



## Happenings at Balham - Nov 2020

### Making a Difference in our Community

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: <sup>35</sup> But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him'. Acts 10:34-35.

Very recently in the news, there was a report from the UK Human Rights watchdog into Anti-Semitism in the Labour Party, which involved harassment of Jews and a refusal to implement changes to the Party that have been suggested in the past. The report suggested that the Labour Party has failed to recognise the extent of the problem within its own ranks. It is ironic that the Party which has headed anti-racism drives in the past, have been accused of racism itself.

Most of us coming from Afro-Caribbean background have been victims of racism, and are descendants of slavery which lasted over 400 years. We can associate with victims of racism and prejudice. However, it got me thinking, could it be that on a smaller and less pronounced scale we have been guilty of prejudice against others who don't look like us, or, are just from other nations than us? I remember hearing someone saying that racism is prejudice, plus power, and they implied because black people are generally lacking in power, we cannot really be racist. Well I am not going to challenge that sociological definition of racism at this point, but I want us to look at the matter of prejudice in ourselves.

Even from a Church perspective, many of us are old enough to remember the prejudice faced by black people within the Church, where black people were denied places in Newbold College, in Pastoral ministry and even in Conference positions in the 1960s and 1970s in particular.

However, the Biblical perspective on prejudice and favouritism goes beyond the matter of power and historical experiences, but goes to the matters of the heart. In the passage above, it is stated that God is no respecter of persons. In other words, his treatment of people is not determined by where they come from and James 2: 9 says '**But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors**'. So, the real question is, have we used our power to oppress people who are of a different race but do we love them less, or treat them worst because of where they come from?

To bring it home, do we treat people less well because they come from East Africa as opposed to West Africa or, because they are of the Igbo tribe in Nigeria as opposed to Yoruba or, if we are from Ghana, do we treat those from the Akan worse than we do from Ga? If we are from the Caribbean or of Caribbean parentage, do we treat those who were born in Africa or of African parentage worse than those from the Caribbean? Even more ridiculous is the notion of lumping together those of the 'small islands' of the Caribbean together, as if Jamaica is that big. Some even take it a step further and have prejudices between different parishes within the same island. There are prejudices even amongst those who describe themselves as British, between those who live in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland or those who live in South England as opposed to North England.

On another matter, in the Adventist churches in the UK, there has developed mono-ethnic churches. Some have pointed out the need for this because of language issues and some have argued that since our worship styles are different there is nothing wrong with people going worshipping where they are comfortable. I won't challenge any of their thoughts, but I want to suggest that at least one reason that we have this different nationality churches are that, we haven't learnt to get on with each other and because prejudice is deep rooted even amongst people of the same colour and members of the same denomination.

Now it is perhaps understandable that people will feel more comfortable amongst people who have similar background or cultural experiences, speak the same language or dialect, and have same preferences in types of food, leisure, humour etc. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about the tendency to think your 'group' is somehow better than others and treat others worse than you would people of your own group.

As Adventists, we come from various backgrounds and have different experiences but, we still are all Adventists and as Christians, we are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28); and we are challenged to love one another as Christ loves us (John 13:34-35). We are still challenged to be like Christ and be no respecter of persons. This is a high calling, but it is what we are called to be.

Back to the situation in the Labour Party and anti-Semitism. Some in the party have argued that they are being politically targeted because they speak out about the situation between Israel and Palestine. Others argue that situation has been exaggerated. I have no idea which of the various views are true, but the Labour Party would do well to do some heart searching rather than just dismiss the charges against them. We too would do well to do some heart searching about whether we have allowed our feelings and prejudices to affect how we view and treat other people. Maybe if we do this, we will conclude that we fall very short and ask God to help us to be the loving, prejudice free people who reflect the character of God to a world who needs to see Jesus in us.

**From the Pastor's desk:** Group leaders were appointed and asked to report each week to Pastor on the number of members contacted and whether they had stated specific needs.

