

On Sabbath 28 April the South Bristol church was formally organised with the support of the surrounding Bristol Adventist congregations.

The programme commenced at 10am with a soul-stirring song service conducted by the vibrant ladies of the South Bristol congregation. Local pastor, Royston Smith and Sabbath School superintendent, Anita Ho, then conducted a very interactive lesson study. Both members and visitors eagerly participated in the discussion, which gave a great start to the day. After the discussion Pastor Smith posed the thought-provoking question: 'Who among us can raise their hand, knowing that should Christ appear today they will be saved?' He went on to emphasise the need for self-evaluation throughout our Christian journey.

Two of the 'core members', Clover Samuel-Young and Billy Odumuzor (elder) then filled the church with nostalgia as they recounted aspects of the group's history. The group was formed from the mother church of Bristol Central in 2004 by the then pastor of the Bristol district, Richard Daly. This was done to satisfy the need for an Adventist presence in one of the poorest areas in Bristol, Bedminster. Approximately eight families embarked on this uncertain journey, but their effort proved to be worth the while. The first location secured was that of the Salvation Army in Bedminster, where the group spent just over a year before moving on. They then settled for some time at the Southville Methodist Church and Faith Space, but had to relocate due to being inconvenienced by other users of the facility. Throughout this time the church family was seeing a growth in new members, but was also experiencing a decline in numbers from the core group – some having moved back to Africa or relocated to other cities in the UK. This could have put a damper on things, but the South Bristol family strongly believes in Matthew 18:20: 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them'

The day's sermon by Pastor Doug McCormac was entitled 'Family Ties' and proved to be a well-chosen topic. South Bristol is renowned for being a family church and the members found the presentation both informative and inspiring.

The formalisation ceremony was conducted by Pastor Douglas McCormac, commencing with the declaration of the core group as a church, followed by the incorporation of additional members. The three remaining families of the core group are Stella and Nelson Khonje, Grace and Billy Odumuzor, and Clover and Lloyd Young. The current membership stands at forty-two, with the majority of members from the south of Bristol area, where they have occupied the Redcliffe Methodist Church (Prewett Street, Bristol, BS1 6PB) for approximately eight years.

South Bristol Church organised

by Wijan Watson and Devina Blake-Sanchez Ponce



After all the preliminaries, the South Bristol congregation was officially welcomed into the world family of Seventh-day Adventist churches.

After the morning service there was a sumptuous meal for all, followed by an evening of praise and thanksgiving. The South Bristol family would like to express their sincere gratitude to their current Pastor Royston Smith and his predecessors: Richard Daly, Valentine Roach, Jojo Bonnie and Anand Measapogu. Their leadership has had a strong influence on getting the church established.





Mental wellness – how well are you? Part 1c

The stress impact

Recent research from the Mental Health Foundation sought to ascertain how the UK population has been affected by stress over the past 12 months and their data revealed a sobering picture: 'Our new survey found that over the past year, almost three quarters (74%) of people have at some point felt so stressed that they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope'.¹

In the last issue of *MESSENGER*, I suggested you take the Mental Health Foundation 'Test Your Stress' assessment found at: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health/stress-test>. This gives an indication of the level of stress you may be experiencing. The test uses the Perceived Stress Scale, and colour codes your level of stress from blue (low) to red (very high), and gives relevant advice.

So, what do you do if you found that your stress is higher than you would like, or even heading into the 'red' zone? NHS Choices quote the following ten suggestions on stress reduction from Professor Carey Cooper, Occupational Health expert at the University of Lancaster:²

- **Be active.** Find out how exercise helps at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-benefits-of-exercise/>.
- **Take control.** Find a solution that satisfies you, not everyone else. It is empowering.
- **Connect with people.** It provides support to turn to when you need help.
- **Have some 'me time'.** Scheduling at least two evenings a week to do something social makes overworking less likely.

- **Challenge yourself** by setting yourself goals to do something you enjoy.
- **Avoid unhealthy habits** (caffeine, alcohol smoking) that create dependency and long-term problems.
- **Help other people** through activities such as volunteering or community work. It improves emotional resilience. Find out how at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/give-for-mental-wellbeing/>.
- **Work smarter, not harder.** Prioritise your work and concentrate on tasks that make a real difference, instead of trying to empty your in-tray in one day. Try the time management tips suggested at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/time-management-tips/>.
- **Try to be positive.** Look for the positives in life and things that you are grateful for. Record three things you are grateful for, daily.
- **Accept the things you can't change.** Instead, try to concentrate on the things that you have control over and take action on those.

Homework: Take time to visit the web links identified above. In the next issue we will look at lifestyle interventions and additional resources to help combat stress.

Good health!

¹<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/stress-are-we-coping>
²<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/reduce-stress/>



Jesus, Elie and empathy

The Romanian-born American Jewish writer, professor, political activist and Nobel Laureate, Eliezer Wiesel (commonly known as 'Elie'), was born on 30 September 1928, in Sighet (now Sighetu Marmaiei) in the Carpathian Mountains.

When Elie was 15, Germany occupied Hungary and 'extended the Holocaust into that country'.¹ In May 1944 the deportations to Germany began and the Wiesel family ended up in Auschwitz, where his mother and his younger sister were murdered and he and his father became forced labourers. They were later transferred to Buchenwald concentration camp, where his father died before the camp was liberated in April 1945. In later years Elie recalled 'the shame he felt when he heard his father being beaten and was unable to help'.²

Understandably, after the war Elie Wiesel became involved in many Jewish causes, including the establishment of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. But the suffering he had endured – both what he had seen, and what he had felt personally – motivated him to campaign for victims of oppression everywhere, which is why he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

The citation delivered by the Norwegian Nobel Committee when making this award is worth noting (emphasis supplied):

'It is the Committee's opinion that Elie Wiesel has emerged as one of the most important spiritual leaders and guides in an age when violence, repression and racism continue to characterise the world.

'Wiesel is a messenger to mankind; his message is one of peace, atonement and human dignity. His belief that the forces fighting evil in the world can be victorious is a hard-won belief. **His message is based on his own personal experience of total humiliation and of the utter contempt for humanity shown in Hitler's death camps.** The message is in the form of a testimony, repeated and deepened through the works of a great author.

