

Reading West invests!

Hannah Boakye and Elliott Aboagye

On Saturday 30 December 2017, more than 60 Adventurers and Pathfinders were awarded with certificates and honours of achievement for their dedication and commitment throughout the year.

This rounded off a successful year for the church in which many of its youth were baptised and their church building was dedicated to God.

The service began with the procession of Pathfinders, leaders and the colour party escorted by the club's drum corps.

In attendance was the Area 5 Pathfinder co-ordinator, Sophia Nicholls, who presented the awards, as well as rallying club members with the slogan, 'Pathfinders today, leaders tomorrow', the theme of the SEC Camporee in 2013. She said: 'I felt blessed to be at Reading West's Pathfinders Day as an Area 5 co-ordinator. Being involved in the programme was inspiring, and demonstrated the potential of its youth.'

During the service there were displays of knot tying and first aid. Special musical items were performed by Lee Sargeant and Chris Onditi, and the church's children's choir.

Edsel Gore, the club's leader, said: 'To God be the glory, it was a blessed year. When we work together in faith things happen!'

The theme for the day was 'Your brother's keeper', with three sermonettes preached by Guide-age students. Each sermon reinforced the message that it is our responsibility to take care of one another by trying to 'do our honest part', as the Pathfinder law instructs.

The service was followed by an afternoon programme, led by Sophia Nicholls, which focused on the values of being a Pathfinder. The congregation also learnt about the history of Pathfinders, and the meaning behind the flags, with a fun quiz afterwards to test their knowledge.

The day was not only spiritually uplifting, but also a proud day for the church, seeing their young people being awarded for their hard work.

We pray that Reading West will see many more such events!



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How healthy are you? Part 2b – the HEALTHY format

Exercise

Tuesday 13 February 2018 saw Channel 4 air its first episode of *Joe Wicks – The Body Coach*,¹ in which show participants commit to ninety days of a strict exercise regime and healthy eating. The results? Significant weight loss and a transformed body.

One exercise demonstrated on the show was the HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) workout, which alternates between short, intense bursts of activity and a period of less-intense activity or rest (for example, repeated cycles of running as fast as you can for 1 minute and then walking for 2 minutes).

HIIT might reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. In a meta-analysis of 50 studies, published in *Obesity Reviews*, Charlotte Jelliman and her colleagues at the University of Leicester demonstrated that blood glucose is lower following HIIT than it is following normal continuous exercise or no exercise at all.²

'What . . . HIIT does very well is basically prevent the accumulation or worsening of insulin resistance, and therefore [it] is a very good way of preventing type 2 diabetes,' says Jelliman. 'It helps keep the blood glucose within a healthy range.'

If HIIT is not suitable for you, then the Department of Health has outlined specific exercises for age and gender: see <https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/physical-activity-guidelines-for-adults.aspx>.

At two six-day health retreats last year, we undertook aerobics for 30 minutes each morning; HIIT workouts led by Fitness & Lifestyle Coach Eugenie Burton; and Nordic walking after lunch, led by Fitness Instructor Joni Blackwood, who also engaged us in stretching exercises each evening. Each attendee lost some weight and still did some of the exercises six months later.

The NHS have produced some useful videos which help you keep engaged in a regular exercise programme.³ Some examples include:

- The fitness studio – video workouts to help you exercise from the comfort of your home
- 10-minute workouts – a choice of six 10-minute home workouts
- Get active your way – ideas for busy mums and dads, families, young people, office workers and older adults to build activity into their life
- Gym-free workouts – fun and equipment-free workouts to improve cardiovascular health, strength and general fitness

Good health!

¹<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/joe-wicks-the-body-coach>

²<https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/scicurious/high-intensity-interval-training-has-great-gains-%E2%80%94-and-pain>

³<https://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Fitness/Pages/Fitnesshome.aspx>



Our failure is God's opportunity

Sir Winston Churchill is credited with the interesting line, 'Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.' The thought certainly has a Churchillian resonance to it and could be used to describe that great leader's own life.

There are business leaders who would say the same, such as Elon Musk, whose list of failures runs a close second only to his list of impressive successes!¹ Musk? You're not sure who he is? He's the bloke who recently sent his red 2008 Tesla Roadster into space on what is now 'the most powerful rocket in operation, the Falcon Heavy', built, incidentally, by his own company, SpaceX.²

Musk and Churchill are by no means the only ones to have had repeated failures along the road to success. Do any of these names ring a bell?

Walt Disney was fired from a newspaper for "not being creative enough" and founded a film studio that went bankrupt before moving to Los Angeles with just \$40. Jeff Bezos could become the richest person in the world soon,[*] but admits, "I've made billions of dollars of failures at Amazon.com." Steve Jobs was famously ousted from Apple in 1985 and later said of that time, "I was a very public failure." Steven Spielberg was rejected from the University of Southern California's film school twice, and Oprah Winfrey was fired from her first television job as an anchor.³

It's not the same

What's true for business, however, may not be as true for politicians or those in government. At the end of 2017 we had Sir Michael Fallon and Damian Green resign from their important cabinet positions over mistakes they had made. They went quietly from office, without fuss or public complaint, but no doubt remorseful about the failures that led to their political downfall.

We see something similar happening to the world's aid organisations, where donors, the governments of recipient countries, and now even the staff of Save the Children are demanding that things should change. They are unwilling to tolerate the moral failure that appears to have gained a 'toehold' in this sector.⁴

Then there's the Church

Yes, amid all of this you then find the Church – a puzzling place, an anomaly: 'something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected'.⁵ Why? For the simple reason that the Church (generally) promotes the highest possible moral standards, but gratefully accepts those who come nowhere near reaching them! Put frankly, the Church is a haven for 'failures'. And if you find that hard to agree with, just read through the gospels and take note of the people they describe.

People say that a man 'is known by the company he keeps'. If that is so, what does it reveal about Jesus? Notice what happened during a meal at Matthew the tax collector's house:

'A large number of tax collectors and other outcasts were following Jesus, and many of them joined him and his disciples at the table. Some teachers of the Law, who were Pharisees, saw that Jesus was eating with these outcasts and tax collectors, so they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such people?"'

Jesus heard them and answered, "People who are well do not need a doctor, but only those who are sick. I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts."⁶ (Mark 2:15-17, GNB.)

What does it reveal? That Jesus had a particular interest in society's so-called 'failures', and that they were especially receptive to His teachings. We could illustrate this from the lives of numerous of His NT contemporaries, but let's stick to one: Peter.

He was a leader

We meet him in the 'boardroom' where Jesus has gathered His disciples for a final meeting (Matthew 26:17-30). All is prepared for the customary washing of feet, except that there is no servant to carry out the duty,

and none among the disciples are willing either. Jesus then gets on with it Himself. That is, until Peter flatly refuses to co-operate: 'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.' (John 13:8, NIV-UK.)

There you have it: Peter obstinately denying His Master the right to carry out His ministry! What was going through Jesus' mind: 'Is this the same man who told Me: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16, NIV-UK)?'

