

**SEC**

# COMMUNICATOR

July 2020 # 15



# CORONAVID-19

**IMPLICATIONS TO OUR HEALTH & WELLBEING**

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**WHAT YOUR DOCTOR NEEDS TO KNOW**



**LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH**



**EXERCISE: THE IMMUNITY SUPER BOOSTER**

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*The views expressed in this magazine are opinions of the writers*

# Editorial

**O**ur world has changed so rapidly since the last edition on Climate Change. Even though environmentalists would rejoice over the resulting reduction of poisonous gases into our atmosphere with fewer aircraft in the air, we are now focused on confronting a new enemy called the Corona Virus. This virus has exposed our human vulnerability. We are faced with a threat that is further exacerbated if we have certain underlying health issues.

This highly infectious virus has changed our world dramatically. We have become used to new words and phrases such as lockdown, face masks, social distancing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and other terms associated with the arrival of the deadly virus. 'Stay home', 'Stay safe' and 'Save the NHS' are some of the slogans used to try and keep us protected from the effects of the virus which has infected a huge number of people. Many thousands have already died and the virus has created fear around the globe: fear of contracting the virus and fear of dying from the Covid-19 disease it causes.

How we manage our health and maintain our well-being has been brought into sharp focus as a result of this pandemic. The statistics show that most of those killed by the virus suffered from underlying health conditions.

Our hearts go out to all the families who have lost loved ones, and we sympathise with them in their loss. We cannot but be grateful to God for those who have survived the effects of the deadly virus.

In this edition, we have chosen to focus on the implications of the Corona virus for our health and well-being. Even though living a healthy life cannot guarantee protection from infectious diseases, it is still our best option and also helps us to stay strong spiritually.

In the book, "Counsels on Health" Ellen White writes, "Life is a gift of God. Our bodies have been given us to use in God's service, and He desires that we shall care for and appreciate them. We are possessed of physical as well as mental faculties. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and therefore we must do nothing that would defile this entrusted possession. Our bodies must be kept in the best possible condition physically, and under the most spiritual influences, in order that we may make the best use of our talents." CH 41.1 Read also 1 Corinthians 6:13.

"A misuse of the body shortens that period of time which God designs shall be used in His service. By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting to take physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives by disregarding nature's laws are guilty of robbery toward God. We have no right to neglect or misuse the body, the mind, or the strength, which should be used to offer God consecrated service." CH 41.2

<https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/20.200#201>

**OUR COVER**



**SAM O. DAVIES**  
Editor

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## the President's Desk

DR EMMANUEL OSEI



The year began with great optimism and excitement. As we shared the SEC team's vision for the next quadrennium, we looked forward with eager anticipation to *Make Disciples* and *Build Communities*. It never crossed our minds that in just 2 months we would be struck with COVID-19 and have to close our church buildings and be forced to build communities.

We recognised that, as a church, we have been very insular and, as a result, we have developed a fortress mentality. The physical church has become a fortress where we can hide and feel safe. We are protective of who comes into our church. We believe, they must look like us, dress like us, eat what we eat, behave like us etc. However, every once in a while, we would open our doors to the public and let a

few in, after which we shut ourselves in our fortress again. This practice has gone on for years without the success we would like to see, and so an emphasis was now being placed on leaving the comforts of our churches and engaging with those in our communities. This vision was well received and, as plans unfolded to put the strategy in action, we were suddenly hit with COVID-19.

As the safety of our membership is paramount, we took an action to close our churches immediately and were now forced to do ministry in our communities. Although we do not believe COVID-19 is a plague from God, we have witnessed members reaching out to their neighbours, providing hot meals, grocery shopping for the vulnerable in their communities, collecting prescriptions for the needy, participating in acts of kindness, and being relevant within our communities.

This indeed is what the church should have been doing, but it took COVID-19 to serve as a catalyst and give us the impetus to get on track.

Each week, we have listened and watched as

members from every area of our church shared how they are building their local communities. Our gratitude goes out to our Pastors and Elders who have done, and continue to do, a sterling job of leading the various ministries in churches during the lockdown.

Many of our members have been laid to rest as a result of the coronavirus. As a conference we extend our sincere condolences to all the families who have lost loved ones. Our church will never be the same because of the effect COVID-19 has had on the world. Our church services have been impacted and even altered as we plan to implement changes for the future. Presently, we are in discussion and forming strategies as we prepare to reopen our churches.

We are grateful to God for modern technology. I am particularly thankful for all our technical experts who have been instrumental in ensuring that the local churches remained connected through Zoom, Webex and other platforms. Services have continued; seminars and revival series have taken place within our churches. Evangelism programmes have taken place with the help of our technical team and many have indicated a desire for baptism. We can attribute this only to the working of the Holy Spirit during this pandemic.

The valuable lesson learned is this: During a crisis, the Holy Spirit is active, saving souls. May we open ourselves to His leading.



# 2020 VISION

I'm sure that we all had millions of different hopes, dreams and ambitions when we looked forward to the year 2020. However, the year has been dominated by the world's biggest crisis in living memory, the coronavirus Covid19. Suddenly our health has become our number one concern.

Given the nature of this virus, those of us who have underlying health conditions are most at risk. Indeed, most people who are seriously affected or die, were already living with a chronic disease such as hypertension, diabetes and asthma, to name just a few.

Over the years, many people say to me, 'Thank you, Dr Chidi. It would be nice to start your programme and get rid of my disease, but I'm just not keen on changing my lifestyle. I like to eat what I eat. I'll just keep taking the pills that my doctor gives me. I'm ok with that.'

Habits of a lifetime are challenging to break. People are also used to living with their disease. I like to think of chronic diseases as a bear, stalking us from a distance. It has the potential to kill us, but it's so far away and moving so slowly that we do not worry about it. Covid19, however, has given that bear a steroid boost, so that it is now just behind us. Sadly, for hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, it caught up to them.

This really does expose the myth that we can happily 'live with our diseases'. Our bodies are fighting hard to keep us alive each day. With a chronic lifestyle disease, we need to fight even harder. If

a further challenge is introduced, such as Covid19, influenza, or even a highly stressful period of life, our bodies often cannot cope and so give up the fight.

Now is the time to start investing in ourselves. It is time to start making those changes that will destroy that bear completely. Regular daily exercise; drinking enough water; maintaining a healthy, plant-based diet; getting out in the sun; learning how to deal with your emotions. These are certainly great ways to strengthen our immune systems. Evidence shows that berries, such as blueberries, can increase our number of natural killer cells (our potent immune cells). Spices such as cardamom increase the activity of these cells. Cruciferous greens, such as broccoli and kale, actually prepare the immune system in our bowels to protect us from any foreign invaders that we may eat.

A worrying finding has also emerged regarding those who are vulnerable to this virus. Along with the elderly, obese, and people with chronic diseases, add the BAME population. There are many enquiries going on regarding this at the moment. I have had the privilege of reporting to both the government and opposition groups on this issue. In summary, my opinion is that, although socioeconomic factors will always affect health outcomes and inequalities, the answer seems slightly simpler when it comes to COVID19 and influenza - Vitamin D.

There are many studies which show that Vitamin D is a powerful

tool to combat COVID19 and influenza. We know that Black and Asian people have lower vitamin D levels, especially in western countries which have less sun. More research is needed to prove this point. But while we await the definitive results, let's make sure that we top up our vitamin D levels.

Finland seems to be teaching us a lesson too. In Europe they have some of the lowest levels of deaths from the virus. What do they know that we don't? Saunas. Everyone has saunas in Finland. In a population of 5 million, the number of saunas is 3.5 million. Studies have shown that the heat from the saunas raise the levels of natural killer cells; and the immediate cold afterwards, keeps those cells in the central part of the body. So, should we all start building saunas? No, simply having a hot shower followed by a cold one may also work, if you're brave enough.

This knowledge will help us prepare for the next virus. Whether it is COVID19 or the yearly influenza, we can prepare to protect ourselves and our communities. The SEC Health department is working with ADRA-UK to help us go into the communities to help vulnerable people beat such illnesses.



**DR CHIDI NGWABA**

Health Ministries Director

# WHAT YOUR DOCTOR NEEDS TO KNOW

When should the need to address urgent medical issues outweigh the fear of catching a virus, one that usually causes a mild infection?

In the current pandemic, patients continue to have medical problems that are not related to the coronavirus. However, offering any solution that puts them at any risk of contracting the virus is often vehemently rejected. Coronavirus has killed hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. It is especially stealthy and unpredictable, able to spread from carriers who have no symptoms and so one needs to be cautious, given the mortality data and the constant media coverage of the epidemic.

However, the literature on risk in medicine indicate that the actual risk of harm to a patient is often coloured by perceptions of potential harm which often is influenced by the media broadcast at the time.

As a GP, I have been in a couple situations, recently, where I have had to advise patients to either go to hospital or come into surgery, despite their fears, as not doing so could have been fatal.

The first involved a young man who had had a severe sore throat for several days and this continued to worsen despite using strong antibiotics. He could not swallow, was drooling saliva and could hardly speak. This was due to quinsy that needed to be drained and so he went in and was relieved.

The second involved a lady who called in with lower abdominal pains and dizziness of sudden onset. The pains were so severe she could hardly breathe even as she spoke, but she wanted to wait and only wanted strong analgesia to take



the pain away. She finally called the ambulance and was noted to have an ectopic pregnancy and needed immediate surgery.

The thing is that both patients did not contract the corona virus and are well because they had the treatment they needed.

Acutely unwell adults and children need to seek emergency treatments they need without the fear of contracting the virus, as the alternative may be fatal.

Those requiring essential routine care, such as childhood immunisations, six weeks baby checks, post-natal visits, and those needing some injections and specific medications, may need to attend to get their treatments. Also, it is imperative that those on potentially toxic medications that require monitoring, such as DMARDs (Disease Modifying Anti Rheumatic Drugs), medications that modulate the immune system, Lithium, Warfarin and Clozaril and similar medications, will need to continue with their prescribed schedule.

Most GPs are currently easily accessible by telephone or video consultation, so most chronic conditions, especially those at risk of deteriorating under poor management, such as diabetics, COPD(chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder), poor blood pressure and asthma among others in the "shielding group", are able to contact their doctors for continuing care.

People who are on treatment or who develop symptoms suggestive of cancer- including weight loss, new lumps, suspicious skin lesions, severe bone pain, and rectal or vaginal bleeding - will need to contact their doctor for assessment and urgent investigations. Also, women with a previously high-risk cervical smear or abnormal breast scan will need to continue their follow-up as planned.