'Wiesel's commitment, which originated in the sufferings of the Jewish people, has been widened to embrace all repressed peoples and races'.³

Whichever way you look at it, Eliezer Wiesel was a remarkable man. No wonder then that Mary Rourke of *The Los Angeles Times* (29 April, 2002) could write that, 'Wiesel is often described as the most important Jew in America'.⁴

A truth expressed

Among the many profound things that Elie Wiesel spoke and wrote (he was the author of 57 books), there is one truth that has captured my attention. It is expressed in this simple, single sentence: **'The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference.'**⁵

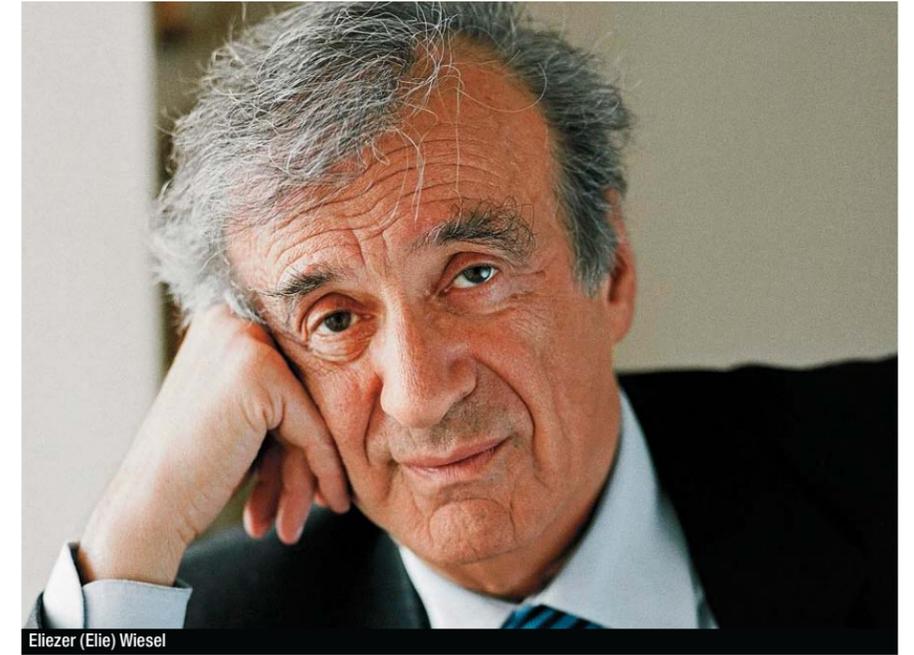
Why is it so profound? For this simple reason: that in order for problems like poverty, homelessness, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and genocide to **persist** and **spread**, all we need is to be 'indifferent'. But what does being indifferent mean? Well, here is the *Cambridge Dictionary's* definition: a 'lack of interest in someone or something'.⁶ The *Cambridge Learner's Dictionary* reads a little differently, however: 'the feeling of not caring about something or having any particular opinions about it'.⁷ To cut to the chase then, indifference is the attitude in which one **'just couldn't care less about people or the issues they face!'**

Surely not!

'This can't apply to Christians,' I hear you murmuring quietly to yourself. 'After all, aren't we to be known for our love for each other? I don't know about you, Mr Editor, but I don't hate anybody!'

Hang on a minute. Who said anything about hate? I'm talking about **indifference, not hate!** Neither was Jesus speaking about hate when He said (emphasis supplied):

'Then he will turn to the "goats," the ones on his left, and say, "Get out, worthless goats! You're good for nothing but the fires of hell. And why? Because – I was hungry and you gave me no meal, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,



Eliezer (Elie) Wiesel

I was homeless and you gave me no bed, I was shivering and you gave me no clothes, Sick and in prison, and you never visited."

"Then those "goats" are going to say, "Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn't help?"

'He will answer them, "I'm telling the solemn truth: **Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me – you failed to do it to me.**"' (Matthew 25:41-45, *The Message*)

It's not about love or hate

It's not a straight contest between love and hate that Jesus is talking about here. It's about something very subtle – an attitude of **indifference** (Elie Wiesel) towards others, of **overlooking and ignoring** (Jesus Christ) the ordinary souls around us.

Here Jesus is calling on us to see Him – His potential – in every struggling soul, no matter how weathered they may be by sin and circumstances. **He is challenging us not to overlook or ignore them, but to lay aside our indifference and allow Him to infuse us with empathy for all.**

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elie_Wiesel²https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1986/press.html³<http://articles.latimes.com/2002/apr/29/news/ln-wiesel29>⁴https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/elie_wiesel⁵<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/indifference>⁶<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/indifference>

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Noah's Ark – myth or truth?

For many in today's culture, the story of Noah's Ark and the flood is regarded as simply a children's story. Even Adventist books for children seem to have been influenced by this thinking, with illustrations utilising details other than those clearly described in Genesis.

For several years, I have been sharing a presentation that looks at whether the account we find in the Old Testament about Noah's Ark was practically feasible; whether any of the details from the Hebrew story can be found in any other ancient cultures; whether the dimensions given by God to Noah would result in a vessel large enough to carry all the animals required, and what those creatures may have been. It has also addressed the question of whether just eight people would have been physically able to feed, water and remove all of the waste products on a daily basis.

The Bible plainly teaches that the flood in Noah's day covered the entire globe. Old Testament writers believed it. Jesus believed it and the apostle Peter based key Christian doctrines on it. However, a lack of realistic answers to the many questions that critics and sceptics often pose has sadly encouraged many people –

including some leading theologians – to deny the Biblical record and dismiss or make fun of the whole account, thereby encouraging many Christians to retreat into the use of local flood compromises.

Around the world, however, there are many legends and tribal stories about a great flood covering the known world. Among the North American First Nations, for example, there are over 40 separate legends that deal with a universal flood. In the Far East and Indonesia more than 30 flood legends exist. Flood stories and traditions have, in fact, been found in the oral and written histories of cultures on every continent of our planet, with over a thousand having been recorded.¹

While some, if not all, have been modified over time, there is almost complete agreement about three key features. 1) A universal catastrophe destroyed humans and all other living things with water. 2) A boat provided the only means of escape. 3) A small group of humans were preserved. In most, but not all, a fourth feature occurs – the 'wickedness' of humans is given as the flood's cause.