Then, somewhere between the 'boardroom' and Gethsemane, Jesus speaks plainly about His impending arrest and the fact that the disciples would all abandon Him: to which Peter responds, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' (Matthew 26:35, NIV-UK.)

Then, with such loyal sentiments only a few hours old, Jesus sees Peter undo everything with a savage slash of his sword! (John 18:10.) Had he already forgotten that core value of the Kingdom: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Matthew 5:9, NIV-UK)?

Finally, and prophetically, during the subsequent trial, Peter denies his support for Jesus three times, driving home his point with a selection of oaths and curses! (Matthew 26:69-75.) Peter had failed completely and he fled the scene!

Well, had he failed a British prime minister, Peter would have been asked to promptly present his letter of resignation at No. 10, and leave by the back door! Were he to have failed President Trump it would have been done and dusted via a terse early-morning tweet: 'You're out. Get lost. And this is not fake news!'

But our Master is in the business of rehabilitating failures, and, when they met some weeks later on the shores of Galilee, Jesus took a risk and fully reinstated him! (John 21:15-19.)

But why?

The answer is simple: because that is what grace does. That is the nature of grace – the nature of God. Let's never forget that our frail and failing humanity will always be God's opportunity to prove the power of His grace!

'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.' (2 Corinthians 4:7, NIV-UK.)

*He already has. (See <http://time.com/money/4746795/richest-people-in-the-world/>)

¹<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-many-failures-of-elon-musk-captured-in-one-giant-infographic-2017-05-24>

²<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/02/tesla-elon-musk-mars-spacex-asteroid-belt/552719/>

³<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-many-failures-of-elon-musk-captured-in-one-giant-infographic-2017-05-24>

⁴<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/save-the-children-staff-demand-removal-of-global-chairman-sir-alan-parker-sc6vlnzld>

⁵<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/anomaly>

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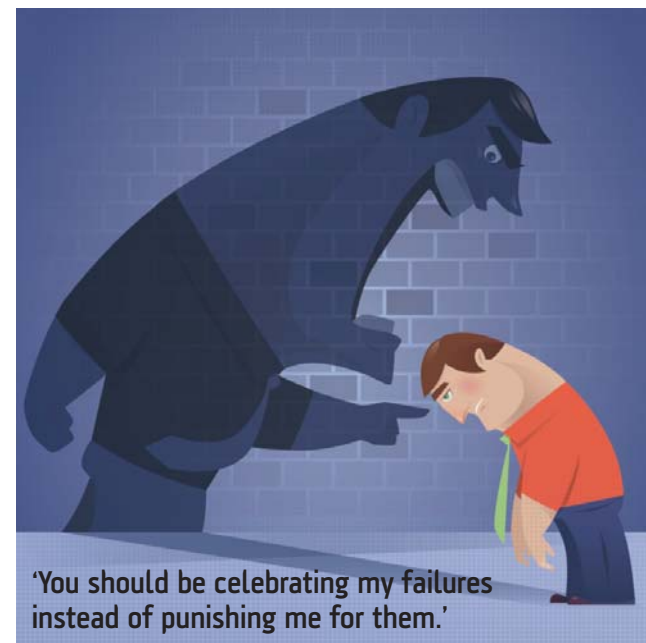
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EVANGELISM EVERYWHERE

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'Some water from our list, Sir?'

by Stephen Holden

The ADRA site tells us that some 780 million people around the world lack access to clean water, and that ADRA have been in action for 30 years in this field, installing filters that clean contaminated water, digging wells and installing water pipes where water is available yet inaccessible.

Clean water is the key to life on earth, arguably the most essential commodity on the planet.

Over a decade ago *The Telegraph* ran a report on the cost and availability of the bottled water on offer at that time in one of London's most prestigious hotels: Claridge's.

The 'water list' was being offered to guests alongside the 'wine list' when dining in, and it had some 30 different varieties listed from nearly as many different countries around the world.

There was bottled water from Norway, Patagonia, New Zealand and Hawaii, along with advice given as to which was best suited to complement any particular meal. Finé, artesian water from Japan, for instance, was said to be the perfect companion to sushi or caviar, while Waiwera water from a thermal resort which bears its name in New Zealand, having a low

mineral content, was reputedly best with grilled or fried food!

For those suffering from exhaustion or overcoming jet lag, OGO spring water from Tilburg (Holland) was recommended, as it apparently contained thirty-five times more oxygen than regular water, which would help revitalise any discerning customer who could afford it.

The most expensive bottle listed back then was volcanic spring water from Tai Tapu (New Zealand), at an eye-watering £21 for a small 420ml bottle. Apparently its 'smooth sensation on the palate' had been acquired during its journey from its source at the bottom of an extinct volcano through 200 metres of volcanic rock.

Another brand on this comprehensive listing was '10 Thousand BC', which was reputedly bottled from melted ice from a glacier thousands of years old.

Then there was Mahalo, deep sea water from Kailua-Kona (Hawaii), which was originally a freshwater iceberg, we were told, that melted long ago and the water sank to the ocean floor because of its difference in temperature and salinity. It was apparently pumped to the surface

through a 1,000-metre pipeline and, presumably, its exorbitant price reflected the fact that stocks were somewhat limited.

The report concluded by stating that among all the grandeur of Claridge's there was one additional option listed, which was still completely free – a glass of old-fashioned London tap water, which, it suggested, had never been better!

Around the same time as this report appeared, my wife, Liz, had received a call from Anglian Water, who wanted to arrange a time for our domestic supply to be switched off in order to replace the old existing water meter.

Our quarterly bills had been on the decline for a while, with a healthy credit balance developing on our direct debit account. I had for some time attributed this to my wife's frugal housekeeping measures; but then a more acute reduction had sparked a keen interest from the supplier to investigate the functionality of their old unit. It seemed to have contracted a rare condition – some 'numerical virus' that resulted in it ceasing to record the correct volume of water going through it.

We had been given prior notification in writing of this anomaly and of the intended action necessary on their part to rectify the fault. Within 10 minutes of the engineer alerting us to his arrival the dysfunctional unit had been removed and replaced by a more reliable phase 2 model, which recorded more faithfully and allowed the utility company to invoice more liberally once again.

In John 4 we have the account of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman. We picture Jesus travelling through Samaria and stopping to rest on a particularly hot day at a well near the little town of Sychar, located on land originally owned by Jacob.

A tired Jesus had sat down on the little stone wall around the well. As He sat there the Samaritan woman came to draw water and Jesus engaged her in conversation, asking her for a drink – you're familiar with the account, I'm sure.

The Samaritan woman spoke of the virtues of the well dug for them by their ancestor Jacob and the good water it provided. Jesus' response was along these lines (see John 4): 'The water from this well may be good water, but it's like all other water – after you drink it you'll get thirsty again. Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst again. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

Eternal, life-giving water – the most essential commodity; the key to life beyond this planet – doesn't come dispensed through an unreliable meter that records our usage and continually revises the cost of supply. Nor does it come bottled with an exotic label and dubious claims as to its source and properties. It comes to us from a single source, Jesus Himself, and is freely available to all at our point of need.