In this Covid-19 era, some people have touted faith over fear as the clarion call, but I would add, faith without action is dead. Therefore, we have to stay alert and ask for help when we need to, believing that He who is in us is able to lead us through this disquieting period.



**DR RAYMOND ARHIN**

GP and Member of South East Community Church, London



**DR HELGI JÓNSSON**

Health Ministries Director (Trans-European Division)

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH...



**W**hat have your worries been during the pandemic? Do you know what people's main worries have been? Not the virus itself, but the isolation and not being able to meet friends and family. Not being able to run the usual errands. People have been worried about losing their livelihoods and... their mental health. According to surveys, contracting the virus itself is Number 7 on the list.<sup>1</sup>

It's always important to take care of our health, not just during this time, but it is during times like these that we realise what is important and what sustains good health. All the things we do to maintain good physical health is also good for our mental health, whether it's regular exercise, a

<sup>1</sup> <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/file-download/9943689328/5/2020>

sleep of 7-9 hours or a healthy varied diet. The importance of positive thinking has long been known, however we interpret what occurs around us. We need to fill our minds with positive things. But in this short article, I want to draw your attention to something else, something we don't always remember when we address mental illness prevention.

Shortly after the lockdown in Italy was implemented, people posted moving videos of their neighbours singing from their balconies. Professional and amateur musicians were giving the gift of live music to everyone confined to their homes around them. People sang together. In other places, including in the UK, people shared their gratitude by going outside and clapping for those who were

## ...DURING THIS PANDEMIC

helping the sick on the frontlines. Whole neighbourhoods were joined together, and it was "felt" throughout the country.

Belonging to a group of people is important to us all. And should we focus on something during, and especially after, the pandemic, it should be loneliness and working towards eradicating it. Loneliness is a great problem in our modern-day society. It has been shown that loneliness can lead to a 50% increase in premature deaths,<sup>2</sup> increased depression, high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels. The subjective feeling of loneliness in the elderly even seems to be a risk factor for developing dementia.<sup>3</sup>

From the very beginning, it has been clear that we need to be with other people. We are created as social beings. Look

<sup>2</sup> Holt-Lunstad, Julianne, Timothy B. Smith, Mark Baker, Tyler Harris, and David Stephenson. "Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10, no. 2 (March 2015): 227-37.

<sup>3</sup> Holwerda, T. J., D. J. H. Deeg, A. T. F. Beekman, T. G. van Tilburg, M. L. Stek, C. Jonker, and R. A. Schoevers. "Feelings of Loneliness, but Not Social Isolation, Predict Dementia Onset: Results from the Amsterdam Study of the Elderly (AMSTEL)." *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry* 85, no. 2 (February 1, 2014): 135-42.

at Genesis: 'And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him"' (Genesis 2:18, KJV). *It is not good that man should be alone.*

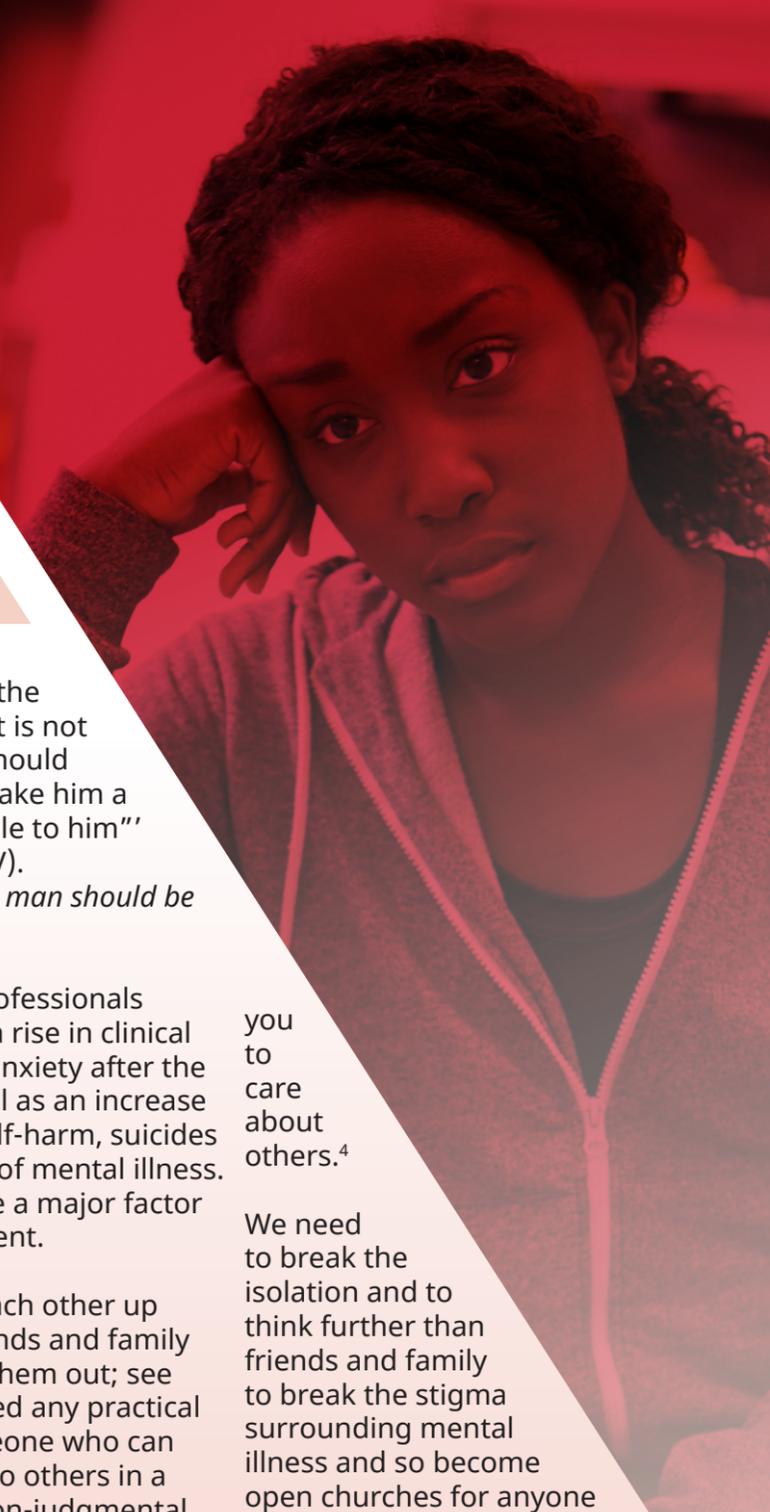
Mental health professionals are anticipating a rise in clinical depression and anxiety after the pandemic, as well as an increase in incidents of self-harm, suicides and other forms of mental illness. Loneliness will be a major factor in this development.

We should call each other up and see how friends and family are doing. Hear them out; see whether they need any practical help or just someone who can listen. Listening to others in a respectful and non-judgmental way can be a valuable gift. Perhaps time is the most valuable thing we have and can give to others. When Jesus said, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22.39), He wasn't just thinking about your neighbour, He was also thinking about you because He cares for you. He knows that it is also beneficial for

you to care about others.<sup>4</sup>

We need to break the isolation and to think further than friends and family to break the stigma surrounding mental illness and so become open churches for anyone in need of a talk. The gospel is not just knowing facts but knowing Him and thereby becoming compassionate, caring communities for those in need. In this way, we also take care of our own mental health.

<sup>4</sup> Poulin, Michael J., Stephanie L. Brown, Amanda J. Dillard, and Dylan M. Smith. "Giving to Others and the Association Between Stress and Mortality." *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. 9 (September 2013): 1649-55.



# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

**IDENTIFY IT  
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# ANXIOUS AND NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?



**THEMBIE MAPINGIRE**

Cornerstone Counselling Coordinator

**W**ith the lockdown slowly easing, there seems to be a slight glimmer of hope in people's minds. Yet this also comes with a new set of anxieties and uncertainty – the struggle with the meaning of the “new normal.” What will this look like and how long will social distancing last?

Many people are experiencing mixed emotions because of the lockdown. Anxiety, sadness, frustration, relief, happiness, anger, and often a sense of grief and loss are some of the prevailing emotions.

Though the word “grief” is often associated with the death of a loved one, COVID-19 has changed the way we view grief, as we sadly realise the extent and impact of what we have lost during the pandemic. On top of the consequential loss of human life, we have lost our daily routines, face to face interactions, milestones like graduations and weddings, dreams and other planned events, jobs and financial security, to name a few. We have lost normalcy and now worry about the “new normal.” COVID-19 has disrupted our lives, and we are all experiencing grief during these strange and unprecedented times. We know that things will never be the same. We have that lingering sense that more loss is to come, even if we don't know what precisely those losses may be.

These losses can be confusing and challenging to deal with because they are not tangible. This situation may leave us with feelings of despair, anxiety, anger or a sense of being

overwhelmed continuously without reason.

Don't struggle alone. Reach out and talk to someone.

## What can you do about this?

- 1. Validate and affirm your feelings:** There is no need to feel ashamed or critical of the emotions you are experiencing. These feelings are legitimate and standard during this difficult time. Be kind to yourself.
- 2. Talk to someone:** If you find the thoughts and feelings described above persist and become disruptive in your daily life, impacting your work, school or relationships, don't struggle alone. Talking to someone you trust, like a family member, a friend, your GP or counsellor helps.
- 3. Talk to a counsellor:** As much as talking to family or friends is helpful, for most people, it can be a barrier to freely discussing personal issues. Talking to a counsellor has an extra benefit because counsellors are trained professionals who have an understanding of several mental health conditions and are there to listen without judgment.

## Talking helps you to:

1. See your thoughts from a different perspective.
2. Release bottled up thoughts or feelings and relieve stress
3. Set aside time to confront your feelings
4. Feel less alone with your problems
5. Cope better with everyday life
6. Share the burden of always carrying your emotions.
7. Improve your physical wellbeing

8. Increase your self-awareness

Cornerstone Counselling Service (CCS) provides you with the opportunity to talk to someone seven days a week, from 8am to 12 midnight. Because research shows that one's first language increases emotional expression, at CCS we have counsellors and listeners who can connect with you in different languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French, Romanian, German, Tamil and a variety of African languages. These are trusted and trained confidential professionals.

When you call us, a friendly professional listener will talk and listen to you without judging you, allowing you to feel valued, accepted and listened. If your need requires a more qualified counsellor or specialist counsellor like a traumatologist, the CCS team will refer you appropriately within its group. We have counsellors who are specialised in helping couples, family, children and young people, with traumas, addictions, depression, anxiety disorders and a whole range of mental health issues. Sessions are currently being held online through Zoom, WhatsApp, by telephone, Skype and Facetime.