The Chinese culture is one of the oldest in the world and

possesses one of the most complicated writing systems. During the communist takeover in China, many of its museum curators were forced to hide their vast wealth of early manuscripts and historical treasures to prevent their destruction during the Cultural Revolution. In recent decades, however, China has opened up a large number of these ancient records, traditions and writings to be catalogued and translated. As a result, some astonishing discoveries have been made, showing that the early Chinese possessed an unusual knowledge of sacred history – incorporated into their earliest written script and language. Thousands of pictographs found inscribed on early bones and bronzeware from the Henan province of China tell a similar story to that told by the Hebrews, indicating that not only did the early Chinese worship a creator-God known as 'ShangDi' – the God most high – but that modern-day Chinese were direct descendants of an ancient hero called 'Nu-Kua' (or in some places 'Nu-Wah'), who, together with his wife, three sons and three daughters, escaped a huge flood by boat.^{2,3}

The Chinese character used in books and newspapers today for the words 'boat' or 'ship' comprises the symbols for a mouth and the number 8, and is regarded by translators as showing that the first Chinese ship was a vessel that carried eight people.⁴

Using the dimensions found in Genesis 6:15 (NIV) – 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high – it

becomes clear that Noah's Ark was the largest sea-going vessel ever built until the 1850s, when Isambard Brunel designed the SS Great Eastern. Incidentally, Brunel used the same mathematical ratio as was used for the ark when he built the SS Great Britain in 1844 – because it gave the best possible design for preventing a ship from rolling in heavy seas. It has been suggested that the internal capacity for the Ark was the equivalent of around a thousand shipping containers.⁵

John Woodmorappe, in his book, *Noah's Ark – a feasibility study*, uses technical data from zoos and farms around the world to calculate the likely number of animals – genetically capable of repopulating the planet – that would have been on board. He suggests around 16,000. By calculating the body-mass volume of every creature, from humming birds to dinosaurs, and the weight/volume of their food and water requirements, he shows that less than 70% of the available space would have been needed to house them all for the 371 day voyage.⁶

John was born in the USA to Polish immigrant parents who had lost everything in World War II. He suffers from the debilitating neurological disease called Tourette's Syndrome, yet despite this he gained three science degrees at university. While studying, he attended a Campus Crusade for Christ, was lent the book *The Genesis Flood* by Whitcomb and Morris, and in 1995 decided to publish a compelling response to the many modern-day critics of the Biblical Ark account.



The full-size replica of the Ark in Kentucky, USA, which now attracts thousands of visitors a year.

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Islanders, idolatry, and the end of days



Vanuatu Volcanic Island

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He vigorously defends Biblical beliefs with a phenomenal array of gathered evidence. While not questioning the possibility of God's miraculous involvement in the gathering and care of the animals in the ark, John set out to show that the Genesis record makes perfect sense, even if no miracles were involved. The book's publication has led to extensive and ongoing internet debate about Noah's Ark.

While we should remember that the ultimate basis of our confidence in the story of Noah's Ark is that Jesus believed it and taught it, I believe that it is also good to have our faith in Biblical events supported by scientific research and new discoveries. The warning message we read in Matthew 34:21 (*The Message*) remains critical for today's world: **'The arrival of the son of Man will take place in times like Noah's. Before the great flood everyone was carrying on as usual, having a good time right up to the day Noah entered the ark. They knew nothing until the flood hit them and swept everyone away.'**

As well as the books listed below, you may want to consider looking at the Answers in Genesis website (www.answersingenesis.org), which is run by a Christian organisation that aims to provide answers to questions about the book of Genesis regarding key issues such as creation, evolution, science, Noah's Ark and the flood, and the age of the earth. A few years ago, it built a full-size replica of the Ark in Kentucky, USA, which now attracts thousands of visitors a year.

What I'm about to tell you probably sounds like a joke, but I'm being deadly serious. The royal wedding of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle a few weeks ago wasn't just celebrated in Britain, but also on the other side of the world. No, I'm not thinking of the anglophile admirers of royalty among the Americans. There is an island called Tanna in the Pacific archipelago republic of Vanuatu, and on that island, in the village of Yaohnanen, indigenous tribesfolk celebrated by waving the Union Flag and eating 'many, many pigs'.

They live an idyllic life, sheltering under the banyan trees, eating fruit and watching the swine wander by, while dressed in little else than grass loincloths... but they happen to worship someone you might recognise. They believe the son of their god to be none other than the notoriously gaffe-prone consort of our reigning monarch – until recently the Chancellor of Cambridge University and Lord High Admiral of the Royal Navy – His Royal Highness Prince Philip. No, really! It's accredited by the *Independent* and the *Telegraph*, and is even on that

most reliable of webpages, Wikipedia!

Apparently it's a 'cargo cult' – a form of worship whereby island peoples make sense of the technological disparity between their own lands and Western cultures by incorporating them into their myths, one of which concerns the son of the mountain god who wanders off to a far country and marries a powerful woman, eventually to return to his people and hunt pigs with them. Prince Philip came to Vanuatu with HM the Queen on the royal yacht Britannia in 1974, and there, seeing him standing on deck, resplendent in his white naval officer's uniform, Chief Jack Navia 'knew then that he was the true messiah'. They sent him a hunting club, and he sent back a picture of himself holding it. That photo is now revered as a religious icon. They pray to him for sunshine or rain, and they say that he grants their requests.

They even – sponsored by Channel 4, who made a documentary on it called *Meet the Natives* – came to Britain to meet him in Windsor Castle in 2007. They visited a British pub, and it

turned out the islanders were rather good at darts, although they couldn't understand the concept of drinking to get drunk; and it really shocked them to see people shampooing their dogs. The level of homelessness made them sad, as on their island, if anyone lacks a home, the others will all build one. They were really hoping Prince Philip would agree to come back to their island and live with them.

Why am I telling you all this?