All we are required to do is be convicted of our personal need of it – accept it by faith – then drink and be refreshed by it and stimulated into action for the One who freely gives it.



Countering extremism and the 'temper of the times'

by Brighton G. Kavaloh (retired pastor)

From the tribe of Issachar there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives – all men who understood *the temper of the times* and knew the best course for Israel to take.' 1 Chron. 12:32 (TLB, italics supplied).

In September 2017 the Government launched its recruitment process to appoint a lead commissioner to head up the Commission for Countering Extremism. The Commission's purpose will be to identify extremism and to advise the Government on measures designed to tackle radicalisation and extremism in all its forms.

This decision follows the failure of the Government to pass its proposed legislation in HM Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill in 2015 and 2016. The key features of the bill were that there would be a requirement to register out-of-school education settings (such as children's Sabbath schools, vacation Bible schools, and home schools) with the authorities, so that they could be inspected by Ofsted and sanctioned in cases where they fail to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in their care.

The counter-extremism strategy has defined extremism as 'the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'. The problem with this definition is that no apparent difference is being made between the treatment of violent and non-violent extremism, which has alarmed many faith groups.

Furthermore, the Government's two-pronged approach to dealing with this issue, namely regulating activities in out-of-school education settings, while at the same time facilitating integration through the promotion of fundamental British values, could directly infringe on religious liberty.

The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, equality, freedom

of speech, mutual respect, tolerance, and the understanding of different faiths and beliefs are, by and large, concepts we also embrace as law-abiding citizens.

However, the Casey Review, which is being used to inform the strategy on integration by the Department for Communities and Local Government, also includes 'equality' among the fundamental British values. The standard for equality is set out in the Equality Act 2010. This Act effectively combines all the anti-discrimination legislation in one statute, covering the protected categories of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sex and sexual orientation – but it does not effectively address situations where there may be a clash of interests between the protected groups.

Christians have been given a commission to share the Gospel, the good news of salvation to be found in Christ alone, but in doing so they risk falling foul of the law and being labelled as bigots or 'strait-laced extremists' by people who do not share these beliefs. All these issues collide when we consider the challenges that the phenomenon of transgenderism presents to the church. Under this new regime it is expected that children should be taught about different lifestyles, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender lifestyles, and if the schools fail to meet the expected standards they may incur sanctions which could include closing the school or preventing its teachers from working with children in the future.

Equally concerning is the proposal that, under the new rules, all public office holders would be required to take an oath to uphold the fundamental British values. Increasingly, our church members are having to confront these issues in their own lives, at home, at work, and in the church, and there is a clear need for a church

policy and guidelines based on fundamental biblical principles to help them as they do so.

Furthermore, while issues such as transgenderism present significant challenges, they also present opportunities for us to witness for the truth. The consultation on government proposals to de-medicalise the gender recognition process is imminent, and women's groups, concerned about the violation of women-only spaces by men

claiming to be women, are certain to be actively engaged in the process.

In *Testimonies* vol. 5, page 714, Ellen White counsels us that 'we are not doing the will of God if we sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience'. Benson's commentary on 1 Chronicles 12:32 observes that the children of Issachar 'understood public affairs, the temper of the nation, and the tendencies of the present events. And they showed their wisdom at this time.'

Like the children of Issachar, are we ready as an Advent movement, both individually and collectively, to meet this challenge?

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'Good grief' in the church

by Pastor Andrew Rashford-Hewitt

How to encourage members who have lost a loved one to experience good grief – a healthy process of grief that leads to healing, hope and future functioning for the Master.

Most people will at some point experience grief and loss following the death of a loved one or dear friend. When this happens our usual response as a church family is to pray for the person, send a card or text message, give them a phone call or visit them.

Then at the funeral we caringly and respectfully talk about how we knew the person, how loved they were and how much we shall miss them, trying hard to enter into the pain of the loss of the family and support them sympathetically and empathetically.

Then, following the funeral, we might experience those awkward moments when we meet the bereaved member but really don't know what more to say.

Avoidance can be painful

One church brother told me that, following his loss, he sensed that certain people were avoiding him at church. He noticed that they seemed to make a beeline in the

other direction, towards the toilet or the kitchen, when he appeared. He recognised that it could have been totally coincidental, but somehow he didn't think so. I suppose that sometimes it may seem easier for us to avoid a potentially awkward conversation with someone who is recently bereaved. Sadly, avoiding those who have been bereaved, whether intentionally, accidentally or unintentionally, can be rather painful for those who are grieving.

Talking about death and bereavement doesn't come easily for anyone!

The truth is, talking about bereavement doesn't come easily for anyone, but isn't it a skill we should all develop? Well, you may ask, isn't it enough just to encourage the bereaved in the blessed hope? And isn't that what we do? Often, once we have heard that the deceased person was a Seventh-day Adventist, we say, 'Well thank God for the

blessed hope!' – as if to say that because they were a believer and because of the 'blessed hope' in the soon return of Jesus there is no need to be sad or to grieve, so cheer up and move on.

Is it just possible that our reference to the 'blessed hope' may be made because we feel uncomfortable talking about death and loss, and because we don't really know what to say? Or is it because we assume that it is our job to make the person feel better and ourselves feel less uncomfortable? Sadly, when we do this we reinforce a silent message – the message being to 'ignore or deny the feelings associated with grief and loss'.

Opening a conversation about a deceased loved one helps

Now, I know that feeling uncomfortable, speechless and awkward is something that we would rather not experience, but, to use a well-known expression, 'It is what it is'; it is just that – uncomfortable. However, if we are

willing to be patient and courageous, we can weather the discomfort those encounters bring and so become a source of comfort to the bereaved.

For example, being open and honest, we could say to the bereaved church member or neighbour, 'I really don't know what to say that would be a source of comfort for you right now, but tell me, what do you miss most about your loved one?' Alternatively, we could say, 'I really have no idea how you might be feeling; please tell me, if you can, what does it feel like to come to church without your loved one being here any more?' Being able to hold a conversation about the deceased person is likely to come as a breath of fresh air to a bereaved person who feels they are being stifled by their grief and loss, simply because they feel that they are not expected to talk about their lost loved one.

Creating an opportunity for persons to talk about their experience of grief helps the grieving recover in a more holistic way. During my ministry I have arranged a series of sessions about journeying through grief – something that members have appreciated, having felt that they at last had a safe space and place to talk about their journey of grief through the 'valley of the shadow of death' (Psalm 23:4, KJV).

