

Significantly, the GC agreed to pay the cost of employing the expat pastors. The GC recognised the importance of a racially united church, working in harmony regardless of race. Respect was a much-needed Christian virtue.

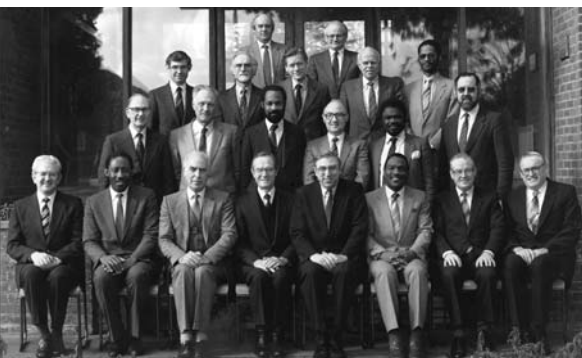
In the same vein as mentioning Barack Obama and the *Windrush* generation, Pastor Stickland mentions a Caribbean fellow Adventist who 'admitted' to him how members who now find themselves in churches with new members from other cultures feel about this changed church composition, and how this makes them understand how white members must have felt when black members became the majority.

It is clear from the above that the change in racial composition in the 1970s troubled some white members and the leadership at the time. Indeed, some white members left and formed Sabbath School branches rather than stay in churches where black expats were the majority.

The goal of the Pierson Package remains commendable – and, above all, it has the undeniable attributes of the Christian faith.

People with another culture or skin colour should be welcomed. We are all one in Christ. Our place in heaven is not going to be allocated on the basis of skin pigmentation. The lesson for our church is that mutual love, respect and Christian dignity belong to all of God's human race. We are all created in God's image; and, as such, we should all stand united in God's love.

Respect for each other is a profound and very welcome feature of Adventism.



**British Union Conference Committee 1986**

Front: Ernest Logan, C. R. Perry, Maurice Musgrave, Harold Calkins (president), W. John Arthur, Don McFarlane, R. H. Surridge, Watson Southcott  
Second: Denys Baildam, Ken Hammond, Nylann Kennedy, David Marshall, Keith Burrell, M. J. Stickland  
Back: Paul Hammond, Ivor Margerison, G. Martin Bell, Hugh Dunton, Peter Archer, S. V. Maxwell, W. Shaw.



# A year of steady faith: tithing through 2024

by Wederly Aguiar, *BUC Treasurer*

As the British Union Conference (BUC) Treasury Department concludes the 2024 annual audit, it presents more than a financial summary – it offers a meaningful reflection on a year marked by steady growth, spiritual commitment and faithful generosity.

In the face of ongoing economic challenges and shifting global conditions, members across the Union have continued to demonstrate unwavering dedication to the mission of the church. The total tithe returned in 2024 amounted to £32,869,576, representing a 1.6% increase over the previous year. While this growth is more modest than the post-pandemic surges of recent years, it signifies a deeper trend: a transition from recovery towards stability and sustained stewardship.

Tithe figures increased across both conferences and all three missions within the BUC. This consistent upward trajectory is not merely financial in nature: it is reflective of the enduring faith and commitment of the church community. Over the past ten years, tithe within the British Union has grown from approximately £21 million in 2015 to nearly £33 million in 2024. This remarkable progression stands as a testament to God's continued provision and the faithfulness of His people.

Tithe funds play a vital role in supporting the mission and ministry of the church. A significant portion is allocated to sustain pastoral and ministerial teams across the Union.

These funds ensure the presence of trained and committed leaders in our churches – individuals dedicated to providing spiritual care, preaching the word, and engaging in community outreach.

In addition, tithe supports mission and ministry programmes at both the Conference and Mission levels. These include evangelism initiatives, leadership training, children's and youth ministries, and the administrative structures that enable local churches to function effectively.

The BUC expresses sincere appreciation to every church member, pastor, local treasurer and leader whose faithfulness in returning tithe and offerings continues to sustain the mission of the church. Your dedication ensures that vital ministries – ranging from Sabbath School resources and youth congresses to digital evangelism and pastoral care – can thrive.

It is through your faithful stewardship that the church remains equipped to serve both its members and the broader community.

As the church enters a season characterised by more measured growth, the emphasis must now shift to careful planning and thoughtful stewardship. Financial stability will be crucial as we navigate the opportunities and challenges of the coming years. It is a time to steward resources wisely; respond to emerging needs with discernment; and remain attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Rather than closing with a traditional verse on tithing, we are reminded of the broader impact of generosity through the words of the apostle Paul: 'You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God' (2 Corinthians 9:11, NIV).

## BUC appoints interim youth director

On 12 June 2025, following Pastor Kevin Johns' departure to become the Trans-European Division Associate Youth Director in September 2024, the British Union Conference Executive Committee received the final report from its Search Committee, which concluded a comprehensive process to identify a new director for Youth Ministries.

Following this, the Executive Committee voted to appoint Pastor Njabulo 'Njay' Ndlovu, who currently serves the Crieff and Dundee churches in the Scottish Mission, as the interim director of Youth Ministries until the next BUC session in July 2026. We are pleased to announce that Pastor Njay has accepted this call and will officially begin his role on 1 July 2025.

After completing his MA at Newbold College, Pastor Njay began his ministry serving the Aberdeen, Inverness and Elgin district of churches. From 2014 to mid-2024, Njay and his wife, Mthoko, served as co-sponsors for Club Ministries in Scotland. Together they played instrumental roles in Union and Division camporees, as well as the BUC Bible Experience finals, which were hosted in Scotland in 2024. Their shared commitment to youth ministry has been marked by dedication, creativity and deep relational engagement.

With a passion for contextualised youth work, Njay brings a thoughtful approach to ministry, reflecting on the importance of both learning and unlearning in service. We look forward to seeing his leadership, energy and spiritual insight in this role.

BY BUC COMMUNICATIONS (ARTICLE FIRST PUBLISHED IN BUC NEWS)



[Vanessa Pizzuto] / AME (CC BY 4.0)



# Nature's pharmacy, part 6a – Healing foods

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



'Wherever the truth is proclaimed, instruction should be given in the preparation of healthful foods' (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 273).

The book *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, first published in 1938, is a compilation of Ellen White's writings on different types of foods and their health impact. It gave powerful insights into the correlation between diet and wellbeing decades before medical establishments, physiologists and researchers reported on the connection between our dietary habits and our health outcomes.

Current evidence-based publications continue to spotlight the impact of our food on our health. The 2018 edition of the *Reader's Digest* publication *Foods that Harm, Foods that Heal: What to Eat to Beat Disease and Live Longer* carried this review: 'An updated edition of the groundbreaking, best-selling guide to the vital link between food and health – now featuring more than 50 recipes for good health.'<sup>1</sup> The review continues: 'The first edition of *Foods that Harm, Foods that Heal* changed the way we view food and its impact on our bodies. More than 7 million copies of the book have been sold worldwide since then, and interest in food as medicine has only grown as researchers have continued to discover the crucial connections between diet and chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other serious illnesses, as well as the impact of food on stress, insomnia and other common complaints.'