We may smile at the credulity of these amusing islanders, but it's tragic that they're jeopardising their salvation by worshipping the wrong messiah. We wouldn't do anything so foolish, would we?

Oh yes we would, says Jesus, who takes pains to tell us: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many... Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many... Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "There!" do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you

¹John Whitcomb, *The World That Perished*, Baker House Books, 1973. ²Nelson, Broadberry and Wang, *The Beginning of Chinese Characters*, Read Books, 2001. ³Nelson, Broadberry and Chock, *God's Promise to the Chinese*, Read Books, 1997. ⁴Rene Noorbergen, *The Ark File*, Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1974. ⁵John Whitcomb, *The World That Perished*, Baker House Books, 1973. ⁶John Woodmorappe, *Noah's Ark – a Feasibility Study*, Institute for Creation Research, 2003. ⁷David C. Read, *Dinosaurs – An Adventist View*, Clarion Call Books, 2009.

David holds degrees in Zoology, Ecology, and Operational Management. He has served in various capacities as a science teacher, part-time lecturer and Community Education Manager. He retired as Education Officer for Hampshire in 2003. If you would like to have him visit your church at youth groups to present his Noah's Ark presentation, contact him at taffy60@hotmail.co.uk.



beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, "Look, He is in the desert!" do not go out; or "Look, He is in the inner rooms!" do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 23-27, NKJV.)

Many today put a high level of faith in the achievements of man – science and technology, the work of man's hands. We marvel at the complex inventions, and the breath-taking theories behind them, which have led to the digital and information revolution. Our televisions, computers, and smartphones – mere metal and plastic and glass – capture our attention and our emotional energy. We don't worship them though – do we? What about your car? Or your house? Or the piece of plastic you keep in your wallet? Maybe it's not worship in the Old Testament sense, but we certainly value them, even treasure them, and invest a lot of effort, time and money into these things – effort, time and money that might instead belong to God and to our neighbours. Are there any 'idols' in your home?

That's to say nothing of intangible, abstract nouns – ethical utilitarianism; democracy; personal liberty (to do what I want, when I want); the imperative of the dialectic. People kill and even give their lives for such things. Even beauty and health – good as they are – can become idols. We're all too familiar with how God's gift of sexuality has been twisted by the devil to produce pornography, with some starlets even setting themselves up as 'goddesses' to be 'worshipped'. So many today, even Christians, 'worship' these 'goddesses'. How will we fare when more severe deceptions come our way and false messiahs try to lead us astray?

The islanders of Hattah believed that their god would come to live with them on their island, participating in their way of life. Our God will come and live with us, but He wishes us to adopt His way of life instead: and His way of life is far, far better. Until then, he asks us not to be deceived, but to worship only the Creator.

There are no better words to conclude with than those of His disciple John (1 John 5:21, NKJV): "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Religious Liberty: home schooling and 'suitable' education

The purpose of this article is to analyse the definition of 'suitable' education as cited in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996¹ and to explore tension between both church and state ideologies from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. In April 2018 the Government issued elective home education [home schooling] guidance in England and Wales for parents wishing to undertake the home schooling of their children. The draft version published for consultation states that:

'b. To be "suitable", education at home should not directly conflict with the Fundamental British Values defined in the Government guidance.'²

This stipulation, though only guidance, should not be ignored or overlooked by the Seventh-day Adventist community. It is therefore very important, primarily, that those who have opted for home schooling their children should be equally well-versed with this Government guidance and provide a clear, constructive and measured response that demonstrates our Christian educational ethos.

The Government's draft guidance for consultation on elective home education should be understood in the context of pronouncements by Sir Michael Wilshaw, Dame Louise Casey and Lord Clive Stafford Soley.

Sir Michael Wilshaw (former Chief Inspector of Schools) raised concerns about a link between the growth of unregistered schools and an increase in the number of home educated children. He suggested that officials from Ofsted and the Department for Education should work together to consider how the **current legal framework around home**



education should be strengthened.³

Dame Louise Casey (Author of the Review into Opportunity and Integration) noted there was no definition in law of what constituted a 'suitable' education. However, she acknowledged in 2007 that the Department for Education had issued guidance using a definition which had been taken from a judicial case in R v Secretary of State for Education and Science (1985), and she argued that the 30-year-old case ran counter to British values. She concluded that if Independent Schools were requested to teach fundamental British values, then that should also apply to home educated children.⁴

Lord Clive Stafford Soley introduced a Private Members' Bill in the House of Lords.⁵ His motivation for this bill, he noted, was to prevent home-schooled children from 'radicalisation, exposure to extremist material and child abuse.'

Following the introduction of the legislative process, the impact of potential changes to home schooling in England and Wales are huge. This is due to the added emphasis placed on 'suitable' education which includes 'fundamental British values' as defined in the Government

guidance, the violation of which could result in sanctions from the local authorities. How would this impact our Seventh-day Adventist religious liberty? The approach taken by the Adventist Church organisation to navigate through a possible clash with the state over what a 'suitable' education entails is crucial. The Government acknowledges that some parents choose to home school their children for 'religious and cultural beliefs' and thus ensure that their education is aligned with these.

Moving forward, I suggest a two-pronged argument in response to the Government, comprising legally protected parental rights, followed by a clearly defined, Biblically supported philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist education:

A parent's duty

(a) Argue that Section 7 of the Education Act, 1996, gives a parent [guardian] a statutory right to home educate and to provide 'suitable' education for the child at any stage up to the end of compulsory school age. This also applies to a child with special needs (SEN).