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# TOP TIPS

1. You don't need equipment or a gym to have a great workout. You can start with walking, especially if you haven't exercised in a long time or are not used to exercising.
2. The best time to exercise is early in the morning before breakfast. The air is freshest in the morning, so get outside and walk, cycle or do a workout session.
3. When exercising outdoors, you should double the recommended social distance between you and others; and do not run, cycle or walk directly behind someone who is running or cycling.

4. Make sure you get hot and sweaty during your workout. Your heart rate should increase significantly to get the best results. On a scale of 0 – 10, you should feel that you are working between 6 – 8.
5. Do not work out for more than an hour, but try shorter, more intense workouts as they have been proven to be more beneficial. Do short bursts of exercise for 20-45 seconds with short rest periods of 10-20 seconds. Repeat, several times. The shorter the interval, the shorter the rest period.
6. When building your own interval workout, first choose your favourite exercises, then decide on how long the exercise and rest periods will be. For example, walk at a brisk pace for 30 seconds then at a normal pace for 15 seconds and repeat several times. Use landmarks to measure distances such as lampposts, side roads and trees.
7. Use exercises that use as many muscles as possible. Do this by utilising more than one joint (shoulder, elbow, hips, knee, ankle) which will engage more muscles. This will cut down your workout time and improve your results. Examples of exercises are: Jumping jacks, press ups, squats with shoulder press, mountain climbers, burpees, high knees with arms above head, squat thrusts, jump squats, running on the spot. Search YouTube for demonstrations and modifications of these exercises.
8. Consistency is key. Build up a routine you can stick to and plan your workouts.
9. Dedicate your workouts to God to keep you safe and to make your workout effective.

## EXERCISE

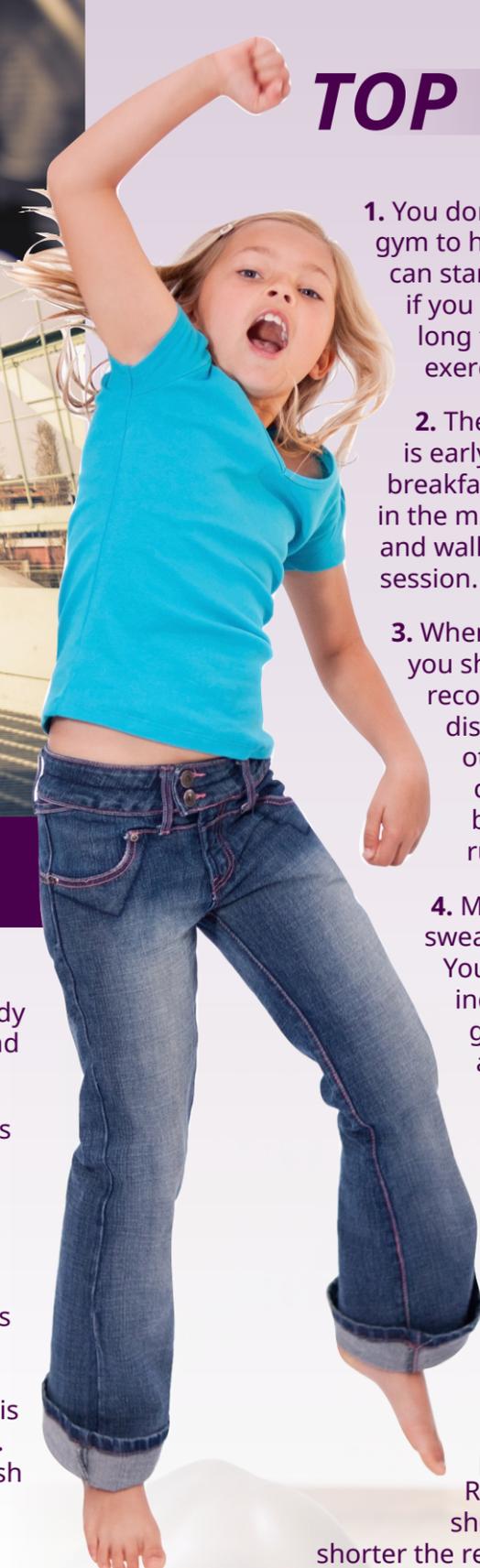
### THE IMMUNITY SUPER BOOSTER

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has brought challenges that have far exceeded our wildest imaginations. While the death toll continues to rise, and we hear of family and friends that have either caught the virus or sadly passed away from it, there is one thing that shines through as a definite positive: More people are exercising.

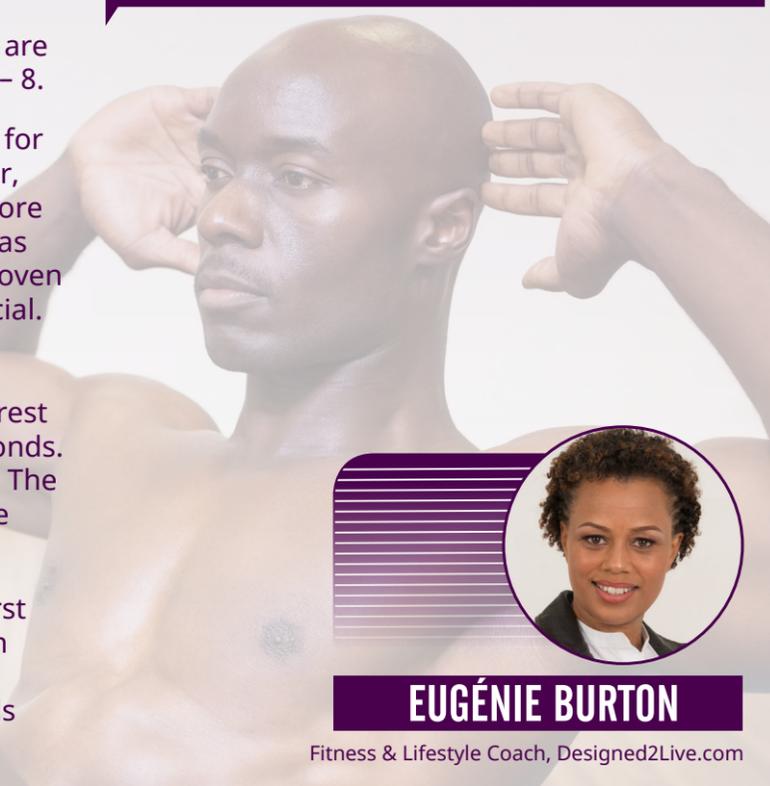
A new UK survey by NutraCheck, a nutrition tracking app, found that 'over a third of participants are more active now than before the lockdown'. This is great news because our best defence is to have a strong immune system, and exercise is one of the ways that can help to strengthen it. The immune system defends the body against infections and is made up of a complex network

of cells, tissues and organs that work together to protect the body from bacteria, foreign bodies and viruses.

A healthy lifestyle which includes regular exercise will help to keep your immune system working as it should. However, long and intense workouts can weaken your immune system. The body interprets long periods of exercise as stress. As a result, the levels of your stress hormones are increased, and this suppresses the immune system. Exercise benefits start to diminish after 60 minutes of continuous and intense aerobic activity; therefore, I suggest that you do workouts with short intervals of intense aerobic activity which will reduce the risk of a weakened immune system.



*"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." – (3 John 1:2, KJV)*



**EUGÉNIE BURTON**

Fitness & Lifestyle Coach, Designed2Live.com

# WHAT HAS SLEEP GOT TO DO WITH IT

**“Every night for the past two weeks, I have been wide awake for several hours. It usually takes me ages to fall off to sleep, and then when I do, if I get up to use the bathroom, I can’t get back to sleep.”**

The above comment was from a lady recovering from the COVID-19 Coronavirus. As she recounted her situation, I could hear the frustration in her voice. She stated that previously, her sleep had not been problematic, so I was anxious to know what to do to address her current sleep deficit, as it was making her feel low in mood. Additionally, she had also begun feeling quite unwell and found it hard to relax. I shared with her some tips which I will outline later in this article. suffice it to say, on implementing the advice, she now reports some improvement with her sleep and better physical and mental wellbeing.

## COVID-19’s Impact on Sleep

Candice Alfano, director of the University of Houston’s Sleep and Anxiety Centre, reports<sup>1</sup>: “During times of increased stress, sleep is often the first biological system to malfunction...A pandemic is stressful...” In a recent online survey conducted by Alfano and her research team, the rate of respondents reporting “severe to very severe problems” either falling or staying asleep, was double what they normally see.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-sleep-anxiety/>

Explaining the link between stress and sleep, Alfano states: “The relationship actually runs in both directions... Even during times of low stress, sleep loss elevates next-day anxiety, potentially creating a vicious cycle.”

This certainly mirrors the experience of a number of individuals I have spoken to, both those who have had COVID-19 and those fearing they will get it. Increased stress was a major factor.

Another survey by Sleep Standards, captioned “Sleep Habits Post Quarantine in the US (2020)”<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ajmc.com/newsroom/how-have-sleep-habits-changed-amid-covid-19>

examined sleep habits both prior to and following lockdown measures resulting from the pandemic. 1, 015 Americans between the ages of 18 and 79 (55% female; 13.4% Generation Z; 51.6% millennial; 9.9% baby boomer) were surveyed.

## Survey findings included

1. 53% reported less time spent sleeping than before the pandemic.
2. 67% believe their sleep was healthier prior to the lockdown.
3. 98% reported new sleep problems post-lockdown.
4. 68% felt stressed or finding it hard to sleep, even after

<https://www.ajmc.com/newsroom/how-have-sleep-habits-changed-amid-covid-19>

lockdown was lifted.

## Positive Impact of Sleep

Sleep Matters Club<sup>3</sup> lists 10 top benefits of a good night sleep:

1. **Reduces stress** – (reduced levels of stress hormones produced)
2. **Improves memory** – (brain organises and stores memories to improve recall)
3. **Lowers blood pressure** - (relaxed states reduces blood pressure and risk of heart attacks and strokes)
4. **Boosts immunity** – (production of protein molecules during

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dreams.co.uk/sleep-matters-club/top-10-benefits-good-nights-sleep/>

5. **Maintains weight** – (regulates hormones that impact appetite and reduces craving for high calorie foods)
6. **Improves mood** – (enhances ability to remain calm and reduces agitation)
7. **Reduces type 2 diabetes risk** – (may assist with stabilising blood glucose levels)
8. **Maintains heart health** – (lowers levels of stress and inflammation to the cardiovascular system)
9. **Assists with pain relief** – (lowers pain threshold)
10. **Improves brain function** – (increases attention, efficacy and productivity)

Here’s to better sleep and better wellbeing!