Reading the book *Foods that Harm, Foods that Heal* was both intriguing and refreshing, as many of the foods listed and much of the advice given are not dissimilar to guidance stated in *Counsels on Diet and Foods*.

I find it fascinating that dietary counsel given in the 1900s is still being upheld today. Take for example the following quotes. Is there comparative current evidence to embrace these statements?

'When properly prepared, olives, like nuts, supply the place of butter and flesh meats. The oil, as eaten in the olive, is far preferable to animal oil or fat. It serves as a laxative. Its use will be found beneficial to consumptives, and it is healing to an inflamed, irritated stomach' (Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 298).

'Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and

natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigour of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet' (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 296).

Visit <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/384.84#84> for more statements and judge their relevance for yourself.

The World Health Organisation report this in their statement on a healthy diet: 'Evidence shows the health benefits of a diet high in whole grains, vegetables, fruit, legumes and nuts, and low in salt, free sugars and fats, particularly saturated and trans fats. . . . The benefits of a healthy diet are reflected in higher educational outcomes, productivity and lifelong health.'<sup>2</sup>

In an online article by *Nuffield Health* titled 'Recover from injury faster with these healing foods', Nutritional Therapist Shirley Ward writes: 'Any injury produces inflammation. Although this is a crucial part of the natural healing process, it provides a big challenge for your immune system, which is heavily dependent on lots of nutrients, vitamins and minerals to provide effective protection.'<sup>3</sup>

Listing the essential food advice most effective for healing, Ward identifies the following:

- Boost your friendly gut flora.
- Keep up your vitamin D levels.
- Top up on essential fatty acids.
- Cut down on sugar.
- Eat your greens.
- Eat every colour.
- Eat protein for recovery.
- Watch the wheat.
- Include anti-inflammatories such as fresh coconut, turmeric and ginger.

In the next issue of *Enhancing Health*, we will examine these elements and take a closer look at ongoing research into how foods heal.

## Good health!

<sup>1</sup>[www.amazon.com/Foods-That-Harm-Heal-Disease/dp/1621453820](https://www.amazon.com/Foods-That-Harm-Heal-Disease/dp/1621453820)

<sup>2</sup>[www.who.int/health-topics/healthy-diet](https://www.who.int/health-topics/healthy-diet)

<sup>3</sup>[www.nuffieldhealth.com/article/recover-from-injury-faster-with-these-healing-foods](https://www.nuffieldhealth.com/article/recover-from-injury-faster-with-these-healing-foods)



# Creative Writing for Evangelism celebrates tenth anniversary

by Darell J. Philip, Assistant Tutor, Creative Writing for Evangelism



Left to right: Darell Philip, Divinia Reynolds and Brenda Nelson

**'If you want to change the world, then pick up your pen and write.' (Martin Luther, 1483-1546: a seminal figure of the Protestant Reformation)**

If you have an interest in writing, then one of the courses being offered by the South England Conference (SEC) School of Evangelism is Creative Writing for Evangelism. Founded by Course Tutor Divinia Reynolds and launched at the inaugural SEC School of Evangelism under the leadership of the then director of Evangelism, Mission and Leadership, Dr Kirk Thomas (now the SEC President) in 2015, this year the Creative Writing for Evangelism course celebrates its tenth anniversary. The course was created for those with an interest in sharing the Gospel's good news message through writing. The course covers a broad spectrum of units related to different aspects of writing, which include 'Testimonies', 'Devotional writing', 'Poetry', 'Narrative (story writing)', 'Journalism', 'Writing for Radio and Digital Ministry' and others. Brenda Nelson (Devotional Writing) and Darell J. Philip (Journalism), previous graduates of the course, have assisted Divinia in the teaching of the class for the past five years.

Last year (2024), three students graduated from the Creative Writing

for Evangelism course at a special ceremony which took place at Stanborough Park Secondary School on 30 November 2024, which recorded the largest cohort of students enrolled in the SEC School of Evangelism with a total of 140 graduates on the day.

Among those graduating from the Creative Writing for Evangelism class was Mariska Edwards, who on that day recited a poem she wrote on kindness – she has since gone on to share poetry via online platforms and at in-person live events, such as the Love in Action ADRA Charity Concert & Social held at Tottenham Lighthouse Seventh-day Adventist Church on 28 June 2025. Another graduate, Aina Rakotonirina, sang a song at the graduation that she had written and composed herself – she has since gone on to perform her own music at different churches and has authored some self-published books. The final graduate was Lillian Kabambe, who had a slot dedicated to Prayer Ministries on the late Elder Mike Johnson's Life Radio UK station and has since used the skills she acquired on the course to write testimonies and sermons.

Over the years the course has

attracted a number of international students from a variety of different countries, including Bolivia, Zambia and Angola among others. Many graduates of the course have gone on to have their work published in a variety of publications, including *FOCUS*, *MESSENGER*, *BUC News* (online), *SEC News* (online), Adventist Radio London and Life Radio UK. The class also put on a 'poenar' – a mix of poetry and seminar – based on a topical issue with a spiritual perspective in mind as a form of evangelism outreach to local communities. Previous topics covered have included the limits of politics, tackling youth violence, and maintaining positive mental health, some of which can be found on the class YouTube channel 'Creative Spiritual Insights': [www.youtube.com/@creativespiritualinsights1653](http://www.youtube.com/@creativespiritualinsights1653).

Special guest tutors with specific expertise in their field have also accepted invitations to teach on the course, including 'Writing for Radio' by a former Adventist Radio London director, Pastor Michael Hamilton; 'Writing for the Stanborough Press' by a former Stanborough Press editor, Pastor Julian Thompson; and 'Tell Me a Story' by a published author and journalist, Catherine Boldeau, among others. Eileen Philip, a self-published poet and writer, has also been a special guest speaker on the course.