(b) Argue also that the First Protocol, Article 2, of the European Convention on Human Rights, which provides a Right to Education states that: 'No person shall be denied the right to

education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education, and to teaching, the state shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.' This means that the state must respect the wishes of the parents, albeit the state has limited discretionary powers to intervene when necessary to do so.⁶

Include the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26(3): 'Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.'⁷

Adventist philosophy of education

The Adventist definition of 'suitable' education states: **'True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. . . . It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.'**⁸

This philosophy of education should be viewed in the light of the current working definition of the Government's guidance, based on the case law that characterises 'suitable' education as that which **'primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child's option in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so.'**⁹

It is interesting to note the case law definition of 'suitable' education, relied upon by the state for guidance, affirms that 'equipping' the child takes place within the proximity to which the child is a member [community] and not to the country as a whole. Against this backdrop, the Adventist definition is very broad and suggests a form of education that prepares children for service in this world and for eternity from a Judeo-Christian tradition. This is not in contravention of the overall working definition of the state, but only goes further because of the community's emphasis on service

in this world and 'for the world to come'. Seventh-day Adventists ought to use this common ground to foster unanimity. The inclusion of 'fundamental British values' in the definition of 'suitable' education infers adherence to the axioms of democracy and civility that law-abiding citizens, along with the Adventist community, welcome, including values of individual liberty, anti-discrimination, mutual respect, and tolerance and understanding of different beliefs. However, when fundamental British values, as defined in the Equality Act, 2010, pitches the protected characteristics of 'religion or belief' and 'sexual orientation' as two competing interests, the resulting clash raises issues of religious liberty among Adventist proponents of home schooling. Suffice it to say, the recent elective home education guidance for local authorities stipulates: 'c. local authorities should interpret "suitable" in the light of their general duties. . . . However, there is no requirement on parents [home schooling] to actively promote the fundamental British values as there is for schools.'¹⁰

It is important to observe that Government guidance on British values to local authorities is inconsistent here from the obligation now being expected of home schooling parents.

Finally, even though the opportunity to actively participate in the Government consultation on home schooling has closed (12 April-2 July 2018), visit www.adventrlp.com or www.adventrlp.com/useful-links to access the home schooling consultation details underway for England and Wales.

¹Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

²Elective Home Education Departmental Guidance for Parents: Draft Version for Consultation (April 2018). ³David Foster, Briefing Paper Number 5108, (18 January 2017) – Home Education in England.

⁴Dame Louise Casey DBE CB, The Casey Review – Into Opportunity and Integration (December 2016). ⁵Library briefing – Home Education (Duties of Local Authorities) Bill [HL] of 2017–19, House of Lords. ⁶Paul M. Taylor (Barrister Lincoln's Inn) Freedom of Religion; UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice (2005) p. 378. ⁷United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁸E. G. White, *Education* (1998) p. 13. ⁹R v Secretary of State for Education and Science (1985), ex parte Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School Trust. ¹⁰Elective Home Education Departmental Guidance for Local Authorities: Draft for Consultation (April 2018).

Autumn House gains wider exposure

by Elisabeth Sangüesa,
General Manager of The Stanborough Press Ltd

Christian Resources

Together, perhaps better known to many Christians as CRT, produce *Together*, a bi-monthly print and digital magazine aimed at resourcing Christian retailers, suppliers and church leaders. It is a window into 'what is happening in the UK Christian retail and supply trade, the very best in product information, trade news, publisher and retail store profiles and much more.' According to its publishers, *Together* 'is a magazine that is read and re-read by retailers and suppliers alike.'

It is sent to Christian bookstores, general booksellers and publishers, among a number of other organisations and individuals. Recently, the products of **The Stanborough Press Ltd** were featured in their magazine for the first time when Trevor Johnson, our Adventist Book Centre manager, was given a page in the April issue of *Together* in order to promote the books and other products that we publish under our **Autumn House** imprint.

Autumn House Publications (Europe) Ltd was established in 1991 with the mandate to share Jesus and His message of hope with the wider faith community and the British public in general, as well as the international community of English-language readers. It specialises in producing Bible-based materials, which include children's books and games; a variety of daily devotional readings; Bibles; Bible study helps; cookbooks for the health-conscious; inspirational gift books and cards; and more.

Part of a broader strategy

This is part of the broader strategy of The Stanborough Press to strengthen its presence in the Christian bookshop environment at the same time as it endeavours to provide a better service to our members in the UK and abroad.

Several initiatives are in place to improve our visibility and the access that members have to our wide range of products – which are already proving quite popular.

By working very closely together with the different departments of the Church, we have been able to provide relevant literature at events and conventions organised by the British Union, and at others organised by the Church internationally (Family, Women and Children Convention in Budapest; Health Conference in Romania; Youth Congress in Germany; and the Disabilities Ministries Conference in Bucharest, etc.).

These are exciting times, times of change and innovation, and we look forward to providing resources for evangelism, nurture, and member retention to our churches, and quality Christian and health literature to the British public in general.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please feel free to visit our website at www.stanboroughpress.org.uk; and www.adventistbookcenter.com; or call us on 01476 591700 (choose option 1) to secure the literature resources you need.





Doctor runs in support of her patients

On Sunday 22 April, Winchester Church member Dr Sarah De Vos completed the ABP* Southampton half-marathon, in order to fundraise for Countess Mountbatten Hospice Charity. She joined 34 others who ran the half-marathon, full marathon, or 10 km to raise funds for this very special charity, which supports Countess Mountbatten House, the hospice where Sarah works in Southampton.

The charity provides those little (and not so little) extras to help make someone's stay in the Hospice, their visit to the Hazel Centre (day hospice), or the care they receive in the community, the best it can be. These 'extras' the charity provides include free daily newspapers of their choice for inpatients; drinks and snacks for visitors; pain-relieving mattresses for patients; additional staff and

training; purchasing of new and improved equipment; funding volunteer driver services; and the upkeep of beautiful gardens which are so appreciated by patients, visitors and staff. An important aspect of the charity's work is in fulfilling many last requests for patients, which have included providing a helicopter ride and a powerboat ride, arranging visits to patients from local sporting celebrities, and even helping to organise a beautiful wedding at the hospice within a short space of time. These 34 runners have raised over £10,000 to date, which will all be used as mentioned above.

Sarah feels blessed and privileged to work in a place where she is able to minister to the medical, practical and spiritual needs of people living with, and dying from, serious illnesses, including cancer, motor neurone disease, advanced heart failure and numerous other conditions.



Any support you can provide, including your prayers for Sarah and those she works with (her patients, their relatives, and her colleagues) is gratefully appreciated.

To find out more visit www.justgiving.com/sarahdevosotonhalf2018, or contact her via Facebook.

