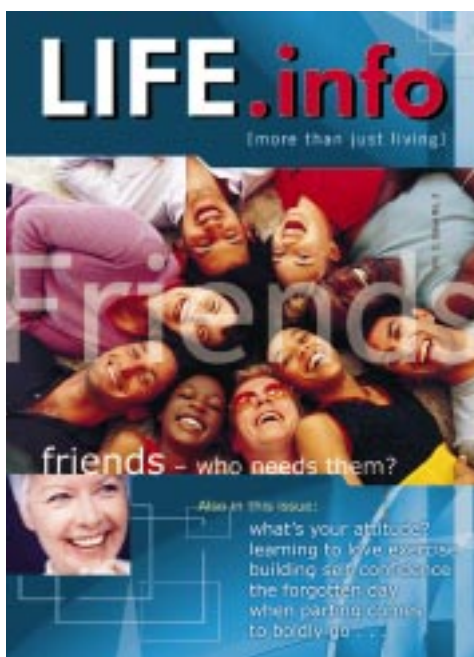


Messenger



HAVE YOU SEEN IT? DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S FOR?

In brief:

LIFE.info is a magazine to help you make contacts with your non-church-going friends, neighbours and work colleagues. *LIFE.info* is a conversation starter, it really can help you to build relationships. Give it a try!

LIFE.info magazine is only **20p** a copy! In other words you could get hold of three copies of the magazine for the price of a loaf of bread! (However, if your neighbour needs bread maybe you would be better off buying that first.) If you are ordering in quantity, you can now have any number of magazines you like in incremental steps of 25. (25, 50, 75 etc.)

To order your copies contact: **Pastor Dalbert Elias: 01923 672251.**



An Update by Alan Hodges
Executive secretary, LIFEdevelopment, BUC

The LIFEdevelopment.info team has had a busy time over the last few months, developing resource materials, preparing for special rallies in the Conferences and Missions, conducting training seminars and most importantly emphasising the need during 2003 for every member, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to 'Get Connected' and seek to make three secular friends in preparation for 'The Evidence' media event in March 2004.

Media event
The 'Evidence' event of ten television

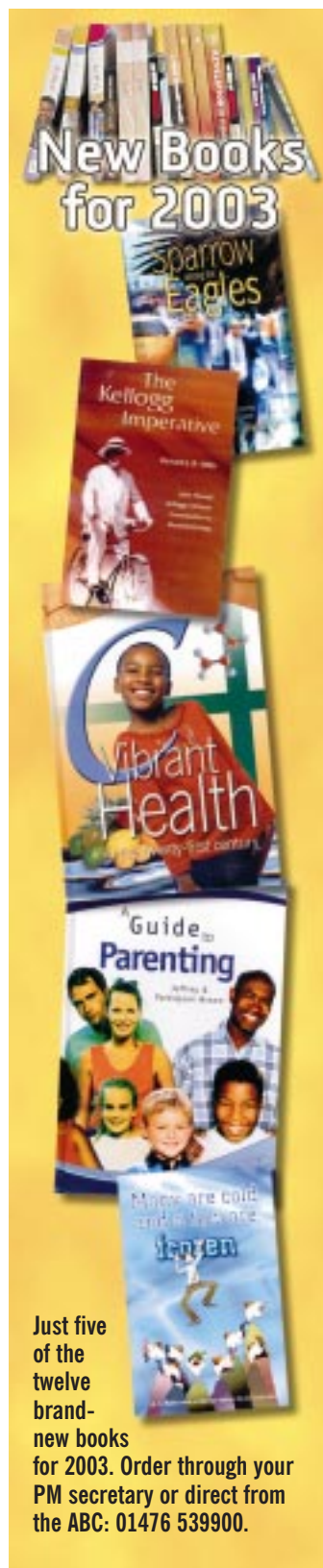
programmes to be presented by Pastor Dwight Nelson, will be an opportunity for LIFEdevelopment groups from all over Britain and Ireland to watch and discuss issues on topics such as God, the Bible, Suffering, Hope, Justice, etc. Sally Salmond, television producer from the Adventist Media Centre in Sydney, Australia, has joined the LIFEdevelopment team and will be in the UK for eighteen months researching and preparing materials for the media event, which will be transmitted via satellite.

