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SEC SESSION

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CONTENTS



NEW ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM



SESSION REPORT



NEW SEC TEAM

EDITORIAL TEAM

- Editor**
Sam O. Davies
- Copyeditor**
Catherine Anthony Boldeau
- Proofreading**
Norma Borrett
- News & Photo Editor**
Don Roberts
- Layout & Design**
Peter Oppong-Mensah

03 EDITORIAL

04 NEW ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

08 SESSION REPORT

- Highlights Of The Session – Catherine Anthony Boldeau
- The Spiritual Message – John Surridge
- The New SEC Team For The Next Four Years – Ricahrd Daly

14 RELATING TO CHILDREN WITH AUTISM - Darell Philip

15 MAKING JESUS FAMOUS - Akwasi Agyemang

18 ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON

- The Stories – Vanessa Pissuto
- Making An Impact – Lynette Allcock

20 SEC DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS

27 ADVERTISEMENTS

28 NEWS SPOTLIGHT - Don Roberts

33 DEVOTIONAL - Michael Anim

36 EVANGELISM EXPO

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Editorial

We are devoting the bulk of this edition to the coverage of the 63rd Session of the South England Conference. This is important because at Conference Sessions, changes do happen, and new directions for pursuing our mission are set out for the next term which, for our conference, is four years.

One of the key statements expected by delegates and constituents on the last day of session is the speech by the newly elected President. It is significant because the President's speech sets out the theme and direction for the mission of the church.

Dr Emmanuel Osei's re-election at the 63rd Session to lead the South England Conference gave him the mandate to share his vision for the next four years. His charge to delegates and constituents on the last day was for the church to be heavily involved with the communities in which they are situated. He coined the theme, "Total Community Involvement" to emphasise that our mission lies within the communities where our churches reside. What are the implications of total membership involvement in the community?

The details will become clearer as we move into the new term. At the time of going to

press, a few more directors and coordinators were yet to be elected, and the mandate was transferred to the newly elected executive committee to oversee the completion of this task. After the completion, the new team will begin meetings to draw a strategy for carrying out the theme for the mission. Usually, at a major constituency meeting in the new year, at the South England Conference "Evangelism Expo," the various directors and coordinators share how the strategies can be implemented. Representatives from each church then take this to their churches for local implementation.

We are thankful to our guest writers who have brought us the various stories that emerged from the 63rd Session of the South England Conference.

Also, in this edition, we share an article by Darell Philip on Autism; how is your local church relating to people with conditions that may appear to disrupt your regular services? We have also featured an article by Akwasi Agyemang on the impact that Adventist Education makes in evangelism.

Your constant prayers and support are elicited for the new team as they lead in the implementation of "Total Community Involvement" for the next four years.

OUR COVER



SAM O. DAVIES
Editor

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The New SEC
Administrative Team

Emmanuel Osei

President



Dr Emmanuel K. Osei was elected to serve as President at the 63rd Session of South England Conference in Portsmouth on 6th September 2019. Born in Accra, Ghana, Emmanuel travelled to the UK as a child. He received his call to pastoral ministry at the age of 21, just before completing his first degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

On entering Newbold College of Higher Education, Emmanuel embarked upon and completed his ministerial training, qualifying with an MA in Theology, before pastoring. He has since pastored a number of churches within the London area as an ordained minister.

He is married to Laura Osei, a Head Teacher, and they have been blessed with three adult daughters - Naomi, Danielle and Leah - plus two grandchildren, Rhianne and Aaron.

A gifted and sought-after speaker, Emmanuel has conducted evangelistic campaigns both here in the UK and throughout Africa, USA and the Caribbean. Apart from his formal post-graduate ministerial training at Newbold College, Emmanuel has also obtained a MA in Mission Studies from Birmingham University and a Doctor of Ministry from Seabury Western Theological Seminary in Chicago, USA.

Osei is honoured to serve the 25,000 church members and has a vision of making the churches in Southern England relevant and open to all within their respective communities.

In his leisure time, Emmanuel enjoys playing dominoes with his friends, staying fit and healthy with regular walking, and he has a real passion for travelling and seeing the world.



Douglas McCormac

Executive Secretary

Douglas grew up in Belfast and, after leaving school with a handful of 'O' levels, began his working career as an apprentice electrician. But just as he was finishing his apprenticeship, he felt the call to full-time Pastoral ministry and so began his studies at Newbold College of Higher Education in 1989. In 1993 he was awarded his BA Degree in Theology, and two years later received his MA in Systematic Theology and a Diploma in Pastoral Ministry.

In 1997 Douglas began his ministry in Dublin and Wicklow, Ireland, serving the congregations of Ranelagh and Baltinglass and later adding the Dublin Romanian church. While in the Irish Mission, Douglas served as Pastor, Communications Sponsor, ADRA Ireland Country Director and Secretary of World Wide Advent Missions. It was in Ireland that Doug-

las and his wife Annie had their two girls.

In 2008 Douglas accepted a call to serve in the South England Conference and became the Senior Pastor to the Southampton and Winchester churches. He also served as Area 3 Coordinator.

In September 2015 Douglas was elected to serve as Executive Secretary to the South England Conference and re-elected in 2019 to serve for a further four years.

When Douglas is not spending time with his family, he enjoys walking, photography and working on his allotment. He has served in the Adventist Church for over 24 years, and it is his passion of seeing Jesus Christ expressed in all our lives and in all we do that drives his ministry.



Treasurer

Candy Layson

Candy Layson is the newly elected and first female Treasurer of the SEC.

She holds BSc in Industrial Engineering from Ateneo de Davao University, Philippines, and began her career working in export manufacturing before moving to the banking sector where she completed an MBA from the University of San Carlos.

Born in the Philippines, Candy immigrated to the UK in 2002 and worked for 15 years in the Finance department of an NHS hospital. While serving there,

she qualified as an accountant with her ACCA.

Candy has been an active member of the Filipino International Church (FIC). She participates in different ministries through her involvement in small groups, serving as Sabbath School superintendent, Music Ministries leader, choir member and head of the local church Treasury department for over 15 years.

In 2017 she joined the SEC as Associate Treasurer. She understands the challenges of the local church treasurers and hopes

to contribute greatly to the enhancement of service and communication between SEC and local churches. She humbly, somewhat reluctantly, accepts this position as Treasurer and trusts that God will equip her to fulfil her role.

She is married to Hefer who is a nurse, and they have two children: Rhae, aged 18, who is about to start her first year at University College London; and Kari, aged 12, who attends Stanborough Secondary School.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SESSION

BY CATHERINE ANTHONY BOLDEAU

The shadows of the Thursday morning gave way to hazy sunshine as we approached the maritime city of Portsmouth to join the delegates and invitees to the 63rd Session of the South England Conference. 'Sessions' are places of corporate church business- the selection of new officers, the granted credentials to church representatives, both clergy and laity, and the planning for the future of the church. Yes, there were devotionals by guest speaker Pastor Royston Philbert and warrior-like petitions to the Father from the SEC Prayer Team. We were soothed by the angelic voices of the Filipino International Choir on Sabbath morning and afternoon, and we witnessed the ordination of Hezron Adingo Otieno, Michael Salmon, Otis Lewis and Alex Marenicu to gospel ministry. But the purpose of the four days was to *'do business'*.

On Thursday evening the Recommendations Committee was formed with over 180 people, and they retired to elect the members of the Nominating Committee, the Plans Committee, the Constitution Committee and the Licence and Credentials Committee.

By Friday morning a Nominating Committee, chaired by Pastor Ian Sweeney, President of the BUC, had elected Dr Emmanuel Osei as President, re-elected Pastor Douglas McCormac as Executive Secretary and elected Mrs Candy Layson to serve as the first female Treasurer of the SEC. By the end of the Session, the Committee had elected, and the floor voted, the following directorial appointments:

Pr Sam Davies	-	Communication & Media
Pr Max McKenzie-Cook	-	Community Services
Dr Mike Hamilton	-	Radio
Dr Mike Mbui	-	Personal Ministries
Mrs Judy Clements	-	Children
Dr Chidi Ngwaba	-	Health
Mrs Jackie Otokpa	-	Women's Ministries
Pr Anthony Fuller	-	Youth
Pr Juan Carlos Patrick	-	Teens
Pr Clifford Herman	-	Pathfinders
Pr Fergus Owusu-Boateng	-	Adventist Muslim Relations
Pr Fergus Owusu-Boateng	-	Sabbath School
Pr Todd Frias	-	Stewardship
Pr Sam Oudjo	-	Ministerial
Dr Augustus Lawrence	-	Family

Further posts, not elected at the Session, will be chosen by the incoming Executive Committee (Board of Trustees).

Appreciation was given to Pastor Maslin Holness (Women's Ministries), Pastor Kevin Johns (Pathfinders), Pastor Ebenezer Jones-Lartey (Ministerial), Ms Malika Bediako (Community and Children), and Mr Fred Shone (Treasurer), for their service to the South England Conference over the past four years.