SARAH DE VOS

A well-deserved silver medal

Audrey Balderstone of Stanborough Park Church has once again been in the news over her flower arranging exploits. This time it was for an arrangement at the recent Chelsea Flower Show, for which she and her friend Yolanda Campbell earned a silver medal. They are both members of the Watford Floral Society and have organised a number of festivals at Stanborough Park Church over the years.



JUNE COOMBS



Inez is on the left of this photograph

High honour for Inez Brown

On 24 April Inez Brown, Partner and Head of Clinical Negligence at Harrison Clark Rickerbys (Medical Accident Group), was inaugurated as the deputy vice president of the Birmingham Law Society. She will become vice president in 2019 with a view to becoming president in 2020, when she will preside over 5,000 solicitors and barristers. This is a major achievement and Inez has said that God has really blessed her and helped her to be one of the best in her field. She gives the glory to God and prays that she will continue to be a witness for Him. She is a member of the Handsworth Church and serves on the North England Conference Committee.

PASTOR RICHARD JACKSON (NEC PRESIDENT)



'Come let us pray'

It is said that 'when a woman cries out to God in prayer there is a "tectonic shift": hearts connect, friendships form, bonds deepen and lives are changed.' This was evident when 700 women attended the North England Conference Women's Ministries Prayer Conference, held on 30-31 March in Manchester. The colour scheme for the event was purple, which is associated with royalty, nobility, luxury, power, dignity and ambition. It was a beautiful sight to behold.

'Come let us pray' was the theme chosen by Beulah Plunkett (North England Conference Women's Ministries and Sabbath School Director) and her team who put together the Prayer Conference. The speaker was Sharon Platt-McDonald, the British Union Conference Women's Ministries, Health and Community Director. The conference goal was 'fostering practices to grow our relationship with God'. This goal identifies prayer as one of our key practices, in harmony with a prior NEC Directors strategic planning meeting, during which Pastor Richard Jackson (NEC President) encouraged directors to include prayer in all their plans and undertakings.

Pastor Alan Hush (NEC Executive Secretary) opened the event on the Friday, and during his welcome he connected by WhatsApp with the NEC President who was in Canada. They both encouraged the women and gave their blessing to such an inspirational programme.

Sharon Platt-McDonald came to teach and to preach and the women were blessed. They were given guidance on the importance of earnestly bringing our petitions to God and then to listen for His answers: yes, no or wait. Her personal testimonies helped to deepen their understanding of how prayer works. Sharon also taught them the importance of going back to God and thanking Him for answered prayer. The key point was that one must put as much effort and time in thanking God for answered prayer as when petitioning Him, which must have been a revelation to many.

Sharon also shared 15 strategies on how to 'pray for breakthrough'. These included: praying God's Word, dressing in God's armour daily, praying in faith, personalising your prayer, praying the solution not the problem... to name a few. The women had resources to take away for use in their own prayer plans.

On the Sabbath, Beulah Plunkett led a Bible study on the theme of stewardship – the 'The Stewardship of Prayer' – in which she examined the prayer of Solomon. The discussion was lively and insightful.

Another key aspect of the Prayer Conference was that the women actually got to pray together. The four prayer leaders – Ruth South, Lesley Noakes, Joan Saunders and Rudo Chengeta – led united prayer for one hour. Each took 15 minutes to direct the women to praise, confession, petition and thanksgiving.

Singing praises to God is an integral part of any worship and the well

organised praise team led the congregation in singing some of the wonderful hymns that were chosen for the occasion. The group 'Voices in Praise' from Handsworth Church, Birmingham, added that extra-special element through their tight knit vocal harmonies. Lunch was provided, and even when booking numbers swelled, the chef, Cheryl Banton, said she would be fine – her trust in God is formidable. God blessed the food and everyone who wanted lunch had lunch and were well fed – all 550 of them.

Despite it being a women's conference, a few men came to assist behind the scenes and their contribution was sincerely appreciated by all.

In retrospect, this day ran like a well-oiled machine. From the early registration to lunch and beyond there was an air of grace and patience. The organising team, comprised of Voahangy Bohoussou (NEC secretary), assisted by Wendy Watson-Teague, Lesley Noakes, Angela Walters and Paulette Martin, are to be commended for the work they did. The hall was filled and there were no major incidents. God has to be praised for such an informative and life changing experience. Please keep the work of the Women's Ministries team in your prayers.

BEULAH PLUNKETT AND LUNGANI SIBANDA

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THE HUB COMMUNITY CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a contemporary worship service for all, meeting community needs for Christ in all that we do.

The Hub Church Plant worships in ASDA

It's not every Sabbath you get to enter a church via the entrance to an ASDA supermarket, but if you plan to attend *The Hub* that's exactly what you'll have to do.

The Hub is a contemporary Adventist church that has as its mission to 'provide a programme of nurture and teaching alongside growing fellowship that will lead people into a deeper spiritual experience.'

For those who would prefer a less formal church setting, with contemporary singing and a relaxed informal dress style, then maybe *The Hub* is for you. According to Ruth Stewart, one of the co-founders of the group, the vision for the church was born from a 'desire to attract the younger generation, who were leaving church, and to provide for them an alternative style of worship.'

Indeed, when you step into the community hall based at the back of ASDA on St Albans Road in Watford, you will find the church set up for a relaxed atmosphere. With round tables offering water and light refreshments, sofas for more relaxed seating, as well as a 'Messy Church' room for children, *The Hub* provides an opportunity for parents to focus on the worship experience while their children are taken care of.

With its unique location near the busy shoppers in the ASDA shopping area, *The Hub* provides an opportunity to engage with those from the community who may want something more than buying groceries. Not only that, but the group get to use the premises for free!

Raymond Stewart, the group's elder, said, 'Being within the ASDA environment allows us to collaborate with the management and staff for future projects such as the running of a food bank, health seminars, a community choir, as well as catering for children while parents do their shopping.'

The service starts at 10.45am, with the lesson study in a 'living room' style format. Then there's a 'greet and share' time where attendees talk to each other about their week and share their experiences. The praise and worship team then lead out with uplifting songs which, following prayer and an offering, leads into the main message.