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/healthy-sleep-tips>



**SHARON PLATT-MCDONALD**

Health, Women’s Ministries & Adventist Community Services Director, BUC

## Sleep Tips

Listing some tips for better sleep, the Sleep Foundation<sup>4</sup> identifies the following:

1. Stick to a sleep schedule of the same bedtime and wake up time, even on the weekends. This regulates your body clock.
2. Establish a relaxing bedtime routine, reducing bright lights.
3. If you have trouble sleeping, avoid naps, especially in the afternoon.
4. Exercise daily, but not too close to bedtime.
5. Evaluate your sleep environment to establish the conditions you need for sleep. Your bedroom should be cool (between 60-70 degrees), dark and free of noise that may disturb your sleep.
6. Sleep on a comfortable mattress and pillows.
7. Avoid bright light in the evening and expose yourself to sunlight in the morning. This will keep your circadian rhythms (body clock) in check.
8. Avoid spicy and heavy meals in the evening. Alcohol also disturbs sleep.
9. Wind down with calming activities and eliminate electronic gadgets. These screen lights active the brain, keeping you wakeful.
10. If sleep difficulties persist, speak with your doctor or a sleep professional.

# BOOSTING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

## WITH THE APPROPRIATE RECIPES



SUZANNE KIRLEW

Coping with all that is happening in the world right now can have an effect on our bodies: Global pandemic, social distancing, lockdown, quarantine and whatever is next to come.

Staying healthy in these times is even more important now than ever. The best solution is to eat healthy meals that have lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Try new fruits and vegetables or new varieties of fruits and vegetable that you may not have tried before. You can also try cooking or preparing them in a different way. So, for breakfast why not try having some tray roasted berries - blueberries, raspberries, blackberries etc. These make a nice healthy start to the day.

I have two recipes that are tasty and healthy too. The chickpea nuggets are quick and easy to make, and the recipe includes turmeric which, according to Medical News Today.com, has many health benefits including:

- Anti-inflammatory properties
- Pain-relieving properties, including for arthritis pain
- Dramatically Increases the antioxidant capacity of the body
- Powerful antioxidant that appears to prevent damaged to the liver by toxins

### CHICKPEA NUGGETS

(quick and easy plant-based recipe)

#### Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas (15.5 oz or 400g), drained
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 Tbsp nutritional yeast (optional)
- 1 teaspoon all purpose seasoning
- 1 Tbsp bread crumbs

#### Coating Ingredients

- ½ cup bread crumbs for coating
- ½ teaspoon turmeric

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350f/180°C or gas mark 4
2. Pour the drained chickpeas into a food processor and process for a few seconds.
3. Then add all of the other ingredients except the last ½ cup bread crumbs for coating. Process a few more seconds. Everything will be well mixed and chunky texture.
4. Scoop up teaspoon sized globs and roll them into balls then press them into nugget shapes.
5. Pour bread crumbs and turmeric into a bowl and coat each nugget.
6. Cover a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Lay each nugget on the parchment but don't let them touch.
7. Bake for 20 minutes, then flip and bake for 10 more minutes.
8. Allow nuggets to cool before eating.



### AUNTY VERNA'S GRANOLA

#### Ingredients

- 500 grams of rolled oats (old fashioned, large-grained type)
- 50 grams brown sugar
- the juice of 2 large oranges
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- pinch of salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- 60 grams crushed peanuts (optional)
- 60 grams sunflower seeds
- 60 grams sesame seeds
- 60 grams flax seeds (linseed)
- 100 grams raisins

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 160°C
2. Mix together the oats, sugar
3. Add nutmeg, cinnamon, pinch of salt, almond essence & rose water to orange juice
4. Add to oats mixture and stir with hands until all of mixture is moist.
5. Place on baking sheets in a hot oven and stir every 10 minutes.
6. During the final 10 minutes add the nuts and seeds
7. Allow to cool, then store in airtight containers.



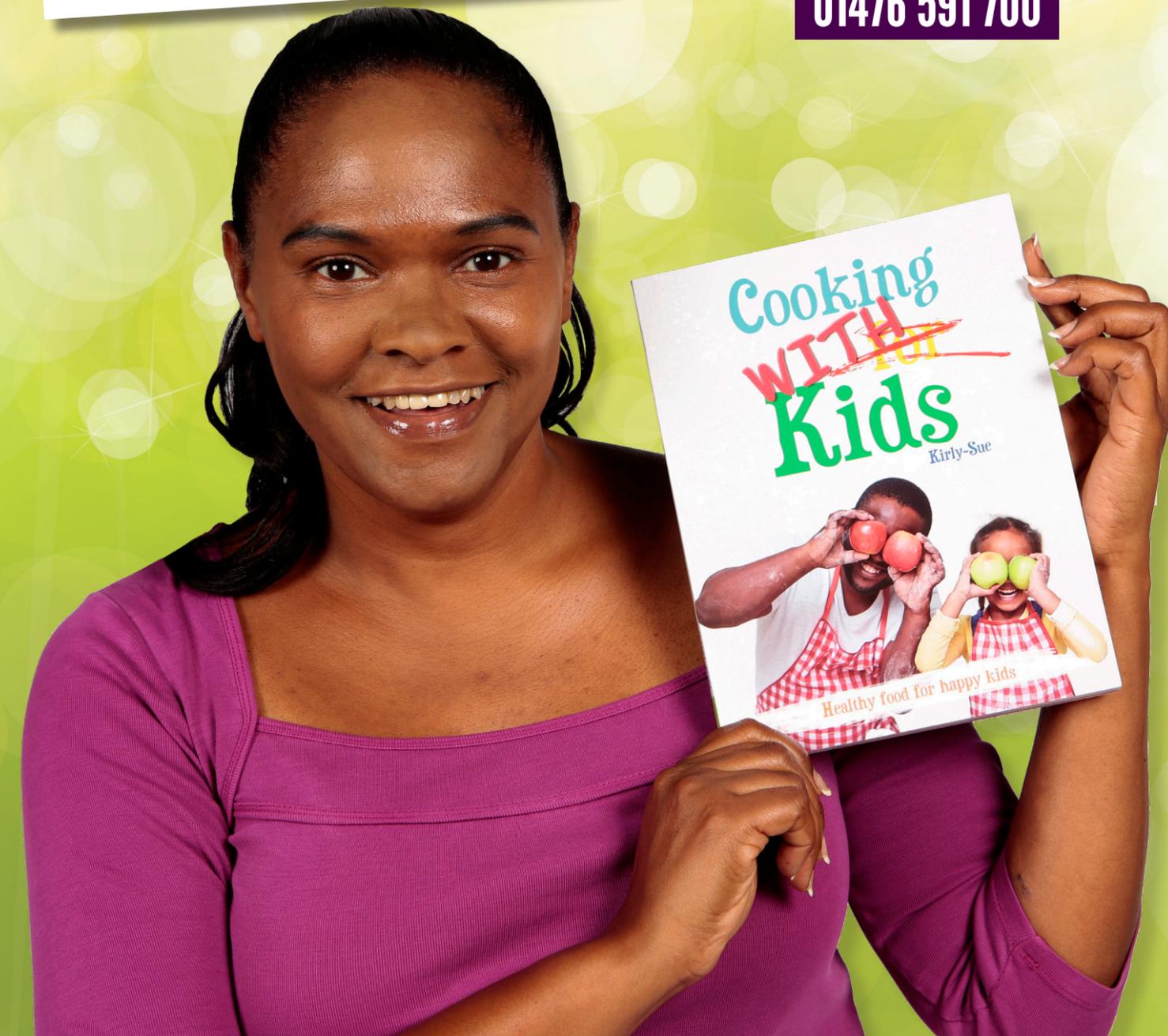
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AN INVITATION TO A VIRTUAL (VIA ZOOM)

# MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT FELLOWSHIP



ON THE TOPIC:  
*Intimacy*  
"NAKED BUT NOT ASHAMED"

## 18 JULY 2020

4-6PM (UK) 🕒 5-7PM (KIGALI) 🕒 6-8PM (KENYA)



**SPEAKER: DR KIGUNDU NDWIGA**

DR. PR. KIGUNDU NDWIGA IS PASSIONATE ABOUT FAMILY LIFE AND YOUTH MINISTRY. HE HOLDS A PHD IN MINISTRY LEADERSHIP. HE IS MARRIED TO MARY AND THEY HAVE TWIN DAUGHTERS.

ZOOM ID: **928 2600 5373** PASSWORD: **518 281**

OSCAR CELL: 0755 1368237



# HOPE & Restoration

After the flood came the new earth. The returning dove was the sign that restoration could take place – much like our hope that after the lifting of lockdown we can start the restoration of life...for ourselves, for those that depend on us and for the world.

ADRA believes in the hope on the horizon and we would love you to be a part of our

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# SURRENDER OUR GREATEST VICTORY



The Apostle Paul writes, beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.* Romans 12:1 (KJV). Implicit in the word *sacrifice* is the notion of surrender, and I have to confess that raising the white flag of sacrifice and surrender was one of the hardest choices I have ever had to make.

When I left the South England Conference in 2015, my wife and I decided that we would visit a lifestyle centre in Canada as part of our sabbatical. We were combining this with a visit to my sister in Vancouver. It was expensive, but we decided that we would do it anyway. I should really stress this point: We are often very reluctant to spend money on our physical health and wellbeing. It was, however, a practice of mine, in spite of free medical healthcare in the UK, to get a thorough medical check-up every two years. That practice, without doubt, saved my life.

Living healthily is a choice, pure and simple. However, we are governed by our senses, and taste is king. I came across a German Burger King advert that read, "Follow your gut, Taste is king". There is no doubt that taste is king, but when we allow taste to govern our choices then I have to remind you that this particular "king" exacts some heavy (health) taxes.

At the lifestyle centre, our blood samples were analysed, and it was

deemed that I had heart disease. When the doctor told me, it was like someone had slapped me in the face. I sat there thinking, "No, you got that wrong, Doc. I can't possibly have heart disease because I've been a lifelong vegetarian." He continued, "You've been eating too many fried foods.' Wrong again, I thought. "We don't eat fried foods at home." But as I sat there reflecting on what had been said, I realised that he was correct. It wasn't what I was eating at home that was the problem, but what happened away from home. Taste had driven my choices. I loved the Indian meals; I loved cheese 'n' onion crisps; I loved, roti and patties; and I loved to eat when I wanted and didn't care too much about the consequences. Our week at the lifestyle centre changed my perspective and outlook.