Apart from the election of officers to serve the SEC for the next four years, one of the 'highlights' of the Session was the proposed changes to the Constitution - the governing document of the church as a charitable organisation. The discussions around this were long and heated. To coin a phrase by the statesman and retired BUC President, Pastor Cecil Perry, it was 'Brexit'. Another delegate, on reflecting on the parliamentary procedures that governed the discussions around the Constitution, stated that he felt that he had 'motion sickness', after the motions on the floor became so confusing, that it even appeared to stump the Parliamentarian that was invited from the General Conference.

And despite over three hours of heated debate on the proposed changes to the Constitution, it was voted by the delegates to refer it back to the Constitution Committee.

On Sunday afternoon, as the Session came to a close and the huddled groups of people that were dotted around, inside and outside the Portsmouth Guildhall, dispersed, the raised voices gave way to the sound of the wind. The planning and business ceased. A quietness reigned that said, 'Be still and know that I am God'.

Sessions come and sessions go, but we must never forget that our ultimate purpose, as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, is not to engage in church business, not simply to elect officers or debate the wording in documentation; it is to acknowledge and serve a God that often is seen through the smile of a child, the blooming of a rose or heard in the silent places of our souls.

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

BY JOHN SURRIDGE
BUC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The transformation of the Portsmouth Guildhall from a place of business on Friday to a place of worship on Sabbath took place through a number of subtle changes. Many of the faces were the same, with a few even sitting in the same seats as they had for the business sessions, but the atmosphere was different. Clothes were slightly smarter, some were joined by their families, and there was a sense of relaxation - real Sabbath rest - knowing that this was a protected period of time when business would not be discussed.

The divine service is always the highlight of a South England Conference Session and as the Filipino International Choir sang "Prepare our Hearts to Worship You", the delegation became a congregation, completing the metamorphosis.

Of course, there was no ignoring the results of the previous day's business, and the new administrative team was again presented from the front, though this time with more emphasis on the need for members to pray for God's leading and guidance, as together they face the daunting task ahead.

The offering was announced by newly appointed Treasurer, Mrs Candy Layson, the first female treasurer in the SEC's history. She introduced another first - the opportunity for those present to give by credit card or contactless donation. As the ushers carried traditional offering baskets to those seated, a handful of early adopters walked to the front and tried out the new equipment. Those hoping for a running total on the screen were disappointed, but it has to be said that the system worked well. At the close of the service, it

was reported that over £2,000 had been collected in the baskets and £460 through the new gadgets.

Royston Philbert has been a friend of SEC President Pastor Emanuel Osei for more than 30 years, ever since they ran a campaign together in Curaçao. Currently serving as the Ministerial Secretary and Communications Director of the North Caribbean Conference, Pastor Philbert enjoys travelling and was clearly delighted to be returning to England. Having spoken at Camp Meetings several times over the years, he pointed out several friends and acquaintances in the congregation.

Using Matthew 11:4-6 as his key text, Pastor Philbert's theme was, "How do you want to be seen?" To analyse the text, Pastor Philbert referred to a technique devised in 1955 by Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingram, known as the "Johari window". This divides personal knowledge according to whether the information is known to self or known to others. Some things are open - known to us and known to others. Some things are closed - not known by us and not known by others. But between these two extremes are blind spots, where others know more about us than we do ourselves, and facades where we hide things from others.

John the Baptist knew things about himself, and he knew things about Jesus, but in his prison cell, he became troubled, and questioned what he thought he knew. When Jesus was baptised in the Jordan, John had said, "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world," but now he asked, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we look for another?"

John the Baptist had never been afraid to speak out, to confront

authority and condemn evil wherever he saw it. When Herod stole his brother's wife, John criticised him openly. In any age it is risky to rebuke a political despot, and in John's case, it resulted in his imprisonment.

Today, a remnant of God's people has been told to come out of the wilderness and preach the message. The message may not be popular and, as in previous generations, people may be afraid to speak out, but if we want to be children of God, we have to speak out. We have a message that has not been given to any other church apart from ours. As Adventists, our responsibility is to call people to fear God and worship Him. "If you want to be a child of God, stand up for Jesus Christ!" said Pastor Philbert.

The qualities of John the Baptist which led to his greatness, were found in his connection with Jesus and in his proclamation of Jesus' coming. Today, true greatness is still seen in those who are prepared to proclaim truths which people may not want to hear. If we are to be successful in this, we too need to keep our connection with Jesus and focus on His soon return.

In his concluding comments, Pastor Philbert gave a personal testimony about his elderly parents. Every time he says goodbye, he doesn't know if he will see them again. However, his faith in Jesus' return, when families will be reunited, gives him the strength to carry on with his ministry, giving his time to proclaim this hope to those who have none.

"How should we live as we wait for Jesus' return?", asked Pastor Philbert. "Answer the call by the quality of your lives."

The Guildhall, Portsmouth University, was the venue for the 63rd South England Conference (SEC) Session. Held from 5-8 September 2019, 543 delegates (401 Regular and 142 Delegates at Large) representing over 200 churches across the SEC, assembled together for this meeting.

Held every four years, the SEC Session is the forum where the business of the Church is discussed at Conference level and includes a variety of important agenda items including the election of administration and departmental officers, the SEC Executive Committee, that steers the business of the Conference throughout the quadrennium and steering committees such as the Plans Committee. It's also a time to review the Constitution, examining any proposed amendments that are brought to the floor. Delegates get the opportunity to question and comment on administration and de-

partmental reports, bring forth motions, amendments and proposals and ultimately to vote on items and recommendations that have been discussed. This four-day session proved to contain all the above as delegates arrived having ploughed through pages of reports and documents in preparation for their task.

Recognising the importance of every vote and the lasting impact it will have on the way the Church functions, underpinning all the business sessions of each day was prayer. Aided by the SEC Prayer Ministries team, the session opened with a united time of spiritual reflection, asking for God's leading in all matters that would be dealt with. With a call to confession, repentance and reconciliation, SEC Bible Worker, Linda Mukwada, reminded the delegation that God is the real Divine Director who guides His church.

With this precedence set in the

opening meeting on Thursday afternoon, each delegate was formally welcomed by Pastors Emmanuel Osei (President) and Douglas McCormac (Executive Secretary) and having obtained a quorum, the session was declared open.

With the minutes accepted from the previous session, the first items on the agenda saw the acceptance of several newly formed churches into the sisterhood of the SEC. The next task was the formation of the Recommendations Committee. This large committee, which was partially completed prior to the session, was finalised and tasked with the responsibility of formulating the Nominating, Plans and Licenses and Credentials Committees.

With these formalities undertaken, the first main item for discussion was the acceptance of the proposed departmental structure that would determine the allocated budgets

and directors who would fill those positions. Some changes to the present structure were proposed, namely the Health and Community Services departments to be led by one director under one full-time budget. The other was a restructuring of the youth entities to contain Children's, Teens, Pathfinder and Youth Director, that would be overseen by a Supervising Youth and Children's Director. This proposal saw much discussion as some delegates aired their concerns of seeing this as another level of bureaucracy whilst others welcomed the attempt towards cohesion in bringing uniformity. However, coupled with the concerns over uniting Health and Community Services, together with a passionate plea from one delegate that was embraced by others to include in the structure a role for PARL (Public Affairs and Religious Liberty), the delegation voted on an amendment to the motion to separate the Health and Community Services departments into stand-alone departments. In addition, it was voted to remove the position of the Youth and Children's Coordinating Director and, with the full-time budget created from this removal, reassign half a budget to PARL and the other half to Personal Ministries which was being presented as a half budget. With this lively debate, which ended with the amendment accepted by the delegation, the first afternoon session ended.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The evening session on the first day is traditionally reserved for the President's Report. Pastor Osei gave an overview of the events that have occurred during the past quadrennium through a video presentation. Looking back, Osei highlighted the evangelistic vision that was established with previous Conference President, Pastor Richard de Lisser,

'Evangelism: Everyone, Everywhere'. Osei, taking this theme, spoke of the annual themes that underpinned the strategy namely, Revival, Restoration, Reclamation and Retention. His presentation included highlights of the main accomplishments within each Conference department and various evangelistic and outreach activities that were held within the various areas around the Conference from Areas 1-8.

Reference was made to the ongoing developments with the North Runcton site which, when completed, will provide accommodation and a camping site for Pathfinders and Adventurers. The long-term vision for the site would also involve the purchase of further land to provide a venue for evangelism and departmental training for all church members which would avoid having to hire hotel venues. An update was also provided on the refurbishments at Chapel Porth which would see new chalets replacing the aging caravans.

BUSINESS ON FRIDAY

On Friday, the business session commenced with the acceptance of the Recommendations Committee report for names assigned to the Nominating Committee. This committee would be responsible for choosing names to fill all administrative (President, Executive Secretary and Treasurer) and departmental roles. They would also choose the Executive Committee that would sit during the next four years, dealing with Conference related matters and ensuring the vision and mission of the Conference is established.