Grief doesn't only occur after someone has died

However, we have to accept that grief doesn't only arise after someone has died. Grief comes following the loss of something significant to one's sense of identity, purpose, security and well-being. Therefore, one may experience grief following a regrettable separation or divorce; the unexpected loss of a job or a church position; the tragic loss of a limb, bodily function or ability; the loss of certain friendships; or the loss of certain life aspirations and hopes. Sadly, in one of my pastoral districts many years ago, I didn't realise that grief was associated with marital breakdown. Had I understood that back then, I am sure my interventions would have been markedly different towards those who experienced divorce or separation. You see, grief is an

inevitable part of life, a difficult part of life for everyone involved. But there are things that can be done to help the process, perhaps the first of which is to accept that grief will come.

To grieve or not to grieve

Now, I am not suggesting that because grief is a normal part of life we should do nothing about it; but what I am saying is that we need to recognise that grieving is an important part of the road to recovery and give persons the space to grieve and even help them along that journey. For let's remember what the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NIV-UK): 'Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope' – which means that Christians will grieve, but not as unbelievers do. It means that their sorrow or grief will not be hopeless, as is that of those without the hope of the resurrection. Therefore, if we try to encourage someone to journey through their grief, we enable them to avoid repressed grief, which can lead to depression and a multitude of other problems that are likely to be seen in the family life or in the poor functioning of the individual.

Men and grief

The story is told of a man who was processing the loss of a family member. At one point he broke down with a flood of tears, but no sooner had this happened than he sniffed as if he was trying to sniff the tears back, saying, 'I can't keep crying; what if my children were to see me now?' Then one of his friends who was comforting him said reinforcingly, 'That's right, man, you mustn't let your children see you like this!'

As I reflect on this story – and you may have experienced something similar – it becomes clear to me that the mantra that 'men don't cry' is deeply ingrained in the outlook of men across many cultures. Sadly, this mantra is all too often the default position of most men, which leads to the assumption and expectation by many women that men simply don't show their emotions.

Men grieve differently

It is important to note, however,

that men generally tend to grieve differently than do women. Some men may not wish to cry as a way of expressing their grief. Some men will try to occupy themselves with activity as a way to process the grief by not directly thinking about it. Others might show their grief through aggression or being combative in their dealings with others. Yet other men may become withdrawn and quiet, while other men may become emotional and very tearful. However, the crucial point to bear in mind is that, while the expression of the grief may differ, it is important to encourage men to come to terms with their feelings – grief, loss, loneliness, sadness, hurt, and even anger – as appropriately as possible.

This is not an easy task for most men, who have grown up with the dilemma of having feelings but not feeling free to show them. This is made worse by the fact that many men don't understand or even own their true feelings, which are just as significant a part of their psyche as is their gender.

This has become clear to me in my work with men. Take this example of a man who lost his young wife to a certain illness: following the loss he sank into depression, which is totally understandable, and became very withdrawn. As we met up from time to time, it slowly emerged that his underlying feeling was that he felt completely lost without his beloved darling wife. With this in mind we were able to spend time talking about that feeling of being lost and how that sense of lostness was influencing his life and his moods.

In another situation the man had lost his much-loved and only sister to a heart condition. Having ignored pleas to go to the doctor, she suffered a heart attack that later proved fatal. Following the loss he threw himself into his work, withdrew from his family and avoided social activities. At times there were flashpoints during which his conversational style became aggressive. As we spent time together he shared how he was feeling angry – towards his sister for not having gone to get checked; towards everyone in general; even towards God for not healing her.

As we identified the anger we

explored how he could own and validate that anger and not feel guilty for being angry. We explored how he could own those feelings and then find ways to express that anger in more helpful ways, such as resuming his sporting activities of jogging and working out at the gym as a release for those pent-up feelings. Over time his anger abated.

Men grieve far more than they are willing to show or to discuss

You see, the truth is that men grieve far more than they are willing to show or discuss, but often we assume that men don't really grieve because we don't see them grieving in the way society or our church might expect them to.

The reality that men grieve in very significant and sometimes painful ways is indicated by Mark Mercer in his book, *What Women Should Know About Male Grief*. The truth is that all who have suffered a loss grieve, and will grieve differently. What is important is how to encourage the grieving process in such a way that it will lead to a wholesome, Holy Spirit-anointed healing for each person, remaining alert to the sometimes less obvious ways this may happen among men. To this end, the book, *The Way Men Heal*, written by Tom Golden, offers some meaningful insights for those working in men's ministry and emphasises the need to be intentional in addressing the needs and feelings that men encounter as they journey through bereavement.

Helping men, women and young people to grieve

Helping men, women and young people deal with grief is by no means easy, but it is one of the best acts of support that we could ever offer to those who may be experiencing the pain caused by any form of significant loss or grief.

May the Holy Spirit work through our wise and sensitive approaches to the relief of grief – especially among the men and boys of our church.

Should you be more interested in this topic, please feel free to contact the writer at: a.r-h@hotmail.co.uk.

Official statement

There has been a lot of media attention regarding allegations of abuse committed by UK charity workers. Many have asked, 'What about our ADRA-UK?' Below is the response of ADRA-UK to those events in an attempt to be transparent and provide information.

ADRA-UK policies safeguard against exploitation

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is an independent Christian humanitarian agency. It follows the ethos of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and was established for the specific purposes of individual and community development, and disaster relief. ADRA fulfils this primary directive of its charter without regard to race, gender, or political or religious affiliation.

The values that shaped the agency are the traditional Christian values regarding the potential of each individual to reflect the compassionate image of God; the dignity that is inherent in every person; and the importance of quality in human life. The safeguarding of ADRA's beneficiaries and staff is of the utmost importance to the organisation.

While there are no guarantees that our church background will prevent the exploitation of children, women or other vulnerable groups in our projects, we are continuously monitoring our performance and keep the well-being of all our beneficiaries in focus. We have comprehensive child, vulnerable adult and whistle-blower policies in place, and are reviewing these policies and their implementation once again following recent reports of inappropriate behaviour by some employed in other parts of the charity sector.

ADRA-UK does not employ UK staff for overseas projects. Staff working in these overseas projects are employed by our local, national ADRA offices. Each of these offices has safeguarding policies in place which help to protect against inappropriate behaviour, exploitation, etc.

ADRA-UK is a registered charity in England and Wales, in Scotland and on the Isle of Man, and is a licensed member of the ADRA global network, which is active in around 130 countries.



... at the funeral we caringly and respectfully talk about how we knew the person, how loved they were and how much we shall miss them, trying hard to enter into the pain of the loss of the family and support them sympathetically and empathetically.

The corpse of compassion

Trust and integrity in an age of scepticism

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau,
ADRA-UK Development Education Officer

She sat at the side of the road outside Euston station, in the heart of London, as the winds of the early January afternoon ripped through her thin clothing. The sign next to her read, 'Please help me!' Those who walked past ignored her, or looked at her momentarily and then deliberately averted their eyes to gaze at the ancient buildings that had witnessed many years of change, in an effort not to make eye contact or feel any guilt at their apathy.

Many of those who hurried by carried small backpacks with a large letter 'C' that almost seemed to stain the white leather of the cases. Most scampered away without a second glance. Their attention was focused on the routine aspects of their lives, the business of work, the challenges of the work/life balance, the mundanity of life.