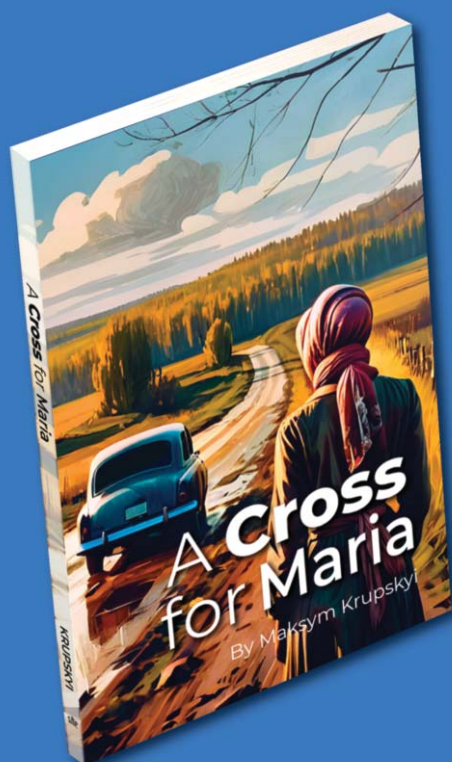
As the course celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, those with a keen interest in the use of creative writing as a means of evangelism are encouraged to apply for the course, which resumes at the start of the academic year (September 2025) on the last Sunday of each month from 10am to 4pm via the online Zoom platform and concludes on the last Sunday in July.

Just as the Holy Scriptures were written by men under inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit, so too are those gifted with the ministry of writing to those who need to hear the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, who is soon to return to the earth.

If you would like to apply for the Creative Writing for Evangelism course for the academic year 2025/26, please email: [mbramble@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:mbramble@secadventist.org.uk).



# The Book of the Month



## A Cross for Maria

In Communist Ukraine, Maria Vasilevna was paying a terribly high price for her Seventh-day Adventist faith. The state, desperate to bend her conscience to its will, was determined to take away her most precious earthly treasure – her only child. Was it worth it? What could she do to prevent it? And how would she be able to cope? Learn of how she endured one of the most terrible things that can happen to a parent; and of how she found peace with God amid the pain – and of the remarkable ending of her moving story.



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

## Gratitude for grief

by Adrian Samuel



Grief is the weathered agony of the soul as it wrestles with the reality of loss; yet Christians can experience a unique sense of gratitude through it. King Solomon says, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart' (Ecclesiastes 7:2, ESV).

I imagine that most of us on any given day would rather feast than mourn. Feasting is fun and often social; it is full of pleasure and blends our palates with culture and creativity. Food, by its nature, is the expression of unpredictable surprise, and the world is shaped by its language.

In contrast, when I walk into the house of mourning, the colours are dull, monotone and faded. Instead of laughter, the rooms echo painful whimpers of bygone dreams and hopes. Tissues like leaves cover the floor as clouds of sorrow darken and shower in their cycles.

I paint this picture to emphasise that mourning is often a physically unpleasant space to exist in; few wilfully seek its companionship.

Upon reflection, though, what if the discomfort is the point? Scripture explicitly says that 'the living will lay it to heart'. There is something unique about these experiences that causes them to be etched into our memory. The Bible continues, 'for this is the end of all mankind'. Is God, through the narrow chambers of death, trying to point our minds to existential questions?

What happens to my loved ones when they die? What will happen to me? What meaning does life hold if everything I am vanishes at my passing? Nations, armies and empires were built to deny the reality that this question reveals.

To the Christian in this dark room, there is a candle, a reminder that grief is the acknowledgement of at least two things:

1. Death, however human, is unnatural. Our longing for its extinction aligns us with God's plan and reminds us of our role to play in heralding a new earth where sin and death no longer reign victorious.
2. In a world torn by violence, cruelty and helplessness, our hearts still retain a healthy sensitivity to human and godlike qualities; after all, 'Jesus wept' (John 11:35, ESV).

God collects our tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8); the house of mourning is therefore also the house of God. He waits for us there.







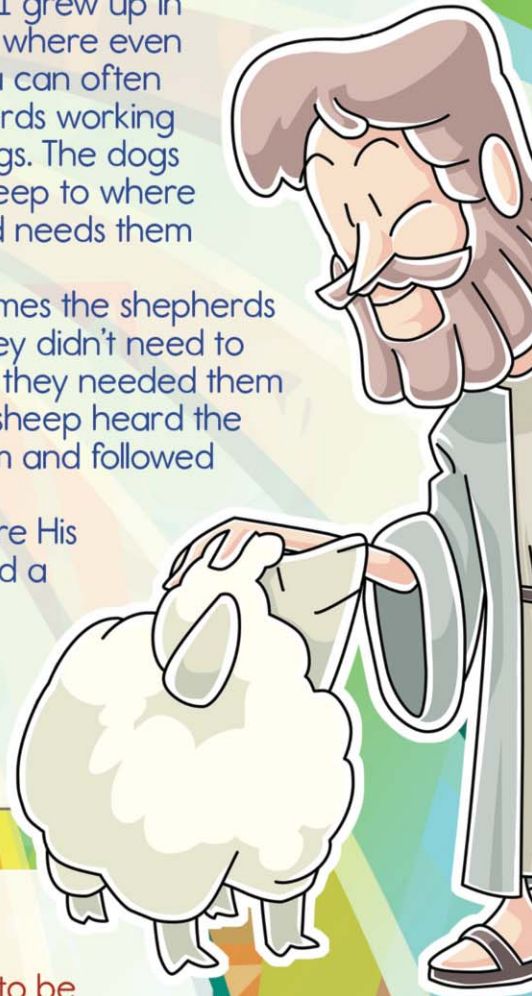
### Hello Little Stars!

Have you ever seen a shepherd at work? I have. I grew up in Yorkshire, where even today you can often see shepherds working with their dogs. The dogs chase the sheep to where the shepherd needs them to go.

However, in Bible times the shepherds didn't use dogs like that. They didn't need to chase the sheep to where they needed them to be. They led them. The sheep heard the

sound of the shepherd's voice, and they recognised him and followed him. Jesus describes this loving profession in John chapter 10.

In this chapter Jesus says that He is our Shepherd, and we are His sheep. He wants to look after us, to find us food and water and a safe place to sleep, and to protect us from harm, just like a shepherd looks after his sheep. But Jesus has done more for us than that. A good shepherd, Jesus says, will love his sheep so much that he is even willing to die for them. And Jesus did that for us too.



### Maths message!

In the twenty-third psalm, David describes the Lord as his Shepherd. David says he loves the Lord so much that he wants to be with Him forever. Find out where David wants to live by solving the sums below. Each answer corresponds with a letter, which you can use to find the secret message! The first two sums have been done for you as an example.

$4 + 4$	$7 + 8$	$23 - 2$	$20 - 1$	$15 \div 3$
= 8	= 15	= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
H	O	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

$10 + 5$	$3 \times 2$
= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>
↓	↓
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

$10 + 10$	$4 \times 2$	$9 - 4$
= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>
↓	↓	↓
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

$6 \times 2$	$20 - 5$	$9 \times 2$	$8 \div 2$
= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>	= <input type="text"/>
↓	↓	↓	↓
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>





## Wordsearch

See if you can find all the words to do with good shepherding listed in this wordsearch! The words may go up, down, forwards, backwards, or diagonally.

