

MESSENGER

Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland

Richard stands up for the Sabbath

by Andrew Beccai



Richard Abban

did not know how he would fare in the exams. The result showed that Richard was just two points away from obtaining a distinction. He attends the Whitley Adventist church in Reading where he teaches a Sabbath school class.

Before the five-day week many Adventists had to choose between their job and loyalty to the Sabbath. Even today young people face tough choices and find their loyalties challenged. . . .

The issue of the Sabbath has once again been brought to the fore on a university campus when an Adventist and six Jewish students refused to take their final examinations on Saturday.

'they were very distressing moments'.

'I was not sure what decision the registrar would make,' he said. 'It was close to the exam period and I needed peace and quiet to revise.'

Richard confessed that he did not want his personal distress to offend his Lord: 'I must be willing to give up everything for His sake.' He would have been distressed to let God down. Richard said he took that decision because he knew he would face similar situations in his Christian life.

Reading University student Richard Abban, a Seventh-day Adventist, discovered when the final examination timetable was posted, that two of his exams fell on Saturday afternoon. The International Consultancy and Accounting examination was Richard's career hope, having lost his ACCA membership. He knew he had to do well in the summer exams. But to come this far in his post-graduate studies and achieve nothing because of a refusal to write exams on the Sabbath posed a great challenge.

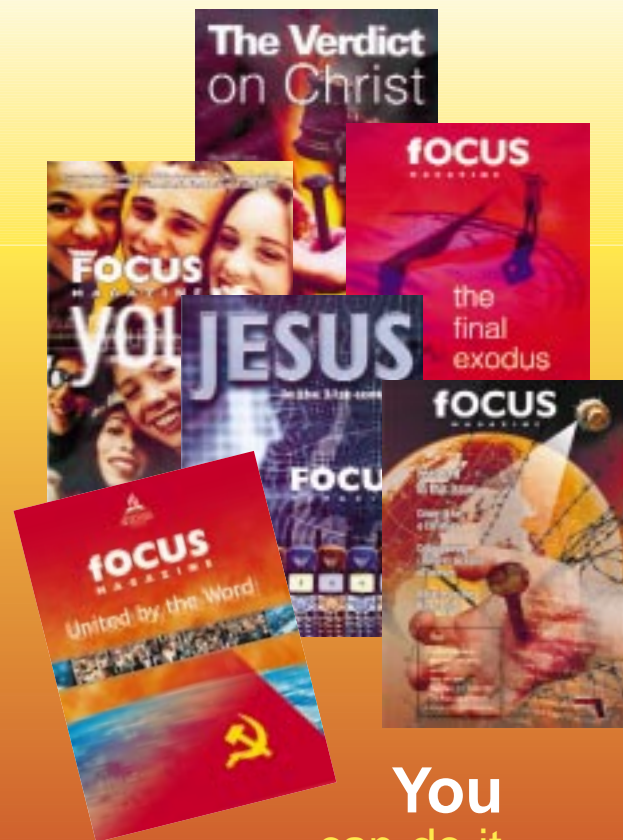
The registrar finally permitted Richard to write his exams on two Friday afternoons, quarantined immediately after that and released on Sabbath afternoon when his course mates would begin their exams. It was during this isolation that he met six other Sabbath-keepers - Jews - at the university health centre where they wrote their exams. 'I was surprised to see them, but I think they were more surprised when the invigilator mentioned my name among those going to take the exam that Friday.' Richard said it was an encouraging feeling to know that he was not alone in standing for the Lord.

Richard, who became a Christian two years ago in the USA said, 'It was a big challenge and I knew that if I had to forego the exams, I would do it in tears.'

After he made up his mind to obey his Lord, the Reading University student said he petitioned the registrar to allow him to write his examinations on a day other than the Sabbath. He admitted that

Under such intense pressure, this Adventist Christian

Witnessing



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YOUTH PAGES:

The Dirty Girl with the Sad Eyes

She sits on my doorstep every day. She's just there all the time, whenever I leave the house, whenever I come back. She's been there for a while now. She sits, quiet and still, staring up at me with her big brown eyes. She watches as I turn my head and brush past her. It's easier to get inside and shut the door if I don't look at her. Out of sight, out of mind. Almost.

Sometimes I think about her just sitting there. Waiting. I know that if I open the door again, she'll still be there. She looks dirty, smears on her face, stains on her clothes. Oh, her clothes! Her dress (well, more of a shaped rag, really) is a drab grey, or at least it used to be. It's filthy. I wonder how long she's been wearing it. It's thin. I wonder if she gets cold at night.

Her feet are dirty, too. Her tiny toes are stubbed and scraped from walking around barefoot. Today I saw a pair of black patent leather shoes with little bows in a store window. I thought she would like them. They looked like something a little girl would like, but how could I give them to her? They'd never look proper on those dirty little feet.