COVID-19 has been a terrible blight on humanity all around the world. So many lives have been needlessly lost. I was speaking to a pastoral colleague whose wife is a doctor and I enquired of him how she was doing. He said, "She had the virus, Pastor." I said, "What?" He said, "yeah, she had the virus; in fact, we all had it." I was amazed because he was just speaking to me, casually. But then he said something that made all the difference. He said, "I'm so glad that we made the decision to live healthily." This family had made the decision to follow a plant-based diet, exercise, water, rest etc. and when COVID came knocking, their immune system was able to fight for them.

Living healthily is a choice, but it is actually the best choice that you can make. COVID has been most devastating to those with underlying issues. Heart disease, diabetes, chronic lung disease, severe obesity, liver disease, chronic kidney disease and those over 65. The NHS estimates that at least two thirds of the diseases that they have to deal with are entirely avoidable. Choices.

A friend wrote to me in the midst to the COVID-19 storm and she said, "Our diet has changed almost overnight - Lots of fruits and vegetables and grains." Living a healthy lifestyle is not an accident, but it's a choice. It calls for surrender, but here's the irony - In surrender comes our greatest victories.

### Reference:

- [https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/burger\\_king\\_abs](https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/burger_king_abs)
- <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/advice.page?id=iJHtmYrbSfo>



**SAM DAVIS**

Former SEC President  
Certified Nutrition Counsellor (CNC)  
Doctoral student (Naturopathy) ND

# LOOKING AFTER CHILDREN IN LOCKDOWN



COVID-19 has tipped the whole world upside down. The way we do nearly everything has changed. If that isn't enough to manage, we might also be working from home, trying to find a peaceful place for a Zoom meeting, and homeschooling three children through a dozen different subjects, including maths (which looks completely different than when you were at school...) is a recipe for stress that no one ever anticipated.

We are now three months into the lockdown experience, and we're all trying to adapt to this strange new world. If you're in lockdown with children, and struggling to juggle everything, here are some tips to help you survive.

The most important thing you can do as a parent is to take care of yourself. When you're happy, calm and have your own life in balance, it will be easier for your children and teenagers to stay happier, calm and balanced. The happier the child, the easier it is for them to behave well, be kind, focus on their schoolwork and play well with others. Some activities that tend to calm children and adults when they are stressed are warm baths, sipping cool drinks, hugs, singing cheerful action songs, walks in nature and blowing bubbles



(the breathing pattern used to blow bubbles naturally calms the body). Paul wrote Philippians when he was living in lockdown on death row, and Chapter 4 is full of great mental health tips to help you get through a crisis. Read it slowly, list all the key concepts, and put them into action (thanksgiving, praying about your concerns, and focusing on positive thoughts etc.).

Listen to how you talk in front of the children. Be calm, kind, thankful and joyful whenever possible. Otherwise children will pick up on your anxiety and become more insecure and distressed, which will make it harder for them to be happy and kind, and to do their studies.

Minimise the time you expose yourself and your family to distressing news reports of any kind. Once a day is enough. Notice the effect negative news has on your energy levels, your emotions and your spiritual wellbeing. You need all these aspects of your life to function well and help your family to be resilient and resourceful.

Establish a routine. It's easier when every weekday follows the same pattern. Try to maintain the same pre-lockdown times and routines. Involve school age children in chores and make it fun to tidy up and cook together. Take the time to worship together (for lots of worship ideas and printable worship placemats see <https://ted.adventist.org/family-ministries/family-spirituality>).

Have fun together as often as you can. Laughter and physical exercise help your children's brains to learn

new things. Do something fun and energetic for five to ten minutes every hour to help you connect as a family, such as an active game, guessing each other's mimes, singing a lively song, playing hide and seek or running around the block. Create some non-screen challenges for your children to do when you're busy, such as finding one object for every colour of the rainbow; creating a Bible scene out of plastic bricks, natural objects, or the bits and pieces in your recycling bin; writing a quiz for the family; making a treasure hunt; or creating a worship activity for the evening.

If it all feels too intense, take a break and have an hour to yourself. Go for a walk, read a book, phone a friend, do something you enjoy, take a long bath, and talk to God about your concerns. Draw around your hand. Imagine it is the hand of God. Write all your concerns on the palm of the hand and give them to God because He can handle every one of them.

Need to talk? Call SEC Cornerstone Counselling 0207 723 8050



**KAREN HOLFORD**

Karen Holford has been married to Pastor Bernie Holford (Luton District) for 36 years. They have three adult children and three grandchildren, and she is the Family Ministries Director of the Trans-European Division.

# MANAGING MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES

## IN THE SEASON OF COVID-19



**DR CURTIS A. FOX**

Ph.D., LMFT, CFT, CFLE. CEO/Director of Clinical Services TRU Integrative Health and Wellness



A few days ago, I was reflecting on the two sides of the experience of COVID-19 and the shelter-in-place orders that seemed to have been the reasonable and sensible response to this global pandemic. After my reflections, I wrote an article to post on my Facebook page regarding my perspective on the experience. I spent more time on the positive effects of the pandemic. I asked my wife's opinion on the article, but she felt that there was too much hurt and pain to tout the positive. I yielded to her wisdom and withdrew my plan to post the article. Truly, there is a lot of pain, loss, death, sickness, fear, anxiety, and financial distress surrounding this pandemic.

But, please allow me a moment here to navigate the treacherous waters between the positive and negative sides of the experience of this worldwide scourge. Specifically, I will focus on marriage and family in the time of COVID-19. Yes, COVID-19 has touched marriages and families with a heavy hand and abundant have been

the revelations. Let me share three revelations I received.

Firstly, COVID-19 has revealed that, to a great extent, we have minored in majors and majored in minors. This disease has exposed this reality.

To a great extent, we have spent much time pursuing the perishable and less time on things that "endureth unto everlasting life." We have spent a lot of time focusing on accumulating wealth and portfolios and little time on building up our faith and good works to be rich toward God.

We have spent a lot of time providing for our families, but less time in being with our families, enjoying and cherishing the relationships that were designed for our support and our wellbeing.

We have spent a lot of time and energy pursuing houses and lands, but little time trying to perfect our homes and family relationships. We have worked really hard to provide our children with the goodies of life

- computers, tablets, games, and toys- but we have spent less time giving them the gift of our own companionship; the greatest gift a parent can give.

We have spent a lot of time looking at movies and television and in other secular preoccupations, but less time building up our spiritual lives and our relationship with God. We have spent less quality time with our spouses and family members, and the worldwide pandemic has shown us more clearly how we were majoring in minors and minoring in the majors. When forced to stay home, when confronted with our mortality and the real purpose of life, we became more aware of how we got our priorities mixed up heretofore. We have minored in spark-filled marriages, in dynamic family interactions, in warm social connections with our children, and in meaningful and supportive friendships. I thank God for this new revelation, and I hope to use it to the max going forward.

A second revelation gleaned from COVID-19 is the awareness that social distancing is not new. Really, we have been distancing, but from our

family for way too long, as we gravitated to other circles and environments outside our homes and families. Our families saw and felt the distance.

This revelation was heightened when it was discovered that social distancing from others was necessary to avert the spread of the virus. And so, they sent us home-away from work, travel, school, entertainment and shopping, and from church. So, we had to leave these other environments, for the most part, and head to the place where we have been least of all present and applied little effort or energy.

So, what a day! Now, the people who were distant family members became close family members. That is so positive an experience. Family members have time, and enough to spare; time to be at home, time to cook and eat together, time to take a break on the lawn or in the backyard, time to call and check on each other, time to play and pray and plan together.

I might say that, while that was a positive outcome, it also turned out to be a hellish situation for some. In fact, the report from many quarters reveal that there are more

family issues, more conflicts, more abuses, more divorces, and more of the other realities in marriages and families during these times.

Maybe, the revelation here is that some environments outside the home, such as work and church and travelling and shopping are easier to navigate and are preferred over warm family connections. Perhaps this is a signal, warning that we need some serious reflection on our marriages and families. Sometimes, the crises show us these things, and we should be open to seeing them. COVID-19 is showing us that we need to regroup and find what it takes to be able to have more intense interactions with the people we love, the family that God has given us.

I heed the revelation that it is time for us to stop hiding from our family members through work, amusements, unnecessary travels, and school or church work.

Thirdly, COVID-19 revealed that it is difficult to re-engage family



togetherness and relationship quality after taking family for granted. I should say quickly that, though difficult, it is not impossible.

We have allowed external environments to pull us away from our families. Now, the shelter in place mandate is pulling us away from our other environments toward home, and it is not easy for many.

I will close this short article with some suggestions for a ready response to COVID-19, if we are to heed the revelations given:

- Cherish your loved ones each day that you have the opportunity.
- Spend quality time with your spouse, children and other family members as much as you can.
- Be kind and generous toward your family.
- Insist on seeking the optimal health and wellbeing of your

family - practice good healthy behaviors, and a healthy home environment devoid of conflict and fighting - these affect immune functioning.

- Remember that any day can be your last day with your family members, so we should not take them for granted.
- Fill your life with reserve fuel so that when the evil days come and the years draw nigh, we will not say, "I have no pleasure in them."
- Give your family members some flowers today. Write a card to express your love today. Spend some time with your family on your back or front porch today. Go for a walk today. Give your child a hug today. Prepare a meal for your wife today, for tomorrow is not promised. Love today, not tomorrow - not when one is on a deathbed, semi-comatose, and beckoned into non-being by the icy hands of death.

Let me offer hearty thanks to COVID-19 for the revelation that it has brought us. And, let me offer hearty thanks to God for having the whole world in His hand. While we may think that the devil brought this virus, God is allowing us some valuable lessons and new opportunities to love more strongly, to enjoy the family that He created, to reorder our way of being and living, and the opportunity to witness to the world by the love we show in the families that God has given us. Thank you, God!



**DR BRIGHTON KAVALOH**

SEC Public Affairs & Religious Liberty

# COVID-19 AND HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

## A CALL FOR EVIDENCE

In recent months a flurry of emails, text messages and phone calls, expressed frustration, anger, resentment, anxiety and worry about an unprecedented piece of legislation that had been passed in the U.K. to enact mandatory vaccination following the coronavirus pandemic. One such text stated:

***"It's very troubling to think one will be forced against our will. I don't think having this vaccination will do anyone any good, as vaccinations takes years to develop; and when one is found, if that's the case, we don't know the repercussions of having it..."***

The two distinct videos doing the rounds on social media purported that changes had been made to the Public Health (Control of Infectious Diseases) Act 1984, and thus brought into force, on

the 27 April 2020, mandatory vaccination as a medical treatment for coronavirus. A section of our community took this as true without questioning. The UK government's response to the issue of mandatory vaccination was inconclusive. On 4 May 2020, at a Downing Street press briefing, the Honorable Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, stated that no such step would be taken. However, on 21 May, a member of the public (Finlay from Ardrossan) asked: "If a vaccine is developed, will it be mandatory? If not, how will you bridge the difference in opinion between those who believe it necessary and those who do not?" Hancock replied, "The question of whether it's mandatory is not one we have addressed yet," thus indicating a change from the previous response on mandatory vaccination.