A report from the Executive Secretary, Pastor Douglas McCormac, highlighted that, during the past four years as of 31 December 2018, the membership of the Conference

stood at 25,295, an increase of 1,986 over the four years from 2015, which equates to almost 8% growth over the period. This church growth was a result of 1,892 baptisms and 277 professions of faith. McCormac's report also showed that as the Conference continues to grow, there is also the movement of those who are leaving our congregations, and the statistics reveal that on average, we currently have a retention rate of 62%.

Fred Shone's Treasurer's Report highlighted that during the past four years there has been steady growth in tithes, demonstrating the faithfulness of our members. The total for the quadrennium was £59.3m, more than 15% up on the previous four years. With the introduction of SEC Text Giving for local churches, and an upcoming app for returning tithes, total amounts, including offerings, are expected to increase.

Both administrative reports, after a period of questions from the floor, were accepted by the delegation.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE'S FIRST REPORT

Whilst discussions were taking place in the main auditorium, the Nominating Committee had been meeting to appoint names for the three administrative roles. Their report was presented to the delegation with the recommendation for the re-election of President, Pastor Emmanuel Osei and Executive Secretary, Pastor Douglas McCormac. Both names were seconded and approved with applause by delegates. For the role of Treasurer, a new name was presented - Candy Layson, who was serving as Associate Treasurer for the SEC. With her acceptance by the delegation,



THE NEW SEC TEAM FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

this marked, for the first time, a female elected to become a part of the administration. British Union Conference (BUC) President Pastor Ian Sweeney, who was chair of the Nominating Committee, gave tribute to outgoing Treasurer Fred Shone for his distinguished work, fortitude and humility for the unfaltering work he had done. In response, the delegates applauded his service and servitude.

With these items finalised, the second business day ended in preparation for the Sabbath.

Throughout the session, morning devotions were led by guest speaker Pastor Royston Philbert, Ministerial and Communication Director from the North Caribbean Conference. His energetic and engaging style of preaching with pertinent messages around the theme of 'Christ-like living', provided a constant reminder of the responsibilities of reflecting Christ to a questioning world. His Sabbath morning sermon centred around the statement that, when people question you about your faith, answer them by your lifestyle. Sabbath Ordination Service



SEC Sessions also provide the opportunity for special occasions such as an ordination service. This session was no different, with four ministers presented for this landmark in ministerial service to a packed-out auditorium with many supporting church members in attendance. Candidates for ordination were Michael Salmon (Fulham and



Stonebridge), Alex Mareniuc (Croydon), Otis Lewis (West Croydon and Pollards Hill) and Hezron Adingo (Dagenham and Chingford). Introduced by their senior pastoral mentors, each candidate was presented with their spouses. SEC President Pastor Osei gave an enriching and poignant message, emphasising the high calling of ministry and to be stewards of God's gift by ensuring the urgent messages of the three angels in Revelation 14 are kept at the heart of their biblical preaching. Urging ministers to be God's light in a darkened world, Osei reminded the ordinands that all power to fulfil this divine calling comes, *"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."*

The dedicatory prayer, with the laying on of hands by fellow ordained ministers, was led by BUC Ministerial Association Director, Pastor Eglan Brooks. The charge to the newly ordained ministers was given by Pastor Ebenezer Jones-Lartey, whilst ministerial spouse Michelle Moore encouraged the wives. Margaret Johns sang a musical item that was appreciated by all, entitled, 'He is able to see you through', which was written and arranged by herself and her son Dwight. With the final response given on behalf of the newly ordained by Pastor Mike Salmon, the presentation of certificates ended this special occasion, leading to the opportunity for all ministerial colleagues, family and church members to express their appreciation.

CONTINUATION OF BUSINESS

After Sabbath vespers, the work

of church business reconvened. Reports were given for the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department by Pastor Michael Mbui, and further departmental reports were presented on Sunday morning, the final day. During these presentations, delegates had the opportunity to ask questions based on the reports submitted.

Reports that generated most discussion included Family Ministries, where questions were posed around areas of Singles Ministry and a clarification on the vision of the Department, to which Pastor Augustus Lawrence was able to outline a clear plan for the department. Questions on Education centred around Adventist schools, the relationship between the SEC and Stanborough School and the challenges in legislation governing sexuality education in schools. With questions on Youth and Teens, as with most departments, statements from the floor expressed commendation towards the work done, with a call for further stability and training in leadership to prepare and equip leaders for more effective results. In Communication and Media, the delegation noted the increase in relaying information across the Conference and some delegates made suggestions to explore the effectiveness of social media, apps, webinars and the utilisation of members' media skills around the Conference.

The Plans Committee gave their report based on seven key proposals which the Executive Committee and departmental leaders will use as a framework to structure their

missional activities for the next quadrennium. These points were accepted by the delegation, subject to a few amendments, and will be made available once the Executive Committee meet.

The Licenses and Credentials Committee review all the various ministerial and church workers' credentials. These names are usually accepted as given, together with lay preachers' credentials which are decided at the local church board level and all approved by the delegation.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Other debates during the session centred around the proposed amendments to the SEC Constitution which, after much discussion, was sent back by the delegation for further examination.

The General Conference has a responsibility to try to hold together the whole of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. As Missions, Conferences and Unions are all legal entities, the General Conference gives guidance on how they should be constituted. This legal document is a *'model constitution'* for the different entities to follow. Some parts of the model constitution are flexible, allowing for regional variations, but some are considered to be crucial for the identity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole. The model constitution is reviewed every year at the General Conference Annual Council, where representatives from all over the world give their input, and a final document is produced. When there is a local Conference and Union Session, delegates are encouraged to examine the document with a view to updating the Constitution in line with the model produced by the General Conference.



OTHER DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS ELECTED

In addition to the administration of the Conference, the Nominating Committee returned to the delegation to present the directors for the Conference departments. The following names were presented and accepted by the floor:

President	Emmanuel Osei
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Executive Secretary	Douglas McCormac
Treasurer	Candy Layson
Communications & Media	Sam Davies
Church Growth	Wayne Erasmus
Teens	Juan Carlos Patrick
Personal Ministries	Michael Mbui
Sabbath School	Fergus Owusu-Boateng
Children's Ministries	Judy Clements
Community Services	Max McKenzie-Cook
Women's Ministries	Jacqueline Otokpa
Youth Ministries	Anthony Fuller
Ministerial Association	Sam Ouadjo
Health	Chidi Ngwaba
Stewardship	Todd Frias
Pathfinder	Clifford Herman
Adventist Muslim Relations	Fergus Owusu-Boateng
Radio (Adventist Radio London)	Michael Hamilton
Family Ministries	Augustus Lawrence

Other departments such as PARL, Prayer Coordinator and Property Development manager will be decided at the first SEC Executive Committee meeting to be held later in the month.

As the session drew near to a close, Pastor Osei gave a final presidential charge, highlighting his vision for the next four years. Drawing on John 21:6, with Christ's command to His disciples to cast their nets on the right side of the boat, resulting in the capture of numerous fish, Osei encouraged the delegation to keep trying new and different methods of evangelism. With total community engagement, the focus is for all members to be involved in some form of community ministry to create a new church culture of inclusion and collaboration. His four-point charge included:

1. To see all church buildings opened at least one day extra, apart from the usual Sabbath and prayer meeting events.
2. Every church to run a Bible seminar of some sort at least twice a year.
3. Every church to capitalise on a Pathfinder and Adventurer programme as a means of reaching out to young people.
4. To fulfil the three points above within two years, whilst the Executive Committee continues to work on a strategic plan to achieve these goals.

The assurance was that exciting days lay ahead, however there is a great work to be done, but we will be successful, *"not by might, nor by power, but through My Spirit, saith the Lord."*



Darell J Philip

RELATING TO CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

You have been looking forward to this Sabbath for a long time – let’s just say it’s Visitors’ Day or Community Services’ Day. You arrive early because it is said that great blessings are in store for those who make it to church on time. You are blessed by the praise and worship, the early morning prayer session, not to mention the Adult Bible Study class.

As Sabbath School comes to an end and the church are joined by members of the Junior Sabbath School along with their parents, somehow your mood begins to change. The movement and constant talking of one child in particular has you irritated and hot under the collar. Another younger child’s constant crying, as his mother tries her best to comfort and keep him quiet, brings a noticeable change to your body language – arms folded across chest, mouth tutting, eyes rolling sky-ward and lips pursed together with a frown to show your disgust. You sit in the pews, looking at all the guilty ones making noise, and you shake your head, muttering to yourself, “How irreverent it is in the House of the Lord today.”

Are you familiar with the above scene in your church? What is right here? What is wrong here?

When it comes to visitor and community service days, we are to expect there to be people from all walks of life, ages and backgrounds with various needs. The church is called to be representatives of Christ, which means we are to reach out to all people, irrespective of class, race and position.

In Luke 18:15-17, Jesus rebuked His disciples when they told Him to send the children away who were being brought to Him by their parents. Jesus told them to let the children come to Him because such

are of the Kingdom of God. He also added that, unless they were like children in character themselves, there would be no place for them in Heaven.

This year marks 10 years since the *National Autistic Society’s campaign* to recognise and support autistic adults led to the successful implementation of the *Autism Act*. There is a campaign for an extension of the Act to include children on the autistic spectrum.