Her hair wouldn't even know what to do if it saw a comb – it might very well stand up on end! I suppose it smells as bad as the rest of her. I wish she wouldn't sit on my doorstep any more, but she's just a kid. How can I ask her to leave? It's not as if she's causing any trouble. Oh, sometimes she looks hungry, I guess, but she never asks for food or anything. She just sits there, leaning against the house, looking at me: eyes sad but sparkling, a tired smile on her face.

She doesn't say much. In fact, in all the time she's been camped on my doorstep, I've only heard her say three words. It's strange, really. She whispers them in a soft, clear voice as I pass by, every time I pass by. She says them so quietly that I've often wondered if she's spoken at all. But I know she has, because it's the same every time I come or go: the dirty girl with the sad eyes and tired smile, and the three words, 'I forgive you.'

The chance to provide clothes, shoes and other items for orphans in Romania is right on your doorstep. Stop and think before you pass by! We need

Ingathering's Brightest Star

At Preston church, personal record cards are handed out to each Ingathering participant. When the presentations are made – beginning with the lowest collector and ending with the highest – there are loud 'Amen's' for every name. The children are excited and listen attentively for theirs.

Brother St Louis did a little jig when his name was called! He had reached his personal goal.

Who was the brightest star? Evadne Whyte, aged 75. Sister Whyte collected a grand total of £1,564. Brother Coke interviewed her to find out the secret of her success.

Brother Coke: What enthuses you so much to do Ingathering?

Sister Whyte: To know that I am helping someone in need. God has given me the strength, so in turn I am doing His work.

Brother Coke: have you any idea how much longer you intend doing Ingathering?

Sister Whyte: As long as the Lord gives me breath and the strength I will continue.

Brother Coke: You have been

your donations. To see a complete list of urgently needed items, go to: www.youthpages.org or

doing Ingathering for such a long time now, what changes have you seen over the years?

Sister Whyte: I feel that I am getting a lot more money now. We used to get excited about filling our tins and they only contained approximately £26, but now these tins hold a whole lot more money than they used to. When I was 15 I used to collect in Jamaica and did well, but in England they are better able to give.

Brother Coke: What would you say to anyone who has never been involved in Ingathering?

Sister Whyte: They are losing out on the blessing that God gives. Help someone and receive that special blessing from God.

Brother Coke ended by saying, 'Sister Whyte, you have been an inspiration to many over the years. I hope that your strength will be sustained so that you can carry on the good work. Once again, you are our top collector.' Sister Whyte gave special thanks to Sister Beryl Douglas, Sister Mary Jeffers and everyone else who went out collecting with her this year.

JENNY JEFFERS

email daren@youthpages.org. Only you can turn those three words into two: thank you.

DAREN BULLOCK

Joshua and the Angel



My wife once described how, as a child, she was taught the 'good news' of the judgement. 'Well,' she said, 'they told us that the judgement is going on in heaven right now, which meant that at any moment your name could come up, even if you didn't know when. But if you're not absolutely perfect when it does (you're at the movies or something like that), then your name is blotted out of the book of life, and you are lost. The only trouble is you don't know that you're lost, and although you're still trying to be perfect, it's too late.'

How did the 'good news' get so good? That's easy. It got that way from *misusing* Ellen White, from taking a few select references (while ignoring everything else that she, not to mention the Bible, says on the topic), and from these few select references constructing an entire theology – no matter how contradictory to the rest of inspiration that theology is.

Every person who joins the Adventist Church ought to be required, before baptism, to read the chapter 'Joshua and the Angel' from Ellen White's *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, pages 467-476. This section gives a clear, balanced presentation of the pre-Advent judgement and, if read in entirety, would help eliminate the kind of 'good news' that my wife and who knows how many others have been 'blessed' with all their lives. Because space allows me to extract only a few quotes, and lest I be accused of doing what I have just decried, I say, please read the entire section in order to get the whole picture.

With Zechariah 3:1-7 as her scriptural basis, Mrs White wrote about Joshua, the high priest, 'clothed with filthy garments' (verse 3), which represent the sins of God's people. While Joshua is entreating the Angel of the Lord for mercy, 'Satan stands up boldly to resist him' (page 468). She wrote: 'The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel are free from fault' (page 468). 'The people of God,' she said, 'have been in many respects very faulty' (page 474), and 'they are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives' (page 473). And Satan, ever the accuser, 'points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ' (page 473).

How then can these people – who have 'defective

characters', who have 'weakness and folly', and who have been 'very faulty' – stand in judgement before a holy God? There's only one way.

'Jesus our Advocate,' she wrote, 'presents an effectual plea on behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser with the mighty arguments of Calvary' (page 471). 'We cannot,' she said, 'answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own' (page 472).