Special days of fellowship have been held in Belfast (Irish Mission), Crieff (Scottish Mission) and Cardiff (Welsh Mission). Pastors Miroslav Pujic, Dalbert Elias and the writer were the speakers at these well-supported events.

Twelve videos

Resource materials have been distributed to every church in the British Union: a set of twelve video tapes, which includes twelve episodes of 'Chasing Utopia', a series especially designed for young secular adults, and twenty-four programmes in the Lifestyle Magazine series covering areas such as health, youth issues, family issues, the environment, self help and social welfare. These programmes, dealing with various topics, are provided so that as a particular issue arises in discussions with secular friends, programmes can be shown on that specific issue.

We encourage every member to catch the vision, to join the team and together reach secular men and women with the good news that Jesus is the answer to our every need.



Just five of the twelve brand-new books for 2003. Order through your PM secretary or direct from the ABC: 01476 539900.

Was war necessary?*

War is an unnecessary evil, which has had its origin in the strategic plan of Satan to discredit and challenge the authority of a caring and loving God.

The first war, which is the mother of all wars, was the result of the assertion of self-will and disobedience of the divine laws that kept the harmony of the universe together.

In the Great Controversy the conflict is between God and the forces of evil, right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice.

The inherited consequences of the Fall, cultivated by humanity, are in our genes and, therefore, our nature as a whole. We live with the inescapable results of sin: death, covetousness, power-lust, greed, hatred, strife, wars, sufferings and a myriad ungodly desires.

How we face what bedevils us, or the aggression that afflicts us, are problems not easy to resolve considering our finiteness and confused, perverted nature. We are almost in the same position as Pilate asking the question, 'What is truth?' How do we evaluate what is just? When is justice served without our getting in the way? How does God view man's ethical and moral dilemmas?

The war in Iraq divided opinion across the whole spectrum of society, if not of the world. There are those who say it was constitutionally, morally and ethically wrong; others who say that there was some justification for it if evil was to be contained. Christian leaders discussed whether it was a 'just' or an 'unjust' war. The question is, Is there such a thing as a 'just' war? Is war ever justifiable? If it is, what criteria do we follow to ascertain whether it is justifiable? If innocent civilians are hurt – what justice is there for them? How long should we wait before dealing with evil? Was Israel's period of oppression in Egypt a guide? When is 'the right time'?

The matter is not simple when we try to define what could be called a just war or reason for war. There will always be different perspectives on it. Who decides when it is right to go to war – the leader of the government or the people he leads?

Is it right to repulse an unprovoked attack from the enemy with a view to avoiding destruction of life and property? What force is 'reasonable'? Is it right to take defensive action against the incursion of an enemy into the sovereign territory of another state without a just cause? Should force be used to contain an adversary who is bent on a mission to deny others freedom and justice?

What is an appropriate or 'proportionate' response to a power that rejects every effort to make it conform to international law or UN mandate? Should other nations be bound by a common charter enforcing UN will to safeguard the global community?

History is often viewed as a litany of wars. Historians, with hindsight, try to answer the question

Why? with regard to previous conflicts. But often subjectively. We tend to judge right and wrong by a gut reaction to what we perceive to be fair or excessive.

The Seventh-day Adventist position on war is generally neutral or pacifist. We do not approve of wars especially when patient negotiations can preserve the peace and save lives. We still encourage our members to be non-combatants and that our servicemen accept other support roles in the medical and humanitarian field. Many have been conscientious objectors in past wars. Some paid the price for refusal to co-operate with the military authorities with imprisonment.