We have many different children within our own families, communities and churches who have various specific needs. Church members must be aware of these differences and react as Jesus would – with compassion, patience, understanding, love and encouragement.

Since 1962, the *National Autistic Society* have been transforming lives and changing attitudes in their pioneering work with individuals and their families who are affected by autism. The society describes autism as a lifelong disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world.

Of the 700,000-plus people in the UK with autism, around 150,000 of these are children. According to extensive research done by the National Autistic Society, children on the autism spectrum:

- Find it hard to understand non-verbal

- communication, like facial expressions and tone of voice
- Have difficulty understanding people’s behaviour and recognising others’ feelings or expressing their own
- Take language very literally and find metaphors and idioms confusing
- Engage in repetitive behaviour and routines and can develop intense and highly focused interests
- Find change and unexpected situations stressful and very scary
- Are very sensitive to light, touch, sound or smell.

Such children do exist within our church congregations, and so it is hoped that with this information, along with what Jesus has encouraged us to do as His disciples, we will be more inclined to stop and think about what we can do to make the worship experience a blessed time for everyone.

For more information on autism please visit www.autism.org.uk

Darell J Philip (BA) is a teaching assistant in an East London primary school and PR and communications assistant at Hackney Seventh-Day Adventist church.



MAKING Jesus FAMOUS



Akwasi Agyemang

Of all the things that amaze me about the Eden School, one thing truly makes me speechless: the irresistible might of hope; hope deeply rooted in the Bible and the pastoral traditions of Adventism. I have seen staff shredded at the wrong end of a student’s sharp tongue; or parents and worried children needing assurance. There have been times that despair has loomed taller than Goliath and Eden’s David, our little faith, shrinking under the weight of looming hopelessness. Yet hope always fights back, providing second chances. In its 24-year history, the Eden school has never given up on any child.

An Adventist school is an extension of the church. Each learner is to be prepared for a productive life on Earth and eternity. In the words of a teacher, to be a teacher in an Adventist school is “to be love”, “to give me” and “to be Jesus”. Teachers are “vendors of hope,” the visible hands and voice of Jesus. An Adventist school is a place of hope, healing and freedom; an active mission field where there would have been a deadly minefield.

During a lesson on evil and suffering in one of my Religious Studies GCSE classes, students voiced several objections about the existence of God. Nearly every student in

the class personally knew someone who had been fatally stabbed, shot or died due to unexpected natural causes. A 15-year-old girl in the class asked, “If God is real and He loves me, why is it that everyone I love dies?” As I heard these heartbreaking words from a teenager, choking with grief, I understood the existential conundrum that many of them faced. Then came the Epicurean dilemma:

“Is God both able and willing to prevent evil? Then whence cometh evil?”

It then dawned on me that God was on trial in our Little Eden classroom for crimes the Almighty had ‘committed’ in their lives, families and neighbourhoods. Their faith suffered a battering in secular schools, where teachers declared war on impressionable minds, and the remaining resting places for their faith eroded by the relentless trio of social media, Hollywood and atheistic media acting in concert with observed inconsistencies in Christians at home and church. After corroding their faith and planting their feet firmly in despair, state schools dumped them when their lives no longer resembled Jesus and gave them tickets on the stopping service to hell via British prisons. After patiently evaluating all the explanations offered by secularism, which some of the students had learned in their previous

schools and read online, it became clear that it is only in the light of absolute moral reference and a moral lawgiver would the very definition of evil be reasonable.

Suddenly, there dropped a most beautiful question from the lips of Tirana (not her real name) who had no Christian background. “Ok Sir, I now believe that God exists. Is that all I need to do to be saved?” With an ever-widening smile the size of the universe, I said, “You are almost there. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Saviour?” I asked.

“Yes, I do, Sir,” she responded with all the children watching in astonishment. Sometimes the Gospel seed germinates in strange places. She was the last person from whom you would expect such a response. She had joined my year 10 class about a year earlier. I remember asking her to pray in a lesson. She said, “Sir, I have never prayed before. Why do we pray?” “In prayer, you talk to God as to a friend. So, talk to your Father in heaven now,” I urged her. “But I don’t know him, and I don’t know what to say,” she protested. I asked her to repeat my prayer after me, she did. Ten months later, Tirana was asking life’s most important question: “What shall I do to be saved?” “Tirana, do you believe that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead? And that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour of

your life?” I asked her. “Yes, I believe.” “You need to repent of your sins and ask God for forgiveness. You will then have to be baptised and your name will be in the Book of life.”

Out of that discussion, a voluntary lunchtime Bible study class was established to discuss Christian beliefs over lunch on Wednesdays, led by Pastor Ray Patrick. Out of the first 18 children who attended the first Bible lesson, 6 of them were baptised; 3 of them and a teacher were baptised during the 2019 SEC Camp Meeting. Imagine if every church brought 7 souls to Christ each year!

It was Friedrich Nietzsche who said God is dead. Well, in Adventist schools nationwide and in our own Eden, the Lord is risen, and we have seen His saving grace. In countries such as Ghana, where the church has grown exponentially, Adventist education has been pivotal to the growth of the church.

Church leaders should endeavour to support a mission field that is so fertile. Year after year, Eden presents children for baptism at Camp Meeting and in local churches. I believe our schools have been raised for such a time as this. Let us work together to make Jesus famous.

Akwasi Agyemang (BSc, MSc) is a father, Christian, freelance writer and educationist.



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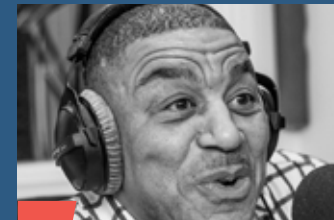
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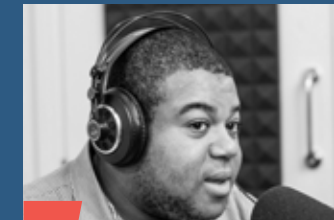
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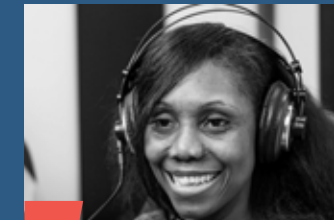
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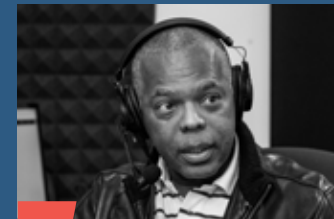
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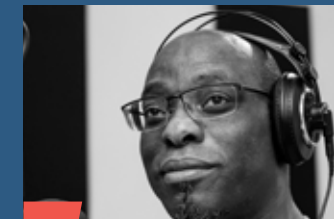
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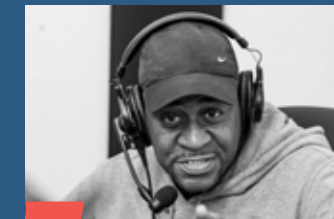
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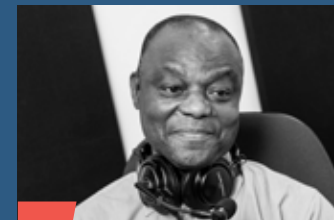
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Sabbath Breakfast/Christian Living



TREVOR JOHNSON
Reflections



RAY PATRICK
Prayer on the line/Ray of Hope



EBENEZER JONES-LARTEY
Our Times

"I hope that through my shows, people will see God as someone real and relevant, someone who genuinely cares about them"

- Lynette Allcock



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Adventist Radio
London



Vanessa Pizzuto

About a year and a half ago, I started working for Adventist Radio London (ARL) as a presenter and producer. I met Prema Devanandam, my first interviewee, on a humanitarian trip to India.

Prema grew up in a poor family with six siblings. Her parents did not have enough money to feed all the mouths and pay for school fees. As Prema was not very academic, she grew up feeling rejected and completely unloved.

Struggling with poverty and depression and feeling isolated from her family, Prema tried to commit suicide seven times. The last time, she drank poison: *"But when I was in the depth of the pit, Jesus appeared to me and said He had a purpose and a plan for my life."* Still on her bed, convalescing, Prema decided to give her life to Jesus- *"I felt loved for the very first time in my life. I felt a joy and peace that I had never experienced before."* Jesus had rescued her, and now she planned to spend the rest of her life rescuing others.

After this encounter, Prema decided to study social work and started working for an orphanage. In 2003 she took a step of faith and opened her own orphanage. Visiting the slums in Bangalore, Prema rescued 13 homeless children that were malnourished and marginalised. As she did not have any help from the government, she used her own salary to feed and clothe the children. In time, people started to notice her commitment and offered some financial support so that she could rent a room where the children could sleep more comfortably.

Prema decided not to get married so she could give the children her undivided attention. She has been a mother to them for over 15 years now. At the moment, there are 36 children at Blessings Home. When I ask her what the greatest obstacle to her ministry is, she says it is never knowing where the money is going to come from to pay all the bills and feed everyone. Her health is not as strong these days either, but she quickly adds, *"When I do not know what to do, I get on my knees. This is how I can go on. Prayer has much power."* I look at her, as she speaks of her difficulties, wearing her ever-green smile. Suddenly, I become aware of being in the presence of a little giant. I know she is going to be honoured in the Kingdom of Heaven because she is already a citizen. In fact, she is piercing the darkness and bringing the Kingdom to earth.