And precisely because of their wonderful Saviour, and because of what He has done for them, these people are 'purifying their souls by obeying the truth' (page 471). They 'exert every energy of the soul

in the work of overcoming' (page 472). They are promised that, through 'repentance and faith', they can 'render obedience to all the commandments of God'. And though they have sinned, they have not given themselves over to the control of evil; and, having confessed their sins, they plead 'for pardon through Jesus their Advocate' (page 472).

However much emphasis Ellen White placed on holy living – as did Jesus, Paul, John (Matt. 5:8; Rom. 6:12; 1 John 3:7) – she clearly showed that the foundation of our acceptance with God rests in the 'mighty arguments of Calvary' alone, the only way we can be acceptable to a holy God.

'Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel,' she wrote, 'applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement' (page 472). In other words, in the day of judgement, when our names come up (Luke 12:8; Rev. 3:5), Jesus once and for all stands in our place; His righteousness alone – the only righteousness sufficient to meet the demands of the law – remains as our surety of salvation, now and especially in the pre-Advent judgement.

After all, anything else would hardly be 'good news', now, would it?

* This guest editorial was written by Clifford Goldstein, editor of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guides*. It was first published in *Adventist Review*, 24 May 2001.

Healthwise

Happiness!

Richard J. B. Willis, BUC Health Ministries director

Archbishop Whately (1787-1863) of Dublin said: 'Happiness is no laughing matter.' Emeritus professor of Psychiatry Thomas Szasz is not even sure that it exists. 'Happiness,' he says, 'is an imaginary condition, formerly attributed by the living to the dead, now usually attributed by adults to children, and by children to adults.'

To some extent Szasz is right since happiness defies any one definition. It is not related to a particular set of circumstances or to any special conditions so there is no automatic switch that allows happiness to be turned on. The Chambers' definition 'taking things as they come' is perhaps the best description. Happiness, then, is subjective well-being – a sense that life is good. As psychologist David Myers states: 'People who *feel* happy also tend to *think* their lives are satisfying.'

Solomon in his Proverbs is therefore able to say, 'A cheerful heart is a good medicine,

but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.' (17:22.) He is right since we know that emotions have biological effects. The immune systems of happy people are boosted and they are better able to deal with the rigours of life. When we are depressed the immune system suffers and the way is open for the disease processes to gain a foothold.

Researchers at the Universities of Texas and Pennsylvania have been analysing the writings of poets who have taken their own lives and have discovered that depression has predisposed some poets towards writing poetry, and also that the expressing of deep dark emotions in some poetry has pushed the writers over the edge. Psychiatric researcher Thomas Oxman concludes, 'This study reinforces my belief that one's choice of words reveals much about one's mental state.' Oxman's conclusion thus bears out another of Solomon's findings. 'As a man thinks in his

heart, so he is.' (23:7.) So a 'downcast spirit' does more than just dry up the bones.

Studies across sixteen nations show that gender and age have little bearing on happiness. Another study involving research in thirty-nine

countries shows that eighty per cent of men and women are at least satisfied with life, the remaining twenty per cent reporting that they are very happy. Of the elderly, the happiest of senior citizens are first and foremost actively religious, and why not? The Bible has much to say about happiness and how it might be objectively and subjectively experienced.

If there is one simple formula which comes close to the dictionary definition it is that expressed by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians: 'I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content.' (4:11.)





Pastor Ron and Sandy Edwards, Pauline and Pastor Doug Sinclair, and church elders Ruth Ohman and Tony King.

Bristol Lodge Causeway: Fiftieth Anniversary

Pastor Ron Edwards and his members had put a great deal of hard work into preparing for the special day. Now the beautiful floral displays were in place and 9 June was here at last. Past ministers and members were invited and, together with a large number of visitors, gathered together in the sanctuary to celebrate this special occasion.

Pastor Doug Sinclair, who was our minister for two years, took the worship service. He reminded us that anniversaries were a time for reviewing and reflection.

Following a fellowship lunch, the

afternoon programme was taken by The Shipton Singers whose musical director, Margaret Shipton, is a member of the Torquay church. After a two-part musical feast of song they ended their programme with 'God's Choir'.

At Bristol Lodge Causeway we are very fortunate in having a good group of teenagers and children who are very talented, and at several points throughout the day they too took part, either playing musical instruments or in various singing groups.

S. A. HATCHER

Stoke Newington reaches out

On the day before Mothers' Day a group of adults and children from our church knocked at every door in the street and handed out 200 red roses – one to each mother. This took the neighbours by surprise! That was real friendship evangelism!

On 24 March four precious souls were added to our church list, three by baptism and one through transfer of membership. Dawn Duggans, Ingrid Carr and Yvonne Jones were baptized by our minister Dr Richard De Lisser, and Neville Alexander was received into membership. All four new members had been worshipping with us for some time. It had been a good year for Dawn because she recently became a mother. Yvonne and Ingrid join their sons who have become members in the last two years.