As she watched the crowds – some in their fancy clothes and their polished shoes, others in workmen's attire or the casual dress of the tourists – she felt alone and isolated, despite the multitudes that raced past her.

There were those with backpacks who stopped to barter with her. Some wanted selfies with her. They urged her to smile, and they smiled too, but once the camera was off they left without an acknowledgement. Some gave her their 'small change' but demanded that she provide them with a letter of gratitude for their employers so that they could demonstrate their corporate social responsibility. She was unable to write well and her benefactors called her illiterate. A few took advantage of her vulnerability and asked her for 'special' favours in return for their

supposed generosity. After such encounters, she felt as if she had sold her soul to the devil.

As the sun set over Euston station, the hope in her heart also faded. Today she had been called a beggar, a fraud and a scrounger. She felt used for the social, political and physical needs of others. She struggled to gain her balance after her day-long sit-in, having made little to feed her children at home. The death of her husband had plunged her into poverty and her lack of education meant that finding a job was nigh impossible. Her body shivered from the chill that accompanied the dying light, and then the world around her spun.

And as she swooned a multitude walked past her with their small, white backpacks – some stared; others wondered if she was dying. A few laughed, and others shook their heads knowingly.

The mob were silenced by the man who made his way through the crowd. He picked up the woman and carried her like a babe in arms. He stooped to whisper in her ear, like a brother, 'I've come that you might have life, and have it to the full' – and she opened her eyes and noticed that the letter 'C' was carved into the palms of his hands.

Developed countries are proud that they offer aid to countries where poverty is rife. Compassion is often spoken of in the halls of government and paraded through philanthropic acts that are often given celebrity status: that is, until they feel the pinch in their own communities and the 'deserving poor' appear to morph into a 'burden on society'.

Compassion has died in many parts of society, but its corpse is



still paraded through our streets because respectable people still value the 'appearance' of integrity. But compassion that is alive and kicking is much more than a facade of goodness: it demonstrates itself through unselfish actions, not only in the public arena, but in the private spheres of life. Compassion weeps for the plight of others and seeks ways to eliminate their suffering.

As Jesus was leaving Jericho He met two blind men who cried out for help, but the large crowds who were with Jesus unanimously urged these two helpless men to be quiet. They didn't want their time with Jesus to be disturbed by blind beggars. It was an affront to their way of life. Of course, they were good people, but there is a time and a place for compassion, and in their eyes that was not the time or place. But '... Jesus had compassion on them [the two blind men], and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight...' (Matt. 20:34, KJV).

Like the crowds that followed Jesus, we live in an age when our compassion often dies because of stories in the media. We give out of emotion, guilt or respectability. Many times we demand something in return for our good deeds, and we lose our sense of integrity. Our demands are then exposed and the hyper-critical society around us loses faith and trust in the organisations that we represent.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we seek to emulate His character. We speak of the miracles that He performed, His love and overwhelming kindness. We admire the Person awaiting

discovery in the narrative of the four gospels. But maybe it's time we started acting more like the Jesus who wept at the grave of Lazarus, who cried over Jerusalem, and who was consistently moved with compassion for the people He met during His travels – so moved that He changed their lives through His loving actions.

Are you so moved with compassion for the suffering of humanity that you feel a call to action? Does the plight of the needy move you to tears? Do you want to connect with like-minded individuals to raise money for those who are suffering, or volunteer your time, or donate much-needed funds to help the world's poorest?

If so, then please get involved with ADRA-UK. Our mission is to search out and eliminate deprivation and social injustice and help those in need. The 2018 ADRA Appeal runs from 31 March until 15 April (22 April in Greater London), but for 365 days a year ADRA-UK is working with communities around the world to improve their lives, and your contribution to our work would assist so many needy people.

ADRA-UK will be returning 10% of funds collected to churches who participate in the 2018 Appeal. With these funds, churches can engage in a project such as one that helps the growing number of people who are living on our streets in the UK.

If you would like to get more involved with ADRA-UK, please go to our website, www.adra.org.uk.

It's time to bury *your* 'corpse of human compassion' – that facade of involvement that we so easily adopt – and come alive with the compassion of Christ.

The 2018 ADRA Appeal runs from 31 March until 15 April across the UK, extending to 22 April in Greater London.

Extending God's Kingdom

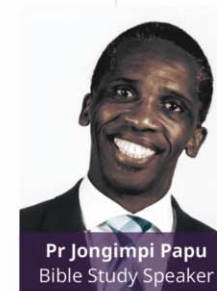
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Pathfinder Bible Experience is here

The Pathfinder Bible Experience is something new in the North England Conference. Although it has taken time to reach us here in the north, our Pathfinders are rallying to the challenge of reading and studying the books of Esther and Daniel in preparation for four rounds of testing, the last being the finals, which will be held in Florida, USA. Initially we started with 17 teams: 14 from Areas 2 and 3, and three from Areas 5 and 6, each being made up of seven Pathfinders, a mentor and a coach.

The Area test was held on 13 January, from which 10 teams went through to the NEC second round. This took place on 10 February and six teams made it to the third round: three from Area 2, and three from Areas 5 and 6. Our Pathfinders were excited as they gathered for the event. You could see the enthusiasm as their coaches and mentors interacted with them before the test began. At the end six teams made it to the next round, which will be held at the British Union Conference office on 10 March. The teams are Bolton, Bradford, Bourneville, Sutton Coldfield, Manchester Southern Crew 1 and Wednesbury, all having scored 90% and over to make it through. To God be the glory; great things He has done for us. Special thanks to all clubs that participated and congratulations to the clubs and teams who made it through to the third round.

JOSEPH SPENCER



A sampling of comments about PBE:

- ✦ 'We have been struggling to study the Bible together with my children at home, but through the PBE we have been able to study together. I am in total support of this programme.' *Local pastor*
- ✦ 'I have never seen my daughter show much interest in the Bible before! But since she joined a team taking part in the PBE she has not stopped listening to the Bible and spends much time after school reading Esther or Daniel in preparation for the PBE! I praise the Lord for PBE.' *Parent*
- ✦ 'Since PBE started we have stopped watching TV in my home! I went into my daughter's room and found the carpet covered with Bible pages printed off the internet, as she sat combing through them preparing for PBE.' *Parent*
- ✦ 'It made me want to read the Bible and has given me a spiritual connection. It was fun and I enjoyed it. I have learnt much more about Daniel and Esther through reading and studying them: much more than I see in movies about them, as they leave out a lot. And I am definitely thinking of taking part next year.' *Pathfinder*
- ✦ 'Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions' (Joel 2:28, NRSV).
- ✦ 'This is nothing short of a "timely" move of God – to Him be praise! For, apart from a *naturally* huge interest from the younger Pathfinders (Friends to Explorers), who just love Pathfinding and all that comes with it, we are seeing *phenomenal* interest in PBE by

older Pathfinders, who generally tend to lag behind in Pathfinding! This can be demonstrated by the fact that 95% of those members from the teams that have qualified are from older Pathfinder classes, i.e. Rangers, Voyagers and Guides (ages 13 upwards)! Soon after the Conference session ended last Sabbath, 10 February, Pathfinders were already forming teams for next year's PBE, which is on the book of Luke! And at the Conference we are gearing ourselves up for this huge uptake and interest so that His will will be accomplished. As the BUC Youth Director, in speaking to the NECPF club directors, recently put it: "Let not you be the one to be a stumbling block to this programme." I want to thank you all for your support, prayers and more prayers for our young people as we see God preparing them for the massive spiritual conflict up ahead! I want to end with these words from the book of Esther (4:14, NIV): "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

PASTOR IKWISA MWASUMBI, NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE PATHFINDER DIRECTOR
'PATHFINDERS TODAY, LEADERS TOMORROW!'