During this year's Iraq conflict, three different views emerged from our Adventist community:

- The uncompromising pacifist who would object to any kind of war.
- The mid-ground pacifist who would make allowance for war in order to address overwhelming injustice or to punish atrocities; he may even participate in it in some form or another.
- The reconciled pacifist who would be unconcerned whatever was happening. He would feel that wars were inevitable.

It was easy to criticise those with a different viewpoint from our own. Whatever the perspective, we can agree that wars cost lives and unnecessary suffering.

What is the conclusion if any?

1. War is not part of God's redemptive plan.
2. War is inevitable in a world of sin and perverted human conditions. In Matthew 24:6 Jesus said, "Such things must happen." (cf Luke 17:1.)



3. God's Kingdom of Grace is a no-fight zone. "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews," Jesus said. (John 18:36.)

4. Christians, like their Master, seek to save lives.

5. Old Testament history is littered with the activities of wars during the theocracy. God's purpose was clear. "The Lord will fight for you." (Exodus 14:14.) Israel's attitude made the difference, especially when they chose a king and fell into apostasy. It would appear that the heathen nations, on most occasions, brought the battle to God's people with the purpose of contaminating or eliminating them. God's purpose was that his people would be a kingdom of priests to the other nations to bring them into harmony with God's will.

6. There is a realism about conflicts which comes from unresolved tensions. Man is territorial and born with an innate desire to enforce his will on others.

7. Sin is the basic cause of wars and conflicts.

8. Christians should be peacemakers and peacekeepers. They should do everything to promote peace positively, irrespective of their personal feelings. In a conflict situation where there are casualties they should do their Christian duty to the hurt and dying.

9. God's 'final act' will be to restore harmony to the universe. This will come to pass at the Second Coming; and when sin, Satan and his angels and sinners are destroyed when the Holy City descends.

* Here our Union president takes up the issues not dealt with in the last MESSENGER.



All-out awesome!

Teddy Roosevelt and Bill Beebe were two very powerful men in their day. Before turning in at night they had a ritual. Let Beebe tell the story: 'We would go out on the lawn and search the skies until we found the faint spot of light-mist beyond the lower left-hand corner of the Great Square of Pegasus. Then one or other of us would recite:

' "This is the Spiral Galaxy in Andromeda.

It is as large as our Milky Way.

It is one of a hundred million galaxies.

It consists of one hundred billion suns, each larger than our own." '

Then, apparently, Roosevelt would grin and say: 'Now I think we are small enough! Let's go to bed.' Having peeped at the all-out awesomeness of God, they felt secure enough to sleep.

For them the universe had not lost its wonder. They could not watch the sun dipping down below the rim of the horizon without reflecting that, in reality, that sun is a giant atomic power plant about which the Earth swings at a distance of more than 90 million miles. This planet travels on a gigantic solar racetrack at a speed of more than eleven hundred miles a minute. Jet planes routinely fly at 1,000 miles an hour; but the fact is that we are all flying at seventy times that fast in our journey around the sun.

With the Earth travelling at 1,140 miles a minute, what keeps it on course? Power does. The power of gravitational pull. Remember Newton? 'The total attraction between the Earth and the sun amounts to 3,600,000 millions of millions of tons.' That power is great enough to hold the Earth on course, yet a tiny sparrow can fly through it. 'In [God] all things hold together.' (Colossians 1:17, NIV.*) All-out awesome, or what?

Is that what makes God all-out awesome? That he's the God of *macro*-creation? The Head Honcho, The Connection, Mr Infinite Big? Well, it's got to come into it. Right? What I see through the microscope impresses me at least as much as what I see through the telescope.

I'm impressed by the God of *micro*-creation, too. God's fantastic attention to detail.

I'm also impressed – at this time of year especially – by the sheer extravagance of God: apple and cherry blossom, laburnum, lilac. Then there's the zebra – 'Let's put stripes on that horse, why don't we?!' – and what, pray, have they got to do with 'the survival of the fittest'? Then there's God's sense of humour. Ever watched the comicality of the Emperor Penguin? Can you put that down to evolutionary progression? I mean, *really!*

Is that the bottom line on the all-out awesomeness of God? Not for me it isn't.