In his sermonette to the candidates, student pastor Richard Jackson, who assisted our minister in the thirteen-week 'Desire of Ages' divine service evangelism, advised them that they should seek a relationship with Jesus.

On Sabbath 21 April, the Stoke Newington School of Ministry held its second graduation. Graduating students were from the Clapton, Hackney and West Green Road churches.

On 10 June, the church set up a stall in the annual local street festival, selling food and drinks and handing out literature. Our Adventurers, dressed in uniform, handed out free balloons, with our name and address printed on them, to young children.

The following Sunday, a Fun Day was held on the church grounds,



Student pastor Richard Jackson, Dawn, Ingrid, Yvonne, church elder Brother Mackenzie and Dr R. De Lisser.

which was well attended by church members, family, friends and the community.

Another baptism took place on Sabbath 30 June in which three people declared their love for Jesus. The candidates were Donna Douglas, Bernadette Barclay and Colin Grant. It has been a good year for Donna – like Dawn she also became a new mother. The immersions were performed by Dr De Lisser.

COMMUNICATION SECRETARY

The bride is ready?

At Ystrad Mynach on Sabbath 7 July we held our Women's Ministries Special Day, led by Heather Haworth, director of Women's Ministries for the BUC, and by Helen Lockham, sponsor of Women's Ministries for the Welsh Mission. We met in the church, and in the refectory of Ystrad Mynach College. Members travelled from all over the Welsh Mission. The overall theme was 'At long last the bride is ready.' Part of the group is shown seated in the grounds of the college.

PASTOR RICHARD VINE



Beyond this 'Dead Dog Society'

A weekend series of meetings, sponsored by the Normanton church, was held from 6-8 July in the upper room of the St James' Centre. Our guest speaker was Olson Roberts, who is currently a student at Andrews University. The purpose of his lively, dynamic and dramatic presentations was, as he stated, to help us to experience 'Close encounters of the spiritual kind with Jesus'. His sermon titles: 'Kicking the Habit', 'Is it Good to You?' (The Nazareth Condition), 'Dead Dog Society', and 'The Fresh Prince of Galilee', were enticing and intriguing. As he

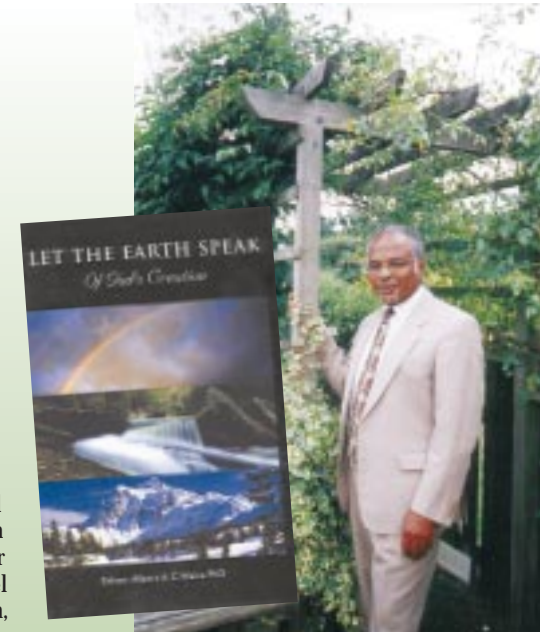
New Creation book

Dr Albert A. C. Waite is a popular speaker and writer on scientific topics in the Adventist Church in Britain. He endeavours to communicate the scientific arguments for the biblical view of Creation in terms that do not presuppose a degree in geology! As a consequence, youth groups over many years have said, 'Why don't you write a book?'

Dr Waite has, instead, edited a book, part of which he has written. Contributors to the book include members of the Geoscience Institute and other top flight Adventist scientists. Among them are Dr Ben L. Clausen, Dr John T. Baldwin, Dr L. James Gibson, Dr M. Elaine Kennedy, Dr Ariel A. Roth and Dr Clyde L. Webster. In addition, Dr A. J. Monty White and Dr Cyril Vesey have contributed ideas.

According to its preface, the idea for this book came to its editor while he was jet-lagged and being driven in the back of a car in Colorado! During this trip, however, the chapters of the book and its contributors were determined. The editor points out that the reader will find the ten chapters of the book refreshingly presented, with the style of each contributor being retained. Careful reading will also reveal new information, as the book contributes to the growth in the rational knowledge of the creation/evolution discussion. It should, the editor asserts, have a wide appeal to Christians and non-Christians alike.

Initially the book – from Mandra Publishing – will be available



preached, the congregation was wooed into a fresh understanding of the Bible texts, through his rhythmic and poetic use of words.

Various soloists from Derby and Birmingham lifted our thoughts heavenward as they ministered to us in song.