I believe sharing real life stories on the radio, like Prema's, makes a huge difference! The world does not need more theory; the world needs to see how the love of Jesus has radically transformed our lives, to the point of no return - the point at which we can no longer live selfish lives but live to love and serve others. Your prayers and support allow us to continue sharing this Hope. We are always on the hunt for good stories, so to share your testimony or to get involved visit: <http://adventistradio.london/get-involved/>.

PS. this is Prema's website, should you need more information or pictures <https://www.theblessinghome.com/about-us>

THE STORIES

MAKING AN IMPACT



Lynette Allcock

"You've been listening to the Breakfast Show, helping you to create a happier, healthier life!" I turn off the mic, gulp back a mouthful of water, and take off my presenter *"hat"*. I'm switching into producer mode now, getting ready for the next day's show and planning ahead for future broadcasts.

Before I became a presenter/producer for Adventist Radio London, whenever I listened to radio or podcasts, I thought it sounded like a fairly easy role - you simply chat to interesting people and relay useful or intriguing bits of information. Now, I appreciate how much time and effort goes into just a few minutes of radio content. For example, a script of 500 words takes just three or four minutes to present, and if you've ever had to research and write something yourself, you know how long that can take to prepare!

I open my computer and start exploring what is in the news and what people are concerned about on social media. I prepare the content for the next day's script, looking for how I can inspire listeners with hope; how I can steer them towards healthier relationships, minds, bodies, work life, and spirituality; and how I can show God to be real and relevant. I arrange interviews with authors, artists, counsellors, health professionals and ordinary people with a *'God story'* to tell. I love how much I get to learn along the way.

When I present, I've had to get used to speaking to a largely silent audience. I come from a teaching background, so I am used to immediately seeing the reactions of my listeners, but in this role, I

never know who is listening. That's exciting, but it can sometimes be discouraging, especially if you thought you would certainly get plenty of responses to your question or book offer...but the audience is quiet! Encouragingly, though, there are moments I get feedback that reminds me that the show is making an impact.

"You helped me after the death of my mother."

"My mental health is better after I started listening to you."

"I try and get in the car earlier now, so I have more time to listen to your show."

"Your station has played a big part in my recent decision to accept Jesus."

At Adventist Radio London, we are a small team with a big task. But with each comment, book giveaway, or Bible study request, God reminds us that His Spirit is working in the lives of our listeners.

We ask for your prayers - and for your support if you are interested in volunteering. I hope that as our team grows, we will be able to make more programming tailored to reach the heart of London. I hope that more churches will get involved, creating community events and even radio content, so that we can connect listeners with Adventists in their area. I look forward to seeing how our stories will help introduce God and a new life to people across London.



SAM ODARTEY DAVIES

COMMUNICATION & MEDIA DIRECTOR

Sam Davies is an ordained pastor who has served churches in both London and the provinces before the invitation to lead the Communication Department of the South England Conference in 2015.

He began his studies for ministry in 1989 at Valley View University in Accra, Ghana, where he spent 18 months. He subsequently enrolled at Newbold College of Higher Education in 1991 where he studied Theology and Communication before pursuing an MA in Journalism at the University of Westminster, London.

Sam has a keen interest in current affairs and considers it necessary for an informed ministry. His varied interests have led him to pursue many other courses, including a Diploma in Public Relations with the PRCA. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Journalists [CIJ], a member of the Public Relations & Communication Association [PRCA] and a member of the Institute of Internal Communications [IoIC]. His membership with the IoIC has enabled him to start the professional MA in Internal Communication Management course with Solent University in September 2019.

His other interests in ministry include helping families resolve their difficulties and preparing young couples for marriage. Sam trained in Therapeutic Counselling and as a Certified Family Life Educator [CFLE].

In his current role, Sam intends to work with local churches to enable them to become more visible in their communities. He believes the Seventh-day Adventist Church has so much to offer its communities and can be a positive influence in our society.

Sam is married to his beloved wife Marcia, and they have three children.



ANTHONY FULLER

YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Anthony Fuller is the newly re-elected Youth Director of the South England Conference and current chaplain of the Hyland House School. He has a BA in Pastoral Evangelism from Oakwood University, a MA in Systematic Theology from Newbold College of Higher Education and an MBA from the University of West London.

Anthony has served the SEC since 2011, first as an intern in the Lewisham Church, before being assigned pastor of the Fulham and Stonebridge District in 2013. In 2015 he was called to serve as Youth Director.

He is deeply driven by his call to the gospel ministry and passionate about working with young people who, he believes, are the leaders for today. He seeks new and innovative ways to reclaim, retain and train these young people.

Anthony's desire is to know and serve God more through Spirit-led dedication to mission; to serve those within his sphere of influence, including his family; and to reach those currently outside the sphere of influence. Married to the former Caroline Campbell, the couple are proud parents of three boys, Anthony Jr, Christian and Ethan.



JUAN CARLOS PATRICK

TEENS MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Juan Patrick was born in the beautiful island of Hispaniola or the Dominican Republic, a Spanish island located in the Caribbean. In his teens Patrick served as deacon, Sabbath School teacher, elder and speaker; at his local church, in his district and on other islands of the Caribbean. Patrick studied Theology and Education at Antillean University in Puerto Rico in Partnership with Andrews University, Michigan, where he held various roles in campus ministry- as Youth Director, President of the Student Association and Director of Social Activities- until his graduation in 2004.

After graduating, he served as a high school teacher and chaplain at Bella Vista Adventist Academy and primary school, serving about 300 students. He also served as Youth Pastor at the Bella Vista SDA Church and, later, as Senior Pastor of the same church. During this time, he served as evangelist, conducting church, teens' and youth revivals, weeks of prayer and conferences in about 38 out of 50 states in the USA.

He completed his postgraduate studies, Theology in Old Testament and Hebrew Bible, at Newbold College in Partnership with the University of Lampeter (today, University of Wales Trinity Saint David). He also completed another master's degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction from Antillean University in Partnership with Andrews University. After completing his studies, he was called to serve as a pastor in the South England Conference where he has continued since 2010.

He is very thankful to God and the SEC for giving him the opportunity to serve God's children in the church, out of the church and abroad.



CLIFFORD HERMAN

PATHFINDER DIRECTOR

Clifford Herman was born in Cape Town, South Africa. He completed a BA Theology at Helderberg College outside Cape Town in 1997 and served as a Pastor in the Southern Hope Conference (now Cape Conference) for 4 years.

In January 2002 he was called to the Scottish Mission where he served in Edinburgh and South West Scotland for nearly 12 years, as well as being the Family Ministries, Communication and Pathfinder Sponsor during that period. He was ordained in Scotland in June 2005.

In 2013 he was called to the South England Conference to serve in Area 1 - Plymouth/Liskeard District- and was elected to serve as Area Co-ordinator in August 2018. In July 2019 he completed an MA Systematic Theology at Newbold College (University of Wales Trinity St David).

He and his wife, Ophelia, are blessed with 2 children (boy and girl). Ophelia's passions are administration, hospitality and young people. She currently works as Medical Secretary and Administrative Support in the Neurofibromatosis Department at Plymouth NHS Trust. Their son Matthew is currently studying towards a BSc in Computer Science at Cardiff University. Meghan is currently in high school.

Clifford enjoys travelling and going to places he has never visited before. His passion is working with young people and children as well as searching for and sharing with others what it means to have a meaningful relationship with Jesus, while at the same time exploring the key ingredient to such a relationship.



JUDY CLEMENTS OBE

CHILDREN MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Judy Clements OBE. BA. Hons. LLB. is a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist, ordained elder and sponsor for Children's and Youth ministries in her church, Hope Community in Beckenham. She is a passionate advocate for new and creative ways to evangelise the increasingly diverse, rapidly changing world, without compromising core Adventist beliefs.

Judy graduated from the SDA School of Evangelism, completing two years of training in lay and advanced lay preaching, and also completing the Certified Elder Curriculum SEC training programme. She has organised, managed and delivered evangelistic campaigns in partnership with other SDA churches and, in 2013, joined forces with two other lay preachers to deliver a two-week campaign, at the conclusion of which ten souls were baptised.

In 2013, Judy completed training at the International School of Field Evangelism in the USA. She has addressed the TED on the topics of Church Planting and Diversity in Healthy Churches. A member of the 2018 TED Faith Commission, she was involved with evaluating school governance.

Judy has been highly recognized for 30-plus years of public service to the nation and, in 2000 was awarded an OBE for services to the community in the West Midlands in the Queen's New Year Honours. She has held many significant, critical and high-profile positions, including Independent Adjudicator for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and, up to 2017, Ombudsman for Students in Higher Education. Her past appointments also include, Head of Diversity and Equality for the Home Office in HM Prison Service, Director for the Independent Office for Police Conduct, Member of the Home Secretary's Stephen Lawrence Steering Group and Chair of the Trust and Confidence Working Group. She facilitated equality training for newly appointed members of the Judiciary and remains a member of the Westminster Senior Women in Public Leadership Network.