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Pathfinder Bible Experience Conference testing

There was a buzz of excitement in Stanborough School hall, Watford, as over 230 South England Conference (SEC) Pathfinders were tested on their knowledge of the Bible books of Daniel and Esther, as well as the relevant sections in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. They were doing their Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) Conference-level testing on Sabbath, 10 February.

The programme attracted a full house, as this year there are 34 teams participating, the largest group yet. PBE is gaining popularity among Pathfinders across the Union, and SEC Pathfinder Director, Kevin Johns, explains it as an amazing phenomenon, with both children and adults getting more involved in PBE.

Johns' ideal scenario would be to see all participants make first place and have the resources to go to America in April for the PBE Finals. However, he is glad to see the impact of the programme on the young people's lives in general.

'I want every kid to do their best and to enjoy the experience more than anything,' said Johns; 'to realise that they do know God's Word and they feel confident in the knowledge that they gain.'

Many new teams have joined for the first time this year, among them the Aylesbury Pathfinder team. Tabby Magwizi, Pathfinder Director at Aylesbury Church, noticed how PBE was affecting the lives of her team, especially in school. She explained that, while the Pathfinders were preparing during weekends for PBE, church members even gathered for an all-night prayer session.

She said, while beaming with pride: 'I have noticed the growing spiritual confidence of our youth because of PBE.'

Each team prepares for the PBE testing in its own way. Some teams like to use drama; others practise through music: but, whatever the trick for each individual is, it has become evident to parents and Pathfinder leaders that, while the children are memorising the Bible books, their school grades are improving significantly.

Many Pathfinders are completing their GCSEs and A-levels, and, while this would be a deterrent for many young people to join, it didn't stop the Filipino International Church (FIC) Team Emerald from participating again. Team member Onyl Calpatura explained how his team had initially been concerned about joining PBE for this reason. However, once the whole team committed wholeheartedly, everyone found the time to study for school and for PBE, which turned out to be a success. His favourite part of the testing is feeling the energy and the enthusiasm of all participants in the room.

Melinda Ndiweni, from Slough, was participating for the first time. She explained that she is enjoying the journey that she is on in her team, first studying, then competing and (hopefully) finally travelling together to America as a reward.

Pastor Johns believes that PBE is a programme that is blessed by God and that it has influenced the number of baptisms among the Pathfinders. Since the beginning of the quadrennium 273 Pathfinders have been baptised.

'We want to rightly train our young people, and the best way to do that is through the Word of God. That way the Word 'will not depart from them'



Photo quality as supplied

and they are likely to remain in the church because they have the Word of God in their hearts,' said Johns.

The next testing will be held in March at Newbold College, which is the Union-level testing, determining which teams go to America. Johns predicts that by 2019 all Missions and Conferences in the British Union Conference will be participating.

To get more information about the Pathfinder Bible Experience, and how your church can get involved, please email Pastor Kevin Johns at kjohns@secadventist.org.uk.

To look through a selection of photos from the Conference-level testing, please visit the Adventist Church's picture gallery.



The Irish Mission and PBE

This is the Irish Mission's second year participating in the annual Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE), an initiative begun in the North American Division, but now attracting entries from Divisions worldwide. This year we were able to host two Area-level events, with six of our fourteen participating teams moving on to the Mission/Conference level of testing.

Although Daniel is a hard book for many of our Pathfinders to fully understand, they have eagerly accepted the challenge to understand it better. As Teniola Olaleye from Galway Church said, 'Studying Daniel was something I was initially anxious about because I knew it was a hard book. After studying it I now understand it better, and I'm so confident in my knowledge of the book now. Esther is also such a beautiful story about a strong woman. The famous line of "If I perish, I perish" really shows the strength Esther had.'

Any type of test can be stressful for children and teens, but it is encouraging to see the excitement on their faces when they realise they know the answers to the questions. When asked about the impact that PBE has had on her life personally, Erika Hakizimana from Newmarket-on-Fergus Church said, 'It has changed my relationship with God. Previously I didn't read the Bible, but now that I have been reading it I am beginning to understand who He is and how He works.'

ERIN GORDON, IRISH MISSION ASSISTANT PATHFINDER SPONSOR

Teams from across the Union will be participating in the finals taking place at Newbold College on 10 March 2018. Those who achieve the highest marks overall will then travel to the Division finals in Florida, USA in April.

Please pray for our Pathfinders as they deepen their relationship with God through the study of His Word.

More information:
<http://youth.adventistchurch.org.uk/pbe-pathfinder-bible-experience>.

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HOST:
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Esther Institute Of Excellence
Curriculum Training Days

Sundays: 13 May, 3 June, 10 June, 8 July

Venue: British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9JZ

09:30 registration
10:00 – 16:00 Programme
Full Training Cost: £40 per person
Lunch and programme material will be provided

For enquiries or to register and pay, please contact the BUC Women's Ministries secretary, Pilira Zapita, on 01923 672251 or via e-mail at: pzapita@adventist.uk. Closing date for registration and payment is Monday 30th April, 2018.

Esther Institute of Excellence is a nurturing and development BUC initiative for girls and young ladies with a wholistic curriculum covering spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development.

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Three generations baptised together

The afternoon of Sabbath 13 January was a special occasion for the Lawrence family as well as the members of the Fartown church as they witnessed the baptism of three generations of the same family at the Huddersfield church: Annrose Lawrence (mother and grandmother), Sharon Lawrence-Andrew (daughter), Donwin Lawrence (son) and granddaughter, Rochè Lawrence.

The sermon was delivered by Dr Lovemore Nganunu, and appropriately based on John 1:35-45, which tells of how John the Baptist introduced Andrew to Jesus, upon which Andrew went and told his brother Simon Peter the good



To all interested teachers . . .

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news. Once Philip heard about the Messiah, and met Him personally, he went to tell Nathanael. Dr Nganunu likened Sharmain Lawrence to those early disciples who carried the message about Jesus to their family and friends. After all, Sharmain was the one who told her other family members, including her daughter, Rochè.

Before her baptism young Rochè sang 'Amazing Grace' in a beautiful, clear and confident manner, which was a blessing to all. The candidates were then immersed by Pastor Pardon Chenjerai, the minister of the Fartown and Huddersfield churches, to the joy of all.

