

Happenings at Balham - November 2019

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:21

It has been called at last. I am talking about the General election of course. After months of arguments about Brexit, deal or no deal, Governments losing votes left right and centre, they have finally agreed the way forward is a Christmas general election. This they hope will solve the problems of the political stalemate.

The political approach to resolving challenges and difficulties tend to centre around discussion, strategies and the occasional stab in the people's back to get the result they want. However what do you do when strategizing doesn't seem to be the answer to your dilemma.

This is what the disciples faced on several occasions like the incident in Acts chapter 3 and 4. A man was born lame had been healed and some of the religious leaders of the day were not happy. So they decided to arrest those who had healed the lame man and challenged them not to preach in the name of Jesus ever again. As some of the people believed in the apostles they are let go. The apostles still had a dilemma they were charged with preaching the Word but also threatened if they did.

The natural approach would be to call a Board or Business meeting of the Church and come up with a plan to deal with this dilemma because surely someone must have ideas about how to deal with this matter. Instead the Church called a prayer meeting and asked God to grant them boldness to preach and God did.

Another incident happened in Acts chapter 16 when a lady was healed of her demon possession and once gain some people were not happy because she used to make money for them from her fortune telling. Once again they were thrown into prison on trumped up charges and just to make sure they didn't escape had their feet chained to stocks (Acts 16:24). Rather than calling a committee meeting or just exclaiming

'woe is me', the apostles, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns (Acts 16:25). Hardly a good strategy but apparently it worked because God released them.

There was a yet another incident in Acts chapter 12 where Peter was thrown in prison because the King. Herod just thought it was a good idea at the time. The Bible says **that night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. (Acts 12:6)** and once again the Church prayed (Acts 12:5). Why didn't they get a lawyer to plead his case? Why didn't they organise a march and surround the Home Office or parliament? The Church prayed. God stepped in by sending an angel who got into prison unnoticed, jocked Peter on his side and his chains fell off. Then God turned the prison doors into automatic doors that just swung opened and Peter calmly walked out.

When Peter realised he wasn't dreaming he said **Now I know of a surety, that the LORD hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. Acts 12: 11**

I think you have got the point. Something seems to happen when the Church prays. This doesn't seem to make sense but God doesn't have to make sense because he **'made sense.'**

Despite all the examples of something happening when the Church prays we still don't seem to get it. That is why when the Church is called to pray, many people find something else to do and we wonder why the Church is so weak. Maybe it is because we failed to tap into the source of power made available to us by God.

In fact many of the revivals in the Bible and even in history happened when the Church decided to pray and even fast, even when this meant making real sacrifices.

The Adventist Church worldwide is about to embark on an annual Week of prayer and we should see it as one of the most important times in the Church calendar and come together in one accord like the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1) and make ourselves available to God.

Rather than relying mainly on human devising, planning and strategizing in wanting to see the Church to go forward (even though it has it's place) let's make the effort, come together to pray and watch God work.

What happened in October ?

International Health weekend:

This was a partnership between some of the Hispanic SDA members and the Balham Health ministries team. It was spearheaded by Jorge Tobar, a member of Balham Church who had built up a team of Hispanic SDA members for this event.

The Friday session was a seminar in Spanish aimed at the Hispanic Church members and community.

Sabbath Divine service, saw a combination of Balham and Hispanic members leading out but the sermon was by an Hispanic member called Dr Pedros Torres who currently lives in USA.

AYS took the form of a couple of Health presentations in Spanish with an interpreter. This included one from a Dietician and one from the Divine service preacher.

Sunday's Health Expo

This was a very well attended and fantastically organised event. I would guess that over 500 people attended, the large number being Hispanic. Balham made a good contribution, leading out in the Wellness stands looking at the benefits of good Nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine etc. Balham was also involved in the stewarding, greeting and offering general support.

There were a number of other Hispanic volunteers which helped in the general stewarding including some who had flown in especially to be a part of this exciting venture.

Several businesses were invited who shared their health products and gave advice and offered a professional look to the event. Some of these businesses acted as sponsors to the event.