A Human Rights (Joint Committee) have launched a Call for Evidence under the title 'The Government's Response to COVID-19 Human Rights Implications.' The committee would like to hear from members of the public, on how COVID-19 has impacted their lives and their communities; and whether the U.K.'s response, generally, has been sufficient in light of the known threat to life under article 2 ECHR, the underfunding of Health Services, the lack of PPE for medical staff and care workers, general unpreparedness and the apparent disproportionate impact on BME communities.

The link below clarifies the issues and invites individuals to participate in the Call for Evidence written submissions:  
<https://www.adventrlp.com/item/81-mandatory-vaccination>

This link provides the process to the Government's response to COVID-19 human rights implications:  
<https://www.adventrlp.com/item/70-the-government-s-response-to-covid-19-human-rights-implications>

The consultation process closes on 22 July 2020. This is an opportunity for us, in a measured, respectful and balanced way, to make our voices heard as a Seventh-day Adventist church community.



**LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE AND THE LAW**

**TO BE OR NOT TO BE**

**Mandatory Vaccinations and More...**

Following the Covid-19 Pandemic...  
The Coronavirus Act 2020?



# YOUTH EXPERIENCE OF THE LOCKDOWN



**ASHRIAH AKAKPO**

Attends Balham Church and graduating from University in July 2020



Most people tell you, 'Lockdown is an opportunity for you to spend time with family, learn a new skill, gain a new hobby and have some time to reset,' and do I agree with that statement? Mm – yeah, to an extent. I say to an extent because, yes, in the beginning I was doing all those things, spending time with family, I released my second single (you know, just shamelessly promoting myself). I learnt how to play the guitar in less than 2 weeks. I even had a lot of time to reset, so to speak. But by the time it was the sixth week in, I had grown tired of seeing my family members eating all of my hidden food, day after day. I was even tired of playing the guitar; in fact, my fingers were.

So yes, it was great in the beginning, but after

a while, things were too – *the same*. I started to miss going out with my friends, going to church, I even started missing my lecturers. I mean – who would have thought? That's a new low for me! I even started missing my assignments; yeah, it gets like that sometimes. I mean, to be fair, for much of the first few weeks in lockdown, I was still writing my dissertation. So, after I had submitted it, I did not really know what to do anymore. I was in a little dilemma. I had run out of ideas. I was even beginning to grow sick and tired of social media, because that was pretty much all I had for entertainment.

But one thing I've learnt during lockdown is that God doesn't leave his children feeling, well – *bewildered* or lost; he always makes a way. So, in my case, he did just that. He saw me perplexed, not knowing what to do next, and he gave me something to do. Firstly, he reminded me that I had some projects I'd been wanting to complete for a while but had no time to follow through. But now he had given me time so, what do you think I did? I decided to try and do all of them all at once, which wasn't the smartest idea. So, I ended up just doing one of them. But I still have time for the rest, so I'm not in any rush. Secondly, God reminded me that I've been wanting to move some files from my old laptop unto one of my external hard drives and now I had the time to do it. Thirdly, he gave me even *more* time to focus on our relationship, as I had been slacking a little bit due to university work. But now I was finally done, university completed, that book finally closed, which meant more time to spend with my creator.

Thinking about it now, the lockdown has been a blessing in disguise. Although I didn't see it at first, now I do and for that I am grateful.



**SAM O. DAVIES**

SEC Communication & Media Director

# COVID-19 AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES



One of the challenges during this pandemic is the problem of 'fake news'. The expression has gained popularity in media circles because of its use by US President Donald Trump during the US presidential election campaign that propelled him to office. However, since the influx of the coronavirus (COVID-19), there has been an explosion of fake news that is enabled by our world of social media – and with it comes a host of conspiracy theories, disinformation, and misinformation.

Unless you are not a social media user, you are likely to be bombarded with countless coronavirus-related stories each day from both credible and untrustworthy sources. At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is causing anxieties, fear, and pain for many, some individuals are busy creating and distributing misleading information that is causing greater worries for many vulnerable persons. You may have heard of the 5G Wi-Fi conspiracy, which is being attributed by some as the reason for the coronavirus. Another conspiracy theory is that the coronavirus symbol can be seen imprinted on the £20 note, meaning pre-knowledge of it by the government. Additionally, Bill Gates has been associated with the 'mark of the beast' by some Christians.

The BBC has recently tried to counter the problem of 'fake news' by making a video clip to caution social media users about

verifying the sources of messages they receive before sharing them with others. It is an attempt to help combat disinformation and misinformation.

I came across a Government website that has created a 'share checklist' to guard against false information sharing. The page begins with the following information:

*'Disinformation is the deliberate creation or dissemination of false and/or manipulated information that is intended to deceive and mislead audiences. This can be for the purposes of causing harm, or for political, personal or financial gain. The inadvertent sharing of false information is referred to as misinformation.'*

*'When shared, disinformation can take on a life of its own and have some serious consequences. It can lead to health scares, false accusations, and potentially damaging hoax stories. It's not always easy to spot, so using the SHARE checklist can help you make sure that you don't feed the beast.'* – <https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/>.

As Seventh-day Adventists, many of us tend to read far too much

into things, sometimes without the appropriate guidance: hence inadvertently becoming channels of misinformation. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, many are causing fear rather than promoting the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to deliver whosoever will believe in Him. Conspiracy theories are rife, and I have come across many messages from obscure sources shared among social media platforms by some of our brothers and sisters.

### Use the SHARE checklist

*Before you like, comment or share online, use the SHARE checklist to make sure you're not contributing to the spread of harmful content.*

**Source:** Make sure that the story is written by a source you trust, with a reputation for accuracy. If it's from an unfamiliar organisation, check for a website's 'About' section to learn more.

**Headline:** Always read beyond the headline. If it sounds unbelievable, it very well might be. Be wary if something doesn't seem to add up.

**Analyse:** Make sure you check the facts. The mere fact that you may have seen a story several times doesn't mean it's true. If you're not sure, look at fact-checking websites and other reliable sources to double-check.

**Retouched:** Check whether the image looks like it has been or could have been manipulated. False news stories often contain retouched photos or re-edited clips. Sometimes they are authentic but have been taken out of context.

**Error:** Many false news stories have phony or look-alike URLs. Look for misspellings, bad grammar or awkward layouts. – <https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/>.

Disinformation, misinformation, fake news, and conspiracy theories are not a recent

phenomenon – they have always been around since Eve listened to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. When Satan disguised himself as a serpent to disinform Eve, he was in the business of causing harm by creating fake news: 'You will not surely die,' he says; 'actually, you will become wiser.'

During the time of Jesus, there were many conspiracy theories and there was lots of fake news around as well. One example was the belief that any form of deformity was a curse inflicted by God.

John 9:1, 2 (NKJV) reads: *'Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"'*

The interesting thing for me here is that Jesus' disciples were the ones who were holding and disseminating the fake news.

A few months ago, I attended a meeting in London for the Society of Editors, and one of the topics that emerged was the problem of fake news and how authentic news should continue to be promoted by the recognised news channels.

We must all verify the sources of information that are sent to us, especially if it is meant for our consumption.

Luke, the author of Acts, was aware of false information during his time, and he commended the Bereans for their ability to verify the information they had received.

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us are going to be vulnerable not just to the coronavirus infection, but to disinformation and misinformation. People tend to be attracted to obscure information when they are anxious and uncertain. This is the time to be deliberately critical with every piece of information that you receive.

Yes, this lockdown is unprecedented. COVID-19 is critical, but we have not been left without hope.

When the disciples asked Jesus about the reason for the blind man's being born blind, Jesus answered them with a reassuring message.

*'Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world"'* (John 9:3-5, NKJV).

Is COVID-19 a curse from God? Some may see it as a curse from God. However, we know one thing: the enemy of our souls is the one who seeks to destroy, as he did in the Garden of Eden. His business is to cause chaos, grief, and pain; but our business as people of God is not to spread fear, but to use the situation to reveal the works of God to save lives. We must work the works of the One who has chosen us to represent Him at this time, because He is the light of the world.

*(This article first appeared in the Messenger of 24 April 2020)*



## SEC DEPARTMENTS

### *Reports and Articles*



It has been more than 12 weeks since our church buildings and usual places of worship have been closed. While the financial statistics, at the initial stage, did not look encouraging, I was more distraught knowing that a number of our friends and acquaintances have been infected with COVID-19. Even more upsetting is to hear reports about church members who succumbed to the virus. During these times, we can only cling to God's Word and promises. Focusing on God's love and mercy has been the ultimate saving grace for many. The list of our prayer requests during our weekly prayer meetings have never been so long, but at the same time, the number of those for thanksgiving has dramatically increased more than ever. Indeed, Apostle Paul, in Philippians 4:6-7, admonishes that we should not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present our requests to God.

Just before our church doors were closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the Treasury Department, in conjunction with the Stewardship Department, sent out a video and a pdf file to pastors and church treasurers, on "Six Ways of Giving". You can find this video on our website. I provide you with the summary below:

1. **On-line giving** – via SEC website and click DONATE button
2. **Bank transfer** – Account Name: South England Conference; Sort Code 40-45-28 Account Number 11014153, quoting Gift Aid number, if any, as the bank transaction reference. If you don't have any GA number, you can ask for a Unique Code from Pauline at psorzano@secadventist.org.uk
3. **Telephone giving** – Telephone number 01923 232728, option 4. Available between Monday to Thursday from 9:00am to 7:00pm and Friday from 9:00am to 1pm.
4. **Cheques** – Please issue cheques to South England Conference and write your gift aid number or church name at the back of the cheque.
5. **Text giving - Text "SDA [Your Church]" to:**
  - a. 70100 to give a £1 weekly donation
  - b. 70300 to give a £3 weekly donation
  - c. 70500 to give a £5 weekly donation

- d. 75575 to give a £10 weekly donation
- e. 70570 to give a one-off donation of £20.

Your donation will be added to your monthly bill or deducted from your Pay-As-You-Go balance and your donation will all go back to the church as a local offering.