On the Sabbath afternoon, history was made as two souls walked through the waters of baptism. Dr Patrick Herbert, the resident minister, baptized Vincent Bernard and Clarence Williamson in a portable baptismal pool. In the past when

Normanton have had baptisms they have gone across the city to their mother church, Chester Green. However, this baptism was extra special because it was the first time they had held their own baptism on their side of the city.

Our weekend climaxed on Sunday with a guest appearance from the a cappella group No Limits from South Africa. We would like to express thanks to all those who travelled from Birmingham, Nottingham and London to support our programme.

P. A. HERBERT

Left to right: Clarence Williamson (baptismal candidate), Olson Roberts (preacher), Vincent Bernard (baptismal candidate), Dr P. A. Herbert.



Leytonstone baptism

On 24 March five candidates were baptized at Leytonstone. They were Sarah Lecointe, Ronnette Valentine, Sean Jay Jackson, Alfonso Lewis and Lawrence Pollard.

The candidates represented the fruitage of Leytonstone's twelve-week 'Desire of Ages' campaign, during which Dr Richard De Lisser and Pastor Richard Jackson preached alternate Sabbaths in the midday service.

Leytonstone was organized into a church in May 2000.

JEAN HEROE

Newport: new members

The Schoonraad family visited us twelve months ago – and decided to stay! On 23 June Leandi entered a florally-decorated baptistry to be immersed. She requested baptism after attending the camporee in Scotland. The service was conducted by Pastor Paul Lockham who had studied with Leandi.

Marrick, Leandi's father, has been baptized in South Africa. We thank God for Ingrid, Leandi's mother, and Estian, her brother, the other two members of this dedicated family.

VERA MACHELL

Ystrad Mynach's first investiture

On Sabbath 21 July we celebrated our first investiture in Ystrad Mynach church. Pastor Paul Lockham, our Mission Youth sponsor, conducted the service in which all the children played their part with recitals, poems, and a short lecture on healthy diet. Sue Hanson, our local Pathfinder leader, had worked faithfully through the winter months for this special day. Honours included flowers, spotter, cooker, artist, friend of animals, Bible, and media critic! Shown, top to bottom are Robert Hanson: Ranger; Darren Hanson: Friend; David Hamblin Companion; Daniel Hamblin: Sunbeam; Adam Evans: two honours; Gregory Watkins: Busy Bee; Lauren Harvey: honours; Charlotte Wells: honours. Paul Lockham and Sue are also shown. Adam and Nathan Battersby were absent, but both are Busy Bees. Thanks to Paul Hanson for all the printing work he's done for the Adventurers' Club, to Helen Lockham, and to all the proud parents.

PASTOR RICHARD VINE





DAVID MARSHALL

IS THEOLOGY A POWER TOOL?

Can a distinctive theology be an extension of the exponent's personality problems and ego requirements – and be used as a means to exert control over others?

Seb lost his sense of humour during his first term at Newbold College. Where he left it, I couldn't say. But by the time he went home for Christmas – as his mother soon spotted – it was nowhere to be found. These events occurred forty years ago; and, as an impressionable teenager, I began to worry that Newbold was the sort of place where a sense of humour could go missing. I have learned differently since. His name was not really Seb; but I'm sure you knew that from the start.

The first evidence we had that the change in Seb went even further came on the Friday evening before Christmas. Just as we were settling down for a family evening, church members started to turn up at our house. Embarrassed, they said, 'Seb phoned and told us to be here before 7.30.' My father welcomed the people Seb – who lived in another town – had invited to our house. Dad omitted to mention that he had just done a night shift and a day shift one after the other and had planned to go to bed. Seb was the last to arrive. With him came a friend who had come to spend Christmas at his home. Our living-room fire roared and Seb opened up and began to expound. It was, he said, time for us 'to awake out of sleep'. Seb was a master of timing. As he got into his subject, my exhausted father fell asleep – and began to snore! I wanted to giggle. It could not have been more unfortunate. Seb was saying, 'The Lord is cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. We must cleanse the soul temple. We must prepare to be part of a

perfect generation before Jesus comes. . . .'

By then the volume of Dad's snoring was such that Seb could no longer ignore it. He duly woke Dad up and used the sleeping householder as an object lesson. The Church was slumbering, Seb said; even snoring – when it should be straining every nerve and sinew to the task of becoming perfect, spotless.

Before Seb and his friend left that night someone screwed up the courage to ask why the pastor had not come. 'He was not invited,' said Seb. At the time I wondered if that was because the pastor was already perfect or beyond redemption. Seb had said that some people were 'beyond redemption', and seemed to nod at Dad after he had finally succumbed to slumber.

In the ensuing months I seemed to be the only person who was trying to do anything about what Seb had said. I strove to be perfect and I took my father in hand!