After recently retiring, Judy enjoys a portfolio career, working in consultative and non-executive roles. She serves as Governor at three faith schools, including Chair at Stanborough SDA Secondary School and Governor of Newbold College of Higher Education. She is trustee for *Together for Mental Well-being* - a national mental health charity - and a member of the British Film Classification Appeals Board.

Judy has one daughter, Christelle.



MICHAEL HAMILTON

ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON

Michael G. Hamilton has served the church in a professional capacity for more than 32 years; 18 years pastoring local churches in South England Conference and more than 14 years in church administration.

He has served as Ministerial Secretary in the SEC; Director for the Adventist Discovery Centre at the BUC; Director at the Trans-European Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the departments of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Prayer Ministries, Stewardship and Bible Correspondence Schools. His most recent pastoral assignment was at the Willesden SDA Church, where he also served as Area Coordinator for West London. He currently serves as Director of Adventist Radio London in the South England Conference.

Michael's passion is training the church members for active local ministry. He has a Doctorate in Global Mission Leadership and enjoys helping others achieve their greatest potential. He is enjoying his marriage to Rhona, who works as a Health Visitor and Clinical Practice Teacher for the NHS, and they are blessed with two adult sons, Christopher and Jason, a beautiful daughter-in-law and one grandson.



MICHAEL MBUI

PERSONAL MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Michael Njagi Mbu began his ministerial training at The University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, where he gained a BA in Theology. He then joined Newbold College of Higher Education and achieved his MA in Religion. He went on to complete a MA in Theology at The London School of Theology, followed by a PhD in Biblical Studies at Trinity Theological Seminary.

Mbu first served as a church pastor and Associate Youth Chaplain in the Central Kenya Conference. Following an invitation by the South England Conference, he served several churches within the conference, most recently Balham and Mitcham.

Mbu is passionate about empowering and inspiring every member to understand and experience God's vision and mission for their lives. In January 2018 he was elected SEC Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Director, and he has been training churches across the conference to grow disciple makers. He has also authored two books to help the church's mission: "Making Discipleship Simple" and "Why Church Exists - Making Mission Simple".

Mbu has been married for 31 years to his beautiful wife Nancy, and they have two adult daughters and a son-in-law.



AUGUSTUS LAWRENCE

FAMILY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Anative of Liberia, Dr Augustus Cafuema Lawrence has served in pastoral ministry since 1985. He holds a DMin degree in Family Studies from the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Lawrence graduated from Northern Caribbean University in Jamaica in 1993 with a BA in Theology and, subsequently, an MA in Pastoral Ministry from Newbold College, England, in 1995. Lawrence also has an LLB degree and is currently working towards training in Psychodynamic Therapy.

Lawrence served in the New Life and Holcombe Road district of churches for six years before assuming responsibility for Milton Keynes Central, West Bletchley Community Church and Wolverton district of churches in 2009. In 2014 he was assigned to the Stoke Newington, Stratford and Rainham district of churches until his appointment to his current position.

He entered denominational work as a high school graduate in 1985. A multi-skilled man, his particular interest is in ministries that support family relationships and he, along with his wife Barbara (a professional in her own right) have been active in leading out in various outreach initiatives for the church. They have three children including Nathanael who is a university student pursuing studies in Aeronautics Management.



WAYNE ERASMUS
CHURCH GROWTH DIRECTOR

Born in Zimbabwe, Wayne Erasmus was raised in an Adventist home surrounded by an extended family with whom to share life and faith. He spent his teen years in South Africa before attending Helderberg College, obtaining a BA (Theol) in 1996 from Andrews University. His ministry path took him back to the country of his birth, where he pastored two of only six English-speaking congregations in the West Zimbabwe Conference, and initiated a reclamation ministry during three years of ministry there. Returning to South Africa in 1999, he spent the next eight years as a pastor in the North, Central and Southern regions, leading both small and large congregations to reach out to their communities with greater care, compassion and consistency. He was ordained in 2003 and obtained an MA in Narrative Pastoral Family Counselling from the University of Pretoria in 2006.

A pastor with the South England Conference since 2008, Wayne has served the Conference as a District Pastor (Area 2), Area Coordinator, Senior Pastor (Newbold) and, most recently, as the Church Growth and Adventist Mission Director (2017 to the present). Speaking after his recent election, Pastor Erasmus said, "It is a humbling and sobering privilege to be asked to continue for a further four years in this role. God is never left without a witness at any time of this earth's history, and the Church Growth Department in particular has the joy of being at the frontline of that witness! God continues to work in the British Isles in 2019. How exciting to be able to participate in His work from this perspective!"

Pastor Wayne is married to Karliese and together they have two delightful daughters, Matthea and Michaella.



TODD FRIAS
STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Todd Frias, is the youngest son of the late, Pastor Abraham Frias and of Mrs Loida Frias, a Bible Instructor. Growing up in a pastoral family, he learned to love and serve Jesus from his early age. He was his dad's little helper as they visit churches, preaching, teaching and promoting the principles of Stewardship, for his dad served as the Stewardship Director at their local conference in the Philippines. From childhood, it has been his desire and prayer to see members become faithful Steward-Disciples of Jesus. Though it was not his intention to become a pastor like his dad.

But God uses unique ways of calling, that, Todd found himself enrolled in the College of Theology at the Adventist University of the Philippines and later finished his Theological studies in 1996. Immediately after graduation, he was called to assist a district Pastor and after four months, was called to teach minor Bible courses at the College of Theology. In 1999, he accepted an MVS call, to assist the Filipino Group at Central London Church. The Filipino group grew through the leadings of the Holy Spirit and was eventually organised in 2002 as a church. On August of the same year the SEC employed him as part of its pastoral workforce, assigned to pastor the Filipino International SDA Church and Muswell Hill SDA Church.

He served the Filipino International Church and the Heathrow International Church until January of 2018. Prior to his appointment as Stewardship Director in 2015, Frias also served as the Area 6D coordinator on 2013.

Todd is happily married to Joy Lopena, and God has blessed them with two lovely daughters, Thea and Jana. Todd loves DIY, reading, photography, and travelling, but above all, Missiology is his passion.



MAX MCKENZIE-COOK
COMMUNITY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

Max McKenzie-Cook is the newly appointed Community Ministries Director. He is an ordained minister who has served in the Brixton, South London Luganda, Battersea, Wallington, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City Churches. In addition to this, he is also the Lead Champion for I AM URBAN: an ADRA-UK and Adventist Community Services (ACS) partnership designed to mobilise local churches in community engagement, and the co-lead trainer on ADRA's Urban component of the Year in Service and Mission course at Newbold College.

During his time in ministry, Max has recognised the awesome opportunity for us to provide a voice for the most marginalised members of our community. This level of engagement presents a compelling narrative about the Gospel.

Max McKenzie-Cook grew up in North London and has a BA (Hons) in Law and Theology, as well as a MA in Systematic Theology. He is currently a Doctoral student in Urban Ministries at Andrews University.

Max holds two directives very close to his heart: Micah 6:8, "Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly in our God."

Christ's method: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, Follow Me."- Ministry of Healing pg. 143.

Max is married to his beautiful wife Jemima, and they have a young daughter named Thea.



FERGUS OWUSU-BOATENG
AMR & SABBATH SCHOOL

Originally from Ghana and coming from a Muslim background, Fergus Owusu-Boateng has worked as pastor in Ghana, Israel and London. His ministry stretches over 27 years within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. During his pastoral work in Israel, he was duly asked to serve as a departmental Director for the field in Israel.

In 2015, the South England Conference recognised his specific ministry and outreach to others in his role as Director of the AMR. At the last session of the South England Conference in September 2019, the Sabbath School Department was added to his portfolio.

Fergus studied at Newbold College of Higher Education, graduating with an MA in Pastoral Ministry. He says that his identity is woven around his passion for the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ, who revealed Himself to him when he was in darkness and brought him into His marvellous light.

Fergus and his wife Cecilia have two children, Kofi and Abena, who are essential parts of his overall ministry.

Fergus is excited about the return of Jesus to earth, but at the same time is passionate about the Kingdom of God here and now.

He values prayer immensely and considers it to be at the centre of his life - "It is like fire in my bones," he says. He is a humble minister of the gospel, to which, he says, nothing compares.



DR CHIDI NGWABA

HEALTH MINISTRIES

Dr Chidi is a leading Lifestyle Doctor, having trained in Surgery, General Practice and Lifestyle Medicine at Cambridge, UCL and Johns Hopkins, USA. With 4 degrees in Science and Medicine, his passion is to reverse, improve or prevent chronic illnesses, including heart disease, cancer, arthritis and diabetes, among others, with his unique programme, "Life Colours". He is a founding board member of the European Society of Lifestyle Medicine and has over 20 years of experience as a national and international health and motivational speaker, including presenting TED talks on Reversing Disease.