VERONICA WHITTLE

Torquay baptism

On Sabbath 19 August last year Pastor Ian Lorek baptised Jasper Vicente (18) and Izabele Sobczak in the presence of family, friends and members of the Torquay church.

Jasper had been encouraged by his parents and four older sisters to study the Bible with Pastor Lorek for the past year. He had gained a place at Cardiff University in September and decided that he wanted to commit his life to Jesus and be baptised before embarking on his studies.

Izabele Sobczak had been reading her Bible diligently for several years, but her Sunday-keeping church was not able to answer her questions, and she became very disillusioned. After realising that Sabbath was Saturday, she started to faithfully attend Torquay Church, its prayer meetings and Bible studies. She was overjoyed to be baptised with her son and daughter proudly watching.

We pray that Jasper and Izabele will remain firm in their faith, and that their lives will continue to be an example and witness to family and friends as they gain a closer connection with Jesus.

R. MORRIS



Friendship leads to baptism

On 18 November last year, Ketty Lancien was baptised at Carterknowle Church by Pastor Carlton Douglas. She was introduced to the Adventist Church by one of her friends, a Carterknowle member.

Ketty has attended church for over two years, and has proved to be a very helpful, kind, encouraging and considerate person. She began Bible studies with Isabel Bunting, and her thirst for



the Bible and the Adventist faith has grown immensely, leading ultimately to her baptism.

It was a lovely, blessed day, attended by many and enjoyed by all.

ELVINA LEE

Baptism at Hackney

There was a celebratory mood in the Hackney church on Sabbath 27 January as Daniel Andries and Joy Baker, regular visitors to Hackney Seventh-day Adventist Church, made the decision to follow Jesus through baptism in the presence of their family, friends and church members.

Daniel, who was born in Romania, found Hackney Church after coming across its website during a Google internet search. He already knew about Adventism, having been introduced to the movement in Romania by his friend, Zabar, a Seventh-day Adventist.

For a long time Joy had wanted to give her heart to the Lord, but, as is often the case, there was an internal battle between the forces of

good and evil. However, on this day the shackles were broken as Joy made the choice to follow her Saviour without turning back.

These new members, who are currently studying with Bible workers – Ann Williams, Ruby Merchant and Cheryl Daley – were warmly received into the family of God, where both Joy and Daniel have already made an impression with their respective support in the Community

Ministry and Media and Technical Departments.

In his counsel to the newly baptised members, Hackney elder, John Mathieu, encouraged them to build their house on the Rock, Christ Jesus; after which Pastor Joojo Bonnie performed their baptism and appealed to the friends and family, who joyously looked on, to follow their example.

DARELL J. PHILIP (PR AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT)

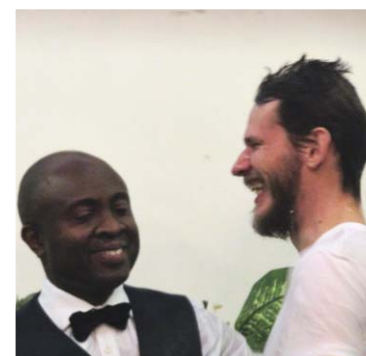


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Weston-super-Mare baptism

Sabbath 20 January this year will be long remembered at Weston-super-Mare Church because two of its young people, Molly Johnson and Alastair Boyd, were baptised in front of a church full to overflowing with family, members and friends. Both, when babies, had been dedicated at Weston, and now they were confirming their parents' promises to bring them up to know and love God.

Both Alastair and Molly acknowledge that the SEC Teens Extreme Camp at Chapel Porth and the friends they made there had a great influence on their relationship with Jesus and their decision to be baptised. For this reason, it was good to see many of their camp friends present with their parents, some having travelled long distances to witness Alastair and Molly's stand for Christ after more than a year of weekly Bible studies had been given to Weston youth by their dedicated Young People's leaders.

The address was given by Weston's new minister, Pastor Rio Espulgar, and the baptism



was performed by Pastor Wayne Erasmus, who had been Alastair and Molly's pastor and friend for more than eight and a half years. During the service Molly and Alastair delighted the congregation when they sang a beautiful duet, 'Healing Streams', accompanied by Alastair on his guitar.

There was an added blessing when Sebastian and Maria Stetco brought their baby daughter, Amelie, to be dedicated by Pastor Wayne. They promised to raise Amelie to love the Lord, and we look forward to the day, in years to come, when Amelie and her big brother David give their hearts to Jesus in baptism.

It was a full day as the morning service was followed by a splendid hot buffet lunch, an



afternoon walk, vespers to close Sabbath and a tea and games evening for the young people. Thank you to all who helped to make the day such a memorable success.

COMMUNICATIONS



Left to right: Pastor Adrian Peck, Peta-Ann McIntosh, Zinhle Moyo, Maggie Williamson, Hazel Williamson

Norwich baptism

In November last year the Norwich church was delighted and proud to witness the baptism of five young ladies – all daughters of families with an Adventist background. They had each, nevertheless, experienced a different faith journey, having keenly explored, challenged and questioned the multiple elements of what it means to be a Christian.

In the testimonies given before the baptism, they expressed their thanks to a number of people in their lives who had influenced, encouraged and helped them come to the point of their decision: thus highlighting the importance of the church community in providing a safe and nurturing environment. Above all, there was a desire to publicly demonstrate their burgeoning commitment to, and faith and trust in, Jesus. They were gladly welcomed into membership, and their subsequent growth and development are eagerly anticipated.

PASTOR ADRIAN PECK



As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Great Yarmouth uses Christmas to deepen friendships

Christmas is a precious time in our church in Great Yarmouth; for, while we recognise the tradition that Jesus was born at this time of the year, we do believe that the season provides us with extra opportunities to share our faith with others; and with some individuals this may be the only time when they are open to us. It also affords the opportunity for the public to recognise that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a truly 'Christian' denomination as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is surprising that so many still know very little about us, and what they *think* they know may be the result of false information.

In Great Yarmouth we engage in various activities during the year that are designed to demonstrate our interest in the welfare of the community around our church. We distribute a monthly newsletter called *The Link* that keeps them informed of who we are, what we are doing and what we believe. It has been distributed since 2012 and, as a result, several people have visited our church from time to time. One such opportunity comes during our annual Christmas carol and candlelight service.

Last year's service was held on the evening of 23 December, when some 16 visitors, some of whom were from the immediate community, joined our regular members for worship. The service always has a warm, cozy atmosphere, with dimmed lights, the lit-up Christmas tree, a series of colourful slides, and the lighting of candles before the closing carol is sung. There was the usual selection of nativity readings from the gospels, while the congregation joined in the carol singing; but we also had some special items from soloists, Helen and Janna Wilkinson; a trio of small children that always wins the hearts of the congregation; and a saxophone solo by Errol Vittorio. The illustrated message for the evening, entitled *When the*



Above: Dining at the Cliff Hotel, Gorleston
Left: Congregation with candles sing the closing carol



Magi Came to Jesus, was presented by the writer, who also invited the congregation to 'come to Jesus'. Each year we make a donation to charity by hanging monetary gifts on the Christmas tree, and for the last few years we have been giving the donation to the East Coast Hospice that is to be built in Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, and is heavily dependent upon charitable donations. We felt that this was a local community project that would be ideally suited for our 'Christmas-time ministry'.