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

CLOAK  
COMPASSION  
CROOK  
FLOCK  
GATE  
HIRELING  
JESUS  
LORD  
LOVE  
MEADOWS  
SAFETY  
SHEPHERD  
STAFF  
VOICE

## Shepherd's crook

Do you know what a shepherd's crook is? It's a long wooden staff with the end curved round almost into a loop. The shepherd can reach out with this long crook and put the curved end round the neck of his sheep, pulling them back from danger.

What are some of the dangers from which Jesus might need to pull you? Stealing is one example. Lying might be another. See how many you can list now, and then pray and ask Jesus to help you avoid them. Also ask your parents.

Let's take a moment right now to thank God for keeping us safe, and to ask for His protection from the dangerous things in life!

Remember, Jesus loves you very much, and wants to take care of you and protect you from bad things all your life. Will you let Him be your Shepherd? Will you follow His voice? You will? Oh, I am so glad! That makes me very happy. And I know it makes Jesus happy too!





## London Ghana SDA Children's Day: a paradox of joy and concern

London Ghana Seventh-day Adventist Church buzzed with exuberance on Sabbath 24 May for the church's annual Children's Day celebration. Dressed in their finest, the joyful young members delivered a flawless divine service filled with uplifting music and energetic performances.

Yet there has recently been a concerning decline in the number of under-10s within the congregation. Naomi Adjei, a teacher in the Children's Department, noted the fewer baby dedications in recent times, pointing to economic pressures as a significant factor. Mrs Adjei made a heartfelt request to the senior pastor of the church, Pastor George Boakye Asiamah, for special intercessory prayers on behalf of married couples who desire more

children, acknowledging the varied challenges they face post-COVID-19.

Johnny Anane, the Children's Ministry leader, echoed these sentiments in his sermon, 'Growing Up to Stand Out', drawing parallels with the life of David. He emphasised the church's responsibility to pray for those who are struggling to have children, and also addressed the wider societal challenges impacting parents. He urged parents not to suffer in silence, reminding them of the support available both within the church and in the wider community.

Encouraging parents to persevere, even when children stray, Mr Anane stressed the importance of intercessory prayer in shaping a child's destiny. He also advised against comparing children, advocating instead for modelling positive behaviour, fostering problem-solving skills, and instilling trust and achievable goals. He concluded by outlining six core values for children: humility; passionate commitment; respect for authority; wise living; willingness to admit mistakes; and a deep understanding of God's grace.

Despite the prevailing demographic concerns, the significant boom in the growth of children in the Teens Department at London Ghana, which comprises young people over the age of 10 years, is a powerful reminder of the indispensable role children play in the church's future – and of the collective Christian duty to nurture them.

ROBERT KYEI-GYAU

## Welling emergency stops

On Sabbath 10 May 2025, 26 excited children, led by Auntie Jackie and her dedicated team of Children's Ministries coordinators, along with supportive parents, made two remarkable 'emergency stops' to minister to the hard-working Fire and Ambulance personnel of Bexleyheath and Barnhurst.

The group was warmly welcomed at the fire station by Justin, the Chief Fire Officer, and at the ambulance station by Zoe. However, before the children could begin their presentations, they were in for a thrilling surprise, as they each took turns handling the firefighters' hoses to put out an imaginary fire. Laughter filled the air as water hit the targets, joyfully echoing the excitement of the afternoon. Then came another highlight: climbing aboard a real fire engine and wearing firefighter helmets, which lit up the children's faces with sheer delight.

The ambulance station was just as engaging. Some children eagerly volunteered to have their heart rates checked. Thankfully, all showed healthy readings! Each child was gifted a book and a sticker.

During the visits, Daynea offered a thoughtful introduction, sharing that the children had been learning about service. This was a powerful lesson in giving back to the community. Aretha and Grace delivered heartfelt speeches of appreciation. Ephraim, Olivia, Ese, and Rejoice presented gift hampers to the staff. The children then sang 'Thanks' by Joy Gardner, a rendition that visibly moved the service personnel. When asked if the children could pray for them, the fire and ambulance staff gladly accepted. Caleb and Prosper led out in prayer for the firefighters and paramedics respectively. So touched were the first responders that they described the children as 'the best group ever' and 'simply amazing'.

The impact was so significant that the paramedics offered to connect our church with the London Lifesavers Team, who have since agreed to visit and teach the Adventurers and Pathfinders vital lifesaving techniques.

This outreach is just the beginning of the Children's Ministry community engagement programme. We look forward to building strong, lasting relationships with our community. May these emergency stops spark an interest in Christ, saving lives not just for now, but for eternity.

LESLIAN ELLIS, COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



The children had a great time with the Fire and Ambulance teams





## Hackney's treasures lead out for Children's Day

During the heatwave on Sabbath 21 June 2025, Hackney Seventh-day Adventist Church saw eighteen children participate in a specially themed day entitled 'Treasured by God'.

Beginners and Primary classes shared memory verses and songs, while three children from the PowerPoint class delivered uplifting messages on God's love for us. The church enjoyed the children's singing, drumming, poetry and sermonettes.

During the interactive children's story Sister Myriam (Children's Department) shared the story of how Daniel and his friends refused the king's meat, concluding with encouragement to eat healthily, practise moderation and treat each other kindly.

As 2-year-old Kamani recited his memory verse, 16-year-old Ardina shared her poem, and other children followed with their verses, the congregation cheered and clapped. Testimonies from the children followed, and Junior Sabbath School superintendent Petra Prince shared, 'It's a pleasure working with them and seeing the results.'

The first preacher was Allyssa Reece, who was introduced by her mother. She spoke of how her daughter had given her life to Christ at the tender age of 8. Allyssa's maturity and charisma inspired us as she spoke of maintaining loyalty to God.

Levi Greaves' father introduced him. An affectionate child with a passion for football and making friends, Levi relayed God's love for us regardless of where we live, what school we attend, or even what football team we support.

The final speaker, Neriah Adewuyi, was introduced by her mother as a loving child who always puts God first in her life. Neriah confidently and clearly shared the importance of hope.

Finally, Curtis Junior and his dad accompanied his aunt as she sang.

'I felt privileged to be surrounded by so much talent from such little people,' shared one member, and Abigail, a regular visitor, thanked the congregation for 'opening their arms' to her.

We continue to pray for all the children, parents and carers in Hackney Church, and thank the Children's Ministries team, Petra, Cheryl, Jen, Myriam, Margaret and Sonia, for their hard work, dedication and encouragement.

Special thanks to our children – Kamani, Jaylen, Dejon, Angel, Jamari, Curtis, Ayvah, De'aira, Liara, Nezhiah, Cairan, Isaiah, Imani, Acacia, Ardina and

speakers Allyssa, Levi and Neriah.

In the words of Ardina:

'So let your kindness brightly shine,  
A reflection of His love divine;  
You are indeed God's treasures.'