Here are a series of photos of the event.









October 12: Street Witnessing

Another opportunity was afforded us to share our faith with the Balham Community through singing and distribution of literature on Balham High Road. Despite the falling rain we braved the weather and went.

We were joined by several members of the Hispanic SDA Church. The highlight was when we sang a verse of a song in English and they sang the same song and verse in Spanish. We got a little wet but we were also very blessed by the time spent.

October 19: Pathfinders Day

Pathfinders day gave the opportunity for the Children to lead out in the service and they did so with distinction. From Sabbath morning to AYS, they demonstrated what they had learnt throughout the year and used their talents to glorify God.

The Divine service started with a drum corp consisting of Pathfinders from several churches followed by the entrance of a multitude of Pathfinders, adventurers and their counsellors plus other Master Guides.

One of the highlights of the service was the short messages given by two of the Adventurers, Lauence Clem and Deshane Sharmah. In fact Deshane not only spoke but sang beforehand accompanied by himself.

The service was followed by the Investiture programme which saw many of the Pathfinders receiving a multitude of honours, In fact the Pathfinders (aged 10-15) received over 190 honours, Adventurers (aged 10-15) received over 90 honours and Eager beavers (aged 5) received 72 honours in various areas including obscure subjects such as mammals, waterfalls, Amphibians, Cacti, Antelope, hand shadows and soap craft.

We also gave trophies for the nominated Adventurers and Pathfinders of the year. Here are some pictures of the morning services,



Pathfinders Sabbath school praise team



A demonstration using blindfolds



Two new recruits from the Community share a message



The drum corp lead the procession



Two of our guests in the drum corp



OK. I like the drum corp photos



Two of the flagbearers



The directors lead the way



The Old and the Young



A Pathfinder guest making gestures



Some adventurers welcoming people to the service



We said goodbye to the Squire Family (well sort of).



Even the balcony told us it was Pathfinders day



One of the preachers, Deshane, sang his own meditational



The other preacher, Laurence shared her message



Some of the Pathfinders with their honours



Some of the adventurers with their honours



One of the Adventurers of the year. One of the Pathfinders of the year

In the afternoon, once again the Pathfinders exhibited their work. This included drilling demonstration and a unique feature where the congregation was split into groups based on where they were sitting and the Pathfinders and adventurers were tasked with teaching on various topics such as tying knots and the basics of hygiene



The two comperes for the afternoon programme in relaxed mode



Some of the young ones doing their drilling



Adventurers teaching how to do knots



That's how you tie it



and that's how you untie it

October 26: Community Services day

Under the theme – ‘The least of these’ the Community services department shared the importance of service throughout the Day. This included a Departmental report during Divine service and a message from their departmental Elder. Bartholomew John

In the afternoon, we invited guests to share the exciting Community services project they were involved in.

First up was the daughter of the Area 6B Community services Youth Federation, who runs a Community project called ‘Pretty box’ where she teaches young ladies how to make sanitary towels.

The second presenter gave her experience of setting up an SDA school in Uganda at a time when she was facing personal challenges of her own. She put her energies into this project and is looking at building a secondary school in Uganda in the future. Her charity is called Noah’s Ark.

Our own Sis Bernard gave us an update on the Sierra Leone school project which she has been involved in for several years and for which Balham Church has played significant role in building up over the years.

What is happening in November?

Nov 2-9: Annual week of prayer

The sessions are:

Sabbath 2nd November: Divine service

Sunday 3rd November: 7am

Monday 4th November: Thursday 7th November: 7pm

Friday 8th November: 7pm

Sabbath 9th November: Divine service

On the first Sunday of the week after the session we will be inviting the Church to a fellowship breakfast

Nov16: Deacons and Deaconesses day

The emphasis is on Service and Praise and we want to share:

- The service to members that the Deaconry offer
- The role of the Deacons in the Bible
- That the whole church (including the Children) can be involved in service.

Lunch will be provided and the day will end with a vespers service

Nov 23: Stewardship Day

Nov 30: Music Day