I gave up on Dad before I gave up on myself. When I talked to Dad, joy kept breaking through. Further, it appeared that Dad knew all the wrong Bible texts – and knew them by heart! 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.'¹ 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'² 'I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.'³

'Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.'⁴ 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'⁵

Seb had quoted some unfamiliar quotations from Sister White. My father had a few of his own. This one has stayed with me through the years: 'Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ. When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities. We may claim sanctification. We may enjoy the favour of God. We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved.'⁶

Dad gave me a bit of a Bible study. He took me through the writings of Paul. Using purple ink he had underlined, in his own Bible, every place where the apostle had used the phrase 'in Christ'. It appeared to be the apostle's favourite expression. 'You are "in Christ";' said Dad, 'eternally secure; because Christ is in the Father – eternally secure. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck

them out of my Father's hand.'⁷

When I talked to him the pastor seemed, on the whole, to agree with my father. This disturbed me. But I was a teenage boy, and you name me one teenage boy who takes any notice of his father! For a further three months I strove to be perfect. The penny dropped when I was reading John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Christian had left the City of Destruction. He had lost his friends. He had fallen into the Slough of Despond. After that Mr Worldly-Wiseman had persuaded Christian to climb the quaking sides of Mount Sinai in an effort to get rid of his burden of guilt. But Christian had discovered that, for every step up, he slipped three steps down.

Hey! Here was something I could identify with! That had been my experience since Seb's Christmastime visit!

Christian eventually slipped all the way to the foot of the mountain. There he encountered Evangelist who had first set him on the road to the Celestial City. 'There's no way to heaven from your house via Mount Sinai,' said Evangelist. 'The scarp is too steep – one slip and you're done for. The road to the Father's house is by way of the hill called Calvary. That is where burdens are lost.'

I knew it was true – and returned to Calvary. I learned what it meant to be 'in Christ Jesus' and to have a closer relationship with Him. Looking back, my brief excursion into perfectionism was no more than a temporary setback. But, at the time, it almost destroyed me. You see, I knew that I could never make it to heaven that

way. Salvation, for me, had to be by grace through faith. If it were to be by performance I should never make it at all. 'Nothing demonstrates the pathetic predicament of fallen humanity more vividly than the person who thinks he can gain righteousness by his own efforts.'⁸

Needless to say, I watched Seb's progress in the years that followed. He was a ministerial intern for a short time, then disappeared without a trace. My family was desperately sorry; my mother wept. Years later Seb gave an interview to a magazine. In it we learned all. Seb's problem had been homosexuality. His perfectionist theology had been his way of compensating. . . .

Seb's theological views, in fact, had owed much to those of Robert Brinsmead. Hence it will not surprise you to hear that, like Brinsmead, Seb zoomed from one end of the theological spectrum to the other – and then clean off it! When I encountered him twenty or so years ago he made mock of the fact that I, an editor, still adhered to the core doctrines of the faith. This morning I heard that Seb is now employed as a radio preacher by a Sunday church in the US. He is, apparently, having 'a major impact'.

The trouble is, of course, that Seb is not so much a person but a type. Articulate, charismatic, Seb's kind of person influences the impressionable – regardless of the specific theology he is advocating at the time. That sort of person needs to stand out, be listened to, looked up to – needs to push back the frontiers. Sadly, for some, theology is a means to an end, but the end is not life everlasting – it has more to do with persona. For such a person theology is a heady country of exciting ideas, whereas theology, to accomplish any good, must become life.

References:

1. Ephesians 2:8-9.
2. John 3:16.
3. John 15:5.
4. John 16:22.
5. 1 John 1:9.
6. E. G. White, *Selected Messages* (RH), book 2, pages 32-33.
7. John 10:27-29.
8. Richard Rice, *The Reign of God* (Andrews University Press, 1986), page 243.

POLEY, Faith – d. 26 June. It is with a sense of sadness and loss that the writer has to record the death of Faith Poley. She was buried in Crieff on what would have been her 83rd birthday. One of the most sincere, dedicated and hard-working Christians the writer has met, Faith was born in India, where her father was a missionary. When he returned to England, Faith trained as a teacher and was eventually called to be the head of Stanborough Park Primary School where she served for almost twenty-three years. She was highly respected by parents and pupils and although she believed in firm discipline it was carried out with a deep love of the pupils. She held numerous offices at the Stanborough Park church. Eventually Faith moved to Crieff but even in retirement answered several calls to teach in Ireland at one of the Church schools there.

When she finally settled in Crieff she became a most valued member of the Crieff church, serving it and God with dignity and faithfulness. She attended every meeting possible as long as she was well enough, and held numerous church offices, but one of her great joys was setting up the Wednesday Friendly Club for retired people. She ran this Club for nine years and every week had a varied and entertaining programme. As a result of the Club, at least three people attend the Sabbath services regularly. Faith also witnessed in a quiet and unobtrusive way, visiting many elderly club and church members and helping whenever she found a need. The affection in which she was held by everybody was evidenced by the large congregation which came to her funeral service conducted by the writer. We feel privileged to have had Faith as a

member of the Crieff church and we know she died in Christ and awaits the coming of Jesus.