ZINZE BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS & PERSONAL MINISTRIES SECRETARY



Elder Chris Brooks

## 'Committed to the Cross' – Hackney SDA Youth Day

Young people were charged to be 'all in' as followers of Christ at Hackney's Youth Day on Sabbath 31 May – committed to the cross and the sharing of the Gospel to all people.

The Sabbath School adult lesson study facilitated by Elder Darell Philip examined the relevance of the Psalms to end-time prophecy; Lloyd Reid gave an animated and enthusiastic children's story of Peter walking on the water towards Jesus; and the health spot, presented by Jana Brooks, highlighted the 50% increase in cases of mental health challenges since COVID-19 among 10-34-year-olds and the importance of limiting our time using social media.

Sister Ronelia, a youth pastor in training, delivered a powerful prayer that reminded the youth of their purpose; musical items were offered by Rashaun Gardner and Sophie Bannis; and the meditational was sung by Hackney's youth praise and worship team, led by Elder Chris Brooks.

Pastor Costa Vegas's message – 'Pack Your Coffin' – challenged the youth to wholeheartedly commit to the cross of Christ and share the end-time Gospel message with all people. He testified of having promised to take a mission trip to Liberia before the country erupted in a civil war. When he took the risk and went on the trip anyway, it was indeed a rollercoaster experience, but 500 individuals were baptised. Vegas told the Hackney youth to count the cost of discipleship and take risks for the sake of God's mission.

The day ended with an open forum as Hackney's youth leader, Rebecca Marshall, looked at the limitless possibilities available to those who place their dependence 100% in Jesus.

DARELL J. PHILIP



Pastor Costa Vegas



Jana Brooks

## One Sound

His House, a London-based worship collective dedicated to connecting people to God through music, recently released their debut single, *REAL*, in October 2024. 35k+ streams later, they decided to film an acoustic version of the single on One Sound's YouTube channel.

The acoustic version is completely stripped back, allowing the vocals to shine front and centre, depicting the intimate and close relationship God wants to have with us (watch the video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nELN19yEV9s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nELN19yEV9s)).

Born out of a lack of intimacy with God, despite doing all the right things and serving in all the right places, *REAL* is a raw depiction of this experience and a call for God's presence to be made just that – *REAL*.

Digging beyond the surface, this song opens a transparent conversation with God, delving into the challenges of seeking Him and pleading for change.

'The truth is, I was angry at God. At the time, I was attending church, serving on the praise team and supporting the youth, but I felt a void. One Sabbath, I distinctly told God, "If You don't do something, I'm leaving."

'While I didn't get the answer I wanted, I stumbled upon this verse, 2 Kings 6:17, and from it flowed a wave of emotions. The words, "Are you not a God nearby? Turn Your face towards me. . . . Open up our eyes; let me see the hosts that surround me" poured out. For the first time, I felt something real – a connection that came from being honest with God and waiting for His response,' shares Jovan Alexander, founder of His House.

Muyiwa Olarewaju, Head of Music at Premier Gospel, adds, 'I experienced this song at a worship night and it haunted me – I had to start off my set with it. The lead pastor of the church called me the next day and said the song stayed in his spirit. It's a great song and extremely well-written – I'm sure this single is going places'

Last month, His House hosted a launch worship night for *REAL*, featuring Shekinah and P. J. Greaves, and began this month's pre-release ministering *REAL* at Encounter alongside Muyiwa.

Perfect for personal devotion, church worship or simply uplifting moments, *REAL* speaks to believers and seekers alike, encouraging faith, reflection and honest expression.

His House – inspired by Hebrews 3:6, which says, 'We are his house if we keep up our courage and our confidence in what we hope for' (GNT) – aims to spark your desire to explore a deeper relationship with God. Through music and shared spiritual gifts, His House is building a community where young Christians can authentically express themselves, connect with one another, and use their creative talents to glorify God.

In the past year, His House has recorded a live album in West London, held numerous sold-out worship nights, opened for renowned artist J. J. Hairston, and gained support from Premier Gospel, the UK's leading gospel station.

Tune in now to experience *REAL* and begin your journey of honest worship.

THE ONE SOUND TEAM



## Evangelistic health event in Area 1, SEC

Every year the Royal Cornwall Show attracts around 120,000 people over a period of three days, making it one of the biggest events in the UK. As usual, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was present this year between 5 and 7 June with a range of free health checks for the community and literature materials on lifestyle, mental health and spirituality.

We want to praise God for exceeding our expectations on the number of people served. More than 200 people received the medical tests, and the majority of them took a booklet or gift bag from the church.

Under the coordination of Pastors Daniel Amakye, Goodluck Ajuzie and Florin Orasanu, church members from various churches across Devon & Cornwall in Area 1 came together to set up the stand, serve the people and have meaningful conversations with different age groups.

This year's edition exceeded our expectations and showed to us that there is a great opening for health and well-being in our society today. Truly, the health message

opens the door for the Gospel.

May God bless those who served in various ways, as well as those who have been served.

PASTOR FLORIN ORASANU





## Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church honoured as a 'centre of hope, health and healing'

In a Spirit-filled and celebratory ceremony on Sabbath 17 May, Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially recognised as a 'centre of hope, health and healing'. This significant honour celebrates the church's longstanding and holistic commitment to outreach, compassion and community service in Croydon and the surrounding area.

The award was presented by Sharon Platt-McDonald, Director of the British Union Conference Health Ministries Department, who highlighted the church's consistent focus on physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing through its various ministries. 'Croydon SDA Church is a shining example of what it means to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus,' she noted. 'Their dedication reflects the heart of true Christian service – restoring hope, promoting healing, and championing holistic health.'

The Mayor of Croydon graced the event and participated in a symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony, affirming the church's vital role in strengthening community bonds and enhancing the wellbeing of residents across the borough.

For years, Croydon Seventh-day Adventist Church has been a beacon in the local community, offering support

through foodbanks, mental health seminars, youth empowerment programmes, family workshops and health expos. This recognition is a testament to the power of faith in action and the enduring impact of love-driven service.

Speaking on behalf of the church, the pastors expressed heartfelt gratitude: 'We thank God for this honour, for providing us with the resources and passion to serve. We are committed to continuing this work, showing His love in practical, transformative ways to all those around us.'

As the church celebrated this milestone, there was a renewed sense of purpose and unity – a reminder that every act of kindness sows a seed of hope, and every life touched is a life changed. To God be the glory.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



## Hanwell Church celebrates new status

On Sabbath 10 May, Hanwell Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated its inauguration as a centre of hope, health and healing (CHHH). This status was created by the BUC Health Ministries and Community Services Director, Sharon Platt-McDonald, to award churches excelling in nurture and outreach. She was thrilled to present the award to Hanwell, and praised them for exceeding the CHHH criteria through nearly two decades of outreach.