Wk. 21 (4/10) - 55

Wk. 22 (11/10) - 46

Wk. 23 (18/10) - 45

Wk. 24 (25/10) - 45

### **The Conference message on week of Prayer**



**Week of prayer will be November 7<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> and in his weekly newsletter, he shares these thoughts on following up to the Week**

I also encourage you to consider planning appropriate follow-up programmes and activities, to counteract the dip in spiritual enthusiasm that sometimes follows a mountain top experience like the Week of Prayer. Perhaps you could encourage the formation of (virtual) small groups to continue prayerful study and discussion of the scriptures; or plan some simple acts of community service that will offer practical opportunities to cement the discipleship habits discussed during the week. Whatever you choose to do, I pray that this Week of Prayer will serve to deepen the Christian experience of our members and empower us to reach the world for Christ. **To see the whole newsletter, go to file:///E:/Downloads/01%20SEC%20Pastoral%20Newsletter%2029%20October%202020.pdf**

## Health tips - God's Medicine in Sage - Marylene Akakpo (Health Ministries leader)

"Our Savior is the restorer of the moral image of God in man. He has supplied in the natural world remedies for the ills of man, that His followers may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. We can with safety discard the concoctions which man has used in the past. The Lord has provided antidotes for disease in simple plants, and these can be used by faith, with no denial of faith; for by using the blessings provided by God for our benefit we are cooperating with Him. We can use water and sunshine and the herbs which He has caused to grow for healing maladies brought on by indiscretion or accident."— Manuscript 65, 1899. (written April 25, 1899 E.G. White)

### Sage

Used in food and as a tea. As a tea: 1 teaspoon to a cup of boiling water, cover, let simmer for 20-30 minutes strain sweeten with honey (sugar destroys the medicinal properties in herbs) sip.



### Benefits

Packed with antioxidants, Vitamins A, B1, B6, C, K, B-complex, Iron, magnesium, **Calcium folic acid**, riboflavin, and **pyridoxine**.

One study found that drinking 1 cup (240 ml) of sage tea twice daily significantly increased antioxidant defenses. It also lowered both total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol, as well as raised "good" HDL cholesterol

### Good for Health Conditions Including:

- **Lowers cholesterol & blood sugar /Heart health**
- **Menopause (Hot flashes)**
- **Bone health**
- **Boost cognition**

- **Support Nervous System**
- **Brain Boosting**
- **Improves memory & mental focus**
- **Sore throat**
- **Promotes Dental Health (used as a mouth wash after brushing your teeth)**
- **Helps Asthma**
- **Fever/Cold**
- **Helps depression (it acts on the brain's signals involved in depression)**

Sage keep your skin healthy with its essential oils and vitamins. It has antibacterial properties that help prevent skin infections, and its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties help cure acne and relieve the symptoms of eczema and psoriasis. Essential oil excellent for hair.

God said it, believe it, and trust in Divine power.

## **Music Day**

The theme for the day was '**Sing Unto the Lord**' and this looked wider than music to include the importance of worship in the lives of Christians. It was hosted by Mike Johnson former Music director of South England Conference (SEC). He spoke between items and made a few interesting points. Here is a paraphrase of a few of his statements:

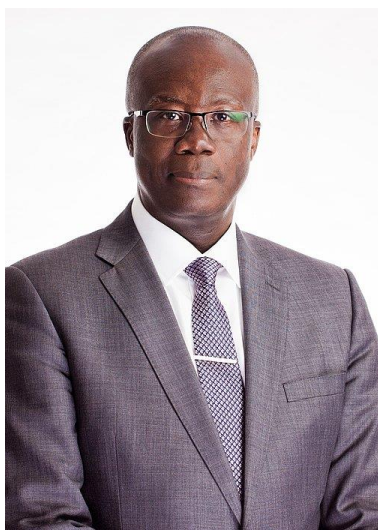
- We go to Church to worship but we should bring our worship to Church.
- Worship should not just be about spectating but be participatory.
- True worshippers recognize we are in the presence of God despite our circumstances or surroundings as long as we have the Spirit within us.
- Worship is not about where you are it is about who you are.
- Worship should be purposeful and is about connecting with God.

Throughout the day we were blessed by a variety of groups and individuals of different age groups and musical preferences and talents including several guests to Balham Church. We were also blessed with powerful testimonies and readings and were challenged to bring back or develop family worship.

One notable feature was a breakaway session when people were invited to participate in household worship whilst background music was played. Throughout the time people prayed, sang and testified within their individual households. Those who were on their own no doubt used the time to be involved in spontaneous worship, just them and God.

Another notable feature was the participation of children in the worship service. They lead out in individual musical items, read poems and gave readings. The extended Children's Spot was also a well appreciated as the Children creatively were involved in singing, reading, reciting poetry and sharing thoughts. The host challenged us to use that format of participation in the future rather than depend on a Children's story told by an adult.

All in all it was a day of blessings and encouragement and we experienced God's presence in a marked way, The day can be viewed on YouTube by going to our You Tube channel Balham SDA Church media or going to our website <https://balham.adventistchurch.org.uk/> and clicking on YouTube tab at the bottom of the homepage.