6. **MobiCash App** - All churches are now set-up for the Mobicash Mobile App. Please liaise with your local church treasurers or Michael at SEC at [magyei-asare@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:magyei-asare@secadventist.org.uk) for help in the initial set-up.

We saw a significant decline in cash flow on the first two weeks of April of around 57% from previous month but ended at the close of April at 44%. Members are getting increasingly comfortable with the new ways of giving. We have already completed our reports for April 2020 Tithe and Offerings. Looking at tithe income on its own and comparing to the year-to-date last year, the tithe decreased by 17%, in monetary terms, £873,969. If we compare the tithe income to the same month last year, the decrease is 25% which is equivalent to £284,892. Although the figures are down, the income is better than forecasted as we were expecting a 40% decline. I can only praise God for our members' faithfulness. Despite the challenges that the pandemic has brought upon us as individuals, in terms of physical health and financial difficulties, I can still see our brethren faithfully returning their tithe and offerings. We see a lot of people who are trying to hurdle difficulties of giving back their donations and adapting to the new ways of giving, just to be able to give their donations. While we are still facing uncertainty, I trust that the Lord continues to lead this church in proclaiming the gospel commission to the ends of the world.

CANDY LAYSON



# PRESENTERS



**BARBARA LAWRENCE**  
*Family Matters*



**LYNETTE ALLCOCK**  
*The Breakfast Show*



**VANESA PIZZUTO**  
*On the Go*



**MARK GREY**  
*In the News*



**JOSH ANDERSON GREY**  
*In the News*



**CYNTHIA OSEI-OWUSU**  
*In the News*



**MIKE HAMILTON**  
*Explore*



**SOPHIA PEART**  
*Explore*



**NIGEL MAUNGANIDZE**  
*Drivetime*



**MIKE JOHNSON**  
*Sabbath Breakfast/Christian Living*



**TREVOR JOHNSON**  
*Reflections*



**RAY PATRICK**  
*Prayer on the line/Ray of Hope*



**EBENEZER JONES-LARNEY**  
*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**



# ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON

## Tough and Challenging Times for Adventist Radio London

It is amazing how finance and economics can negatively, or positively, impact the mission of the church. Over the past eight months, the negative impact has been the reality experienced at Adventist Radio London. The financial crunch being experienced by the South England Conference has had a detrimental effect on our fledgling DAB radio ministry and, as a result, the radio has seen drastic and threatening changes.

Our mission has been to "unashamedly extend the teaching, preaching and healing ministries of Christ to meet the diverse needs of London, discipling its population to holistic living and experiencing Jesus their Saviour, the only hope for mankind". The effective fulfilment of this mission demanded dedicated sacrifice from all the staff, which they courageously and untiringly gave for the past two years. However, sadly, it became necessary to give compulsory redundancies to the majority of them. These redundancies will affect all our live programmes which are broadcast each day. Our live broadcasts are what connect us with the listeners. We all love to hear a real person on the other end of the telephone. We like to ask authentic questions, live, and get a relevant and current response. That was the benefit of our live presenters. They were able to keep us connected with the current issues and relate them in the context of the SDA faith.

A funding shortage has been the primary reason for the cuts at Adventist Radio London. Over the past 6 months, appeals were made, especially to our church members,

for pledges and donations which would be used to support, directly, the radio ministry. We are very grateful to the many who have responded so generously, and we thank you very much for all that you have given. However, the rate of income and the number of pledges has not been sufficient to indicate a positive and stable financial footing for the ongoing ministry of Adventist Radio London. As a registered charity, we have been restricted in how funds can be raised. Commercial advertising and sponsorships were not possible and so donations from listeners and members were to be our primary source of income. For the immediate future, we will continue with our requests for donations, with the hope that our financial position will be strengthened, and this ministry will continue for the foreseeable future. The South England Conference Executive Committee has commissioned a special steering committee to look at a possible financial strategy for the continuation of our radio ministry and it is hoped that a positive recommendation will be made, and that Adventist Radio London will be saved. In the interim, we will have until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to continue a reduced service broadcast. After that time, if no solution is found, we must sadly cease our transmission.

How effective has Adventist Radio London been for the advancement of the mission of the South England Conference? From its inception, numerous reports have been coming in about the impact that our broadcasts have had on lives across the SEC and around the

world. Through this ministry souls have been baptised, Bible study courses and health and lifestyle courses have been applied for through our Adventist Discovery Centre. People have had a change of lifestyle, returned to church, and have expressed interest in knowing more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church; they have expressed a desire to leave their Sunday-keeping churches and to begin keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. These are just the ones that we know about. How many more are there who have silently received Christ and will wander into our churches and on-line worship spaces to express their desire to become members of the Remnant church? Thank God! We may never know, this side of the kingdom.

It is sad that finance and economics have negatively impacted the ministry of Adventist Radio London. Does the God who created this ministry still own all the cattle, silver and gold? Is he still able to supply all our needs and "to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20)? We are fully confident that "He who has begun a good work ... will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). We continue to solicit your prayers and financial support of Adventist Radio London.



**MICHAEL HAMILTON**

## STANBOROUGH PARK CHURCH HUB COVID-19 RESPONSE

(Author: Sharon Platt-McDonald)

Stanborough Park Church has a rich history of meeting community needs for well over 60 years. Their reach, influence and impact have been significant. With the dawn of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, Stanborough Park Church's One Vision Project decided to see what more they could do for their community.

The idea of the church becoming a Hub was birthed by engaging the membership and drawing on the work of One Vision and its 42 charity representatives. Becoming a Hub means that Stanborough Park church will minister to, and meet the wellbeing needs of, their community in the aftermath of the pandemic, the current lockdown and its consequences.



In an interview at the launch event of the Stanborough Park Hub, on Thursday 30 April 2020, Enoch Kanagaraj, the One Vision Project Chairman, said: "I see the hub as a 'rescue' for those in need, both for our Adventist members and non-Adventists alike. We want to meet the needs of the common people." I was excited to see all the charities and community heads coming together to meet the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our local community.

Attending the launch (some watching and contributing virtually) were several local leaders, including Dean Russell, MP for Watford, Peter Taylor, the Elected Mayor for Watford, and Harjit Singh, Chairman of the Watford Interfaith Association.

One Vision will also be partnering with the BUC Health Ministries to help deliver the operational aspect of the BUC's Restoration Convalescence Project, which assists those recovering from COVID-19. One Vision volunteers will do shopping and deliver goods and books on wellbeing,

purchased by the BUC Health Ministries department. Stanborough Park Hub has lit a bright candle that shines through the gloomy clouds that the COVID-19 Coronavirus has left on the landscape. It is a beacon of hope and a testament to the practical gospel that Jesus intends our Christian witness to be.

## MY CHURCH PASTOR HAS BEEN FURLOUGHED: AN ELDER'S PERSPECTIVE

(Author: Don Roberts)

After prayer and careful deliberation on the likely financial impact the COVID-19 pandemic would have on the church and its members, on 17th April 2020, the SEC announced that a number of its workers, including some pastors, would be furloughed.

While many furloughed pastors continued being ministers of the gospel for their congregations in different ways or carried out voluntary community work, under the Government's Job Retention Scheme, they are not permitted to work for the church in any official capacity. For congregations whose pastors were furloughed during the COVID-19 crisis, the role of their elders is now even more vital.

Odafe Ricky Agba is a trainee elder at Luton North SDA Church. Agba and Elder Ronald Rennie, along with Luton North church board members, are now overseeing the running of the church without their pastor at the helm. Agba has been sharing some of his experiences with me.

After a full day working from home, "as soon as I close my work laptop, I open my church laptop."

He continues, "What has kept me, is that I have a praying wife. We pray together. Most of the time, I'm on my knees, asking God for wisdom, speaking to Elder Rennie, and I also do a lot of consultation".

Before the furlough announcement, Agba recalls that when his pastor, Bernie Holford, made him aware of the added responsibilities he would face, he felt inexperienced and "not the best man for the job". However, Holford



responded, "When God calls you, He qualifies you." Agba gives a lot of credit to his furloughed pastor. In advance, Holford "put processes and a framework in place" to enable the church to continue operating as

smoothly as possible. Luton North partnered with Luton Central church (also pastored by Bernie Holford) to meet the needs of both congregations. They have been taking part in the '100 Days of Prayer'. Members of the two churches meet every morning via Zoom and use resources at the website [prayerandreformation.org](http://prayerandreformation.org) to facilitate morning worship and prayer sessions. Also, on Sabbath, they first meet in separate virtual online Sabbath School classes, then come together for the Divine Worship and to hear a sermon from speakers that Holford booked when he knew that he would be furloughed. The online services are attended by young and old alike, with Adga even arranging for elderly members without computers to be set up with tablets, so they too can log in and participate.

Despite the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the impact of the UK lockdown on churches and communities, Agba reflects on the positives. "It has brought us closer together. We have become a family, not just Luton North, but Luton Central as well. We know a lot more about each other. We're in touch with each other. We know our struggles, we know who is suffering, who is in hospital, who to pray for, and who to enquire after. If one day someone doesn't log on for the '100 Days of Prayer', people will call that person, asking, 'What happened to you? We didn't see you this morning'. In that way, we are all encouraged. Members are so happy with their online worship and fellowship that several want to stick with it once lockdown is over."

Alongside his high regard for Elder Rennie, he is full of praise for Luton North's church board members and the elders from Luton Central. "With the day-to-day church issues, God has helped us with whatever we have had to deal with". He also made special mention of his Area Coordinator, Pastor Nathan Stickland, who has been supporting elders with weekly meetings and updates.

Outside of church services, Luton North has been operating a food bank during the UK Lockdown. "We have a very active Community Services team. They go door-to-door, giving food and provisions, not just to our elderly and vulnerable members, but to others in our local community." On Thursdays, they also hand flowers to NHS staff and other key workers on the frontline, as part of the national 'Clap for our Carers' campaign.

When the COVID-19 lockdown is finally lifted, and with the welcome return of Pastor Holford, Agba prays that the positive experiences that he has shared with Luton North and Central churches during the coronavirus pandemic, can be built upon. He concludes, "once we come empty, God fills us up. I'm a testimony of this."

## HAMPSTEAD AND PALMERS GREEN CHURCH: ONLINE AND ON THE GROUND

(Author: Don Roberts)

The London churches of Hampstead and Palmers Green are among many churches within the South England Conference that have fully embraced the 'new normal' of

online virtual services, ever since church buildings were closed following the COVID-19 outbreak in the UK. The two congregations, led by Pastor Kevin Johns, hold joint worship services via Zoom and streamed on Hampstead's Website and Youtube channel.