One of the benefits of a small group is the opportunity to fellowship together over a meal after the service. This creates a deeper bond of unity and friendship, which is where people begin to feel that they belong. Valerie Austin, a co-founder of the group, had this to say: '*The Hub* has now become my home. When you worship here you sense that this is a special place.'

The Hub is one example of several informal church groups around the British Union, and for those who are interested it provides a model of how it can be done.

For further details about *The Hub* contact Raymond Stewart, at raystewart@aol.co.uk.

RICHARD DALY



'You can go home again – 2018' revival meetings

Between 28 April and 12 May Dagenham Church ran a very successful revival series on the theme 'You can go home again – 2018'. During the meetings, Pastor Hezron Otieno Adingo took the opportunity to deliver sermons inviting God's estranged children to come back home to Him. He also presented seminars on Reclamation and Retention.

The attendance was encouraging from beginning to end and some former members are back at church again after being away for many years. Two teenagers also indicated their desire to be baptised as a result of the meetings.

PASTOR HEZRON OTIENO ADINGO (LOCAL PASTOR)



Let your light shine ... in Grimsby

On Sabbath 28 April, expectant North England Conference members gathered in Grimsby Hall for the Area 3 day of fellowship and were not disappointed. Area 3 covers the churches in Sheffield, Leeds, Huddersfield, Doncaster and some outlying areas. The British Union Conference President,

Pastor Ian Sweeney, spoke about angry Christians, reminding the members of how generous God's grace is towards his children. The Adventist Chorale created a wonderful atmosphere throughout the day with their inspired singing; but the day will be remembered most for the number of Pathfinders and Adventurers who attended, some travelling more than eighty miles to parade in the streets of this fishing town.

The weather was typical for this part of the country with light rain falling throughout the day, but despite this the children and youth were not put off and marched through the streets of Grimsby as people curiously looked on. One young person commented on how surprised they felt by the warm welcome and the willingness of people to accept the literature distributed. This was all done in support of the growing Adventurer club in Grimsby. NEC Pathfinder Director, Pastor Ikwisa Mwasumbi, led out in the investiture service of the Grimsby Adventurers.

Overall, it was a day well supported and enjoyed by all, largely due to the work of the area pastors and their team. Special thanks go to Pastor John Francis and his wife, Delivon, who had the vision and determination to hold the event in this lesser-known fishing town.

PASTOR CARLTON DOUGLAS AND LUNGANI SIBANDA



'The Time is Now' report

Lewisham Church hosted a two-week evangelistic series entitled 'The Time is Now', which began on 28 April and involved 16 different speakers, including both pastors and lay preachers. This Gospel preaching was combined with a mix of vibrant praise and worship sessions and informative health talks. The series was organised by Lewisham Church pastor, Colin Stewart, and Dr Richard de Lisser.

Dr Sean Dowding launched the series and encouraged everyone to remember Christ's purpose on earth – to embrace and save people from all walks of life. Later, in the evening, a young preacher, Asher McKenzie, did his bit to get things off to a promising start.

More nights of inspirational, Bible-based preaching followed and the congregation was revived and empowered by the unique way each speaker was able to draw each soul to Jesus. The meetings were well supported by young and old alike, and the members invited their friends from the community and their family to attend. There were also members from neighbouring churches in the South London area who came to show their support.

The final day started with an exuberant song service, after which Pastor Steve McKenzie preached with zeal and enthusiasm about the power of God to add taste and flavour to life, with a sermon aptly entitled, 'It's not that dry'. Many were touched and several came to the altar to make or renew their commitment to God.

At the end of the series Rushayne Amur Archer, Florinda Dasilva, and



Photo: Tony McIntosh

Renique Henry were baptised in a church packed to capacity. Many of the speakers returned to support the baptism, and Pastor Stewart thanked all those who had made the event special, reminding the church that the work of inviting souls to Jesus through community outreach was to continue. Twelve additional candidates are being prepared for the next baptism.

ATHEA BONNER-MCKENZIE (LEWISHAM COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR)



Top left: The four demonstrators (left to right) Michael Walker, Norma Borrett, Justin Overton, Pearl Walker.

Top right: Daniel Keshishyan testing for blood sugar.

Right: Partaking of the food.



Outreach in Great Yarmouth

For several years now, the Great Yarmouth church has been following a process of mission outreach into the community to herald 'God's Last Warning Message', and there are precious souls who are receptive to it. Only recently, a couple started attending our church because they believe that Christ will soon return. They are convicted that their search for truth has brought them to the right place, and that Seventh-day Adventists are nearer to following the Bible than any other denomination.

Our new pastor, Mark Borrett, is following on from the Daniel and Revelation series that was conducted last year mainly by the writer, with an intensive series of studies about *Absolute Surrender* to Christ. We have also introduced a *Church Family Fellowship* programme that takes place on the first Sabbath of every month, open to any who wish to join us. It commences with a fellowship lunch after the morning service, and is

followed by a variety of activities (nothing stereotyped), with something for every age group. Both the above events are being supported by members from both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Churches, which comprise our district.

Our health outreach ministry is still ploughing ahead under the leadership of Pearl Walker, with the two health screening sessions a year in the town centre and the regular bi-monthly vegetarian cookery classes. Since the inauguration of the vegetarian cooking demonstrations in 2012 we have conducted 28 sessions; and those who have attended all of them have now accumulated 112 recipes! At each session four recipes are presented, and at the most recent class (15 April), we presented 'Picnic Pie', 'Savoury Vegetarian Bake', 'Stuffed Mushrooms', and 'Butternut Squash Pasta Bake'. A mouthwatering feast was enjoyed by everyone. The health screening took place the following Sunday in the Market Gates Shopping Mall, and even though the inclement weather negatively affected our client numbers, the response was very positive. Our 'Free Literature' table was well-stocked with health and spiritual materials; and a good quantity of *Steps to Christ* and *He is Coming* were taken by the general public. The local newspaper, *The Great Yarmouth Mercury*, featured both events in two separate issues, giving us good coverage with colour photographs.

In fact, a new contact attended our cooking demo on 29 April as a result of an advert in the newspaper – an advert that we were completely unaware of!