It is not the God of macro- or micro-creation that I find *all-out* awesome. What ultimately impresses me about God is not his power, his wisdom, or his beauty. 'There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. He was despised and rejected – a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. . . . Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. . . . He was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! . . . We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.' (Isaiah 53: 2-6.)

F. C. Jennings wrote, 'How clear are the rays of sanctuary-light that these words throw on human eye by the three hours of darkness on Calvary; so clear that it is difficult to realise that the words were written more than seven hundred years before the fulfilment.'² As the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (volume 4, page 291) has it: These verses 'emphasise the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings and death. The fact that it is for us, and not for himself, that he suffered and died is reiterated nine times in these verses. . . . He suffered in our stead. The pain, humiliation, and abuse that we deserve he took upon himself.'

To see the all-out awesomeness of God I do not look to the 'lower left-hand corner of the Great Square of Pegasus', I look to the cross. When Jesus – spread-eagled on the wood and bleeding – said, 'Father, forgive them,' he was talking about *us*. Awesome! Heartbreakingly so. And if Calvary cannot break your heart, nothing can.

Jesus, the sinless one, bore the sins of all the world so that, when we accept him as our personal Saviour, we might receive the gift of his perfect righteousness and be saved. 'For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.' (2 Corinthians 5:21.)

The dark sky that engulfed Calvary was the outward sign of a cosmic and eternal transaction which took place. The curse of God which falls upon law-breakers fell instead upon the accursed, crucified one, so that law-breakers can be set free. On Calvary Jesus represented us; *substituted for us*. The Sinless One substituted for the sinful ones. That is why Paul wrote, 'God forbid that I should boast about anything except the cross of

our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Galatians 6:14.)

God's sheer unwillingness to give up on man is truly awesome. Remember the story of Gomer and Hosea? From the first, Gomer was unfaithful to her prophet-husband. Two of the three children she bore were not his. Hosea cast her out, as he was entitled to do, because of her infidelities. She was passed from one lover to another until she lost her freedom. She was put up for auction. No one would buy her.

Until, that is, God gatecrashed Hosea's life. He told Hosea to buy back his adulterous wife. 'Then the Lord said to me, "Go and get your wife again. Bring her back to you and love her even though she loves adultery."' (Hosea 3:1.) A tall order by any standards! Then God gave the reason why: "For the Lord still loves Israel even though the people have turned to other gods." '

God was saying, 'Hosea, go and do what I do, love as I love.' And Hosea bought Gomer back. It was God's heartbreak appeal to Israel. He was saying, 'I will win her back once again. . . . I will transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope.' (Hosea 2:14, 15.)

God's last appeal featured these words, "Oh, how can I give you up, Israel? How can I let you go? . . . My heart is torn within me . . . for I am God . . . the Holy One living among you." ' (Hosea 11:8, 9.)³

At length the Holy One actually came to live among the people, said to them, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,' (John 6:37, KJV) and suffered death on the cross so that all might have an opportunity of salvation and eternal life.

And that, I have to tell you, is the bottom line of all-out awesome for me. Isaac Watts wrote, 'Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.' From me the all-out awesome act of Calvary demands everything I am, have and can ever hope to be.

References:

¹ Arthur E. Lickey, *God Speaks to Modern Man*, (RH, 1952), pages 30, 31. ² F. C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah* (Loizeaux, 1935). ³ David Marshall, *When the Only Way Out is Through* (Autumn House, 2002), pages 61-70.

* Bible quotations are taken from the *New Living Translation* (Tyndale House Publishers) unless indication is given to the contrary.





Brixton: Glorious opportunity

On Sabbath 22 February the members of Brixton church with mixed feeling said farewell to one of their young, talented musicians. Mixed because sadly we would be losing a dedicated, versatile musician, but happy to know that he would be grasping a glorious opportunity of a musical challenge in the USA.