However, what makes their online service stand out, is its ability to secure a seemingly endless number of prominent national and international guest speakers each week. During the month of May alone, speakers have included: Pastor Paul Graham, USA; Pastor Vincent Rose, Jamaica; Pastor Abraham Henry, USA; Pastor Michael Dyson, USA; former SEC President, Pastor Sam Davis; and Dr Chris Levi.

The impressive lineup is down to the connections and relationships Pastor Johns has formed and maintained over many years. Most of the international guests have either previously conducted evangelic campaigns, such as camp meetings, or hosted similar events in their country that Johns visited. When they join the worship services via Zoom, due to the time differences they usually have to wake up at unsociable hours.

Pastor E.L. Natufe, of Christ the Way SDA Church in Canada, who shared a sermon entitled 'Keys to Revival in Times of Crisis' joked, "Pastor Johns is the only one who can actually get me out of my bed at 3 a.m. in the morning".

Beyond the impact the two churches are making online, they are also providing ongoing support, food and care to their members and others in their local communities during the COVID-19 lockdown.



Efforts have included supplying food to local community groups such as the Camden Homeless Project. Grace Foods, the Caribbean food and drinks manufacturer

donated supplies to Hampstead Church via Pastor Johns. Some of those provisions were delivered to front line staff at Barnet Hospital on Sunday 17th May. The church's Personal Ministries department established links with the hospital where Pastor Johns' wife Margaret is a Senior Nurse. Other items were redistributed to sister SDA churches in London to help in their COVID-19 relief work.

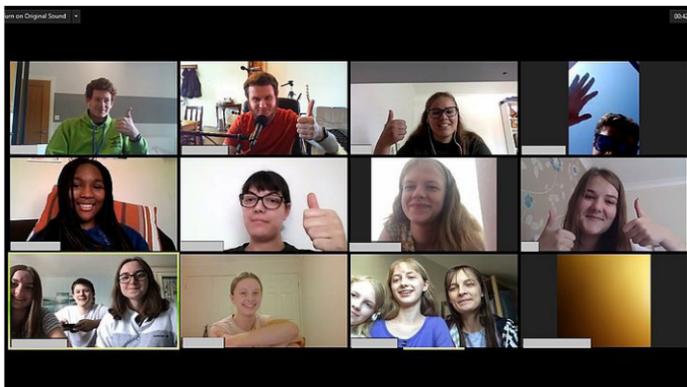
## CHELTENHAM TEENS AND TWEENS WORSHIP ON ZOOM

(Author: Mike Beamish)

When plans were put in place for Cheltenham Teens and Tween's Day many months before the COVID-19 outbreak, no one would have imagined that being together in person would not be possible. Yet there was a determination that, despite Coronavirus, this event would go ahead. With Zoom technology, we realised that worship and socialising together could be arranged, and we planned to have as normal a celebration as possible.

However, the devil was trying to thwart our plans. With ten days to go, we realised that our chosen speaker for the morning was furloughed. So, who to call? Thankfully, Viv and Jonathan Barratt-Peacock of Loughborough church immediately agreed to fill the gap. However, that was not the end. Two days before, Viv and Jonathan's neighbour decided to use a weed burner, which resulted in a freak fire that killed their landline and internet connection (and shrank their wheelie bin). However, Viv's mother came to the rescue, and her garden became the 'pulpit' for the morning.

The theme for the day was 'What Would Jesus Do?' Normal Sabbath School lesson topics were dispensed with, and different age groups considered this important question, particularly in the light of current circumstances. During the all-age worship that followed, on-screen polling was used to find out views on various questions, including how people's lives were affected by Coronavirus.



In their message, Viv and Jon also addressed the question 'What Would Jesus Do?' They used PowerPoint slides to share various points and examples. The interactive chat screen on Zoom was used to encourage people to share how they have been helping out in the community, listing Bible texts that mean a lot to them at

this time, and sharing thanks and prayer requests.

Following the worship, there was breakout time for both younger and older folks to chat. Then in the afternoon, one of the Cheltenham young people, Robin Beamish, hosted a live YouTube worship stream in which he featured pre-recorded music from some of the Teens and Tweens, as well as his own selections.

In all, an estimated 120 people were blessed by this opportunity, and they joined from as far away as France, Portugal and Australia. We thank God for giving us this opportunity to meet together like this, which, for some, is a spiritual and social lifeline.

## CHURCHES HOLDING VIRTUAL FUNERALS HELP MOURNERS SHARE COLLECTIVE GRIEF

(Author: Don Roberts)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take the lives of individuals every day. Sadly, this has included members from churches across the South England Conference.

In addition to the pastoral care and support given to bereaved families, local churches have had to help arrange and conduct funerals under previously unimagined circumstances.

Under the UK lockdown rules, mourners attending a funeral are restricted to members of the deceased person's household and close family members, or if they are unable to attend, close friends. Those who can attend also need to adhere to social distancing guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

Churches are using video conferencing apps like Zoom to conduct funeral services, allowing those who would have attended under normal circumstances to now do so virtually.

For the funeral of Kingston Murray, a member of Southhall church, the Pastors of Willesden and Brixton church worked together to officiate at his service. Pastor Mario Philip (Willesden) hosted the ceremony on Zoom, while Pastor Keith Boldeau (Brixton) was with family members at the cemetery.

During the service, a number of family and friends gave tributes online via Zoom, including the Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Rt Hon. Keith Mitchell, who spoke before returning to a Government cabinet meeting.

The loss of a loved one and the whole grieving process is a surreal experience at any time, let alone during the current circumstances. Despite having to view it through a computer screen, tablet or smartphone, family and friends have been grateful to God and thankful that churches have provided these virtual funeral services in which they can celebrate a life lived and mourn together.



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## POEM: COVID-19

*Coughs and spluttering everywhere  
Contagious droplets we don't want to share  
Young and old and in the between  
This virus is rampant and very keen  
Beware, beware of COVID-19*

*It takes a virus to spread everywhere  
Before we show the elderly, we care  
The evidence is clear on the supermarket shelves  
That humanity in crisis only think of themselves*

*Hygiene is a personal responsibility  
Our hands are ours; it should be down to me!  
Washing our hands is not something new  
Our researchers and scientists have better things to do*

*The world is shocked by COVID-19  
A pandemic this generation has never seen  
Every colour, race, rich or poor  
The virus can enter your own front door  
Money and investments cannot buy you health  
COVID-19 can't be blackmailed with wealth*

*COVID-19 is a global emergency  
Caring for yourself and others is the key  
The pandemic has caused us to surely think  
About the basics of life and our humanitarian link  
Let's not be selfish in our quest to survive  
Common sense and kindness will keep us alive*



## TRIBUTE TO NHS

*Staff and volunteers of the NHS  
You're all heroes and nothing but the very best  
You give your all both night and day  
Your work ethic and compassion  
Are not reflected in your pay  
Thank you for the sacrifice you tirelessly make  
No sleep, no food, no time for tea breaks  
Thank you, NHS staff and volunteers,  
Your dedication and skills  
Caused Great Britain to shed grateful tears*

THANK YOU  
NHS ❤️



Written by Annice Thomas  
March 2020



# Devotional

## BRING YOUR LAMP

*"You, Lord, keep my lamp burning"  
Psalm 18:28*

.....  
In a mountain village in Europe a long time ago, a nobleman wondered what gift he could present to his townspeople. At last he decided to build them a church. No one saw the complete plans for the church until it was finished. When the people gathered, they marvelled at its beauty. Then someone asked, "But where are the lamps? How will it be lighted?" The nobleman pointed to some brackets in the walls, then he gave to each family a lamp, asking them to bring these with them each time they came to worship.

"Each time you are in church, the area where you are seated will be lighted," the nobleman said. "Each time you are not here, that area will be dark. This is to remind you that whenever you fail to come to church, some part of God's house will be dark."

Because of the current situation, none of us is able to physically come to the church. I am missing it a lot, and I'm sure that some of you feel the same. The first week was the hardest for me. We didn't have much in the form of online activities. From the second week, it was easier since, by then, we were having a number of online services, prayer meetings, and small groups. Although it is not the same as going to the church, I really enjoy seeing and talking to the fellow believers online.

There are many other churches that are running different online programs. However, some of you are not part of online meetings. So, I would like to encourage you to "bring your lamp" and join us for online meetings. Also, I would like to encourage you to join or start your online small group – just a few of you. You can use Zoom, WhatsApp, Viber, Skype, Webex, etc. Talk about how your week was, check if everybody is OK, read a passage from the Bible, discuss it and pray. I am grateful that I'm part of Sophia and Elder Nigel's small group in Oxford. It's very uplifting. Please "bring your lamp" to God's online house.



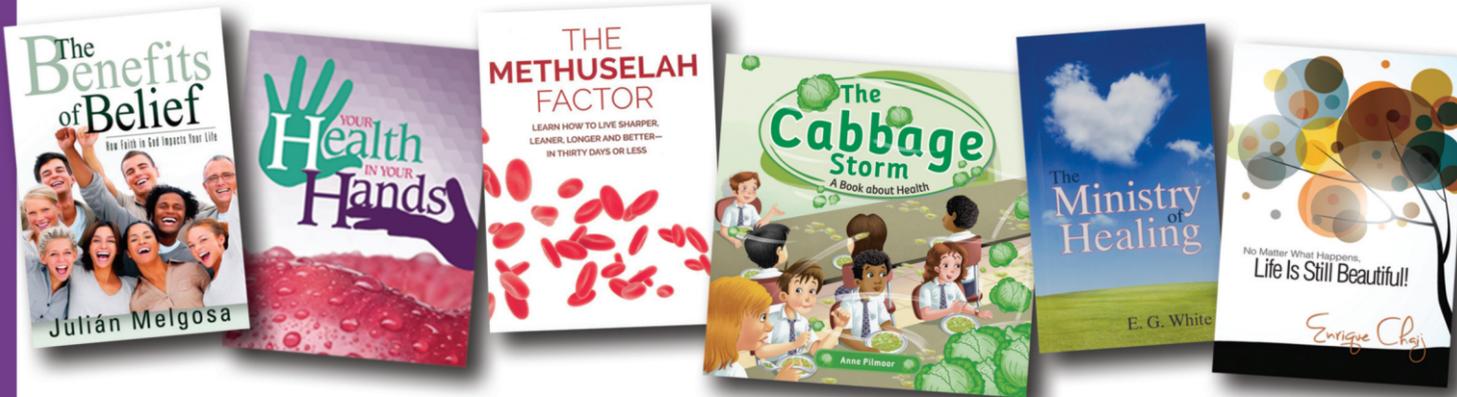
Rudi Puskas

Pastor, Oxford and Aylesbury Churches

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