He has served at the SEC for 10 years, 6 years as Men's Ministry Coordinator and 4 years as Health Director, where he continues to serve. He has also served as an elder at 3 churches- Croydon, Norbury and Hampstead, where he served as the head elder.

He was the featured medical expert and contributor to Europe's most popular health magazine, Top Santé, and he contributes to The Daily Express and The Daily Mail, as well as to TV and radio shows such as ITV's Good Morning Britain, BBC and SKY News. Also, he is the resident doctor at Premier Radio. He is the founding director of a lifestyle medicine clinic on Harley Street and has also founded two successful and award-winning restaurants in London, "Plant", to encourage healthy eating.

In 2016 he received a National Award in Leadership for his work in reversing disease. His mission is 'to bring health, healing, and hope' to communities in the SEC and beyond.

(Follow Dr Chidi on twitter or Instagram @DrChidiMD)



JACQUELINE OTOKPA

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES' DIRECTOR

Jacqueline Otokpa was born in the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba where she was blessed to be nurtured by her grandparents 'in the fear of the Lord'.

She moved to Holland where she lived for some years, pursuing her education. Her love for life and healthy living later took her to Sweden where she was trained in Medical Ministry. She then moved to London where she became a Women's Ministry Leader, and she fostered a passion for women, who are hurting, for over 10 years.

During her time in this role, she recognised the deep need of women with psychological issues and she founded an international ministry called W.H.Y. Women (We Hear You), empowering women to reclaim, recover and restore their lives through Christ. This ministry points to Jesus as the true Healer and Protector, and has taken her to Montenegro and Holland, as well as several venues in England. This has resulted in women re-committing their lives to Jesus and even in baptism. Not one to keep still in one place for long, after graduating from the SEC School of Evangelism, she embarked on and successfully completed a BA (Hons) in Counselling.

Looking around there is a constant daily report of pain and hurt that women face today in their daily lives: domestic violence, abuse, trauma. Sadly, women within our churches are not immune to this.

Jackie's aim as SEC Women's Director is to help women realise that God intends to break the chains of the bondages of pain and guilt. She says, the Bible declares, "the enemy has come to steal, kill, and destroy", but it also states "the battle is not ours, it's the Lord's", and "through Christ, we are more than conquerors".

Jacqueline has been married for 18 years to Jerry. They have three sons who are all happy to work for the Lord in their home, schools and in the community, where they are a constant witness of God's goodness.

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100 YEARS OF STANBOROUGH SCHOOLS



Stanborough Primary and Secondary Schools held their centenary celebrations over the weekend of July 6th and 7th. The strength and value of Adventist education were on full display, as upwards of 1000 people attended over the two days.

The Sabbath service was held in Stanborough Park under a marquee, against the backdrop of a centenary banner and photo montage of Stanborough Schools over the years. The attendees were treated to excellent performances by pupils and contributions by staff members and special guests. The service truly reflected the school motto, Dominus Magister Ludi Nostri (*God is the Master of our School*).

Among the highlights were Year 6 pupils telling the story of Stanborough's beginnings through drama and song, in their *'Walk Through History'* presentation. Primary children also performed a visually striking mime of Jesus' death and resurrection to the song *'Arise My Love'*.

Music was provided by the Praise Team and orchestra, with notable performances from Year 1 & 2 pupils, the junior choir, soloists, musical ensemble, and a piano and drum duet of *'For Unto us a Child is Born'*.



GC Education Director, Dr Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, recognised Stanborough as one of the older schools among the 8, 807 operated by the Seventh-day Adventist church.

She summed up her address on Adventist education with a quote from Ellen G White, affirming that true education *"secures to successful students a passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher grade, the school above."*

This message was echoed in the sermon delivered by TED Education Director, Dr Daniel Duda. He challenged the congregation to be *'People of the Book'*, like the ancient Israelites.

BUC Education Director, Gina Abbequaye, shared her vision of Adventist education and the importance of synergy between home, school and church. Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor, praised the many ways Stanborough pupils serve the local community.

SEC President, Emmanuel Osei, gave a dedicatory prayer for the institution, pupils and staff. He reflected on how God has led the schools over the 100 years and how He will lead them in the future until He comes.

Acting Secondary School Headteacher, Eileen Hussey, and Primary School Co-Headteacher, Angelika Horwood, acknowledged the many teachers, governors and staff who served at the schools throughout the years, in the Vote of Thanks.

The celebrations concluded on Sunday with a Fun Day, and food, drink and memorabilia were on offer at different stalls. The children and adults also enjoyed sports, face painting, bouncy castles, free health checks and goodie bags.

(Reporter: Don Roberts)

BALHAM 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

'We have come this far by faith' was the theme at Balham church as it celebrated 50 years since its formation with an exciting anniversary weekend from Friday 26 July to Sunday 28 July.

The Friday session of worship included congregational singing and interviews with some of the founders of the church. There was also a message from the SEC President, Pastor Emmanuel Osei, who challenged members to move forward in faith as they enter their next phase as a church.

One of the very touching highlights was the tribute to those members who had died during the last fifty years. As their names were listed on the screen to the music, *'We'll Never Part Again'*, there was a solemn, reflective mood. Nevertheless, people were encouraged by the hope of a reunion one day.

The Sabbath sermon was preached by former minister Pastor Errol Lawrence who was present at Balham when the church started and now pastors in Canada. His mes-

sage challenged the congregation to make themselves available to God.

Those present included the Deputy Mayor of Wandsworth Council, Sue McKinney, a few other pastors, and even members who had to be brought to the church in wheelchairs - such was their determination not to miss the celebrations.



Other features of Sabbath included a tribute to the senior members of the church, inviting them to the platform while the congregation sang, *'I'm climbing up the rough side of the mountain'*.

The Sabbath afternoon programme included video tributes from several former pastors, a musical and verbal tribute from recent minister, Pastor Mbui, and musical items by groups from the past with special guests, the London Male Voice Choir.

Another highlight was the message from Pastor Anthony Fuller (*SEC Youth Director and son of Balham*), who invited us to provide the environment where the youth can develop and grow.

We ended the day with a ceremony where an Olympic torch that was used by our current Youth Leader in London 2012, was passed from the first Balham Youth Leader to the current one.

The Sunday Fun Day was aimed at current and past members, including our community neighbours. Features included various stands, games, demonstrations such as music and vegan cooking, and plenty for the children, including the ever-popular bouncy castle. Fifty years is a long time, but at Balham we are committed to being of service to God and the community in the years to come.

(Reporter: Errol Anderson)

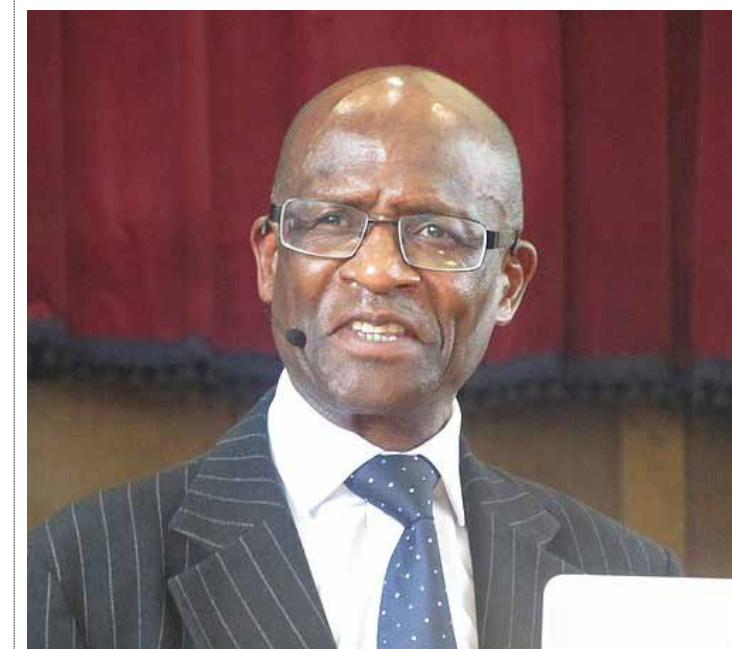
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (PARL) EMPHASIS DAY AT HOLLOWAY

Leaders, members and visitors came together on a special Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) Emphasis Day which took place at the Holloway Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath 6th July 2019.

The first presentation, by Advent Religio-Legal Perspective Assistant Elder Sonia Monroe, looked at *'Religion and Belief in the Workplace'*. She spoke on clashes and conflicts of interest between different workers and human rights, which can result in cases of discrimination.

The guest speaker was Dr Brighton G. Kavaloh. In his sermon, *'Wise Up! Be Seen and Heard'*, Dr Kavaloh described how God created the Sabbath and the family in Eden and pointed out that both will feature heavily in the end times.

Dr Kavaloh shared some of his response to a government-led open consultation on a European Working Time Directive in 2015. MEP's took a pledge for a work-free Sunday ahead of the European elections in 2014, which advocated Sunday rest and decent hours to preserve workers' health and safety, and family life.