Mike Johnson chaired much of the mornings programme



## Premier Song release from Sammy Massiah

A longstanding Balham Church member, namely Sammy Massiah has released his first song. I decide to get a background to his musical journey and what prompted the release of this song. I did this with a series of questions which along with his answers are shown below.



Sammy Massiah

**Q1: What age were you when you started piano lessons?**

A1: I started piano lessons at age 9, back on 1976.

**Q2: Were you the only member of your family who took lessons or were there others?**

A2: My two brothers, Michael and Phil, both had lessons. I think some of their lessons were with the late Sis Golding.

**Q3: Who was your first piano teacher and how was he or she selected?**

A3: My first piano teacher was a man named Mr. Willoughby. My parents selected him. I think he moved away after only a few months so my parents found another teacher named Wilfred Murray, who did the bulk of my piano teaching.

**Q4: How old were you when you first starting playing piano at Church and do you remember the occasion?**

A4: I started playing for Junior Sabbath School when I was around age 10. I then 'graduated' to playing for the main service when I was 13. By then I had progressed up to grade 5 in piano.

**Q5: Over the years you have been involved in a number of groups and choirs, can you name them?**

A5: Wow, there's been a lot. Firstly choirs: I sung in the **Youth Choir Balham** under Merle Torrington, and then later under Stephanie Ferguson and then Colin Anderson was leader. Then I joined the **London Adventist Chorale** when I was 18 and sung with them for many years. I was privileged to sing all over the world with the Chorale. I left the Chorale in 2001 but then was asked by Ken Burton to join his ensemble called the **London Adventist Ensemble**. That choir mostly did TV performances in UK TV programmes. I sang with a small choir that backed the opera singer Jessye Norman on a European tour performing *The Sacred Ellington*, a jazz-gospel work written by Duke Ellington. I've also led the **Balham Gospel Choir** from 2006 - 2010 and also briefly led a community choir in the Hampstead area. I've sung in a few male quartets too: '**The Key of Life**', made up of teenagers from Balham church and Covenant, which I'm most known for where I sang with Paul Lee, Arnold Best and Paul Weekes. We were blessed to sing all over the UK and on radio and TV.

**Q6: What are some of the places has you have been in sharing your music ministry?**

A6: God has been good to me and I've been blessed to sing all over the world: Zimbabwe, Sydney Opera House in Australia, USA, Canada, Royal Albert Hall, to name a few





The Adventist Chorale who won BBC Choir of the Year in 1994

**Q7: What is your most memorable moment in your music ministry?**

A7: There have been many memorable moments but probably the most memorable was actually with the Balham Gospel Choir when we sang on a TV programme called '**Last Choir Standing**'. We performed the Mervyn Warren arrangement of Joyful, Joyful (from Sister Act 2) and, what was so special about it was that an ordinary group of people, from my local church in Balham, through hard work and dedication, produced a sound that was absolutely wonderful!

**Q8: I understand you have in fact written a number of gospel songs. Is this right and if so do you know how many you have written?**

A8: Yes, I have actually written over 100 songs including children's songs, congregational songs, group songs, solos and instrumentals. Around a third are finished, a third and nearly finished and a third need a bit of work.

**Q9: Why have you chosen to release this song?**

A9: That's a good question. I've released it because it is ready and it is the right time. We are in the middle of a devastating pandemic that is hurting people all

over the world. Churches are closed, we can't see our friends and family, people are getting sick and dying and people are wondering "how long will it last?" The song is a message of hope for this time.

**Q10: What is the essence of the song?**

A10: The song is based on Isaiah 40:31, "They that wait upon the Lord will mount up on wings as eagles. They will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint." The song is an encouragement to wait on God for deliverance, to slow down, fuss less and trust more, put our own plans before God and trust in His way, and His timing.

**Q11: You mentioned that you are asking people to share it with non-Christians, why have you asked this?**

A11: I believe that songwriting is a gift given to me by God as a way of witnessing for Him in these last days, so that all men will hear the good news of Jesus and then the end can come. So, I want everyone possible to hear the song because I believe it has a message for believers and non-believers alike. Everyone is impacted by the pandemic and is looking for hope. The song points to God as that source of hope who will see us through if we will wait on Him and trust Him as we wait.