Alden Clarke is the fourth child of Brother and Sister Desmond H. Clarke (first elder) and was brought up in a family that is rich in musical talent. From an early age he demonstrated his skill at the piano and with the help of his mother, and maternal grandmother (now deceased) to whom he was greatly devoted, has developed and mastered this talent. He has played the piano and the organ at various churches throughout the South England Conference, at concerts and at events locally and internationally. His musical accompaniment supports groups, soloists, choirs and several bands.

He was the main musician for the Brixton Adventist Gospel Choir which recently received national prime-time air play with their debut single 'Shout it'. The track for this album was written, arranged and produced by Alden – also known as Bishop Brad. The choir presented him with an engraved cup as a token of their appreciation. Among his many compositions is the invocation, 'Lord, You are Worthy', that the church sings each week.

To show our appreciation for his outstanding service, the church made a special presentation to Alden as well as hosted a farewell function on Sunday evening, where members, friends and well-wishers could pay tribute and give words of commendation and encouragement to him. The programme took the format of 'This is your life' and was chaired by Julie Cameron and Andrew Cudjoe of the AYS department.

JOAN REID

Roses on Mothers' Day

Southall church distributed a rose with card tied to it by a ribbon exhibiting the name of the Church together with a book entitled *Keys to Happiness* to each mother within their catchment area.

Local minister Pastor V. Aguiar

dreamed up the concept. He felt it would be a good gesture to show our neighbours that we care for them. Mothers' Day on 30 March was chosen as the day to do it.

The project was well supported by the members, with the Pathfinders playing their part.

CLAUDE ALEXANDER



From the original Worcester church dedication programme

Worcester at 40

It was a very happy day in Worcester on Sabbath 8 March, the 40th anniversary of the opening and consecration of their church building (9 March 1963). To enhance the celebration day, visitors and some members were surprised and delighted to see the new look of the interior of the sanctuary. Over the past few months, some of the members, together with Pastor Alan Conroy, had worked very hard to decorate right through the church rooms and to refurbish the main sanctuary with new wall-to-wall carpet and new padded chairs to replace the nineteenth-century pews.

It was felt by all concerned that after forty years of continuous use it was time to make the alterations. Among other work carried out, the very small kitchen was extended and smartly refitted with many more new cupboards plus new cooker, sink unit and fridge. This work was all very ably and expertly carried out by our pastor. The guest speaker was Dr Laurence Turner of Newbold, who has a sister, mother and brother-in-law who worship in Worcester.

The church was almost full, with visitors joining the members to thank God for his past blessings and to pray

for his continued guidance and blessings for the future. Dr Turner gave an absorbing and stimulating message, entitled 'If not now, then when?' based on Luke 9:57-62, when Jesus said: 'Do it now, today! Don't delay!'

In 1963, to add to their special day then, there had been a baptism of two people, so it was also appropriate this time to add two special people to the Worcester membership, by the right hand of fellowship given to Ray Angel and Judy Wade, who are both already a great asset to the church and God's work. A member then took a couple of minutes to pass on appreciation and grateful thanks to Pastor A. Conroy for all his hard work and help in having the refurbishments completed in time for this day of celebration.

A sumptuous buffet lunch for all those who could remain for the afternoon, was served by the ladies of Worcester, to their credit, plus a taste of the beautifully-decorated 'birthday cake'. An hour of music, song and praise and a short talk by Dr Turner brought the special day's worship to a close. The Worcester church was organised in March 1910. Sadly it took fifty-three years for the members to have their own church building in which to worship. However, God provided them (and us) with a presentable and becoming place of worship. So now the present-day members are very eager to continue with the task of spreading God's truth and his message for these last days.