The programme was hosted by Dr Michael Mbui, pastor and discipleship champion, whose humble and tireless leadership unified and inspired Hanwell on their journey to CHHH status.

The event began with an impressive display by the Area 6D Pathfinder Drum Corps, led by Dahlia Campbell, Elder Ray Ogbogu and Joan William. Distinguished church and public dignitaries acknowledged the church's outstanding work in promoting community wellness and cohesion.

The keynote speaker, South England Conference President Dr Kirk Thomas, reminded the congregation that Christ's commission is one of service and humility, not politics, encouraging them to accept and love all people.

SEC Community Services Director Pastor Nerine Barrett acknowledged the church's impact, especially during crises. Area 6D President Pastor Berhanu Tsehay encouraged Hanwell to continue its good works.

Though unable to attend, MP James Murray sent his best wishes, with Councillor Dr Shahbaz Cheema officiating the ribbon-cutting. Dr Cheema also offered free phlebotomy training to complement the centre's health focus.

Stephanie Lean, Ealing Community Health Champion Lead, and Sarah Lubanga, Hanwell Community Champion, were commended for integrating local health initiatives into the church. Health professional Gloria Simon lauded Hanwell's support for diabetic patients under NHS programmes, noting marked improvements in lifestyle and health.

Hanwell Church's community outreach began in earnest around 2006 with programmes like the 'Mela Project' and senior citizen services. Departments worked collaboratively to reach hundreds of locals, especially during multicultural events, offering blood pressure checks, BMI monitoring, diabetes management and nutrition training. Special sessions were held on first aid, emergency response, vegan cooking, food hygiene, public health, and lifestyle changes that have led to significant health improvements, including reduced cholesterol and BMI.

The church has also collaborated with entities connected to retailers and charities, facilitating food distribution, training opportunities and community engagement.

The celebration concluded with a vote of thanks and a dedicatory prayer.

SARAH LUBANGA





## Celebration of love and commitment at Ashford

On 24 May Ashford Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kent hosted a heartwarming and spiritually uplifting Renewal of Vows ceremony that brought together couples from the congregation in a beautiful celebration of love, faith and lifelong commitment, inspired by Elder Gary and his wife, the church's dedicated Family Life directors, who carefully designed the day's events with their spirited committee to reflect God's design for marriage.

From the very beginning the atmosphere was filled with warmth and unity as during Sabbath School couples shared moving testimonies about how they nurture spiritual intimacy through family devotions. In the Divine Service Pastor/Dr Chihwai preached a message titled 'GPS for Families', emphasising how God surrounds families with His protection, provision and unshakeable presence. (To hear more messages on marriage, love and family issues, tune in to Dr Chihwai's marriage podcast at [www.youtube.com/@DrMarriageSays/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@DrMarriageSays/videos).)

At 2.30pm the church was transformed into a space of celebration and nostalgia. Couples marched down the aisle side by side, their wedding photographs and years of marriage proudly displayed on screen, a beautiful visual timeline of love through the decades.

Special recognition was given to the longest and most



newlywed couples present. The couple with 54 years of marriage, and the youngest, married for just under two years, each received the gift of an encouraging and wisdom-filled book on marriage.

As the ceremony drew to a close, couples stood hand in hand to renew their vows, with tears in some eyes and joy in all hearts. There were kisses, cheers and plenty of laughter, especially when husbands surprised their wives with unexpected gifts. The day concluded with a joyous cake-cutting ceremony.

This event wasn't just a celebration of marriage – it testified of God's enduring faithfulness. Ashford Seventh-day Adventist Church has once again proved that when Christ is at the centre, love doesn't just survive – it thrives!

DR DENIAS STANFORD CHIHWAI, DISTRICT PASTOR



## Discovering hope in the heart of the city: the launch of the Cambridge Bible Discovery Centre

Something special is happening in Cambridge. Amid the cobbled streets, the hum of bicycles and the busy rhythm of university life, a quiet yet powerful movement has begun – bringing ancient truth to the modern heart.

The Cambridge Bible Discovery Centre has officially launched, with a mission to offer the people of Cambridgeshire the life-changing gift of God's word. And it all starts with a free Bible.

With the support of [www.cambridgebiblediscovery.com](http://www.cambridgebiblediscovery.com), we've begun placing Bibles directly into the hands of those who want to explore life's biggest questions. Through our 'Bible Answers Live' sessions every Thursday evening and our growing street presence in the city centre, we've seen hearts moved, questions asked, and lives touched.

Every fourth Sabbath we take to the Cambridge

Market Square with Bibles; copies of *The Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy* and *Steps to Christ*; songs; smiles; and a message of hope. Our banner, 'Discover Ancient Prophecies with Modern Relevance', stops people in their tracks. Some are curious. Others are searching. All are welcome.

One memorable moment came when a young boy, wide-eyed and excited, returned, asking us to sign it 'so I remember who gave it to me'. It was simple, pure and deeply moving.

Then there was Tom – drawn by the sound of our hymns, he paused and stayed for a deep conversation about life's purpose, the origin of our world, and where hope can be found. Tom and his partner not only took a Bible, but also accepted our invitation to join our Daniel Discovery Study, which meets every other Sabbath. Whether online or in person, these studies offer a safe, open space to explore the prophetic pages of Scripture and their relevance for today.

The Cambridge Bible Discovery Centre isn't just about handing out books: it's about building community, opening conversations, and sharing spiritual food in a city known for intellectual curiosity but increasingly hungry for spiritual truth.

We believe that every Bible given is a seed planted. Some will read quietly at home; others will join us for studies – but each Bible carries the potential to change a life.

So, whether you're walking past us in town, joining a Thursday night Q&A, or visiting our website, know that you're welcome. Come and discover the Bible. Come and discover meaning. Come and discover God.

ELDER EUGENE JAMES



## Young men stand tall for Jesus

On 7 June 2025 St Michael's Church in Stoke-on-Trent was full to capacity and filled with anticipation as family and friends had gathered to support three young men who were about to take their celebratory walk through the waters of baptism. Leon Chanengeta, Daniel Edwards and Delvin Muzuva made the congregation

smile by affirming the baptismal vows with a deep, resonating chorus of 'I do' as Elder Haroon Khan solemnly took them through each of our Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

Although Pastor Carlton Douglas is the presiding pastor of the Stoke district, this baptism generated much ministerial interest, as not only did each candidate have their own choice of pastor to baptise them, but there were also five other Seventh-day Adventist pastors and three non-Adventist pastors in attendance, along with numerous elders from different parts of the UK.

The service flowed smoothly. Prior to the local pastor's baptismal sermon, Hannah Khan engaged the congregation by singing 'When Death Was Arrested', a fitting song that explores themes of redemption, salvation and the victory of Christ over death.