PASTOR A. R. RODD

Wedding

MBANI-SIKANYISILE. A happy and sunny day dawned for bride and bridegroom on 9 June 2001 – a day that they and we will remember. The service was held in St Marks United Reformed Church where the Aylesbury church meet. The sanctuary was filled with family, friends, members and well-wishers as Mbani and Sikanyisile were joined together in matrimony. Known to us here in Aylesbury as Barny and Ski, the couple come from Africa and are both members of a singing group who perform regularly in Aylesbury church. Conducting the service was our own Pastor David Spearing. We wish the happy couple God's richest blessings for a long and contented life.

JOHN DILLON

News Digest

The highlight was Wayne

On 13 June Gloucester had its second open day when the church was opened to the local community, providing refreshments and clothing. Prayer requests were made and literature given away. However, the highlight of the day was Wayne, a young man who had heard about the open day and hitch-hiked from Poole to Gloucester, in borrowed clothing, to be kitted out. A church member, on hearing of Wayne's plan to return by the same route, put love in action and drove him home. Overwhelmed by this kindness and generosity, Wayne has since visited this member at church and has promised to pop in whenever he is in Gloucester.

Y. LOPEZ

Erdington: Ingathering 2001

This year's Ingathering was a real success story for Erdington church. As always, our old stalwarts, as well as several new members, went out during Ingathering with great enthusiasm.

For six successive years our leading collectors, Don Parker and Eddie Henry, have collected well over £1,000. Other collectors followed in their footsteps and came back with very good contributions too. In total, they collected £4,405.74, an increase of 33.19% over last year's figure, and our best ever. Remarkable, considering our small membership. The 2000 total was £3,307.99.

We thank the Lord, and all the members of Erdington church who took part in this year's inspiring project. We also thank our local agent, Wayne Grant, and our pastor, Paul Haworth, for their vision and inspiration.

JOHN OSEI-BEMPONG

Stratford Baptism

Pentecost II was the title of a two-week campaign which ran from 10-24

March. Evangelist Carlos B. Ming – who hails from Portland, Jamaica, and is a graduate of Northern Caribbean University (formerly West Indies College) – preached the word of God with eloquence and power. The Prayer Warriors tuned in to Heaven's throne room each night as the Holy Spirit moved up and down the aisle and the speaker presented Christ to the visitors and members alike.

The meetings were well supported, and culminated with a Youth Day on Sabbath 24 March at Memorial Baptist Church, and a baptism on Sunday 25th at Stratford church, when eight precious souls gave their lives to the Lord. Pastor Horace Taffe, resident minister, immersed Brothers Omari Thomas-Grant, Thungamele Nxumalo (the son of Elder and Sister Nxumalo), and Sisters Sibongumli Mllophe, Norma Stewart, Edna Marsh (both of whom were on the Prayer Scroll), Margaret James, Tanisha Raybe (who will join the East Ham church), and Elvina Farrell, who recommitted her life to Christ. Praise, honour and glory are due to God, who has made all things possible!

COMMUNICATION SECRETARY

Hove: Joyful reunion

On Sabbath 23 June, Hove church had a joyful reunion with one of our previous pastors, Mel Trevena. He had stopped off in England on his way home to New Zealand, having been to Siberia. He had gone there to train adults for Pathfinder work.

Mel had been about eight years at Weston-Super-Mare before he came to Hove. He then spent eight years with us, before returning to New Zealand, due to the deteriorating health of his father.

He did visit us last year on his way to Russia, but this time he was able to spend a good part of the Sabbath with church members. He visited some on Friday, then led out in Sabbath school with the lesson study, gave an interesting children's story, and delivered a powerful sermon. Then, after a fel-

lowship lunch, he gave a talk about the work he has done in Russia to get the Pathfinder work up and running there.

ANNE HOLDEN

Friends of Torquay

The Torquay church was dedicated sixty years ago. To celebrate this occasion the members are inviting all those who have ever ministered, worked at or attended the Warren Road church to a special reunion day on Sabbath 27 October.

To help us to know how many to cater for, if you wish to attend, please write or telephone Jen Read, at 24 Windmill Avenue, Paignton, TQ3 1BS, Tel. (01803) 529489, or email rickslann@cs.com.

If it is impossible for you to come, we would appreciate memories and messages sent to us that can be read out on the day. Also photocopies of old photographs, clearly labelled, would enhance the programme.

We look forward to seeing you all again. Come to sunny Torbay for a special fellowship blessing!