We promote our church's involvement in the community through *Network Yarmouth* (an electronic newsletter for 'Christians Together'), the *Great Yarmouth Mercury*, and our own monthly local newsletter, *The Link*. In addition to this, our new pastor's 28 years with Hewlett Packard now pay dividends through the websites he is developing for both churches in this district. It may have been from the website that the local newspaper picked up the information on our vegetarian cookery class. Please visit the site at: <https://greatyarmouth-adventistchurch-org-uk.adventist.eu>.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER (COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY)



Bristol community Gospel concert

On Saturday evening, 14 April, several churches in the St Paul's area of Bristol gathered to enjoy the first in a series of community Gospel concerts.

The event was organised by local councillor, Dr Carole Johnson, and sponsored by Bristol Energy. For several months Councillor Johnson has engaged the various local churches in discussions to encourage community cohesion.

South Bristol Church and Bristol Central Church, which sits in the heart of the St Paul's area, were both involved, after several discussions between Pastor Royston Smith (local church pastor), Dr Carole Johnson and Mary Philip (community leader). Among the other projects which Councillor Johnson highlighted was the Winter Night Shelter for the homeless, which the church gladly embraced and participated in over a six-week period (led by Beverley Thompson and her team).

On the night of the concert, several artists from our churches performed special items of music. These included Jodene Francis, Kirsten Khonje, and Angela Victor and Mortel Henderson, who sang 'I Know My Redeemer Lives' to rousing applause. Several items of Gospel music were also sung by Renewal Choir, a local group from different faith groups across Bristol.

In addition to the singing, the Bristol Central Community Ministries team of five provided free samples of local healthy snacks. The concert goers were also treated to a selection of grapes, honey dew melon,

watermelon, and cantaloupe fruit bowls. During the break the crowd of about 150 quickly scooped up the dishes and some came back for second helpings. There was lots of positive feedback. One lady was so impressed and commented: 'I am a vegan and usually when I go to events like this I don't eat of the food, because it is always a meat dish. However, I can eat tonight, as it is all plant-based. For this I thank you.'

The church members also took the opportunity to give out 50 goodie bags, with literature such as *Steps to Christ* and *The Desire of Ages*.

According to Dr Carole Johnson it was a great success, and she is planning another concert in the south of Bristol in the not too distant future. As has become the norm, the Bristol Seventh-day Adventist churches again demonstrated their commitment to community involvement, in order to be relevant and demonstrate the love of Christ to the people of Bristol.

MARY PHILIP



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Welsh Mission 'on fire' for the Lord

The Welsh Mission Youth Department organised two outreach community events on Sunday 6 May. Firstly, the youth in South Wales visited the children's ward at Carmarthen Hospital, where they brought a lot of smiles to the children's faces, as each one received a toy as a gift. An amazing amount of joy and excitement showed on the faces of these sick children despite their difficult circumstances. The staff expressed their gratitude too, and invited the youth to visit again later in the year.

The next event for the day was a charity car wash at Carmarthen Fire Station in aid of the Fire Fighters' Charity. The hard work of the youth was well repaid as they managed to raise £148 in donations in the space of a few hours. That was followed by a tour of the fire station and a demonstration of all the equipment used by the firemen, including the fire engine. The young people also gave gratitude packs to each of the



station's 30 fire fighters, which included the book 'The Power of Hope', to show appreciation for their service in the community, and for their putting their lives in danger to save others. The firemen were very welcoming and hospitable towards the youth during their stay at the fire station, and obviously quite deeply moved by the appreciation shown to them by the youth of the Welsh Mission.

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Healthy mind, healthy body

Harvest Festival... traditionally a time when farmers and others give thanks for a successful harvest, but not in the Adventist church of Erdington. Last year their Health Ministries team decided to run a weekend programme focusing on how to keep your mind healthy and active by using only natural products. Beginning on Sabbath 16 September, all members and regular visiting friends gathered to donate a variety of foods, both packaged and fresh.

Wilfred Masih was the day's speaker, and his very appropriate sermon was entitled, 'Gratefulness', during which he showed how men have lost sight of being grateful and thankful to God for His abundant blessings and mercies.

The eye-opening AYS Programme was conducted by Deborah Benjamin, a Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist, who explored the extraordinary connection between the body and the mind. A portion of time was taken to discuss what the Bible says about how important our mind is and how we connect with the Lord and the Lord with us. She also made the point that 'if you can look after your mind you can look after your body'.

On the Sunday there was a well-attended prayer breakfast. This was

followed by a 'Raw Food Demonstration' by Health Ministries leader Cislyn Morgan-Davis and her young helpers, Ynique Yearly and Kylie Anderson. This event was not to be missed and all were treated to mouth-watering desserts, such as scrumptious 'rawtarian' cheesecake, enticing energy balls, refreshing 'rawtarian' lemon bars and a variety of tantalising, rich, colourful smoothies. All the desserts and smoothies were made from completely natural products.

After the demonstrations everyone had a chance to taste test the different products, and some members even had a go at creating their own smoothies!

REBEKKAH ECCLES

Dagenham's pastor meets the Mayor

On 9 May Pastor Hezron Otieno Adingo, the minister for Dagenham Church, was privileged to meet the mayor of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Councillor Abdul Gafoor Aziz, in his parlour. There they discussed the involvement of Dagenham Church in the local community through Pathfinder activities, ministry in the two hostels, Brockle Bank Lodge and Butlers Court, as well as what we are doing at the Bennett Castle and Winifred Care Homes.

Dagenham Church's Pathfinders, due to their good relationship with the council, have been granted the privilege of leading the processions in all major civic events organised by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. God be praised for the opportunity! Dagenham Church also continues to minister to the Brockle Bank Lodge and Butlers Court hostels where their help and support in various ways is appreciated. Some residents and former residents of the hostels have even started attending church services on Sabbath, with some receiving Bible studies. There have also been requests for children to be dedicated and, most important of all, for some adults to be baptised as Seventh-day Adventists!

The Bennett Castle and Winifred Care Homes continue to receive visits every third Sabbath, something the residents always look forward to.

PASTOR HEZRON OTIENO ADINGO (LOCAL PASTOR)



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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
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13	9.14	9.26	9.25	9.51	9.53
20	9.06	9.18	9.17	9.42	9.45
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