DORIS J. LACK

her work in the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and Marianne Cully (Banbridge) spoke about her studies on groups in Northern Ireland striving to build relationships across the Protestant-Catholic divide. On a lighter note, Betty Sisson interviewed two of the elder stateswomen in the Dublin church: Rita Ponder and Eileen Murtagh. Rita related the slightly unorthodox methods of baptism 'in the old days', for example in a church member's bath, and Eileen spoke of the time she first met her husband and how her father had allowed her to date him simply because he was a Protestant 'Adventurer'. Betty Sisson closed the afternoon session with a look at Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (see John 4), a woman who by no means had an easy life (how



The congregation at the ordination service



Ordinand Dr Mart de Groot tells the children's story

Irish Mission Day of Fellowship

'We have to mix with the world, not to lose our identity . . . but to influence it.' These were the words of the worship hour speaker, Pastor Miroslav Pujic, as he addressed over 120 people at the Irish Mission Day of Fellowship in Belfast on 8 March, which focused on the concept of LIFEdevelopment.

Representatives from every Adventist church in both the North and the South gathered together with BUC and TED workers not only for worship and to talk about LIFEdevelopment, but also for the ordination of Dr Mart de Groot, senior pastor of the Belfast and Larne churches.

Family members from as far away as Spain came for Mart's ordination, which took place in an afternoon service conducted by Pastors Cecil Perry and Alan Hodges.

A number of Christian ministers from other denominations, who are friends of Mart's, also attended the ordination, which included a number of musical items by his friends and family.

Overall, the day was a great encouragement to those who came, with the LIFEdevelopment emphasis and ordination resulting in a full, action-packed time.

ADAM KEOUGH



kicked off on Saturday morning with the Sabbath school programme led by Theda Rall and Inge Vermeulen, two of the South African contingent now in the Dublin congregation. During the divine service we focused on the theme by looking at:

Women in the Bible: Marianne Cully (Banbridge) presented an inspiring look at the life of Esther – God using ordinary women to do extraordinary things;

Women in the Home: Busi Msipha (Dublin) spoke from personal experience, sharing with us a touching story about her mother and the example set by her; and

Women in the Church: Evelyn Wilson (Ballinacrow) spoke of great historic examples such as Ellen White and Miriam.

After a brief lunch interlude and awesome music from the young people of Dublin church and Divine Power, the group of women (plus the four men who decided to stay on) settled down once again to listen to the experiences of some of the women in the church in relation to the communities around them. Liz Reid (Dublin) talked about

could she with five husbands?! and yet was chosen by Jesus to bring the whole town out to him.

After such a busy day, you'd think that that was it. But no, there was a fantastic three-course dinner, followed by a social evening that was absolutely one of the best cultural experiences to be had anywhere in Ireland.

The weekend programme continued on Sunday morning when Vicki Murphy led the worship service. This was followed by a workshop led by Linda Soriton and Betty Sisson to look at the future of Women's Ministries in the Irish Mission.

The weekend ran extremely smoothly due to the leadership skills of Betty Sisson, as well as the hospitality skills of Mildred Hill who organised all the food, thanks to the kind contributions from the women in the Dublin church.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons of the weekend, however, was this: that Women's Ministries can only happen first and foremost when the women in the church get to know one another and are friends.

LINDA SORITON

Japhet De Oliveira with Ali Kingston

Photo: Stanley Maxwell



Blue worship services

Pastor Japhet De Oliveira is the youth minister at Stanborough Park church. His principal role is to direct the 200 or so young people who attend regularly. From time to time, his work takes him abroad to America, Brazil or Australia to see what youth leaders do elsewhere.

In 2001 Japhet and his chief helpers launched the Blue worship services at Stanborough Park. Meant for 18-35-year-olds, they were designed for people seeking information about Christianity. The services are funded largely from donations. Last year, there was enough money to fund a student missionary. The shopping list said: A worship leader able to

design services; someone interested in drama; someone able to sing solo; an able presenter; someone with 1:1 contact skills; someone flexible. A tall order!