JEN READ

Darlington: Day at the Carnival

For the third year in succession Darlington church members had a stall at the Darlington Carnival on 30 June. Our stall was divided into two sections, one half displaying Christian literature and pamphlets on drugs, alcohol, smoking and healthful living, and the other half for the younger generation, consisting of balloons, colouring sheets and quiz sheets.

The weather was kind to us again (after a good deal of prayer), and our stall was visited by many people, a lot of whom had questions about who we were and what we believe. During the afternoon our president, Pastor Egerton Francis, who had been preaching at Middlesbrough, and his wife, visited our stall on their way back to Nottingham. They brought with them several of the Middlesbrough members who helped to hand out literature around the show-ground.

PETER NASSAU

Dutch Protestants Consider Status of Same-Sex Unions

by Bettina Krause

The United Protestant Churches of the Netherlands, the country's largest Protestant organization, will consider a formal recommendation later this year that the church bless 'life unions' between same-sex couples. The recommendation came from a report, released 10 July, from a church working group that said couples should be able to seek a church blessing if they could show their relationship is 'lasting,' is based on 'love and fidelity', and is a civilly-registered union.

The Netherlands is a 'postmodern, post-Christian' and 'very multicultural, multi-religious society', says Henk Koning, president of the Adventist Church in the region. 'There seems to be tolerance for almost every position, as long as people are not hurting each other or discriminating against each other.'

The Adventist Church in the

Netherlands still holds the view that 'God created a unique relationship in a marriage between a man and a woman', says Koning.

'At the same time, we as a church should find ways to show our love for those who live or act differently than we do,' he says, adding, however, that 'We do not think that this is done by suggesting that same-sex unions have an equal status as the biblical marriage.'

Koning notes that a range of views exists among faith groups in the Netherlands on the issue of same-sex relationships. 'Although the Lutheran churches, the Society of Mennonites, the Remonstrant Brotherhood and a few other churches have already taken the position that every serious relationship "based on trust and love" should be blessed by the church, including relation-

ships between two of the same sex, the majority of churches have not accepted that view,' he says.

Homosexual couples in the Netherlands have been able to contract civil marriages under Dutch law since April. Leaders of the United Protestant

Churches of the Netherlands will consider and vote on the issue of blessing same-sex relationships at meetings in November this year and May 2002. Some within the organization have expressed strong opposition to the proposal and say they will fight its adoption.

ABC Book Sales		
September 23	John Loughbough School	10am - 2pm
September 30	West Midlands Centre	10am - 2pm
September 30	Newbold College	11am - 4pm
October 7	Brixton Church	10am - 2pm

YouthPAGES
FINANCE OFFICER

YouthPAGES, set up in 1997, is a UK-based internet ministry that exists to serve and inspire young people by connecting them together, equipping them and providing opportunities for ministry in order to reach others and honour God. This ministry is supported by the British Union and after three years of successful operations and growth will seek charitable status this year.

An exciting honorary opportunity has arisen for an enthusiastic, hardworking Adventist with interest in finance, accounting and business planning. Reporting to the honorary treasurer and the management team, the main responsibilities of this position will include:

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- Identification of opportunities to improve efficiency
- Preparation of monthly and quarterly management accounts
- Production of annual statutory accounts

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To apply, please forward your CV with a covering letter outlining your suitability for this exciting opportunity to daren@youthpages.org. Closing date for receipt of CV and covering letter is 10 September 2001.

Congratulations

to Pat Eastwood on obtaining an M.Ed from Nottingham University. We wish her well as she continues as headteacher of Dudley House School, the church school in Grantham, Lincolnshire.

MIKE COWEN

to Chris Walton on obtaining his PhD in Computer Science at Edinburgh University, for a thesis titled 'Abstract machines for dynamic languages'.

to Shaun Douglas on gaining an MA (Hons) in Human Relations from the University of Nottingham. Shaun is now a serving officer in the Nottinghamshire Police Force.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	WHEN	WHERE	WHO	HOW
The Ultimate Illusion Evangelistic campaign	1-22 September at 7.30pm daily (except Thursdays)	Advent Centre, 39 Crawford Place, London W1 (nearest tubes Edgware Rd/Paddington and Marble Arch)	London Youth Federation Dr Rupert Bushner, USA	lorraine.gilllin@csfb.com Tel: (0207) 883 6946
Area One day of Fellowship	Sabbath 29 September	Oldway Mansion, Paignton	Pastor Paul Clee	RicksIann@cs.com

All advertisements for upcoming events should be submitted in this format.

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SUNSET
Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by the Science Research Council.

	Lon	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Aug 31	7.49	8.01	7.56	8.10	8.18
Sept 7	7.33	7.46	7.39	7.52	8.00
14	7.17	7.30	7.23	7.33	7.43
21	7.01	7.14	7.06	7.15	7.25

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