In responding, he highlighted the impact it would have on communities and faiths that worship and rest on different days, including Seventh-day Adventists, Jews and Muslims. He said: *"Not to speak is to acquiesce."* He concluded his message by warning listeners not to be oblivious to the fulfilment of prophecy in Europe.

Continuing her message from earlier in the day, on Religion and Belief in the Workplace, Elder Sonia Munroe went over the protected characteristics which form the Equality Act (2010). While it mentions protection for those of all religious beliefs, this has not always been the case in practice. As an example, she presented the on-going case of Darrell Paterson who was sacked by Walgreens (his employers) for his refusal to work on the Sabbath. The case is set to be tried in the Supreme Court early next year. However, Elder Munroe, reflecting on her own experience, said that if you stand up for the truth in the beginning, then God will also stand up for you. *"After informing my employers that I would require Sabbaths off, they accommodated my request in accordance with the policy of reasonable adjustment based on religious beliefs."*

Elder Munroe concluded: *"You can talk about your faith at work, but it must be a word fitly spoken. We must think if what we are saying is appropriate. In today's society one can quite easily take offence to the slightest view given."*

Addressing the issue of sexuality and gender reassignment was Elder Alex Nsimbi. He warned that believers bring persecution on themselves when they fail to separate sin from the sinner. He finally encouraged the church to follow Jesus by being compassionate to the concerns of others while also upholding the truth.

(Reporter: Darell Philip)

REACHING RWANDA



Seventeen young people from Hackney are travelling to Africa. They will spend part of their summer break renovating two classrooms in a primary school; purchasing and distributing yearly health insurance for 1000 people; and reaching out to the youth, orphans and genocide sur-

vivors within urban and rural communities in Rwanda.

The idea of the trip came after Michaela Mathieu-Marius, a youth leader in Hackney, recounted her time living and working in the country. In March 2018 lightning struck the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Nyaruguru, Rwanda, causing the deaths of 21 people. It is a day that Michaela remembers with profound sadness in her heart.

"Whilst living and working in Rwanda, I lost one of my Year 5 students in the lightning strike. It was a tragic and sad experience that changed my outlook on life, making me more reflective on my purpose for being here."

It was after sharing her experience with family, friends and her local church that a group of young people decided to do something about it: *"Young people from our church and community felt impressed to help out their peers who had suffered in Rwanda, and so from then, our Reach Rwanda Mission trip evolved."*



Michaela was heartened by the youths' response to reach out to their peers who are suffering across the world: *"This trip will seek to show the 17 youth the value of their gifts and the difference and impact their lives can make to others, as well as present them with an opportunity to learn from the Rwandese people and culture"*.

(Reporter: Darell Philip)

AN 'ADVOCATE AND AMBASSADOR'

South England Conference (SEC) Education and Religious Liberty leaders came together in a seminar which looked

at being an *'Advocate and Ambassador'* for Christ. The seminar, which took place at the Advent Centre on Sunday 14th July 2019, was part of the on-going Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) leaders training and equipping programme.

The purpose of the seminar was to provide practical tools needed in an increasingly secular society. Brighton G. Kavaloh, Director of the AdventReligio – Legal Perspective Ministry, began with a devotional which updated attendees on the most current issues regarding religious liberty in the UK. Dr Kavaloh referenced the General Conference in its statement on the importance of PARL departments in local churches:

"We work to position the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its services to a standing of credibility, trust and relevance in the public realm. Why? So the Adventist Church can be more effective in its mission."

He then shared a message from SEC President, Dr Emmanuel Osei, who encouraged those in attendance to use the challenges as opportunities to represent their faith. In closing, Dr Kavaloh warned that *'challenges'* should be *"on credible issues whereby you are able to 'give a reason for the hope that is in you' (1 Peter 3:15)."*

The main speaker was Dr David Landrum (Director of Advocacy at the Evangelical Alliance UK since 2011). Prior

to his appointment, he was the Senior Parliamentary Officer for the Bible Society from 2001 and was based in the Houses of Parliament, developing biblical advocacy and supporting the Christian All-Party Parliamentary Group.

In his presentation Dr Landrum reflected on the general loss of Christian identity in traditionally Christian countries. He went on to address what it means to be an *'Advocate and Ambassador'*. Dr Landrum developed the idea that the Holy Spirit was the *'advocate'*, while those called to follow Christ are to be His *'ambassadors'*, bringing light to the world.

While society has bought into secular humanism, he challenged the *'ambassadors'* not give up amidst the increasingly challenging environment, but to have the compassion of Jesus without compromising the truth.

Dr Landrum finished his inspirational message by encouraging the attendees to: *"Keep calm and carry on. Freedom is in peril, so defend it with all your might."*

The seminar concluded with a Q&A where the two speakers were joined by Elder Alex Nsimbi, SEC Education Director, Gina Abbequaye, Head teacher of Hyland House School, and Adrian Roberts, Co-founder of the Religious Liberty Advisory Council in the North England Conference.

(Reporter: Darell Philip)

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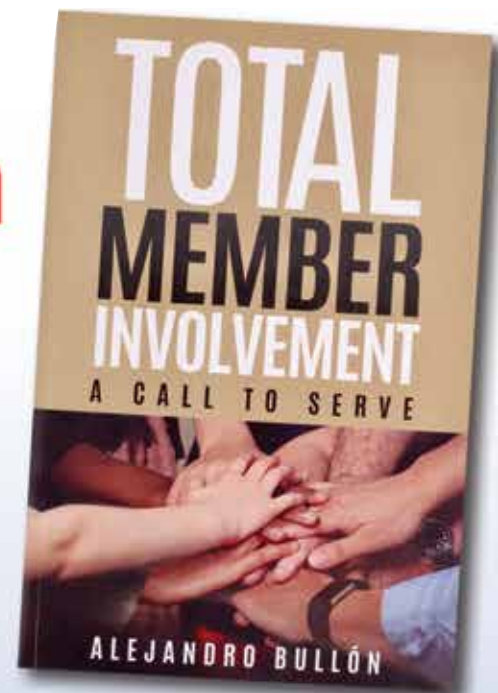
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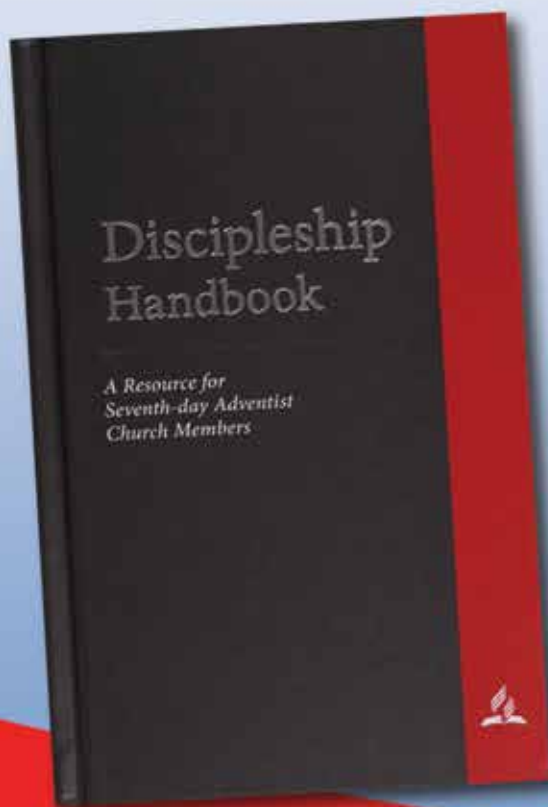
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CAN WE LOOK
FORWARD
TO A BRIGHT
FUTURE?

Devotional

Michael Anim

Pastor, Milton Keynes Central, West Bletchley & Wolverton

The communications company Orange came out with a slogan a few years ago, *"The future is bright, the future is Orange."* The idea was that people who used Orange services and products, or invested in the company, would have a bright future.

The future is not looking bright right now. In the UK the fears of a no-deal Brexit dominate the political landscape. The problem of global warming is worrisome.

Many of us are facing all kinds of stresses, health issues, financial difficulties, unemployment, marital problems and family breakdown. This can leave us feeling perplexed and hopeless.

Can we look forward to a brighter future? Yes, we can!

Psalm 46:1 reassures us that *"God is ... a very present help in trouble."*

We know we can depend on a loving and understanding God, whose Word fills us with hope and assures us of His presence with us.

Whatever the situation, let us declare: *"Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases"* (Psalm 103:2,3). God has promised in Isaiah 41:10: *"Do not fear, I am with you. Do not be anxious; I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you. I will uphold you with My victorious right hand."*

As we mull over the session and the realities that have emerged, we ask, Is the future going to be bright? The word of God answers: *"For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying unto you, 'Fear not, I will help you'"* (Isaiah 41:13).

But the best news is what God is planning for the future: *"I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there you may be also"* (John 14:3). This is a very bright future. *"God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain; for the former things have passed away"* (Revelation 21:4).

If we read and live by God's word, pray, and confess Jesus as our Saviour, we can become a part of God's perfect world for eternity.

"But to you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).

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