Then Japhet and a few others attended youth meetings in Australia. There, a few hours before their flight home, they met Alexandria Kingston. Alexandria, known as Ali, is 20. Her father, Pastor Andrew Kingston, is Associate South Pacific Division Youth director, and her mother, Janette, is a teacher and high school chaplain. Back home, near Sydney, Ali was half-way through a teacher-training course. She loves music, sings soprano and wanted to travel.

Ali arrived in September. She has worked enthusiastically with the young people. This year she has taken on the job of church bulletin editor and is trying to establish a contemporary youth choir.

She says, 'It's great here. I love the people I work with and everyone has been very friendly and welcoming. The weather's not that bad, but the traffic is awful!'

Japhet has the last word, 'Ali has not only shown herself totally adept at her role but has adapted to the culture of the Blue team in its unique church community setting. . . . I can say that she will be missed when she leaves us in July. Maybe God has something up his sleeve . . .'

Blue's website address is www.be-blue.com. BRONWEN ATKINSON

Unused WMD found at the VOP!

by Mike Stickland, director, ADC/VOP

For several months prior to the outbreak of war, all the world was focused on one question – ‘Does Iraq have weapons of mass destruction or not?’ In some ways the question has become irrelevant, because ‘the coalition’ invaded them on assumption rather than wait for full evidence, but that’s another issue and not the purpose of my article just now. I am interested in ‘WMD’ of quite another kind.

Ellen White once wrote, ‘The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying, and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding to theatres, horse races, gambling hells. The highest excitement prevails, yet probation’s hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced, until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy be forever shut.’ (*Desire of Ages*, page 636).

Did you notice that terminology – that men may be ‘deceived, deluded, occupied and entranced’? Now that’s what I call weapons of mass distraction! And I begin to wonder – as Seventh-day Adventists living (more

surely than ever perhaps) in the last days – of which should we be the more afraid? Which concerns you more, weapons of mass destruction, or weapons of mass distraction? Have you become distracted too, perhaps?

There is a way out of this malaise, you know! You need not be deceived or deluded yourself, nor need you sit by while your neighbours are occupied and entranced. There is still every reason for your congregation to operate a ‘Personal Ministries’ offensive. And the VOP has unused ‘WMD’ waiting for you

to hurl into action. We have *Weapons of Mass Distribution* – perhaps known better to you as VOP cards. They do not bring death and destruction, except maybe to a bit of indifference and a few soles of shoes. The unused WMD lodged at the VOP bring hope of life and peace.

We have new Bible and health cards coming off the press that will be ready for you to use immediately after the dust of Ingathering has settled. If Dr Blix comes to visit your vestry, let him see that you have immediate plans for all your VOP WMD.



excuse me, is this healthy?

Healthwise

Chinese SARS

By early April, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) had killed 89 people and infected more than 2,300 people worldwide since it surfaced in southern China last November.

The virus has yet to be confirmed but is probably the *corona* virus. It was thought that it was a mutation of an avian virus inasmuch as the outbreak occurred in an area of China associated with a known chicken virus causing problems with human health. While possible, the link has not been established.

Viruses are associated with all forms of life. As science writer Frank Ryan comments: ‘Emerging viruses, while they may be new to humanity, are never new to nature. They enter human consciousness when they hop species to humanity from a natural host, and most of the serious emerging viruses do so in a wild or rural setting. There is accumulating evidence that all or virtually all of the million or more species of animal life on earth have their own individual viruses.’ [*Virus X*, page 213.]

A passenger on a KLM flight brought the virus from the East to the UK. By the time his respiratory condition was bad enough to seek help the rest of the passengers had travelled all over Europe, making it difficult to find and screen them for the virus.

Hong Kong Health Secretary Yeoh Eng-Kiong has now quarantined an apartment block in Kowloon where at least 107 of the 213 cases reported in Hong Kong live. People are literally confined to their homes and the authorities are providing them with meals-on-wheels for the duration of the health scare. There have been 13 or more deaths in the Hong Kong group. At least four cases of SARS have been reported in the UK and Ireland.