After the carol service, everyone was invited upstairs to the Function Room for hot mince pies and mulled wine (non-alcoholic of course!) where we could chat more informally and establish, hopefully, stronger friendships. Speaking of friendships, over the last number of years we have got to know a considerable number of people through our various activities.

Each year we invite them to join us for a Christmas celebratory meal in a restaurant, the cost being subsidised by the church. This is another evangelistic outreach we use to deepen our friendships with these people. So, on Sunday 17 December, quite a crowd of us dined at the illustrious *Cliff Hotel* overlooking the sea; and everyone was truly blessed. It is our earnest prayer that these friends will eventually become true and faithful friends of Jesus too.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER (RETIRED), COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

Stanborough's infants learn the true meaning of Christmas

The members of the Stanborough Park Church Kindergarten Sabbath School have shown that you are never too young to learn to help those in need. Under their leader, Sunsiree Renard, they have been collecting tins and packets of food for the Welfare Department's food bank.

Welfare leader Pat Walton explained, 'It is some years since I began collecting food for welfare. The clients and social workers who come to the department can help themselves to food from these boxes. The members of the church supply the food.'

Recently one of her regular contacts, Mary Nyiriki, was in need of food for desperate families. 'I have known Mary a long time in connection with welfare,' Pat continued. 'She is a school care worker in Hemel Hempstead and helps about 18-20 families. She is always in need of food for these families.'

At that stage, with Christmas on the horizon, it seemed a good time to show the children that Christmas is about giving as well as just receiving presents; and Mary was invited along to Kindergarten Sabbath School on 2 December to receive the food that they had collected. Unfortunately, she



was unable to get there in time, as she was delayed in traffic, so the food was passed to her at a later date. Here the children pose with some of the food.

JUNE COOMBS



Bristol District DOF

On Sabbath 23 December, over 200 members and visitors from the three churches of the Bristol District joined for worship at a special District Day of Fellowship. The atmosphere was one of joy and celebration, as everyone gave thanks to God, in study, prayer and praise, for the way God had led them through the year.

Organised by the joint elders of the churches, the day followed a slightly different format, with the adult programme having three speakers, each being preceded by a special item from Claudette Brown, The Chronicles and Bianca Brown. Special provision was made for the youth and children, who had their own programmes.

The guest speaker for the youth was Melissa Nicholson, who talked about 'Crossing Over', based on Exodus 14, and involving these steps: to see God; to remember how He has led in the past; and to step out in faith.

In the adult programme Billy Odumuzor spoke on the theme of 'Selfishness or Selflessness', highlighting the difference between our natural, sinful, selfish nature, and Christ's perfect, selfless character. He was followed by the Bristol District pastor, Royston Smith, who challenged the church on the subject of our choices. Speaking of the many opposing lifestyles, positions, destinations and authorities with which we are faced, he urged the congregation to 'look at your current situation, and question and assess your relationship with God' – in other words, 'Check yourself.'

The last speaker was Brenda Sabadin from Bristol Central, who spoke on the subject of 'Your Past Or Your Future?' Using the example of Paul in Philippians 3:13-14, she encouraged the church to look forward to the future, rather than dwelling on the past, even if it was good.

Following a friendly bring-and-share lunch, a special presentation was made by representatives of NHS Blood and Transplant. They spent a few minutes outlining the need for blood donations, in particular from the black African/Caribbean community due to the prevalence of sickle cell disease among them and the need for more RO sub-type blood, which is quite often found in people of African or Caribbean heritage, and for which they need to urgently sign up 40,000 black donors to meet demand.

After the presentation, the representatives, Joanne Seddon-Dite and Brad Dinnall, stayed to talk to people individually, and, if interested, sign them up for future blood donation sessions. One person was Princess Campbell, who had never given blood before, and was nervous of needles. Through talking through the process and asking questions, she eventually decided to register and book in to attend a session. Even Pastor Smith signed up himself as an example to the congregation. For more information, and to register as a donor, go to blood.co.uk.

In the afternoon a coachload of guests from Handsworth Church, Birmingham, arrived to take part in the programme. Performers included Alan Charles, a male trio, God's Girls, and other soloists and groups. They

greatly enhanced the day with fantastic singing that inspired a real spirit of praise and worship.

It was a truly spiritual high day, setting the churches up to meet the challenges of the new year as they seek to reach the people of Bristol with the good news of salvation.

IAN SABADIN (COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER)



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- Your Name
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REUNION - 21 APRIL 2018

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Honouring a life of service

Desmond H. Clarke, known as Elder D. H. Clarke or simply DH, has been synonymous with Brixton Church for 58 years. He came to London in 1960 and attended New Gallery Church on Regent Street in the morning and Brixton Church in the afternoon.

DH, as he likes to be called, is best known for his roles as elder and head elder of Brixton Church, having served in these roles for approximately 43 years. He completed a lengthy term as head elder at the end of 2017 and was elected to continue as elder for 2018/2019.

DH is well known to the South England Conference and the British Union, and has represented Brixton as a delegate over the years. As an elder he often conducts Bible studies for those wishing to join the church and he is known for his skill in resolving difficult issues within the congregation: none of which would have been possible without the stalwart support of his wife, Joy, and the backing of his children. For this reason Brixton Church honours DH for his loyal and lengthy service as an elder.

VALERIE MOODIE (COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT)



Police call at North Wembley

On Sabbath 13 January, North Wembley Community Church was visited by local police and community leaders. This was a planned visit as the church has been working closely with the local authorities to address various needs and interests within the community.

North Wembley were honoured to receive Inspector Karl Spour and Sergeant Yu Zhang, who were supported by local police officer Joseph Mahoney and a community support officer. Also in attendance were the Ward Chair, Barnabe Nemi, as well as John Carroll and Renu Kaul, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the local Sudbury Town Residents' Association.

After being warmly welcomed by Elder Lawson Riviere, the senior members of the delegation addressed the members and praised the church for their involvement in the community, saying how they looked forward to continued collaboration to ensure the safety and well-being of our local residents.

At the end of the address, the police and community leaders were prayed for, that they would be kept safe during their challenging work and that they would continue to have a dynamic and positive influence on the community.

NORTH WEMBLEY COMMUNICATION TEAM



The 2018 ADRA Appeal runs from 31 March until 15 April across the UK, extending to 22 April in Greater London.

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Mar 9	5.55	6.07	5.58	6.04	6.16
16	6.07	6.19	6.11	6.18	6.29
23	6.19	6.31	6.23	6.33	6.43
30	7.30	7.43	7.36	7.47	7.56

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