Seldom do we ever need crowd control at our baptisms, but on this occasion there were so many supporting family members and friends that Pastor Douglas had to devise a strategy so that each candidate's friends and family members did not miss the joyful event they so desperately wanted to witness. This meant that at the appointed time the various friends and family groups respectively moved into the hall to watch their candidate be immersed in the baptismal pool.

The first candidate was Pastor Geoff Smith's grandson, Leon Chanengeta. The congregation were made aware that Leon was a fifth-generation Adventist who had a keen interest in Pathfinders.

Daniel Edwards was introduced by Dr Patrick Herbert, a close friend of the Edward family. Pastor Herbert highlighted that Daniel had been scrutinising his sermons on YouTube from an early age and had developed a keen interest in preaching – so much so that Daniel, even though a teenager, has been preaching in Pastor Herbert's churches for a few years.

Delvin Muzuva was introduced by Pastor Ian Philpott (Prison Ministries Director for the North England Conference). He had the privilege of studying with Delvin some years ago, and was overjoyed when he was requested to baptise Delvin.

This was such a momentous moment in the lives of these young men. The excitement was shared by many of the guests. However, Pastor Herbert scrutinised the family and friends who had come to witness the baptism of Daniel Edwards and couldn't help noticing a bunch of teenage boys along with two teenage girls. Pastor Herbert felt compelled to quiz Daniel about his well-wishers. Daniel, who is known for being somewhat shy and reserved, stated that thirteen teenage boys and two teenage girls from his class at Haberdashers' Adams Grammar School in Newport had come to his baptism! Pastor Herbert gave them special thanks for being present, and all would agree that this added to the special nature of this service.

The parents of each of these candidates were truly elated that their sons had taken their stand for Jesus Christ. We pray that Leon, Daniel and Delvin will continue to be witnesses for Jesus Christ as they continue their Christian journey.

*P. A. HERBERT*

## Bristol baptism

Members from across the Bristol district of Seventh-day Adventist churches came together on Saturday 7 June 2025 to witness the baptism of Michael Yeboah (17) and Raphael Owusu Poku (19). Both young people have grown up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and attended Bristol Central Church since they relocated from Italy.

They were immersed by Pastor Curtis Samuel, who commented that 'it has been a pleasure to watch these young men grow and develop and make the decision to follow Jesus through baptism.'

*COMMUNICATIONS TEAM*





## Stanborough Primary shines bright: exciting new preschool launch and glowing Ofsted praise!

Watford's Stanborough Primary School, part of our Adventist family of schools, is thrilled to announce a season of growth and recognition. Known for its strong Christian values and nurturing ethos, the school is expanding its Early Years offerings following outstanding feedback from our recent Ofsted inspection, which rated us as **Good** with **Outstanding** behaviour and attitudes as well as **Outstanding** personal development.

**Ofsted praise:** 'warm, welcoming and inclusive'

During their latest visit, Ofsted inspectors commended Stanborough for fostering a 'warm and welcoming environment' where 'pupils feel valued and cared for'. The report highlights our strong safeguarding culture, high standards of behaviour, and an engaging curriculum rooted in a values-led approach that reflects our Christian foundation and belief in each child's God-given potential to let their light shine (Matthew 5:16).

Key highlights from the Ofsted report include:

- **Strong subject knowledge:** Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of their subjects.
- **Genuine care:** There is a notable commitment to the wellbeing and academic progress of every child.
- **Individual attention:** The school ensures that 'every child is known, nurtured and supported to thrive'.

### A beautiful beginning: preschool & nursery now open

This September, we are excited to launch our brand-new preschool provision for 2-year-olds, complementing our established nursery class.

- **30-hour funded places** for eligible families
- **15-hour places** with an option to 'top up'
- A focus on **early development** and **school readiness**
- **Play-based learning** with engaging structured routines
- **Warm, qualified staff** passionate about young learners
- A rich balance of **indoor learning** and **outdoor exploration**

With small group sizes and a family-style atmosphere, Stanborough Primary's Early Years setting provides a joyful and stimulating environment where curiosity is encouraged and children grow in both faith and confidence. Our youngest learners are gently introduced to the wonders of God's world through stories, songs and loving care that reflects His love.

**Stanborough Primary School**

# PRE SCHOOL ADMISSION

**Why choose us?**

**We are thrilled to announce the opening of our brand new, nurturing and stimulating provision for 2 year olds.**

- ✓ Warm and supportive staff
- ✓ Family feel
- ✓ Engaging routines
- ✓ Early development focus
- ✓ Outdoor exploration
- ✓ Play-based learning

Our experienced team is ready to welcome your little ones into a safe, caring, and fun learning environment designed to support early development and spark curiosity. Spaces are limited, so don't miss out! Contact us today to book a visit.

Our Website: [www.stanboroughprimary.org.uk](http://www.stanboroughprimary.org.uk)

Our Contact: 01923 673291

Follow Us: @StanboroughPrimarySchool

### Admissions open across all year groups

In addition to our expanding Early Years department, Stanborough Primary continues to offer places from Reception to Year 6, providing:

- Excellent **academic standards**
- Strong **pastoral care**
- A vibrant school community centred on **Christian values**
- **Leadership opportunities** and **creative enrichment**

100% of children have received their first-choice secondary school option for two consecutive years when sitting entrance exams or 11+ exams.

Whether you're seeking a nurturing start for your 2-year-old or a Christ-centred primary school for an older child, Stanborough Primary School is a place where children are known by name, grow in grace, and are well prepared for life while being rooted in faith and guided by love.

**Book a personalised visit or apply today!**

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**2025 Welsh Mission Session Notification**

Notice is hereby given that the Triennial Session of the Welsh Mission of Seventh-day Adventists will take place at the:

**Holiday Inn, The Coldra, Newport, NP18 2YG**  
on Sunday 28 September 2025.

Delegates will receive documentation in advance of the session.

PASTOR MAX MCKENZIE-COOK (EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, WELSH MISSION)


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## One church, many voices: embracing diversity at the heart of Christianity

Christianity is most powerful when it embraces diversity. At Pentecost, people from every nation under heaven heard the Gospel in their own languages. From the start, the message of Christ was meant to cross every boundary of culture, language and tradition.



Today the UK is one of the most diverse nations in Europe. More than 18% of our population are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and in many of our cities more than 300 languages are spoken. Our communities are multicultural, multilingual, multigenerational. The question is: do our churches reflect this same richness?

In many faith communities, diversity is seen as an add-on. But the Bible teaches that the church is one body with many parts. Our congregations should reflect this. We must develop leaders from every background to bring perspectives that can renew our theology, enrich our worship and strengthen our mission. Are our services welcoming to all generations and cultures? Are our ministries culturally intelligent? These questions help us become Christlike communities.