**Q12: Who are the group who are singing this song and what role have they played in your music ministry?**

A12 The group is 'Heaven Sent'. They are made up of my wife Sheila, Samantha Robinson-Daye, Sophia Hutchinson and Cecelia Wickham-Anderson. We have ministered together in one form or another for over 25 years and I love them dearly. They are talented, professional and dedicated singers and are a joy to work with. Without them there is no song as it is written for lady's voices. In fact, most of the songs I write are outside of my own singing range so I always need to rely on others to make the song come alive.

**Q13: Do you have other songs in the pipeline that you plan to release and if you have you set a target for releasing them?**

A13: Yes, I do. Myself and Heaven Sent are working on our next song together which is called '**The Way of Love**'. We have several others in the pipeline which, God's willing, will be released over the next few months. My aim is to release one song per month.

**Q14: What would you say to budding Adventist composers who are considering releasing their compositions?**

A14 Put together your best version of the song, with the level of talent and equipment you have. . Don't wait 17 years like I did. You learn by doing. So, go do it, then learn, improve, and then do it some more. Continue to improve your songwriting craft. Do some studies on songwriting to understand what makes a song listenable and interesting. Get advice from songwriters/musical people and ask for honest feedback on the song from friends and family.

**The YouTube link for the song is shown below**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGxQZxC8f58>

**Annual Week of Prayer series : November 7<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>**



## Sessions

Sabbath 7<sup>th</sup> of November - Divine service (11am)

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of November - 7am

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November - Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of November: 7.30pm

Sabbath 14<sup>th</sup> of November - Divine service (11am)

**Readings can be downloaded on the following link**

<https://adventist.uk/news/article/go/2020-10-21/week-of-prayer-2020/>

**ADRA Gift Box Appeal: (website [www.adragiftbox.org.uk](http://www.adragiftbox.org.uk))**

Did you know that according to *The Children's Society* there are 4.2 million children and young people who live in poverty in the UK? This figure has escalated since the start of the pandemic and with the Job Retention Scheme closing at the end of October, it is likely that this figure will once again increase. Families living in insecure housing, low, or no incomes are often left in great need.



This year, the funds from the **ADRA** Gift Box appeal received will go to help disadvantaged UK families affected by the pandemic. Please note the appeal continues until the end of November 2020 and we would encourage you to go to



Please if possible, we are appealing to you to purchase a virtual gift box or two at £10 each.

Those who wish to donate via the bank, the details are as follows:

**ADRA UK**

Account no. 515 231 71

Sort code. 40-45-27

Ref. Gift box

You could also send a cheque payable to **ADRA UK** and send to:  
**ADRA UK, Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts, WD25 9J2**



**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

CCS is here for you

CONTACT  
**0330 133 2495**  
Dedicated listening line  
**0207 723 8050**  
Office Number / Appointments  
[connect@ccscounselling.org.uk](mailto:connect@ccscounselling.org.uk)  
[www.ccscounselling.org.uk](http://www.ccscounselling.org.uk)

**"I am not living,  
I am just surviving."  
Together we can make  
it happen.**

Often, it is not the initial experience that creates the overwhelming pain, but the lack of support.

Do not suffer alone  
Do not suffer in silence  
CCS is here to support you  
Together we can win your struggle.



## Returning tithes and conference offerings during the lock down

Click or copy and paste the link for instructions

<https://sec.adventist.uk/departments/treasury/tithes-and-offerings/treasury-coronavirus-covid-19/>

The Bank details are as follows:

**Account Name: South England Conference**

**Sort Code: 40-45-28**

**Account Number: 1101 4153.**



Please indicate your gift aid reference when making the payment to the conference so the Church can receive a recompense from the Government.

**Alternatively, if you would like your tithe to be collected please see Pastor Akakpo**

## Local Church offering during the lockdown

For those who want to contribute to the local Church budget, note the details.

**Our Bank: Barclays Bank      Account name: Balham SDA Church**

**Account number    00150142      Sort code: 20-21-78**

In the reference section of the online banking, please indicate whether this is for General Budget or CVID-19 or the recently set up Hardship **Please contact Clinton Monfries on 07958 217715 for more information.**



A prayer line was initiated by Lewisham SDA Church but now includes people from around the country who are involved in praying for people who call the line. You are free to call the line and ask for prayers, but if you want to volunteer to receive the calls and pray for others, please see Errol Anderson.

Global  
**24/7**  
**Lifeline**  
day/night

Lonely, feeling down,  
fearful of the future or  
current events in your life?

Prayer can make the difference

Call us **free** on  
The **Lifeline** now!  
**020 3998 2118**

someone is waiting to **pray or even just listen to you**

**web: [www.global247lifeline.org](http://www.global247lifeline.org)**