At One Vision, we have partnered with many agencies and trained people to speak the languages and understand the cultures of those often excluded from care. We have created spaces for intergenerational dialogue, faith-based volunteering and frontline outreach. We partner with public institutions to make culturally intelligent engagement part of mainstream service delivery.

We use a simple model we call The Light Wheel to visualise a thriving church. At the centre is living faith, surrounded by emotional and mental wellbeing, strong relationships, social connection, empowerment, health and resources. When churches nurture these areas, they become places of healing, dignity and transformation.

Many are seeking justice, belonging and purpose. People are drawn to communities that offer space to grow. A church that embraces diversity becomes a living testimony of the Gospel. When every voice is heard, the Gospel becomes the beautiful chorus it was always meant to be.

Diversity is not a challenge, but a gift.

ENOCH KANAGARAJ BEM

## Adventist member contributes to National Cancer Plan shaping the next decade of care

Enoch Kanagaraj BEM, a devoted Seventh-day Adventist and founder & CEO of the One Vision charity, was recently invited to participate in the national consultation event shaping England's new 10-Year National Cancer Plan. Organised by Macmillan Cancer Support in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, the event gathered key voices from different sectors to influence the future of cancer care and tackle persistent health inequalities.

Representing both the British Union Conference and the wider faith and voluntary sector, Enoch highlighted the critical role that faith communities play in addressing cancer disparities. 'It was a privilege to bring the voice of our church and our communities to this important national platform,' said Enoch. 'Our collaboration with Macmillan has already demonstrated the impact we can have when faith and health come together.'

It was also a privilege to attend alongside inspiring voices like Gemma Peters, Chief Executive of Macmillan, and her brilliant leadership team, whose dedication to inclusive care and community engagement was evident throughout the consultation.

The National Cancer Plan is a key component of the Government's wider 10-Year Health Plan, which seeks to move the NHS from illness to prevention, from the hospital to the community, and from analogue communication to digital communication. This vision for health reform aligns closely with the Adventist Church's longstanding commitment to holistic wellbeing and preventative care.

The consultation also addressed the specific needs of younger patients through the Children and Young People's (CYP) Cancer Taskforce, launched in February 2025. The taskforce is working to improve outcomes and patient experience for children and young people with cancer, and its recommendations will be incorporated into the final National Cancer Plan. One Vision welcomed this initiative, having seen the value of engaging families early in culturally appropriate ways.

Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference, expressed his support and appreciation for this contribution, stating: 'We are incredibly proud of Enoch's work and his invitation to be part of such a significant national conversation. His contribution reflects our Adventist values of health, service and outreach. It is encouraging to see the role of faith communities recognised in shaping inclusive and equitable healthcare for all.'

This involvement marks a continued commitment by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be an active voice in promoting holistic wellbeing, social justice and public health reform in the UK and beyond.

ENOCH KANAGARAJ BEM





## Yorkshire churches organise mental health programme

Three Adventist churches in the North England Conference conducted a week-long educational programme called 'Hope for Mental Health' that focused on addressing mental health challenges, a growing concern within the county and the country at large.

The Leeds, Scarborough and York churches organised the collaborative Mental Health Education programme from 4 to 10 May, facilitated by the speaker, Chaplain Greg Davids. The initiative engaged approximately 150 participants through online platforms, with more than 200 individuals attending in person on the final day for practical guidance on mental wellbeing.

'We've observed how isolation affects mental health in our communities, and we aim not only to share the Gospel, but also to provide comfort and support,' stated Pastor Fredrick Nti-Mensah, who was the host and senior pastor for the district. The programme highlighted the connection between relationships and mental wellness, which is particularly pertinent after recent years of social disconnection, offering a pathway for those affected.

Each session addressed various aspects of the impact of friendships on mental health, with Chaplain Davids presenting evidence-based approaches and incorporating spiritual principles. The workshops included interactive exercises designed to help participants assess their friendship circles and establish healthier relationship boundaries.

The programme concluded on Saturday 10 May with a presentation connecting mental health principles to Christ's role as a healing friend who provides comfort for mental distress. 'Jesus demonstrated the perfect friendship model, one that heals our mental well-being,' explained Chaplain Davids, whose closing sermon highlighted biblical examples of Christ's compassion and how faith in Him can reduce anxiety and emotional burdens.

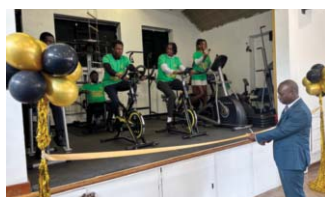
After the programme, such attendees as Wendy Ansah from Leeds New Generation shared that the programme had transformed their perspective: 'This week has given me practical tools to nurture positive relationships.' Others found the message inspiring and deeply moving, with many sharing personal stories of finding peace through their relationship with Christ. This initiative not only strengthened community ties, but also emphasised the church's commitment to holistic well-being by blending mental health education with spiritual encouragement.

ALEXANDER OWUSU ANSAH



## Welling Centre of Influence

There was delight and anticipation on 24 May 2025 as Welling Church Hall was officially dedicated as a centre of influence. Months of planning by the passionate and committed Personal Ministries Department had preceded this moment, led by Brother Tony Furrs in collaboration with Pastor Habib and directors of the South England Conference (SEC). Beyond the scope of the PM team, church members had worked tirelessly to install the gymnasium. The team would like to extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed.



In attendance for this memorable occasion were the SEC President, Dr Kirk Thomas; Executive Secretary, Pastor Nathan Stickland; and Safeguarding Director, Judy Clements. Dr Thomas's powerful keynote message, 'Breaking Down Barriers', challenged us to examine our prejudices. 'The Centre of Influence is about restoration,' he said. 'Our remit is to love and see others through the eyes of Jesus.'

Thus inspired, we moved from the church to the Centre of Influence with joyful singing, led by the praise team and musicians. Pastor Habib welcomed everyone, and Dr Thomas offered introductory remarks. Pastor Stickland led out in the prayers of dedication. He prayed that the Holy Spirit would fill the centre, that the community would know that their help comes from the Lord, and that all who enter would be restored physically, mentally and spiritually. He also prayed for protection for every individual and for the building itself.

Then came the moment we had all been waiting for: the cutting of the ribbon! The scissors, decorated in black and gold, were handed to the President. With a beaming smile and a few snips, the ribbon was cut.

The curtains of the stage were drawn back, revealing the gymnasium and a group of enthusiastic youths ready to spring into action. Voices rang out with laughter and cheer, and praise was lifted to our God. This was indeed a wonderful moment, and the service of dedication concluded as we sang of the wondrous love of Jesus.

LESLIAN ELLIS

## Messenger

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Aug 1	8.48	9.01	8.58	9.20	9.24
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15	8.23	8.35	8.31	8.49	8.55
22	8.08	8.21	8.16	8.32	8.39
29	7.53	8.05	8.00	8.14	8.22





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