While SARS is worrying, particularly for travellers, it has not reached the proportions of many of the other viral conditions spread across the globe in recent years. Symptoms of SARS include a high fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath and muscle aches which, untreated, progress to pneumonia. There is no specific treatment.

Studies are continuing to isolate and confirm the virus as the corona virus which is one of the family of viruses normally associated with colds. Laboratories specialising in viral research say that this particular virus may be the product of a *paramyxovirus* (associated with mumps and measles) and a viral sub-type *human metapneumovirus* (causing pneumonia).

It is generally agreed that little can be done to protect oneself against the virus and that travel plans should not be curtailed. There is certainly no need to panic; viruses are here to stay. Ryan, quoted earlier, says: ‘There appears to be an inexhaustible supply of new viruses, with a new addition appearing at least once a year and often a good deal more frequently than that.’ Keeping fit and taking care to avoid risk-taking situations is the best protection.



War: An Historian’s perspective

There are some things that the Bible-believing Christian can be unequivocally against. Unfortunately, war is not one of them. If one accepts the historicity of much of the Old Testament, one cannot avoid the conclusion that war is not only an inevitable part of human existence, but even sometimes a desirable one, for how many times are we told there that God ordains war and, indeed, war on the most spectacular scale, with orders to kill every man, woman, child and even animal on the opposing side? Later, Christian thinking, beginning with Augustine, devised the theory of the ‘just war’, one of the traditional aspects of which was proportionality, namely that the good achieved must be important enough to justify the harm done. It is difficult to fit the Old Testament wars into that category and even if it can be done (perhaps by arguing that the preservation of Israel as God’s representatives on Earth was of overriding importance), another requirement of just war theory seems not to have

applied, namely that of non-combatant immunity.

Thus the Bible-believing Christian was faced with certain dilemmas in the days of Conscientious Objector tribunals. How could he take the pacifist line and still accept the Old Testament (and maybe also some phrases in the New Testament)? The Seventh-day Adventist could choose to emphasise the near-impossibility of Sabbath-keeping in the armed forces, but I, at least, when I appeared before the tribunal in National Service days, was rather nervous lest someone on the bench should ask me whether I felt it was allowable to kill provided I did not have to do so on Saturdays. Mercifully, no one asked me that.

Perhaps the best that we can do is to assert that war is always an evil, but that sometimes it may be necessary to avert greater evils. In that context, my own opinions have been shaped partly by the fact that I grew up in the 1930s and have read a good deal about that period since. From what we now know, it seems clear that

if, when in 1936 Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland, Britain and France had threatened war, he would have retreated and consequently perhaps have fallen from power. If that had happened what vast suffering the world would have been spared! A small war, or perhaps only the threat of war, might have averted a massive war with all its consequent evils. When it came, however, the Second World War could of all wars perhaps be termed a necessary war. Even while it was being fought that seemed apparent. When it ended and the concentration camps were opened there was no doubt.

The Second World War was, however, exceptional in that regard. There is a saying that ‘truth is the first casualty of war’. That being so, it is difficult for a lay person to form an accurate estimate of the justice of any given war. On the political front, those who promote war from apparently idealistic motives may have a hidden – perhaps economic – agenda. Those who oppose it for apparently equally idealistic reasons may have their eyes upon the political capital to be gained if they believe that the majority of voters may be opposed to it.

A. J. Coates in his *The Ethics of War* (Manchester, 1997), page 2, says, ‘However “just”, no war is ever so pure or ever so untainted as to be entered into without grave moral misgivings, or to be conducted without continual moral scrutiny and anxiety, or to be concluded without a sense of moral failure and remorse.’ He quotes – of all people – Ernest Hemingway as

writing, ‘Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified, is not a crime.’ The just war theorist holds that war is justified only as an instrument of peace. For him it is a concept of a world without war that shapes his thinking. Tragically history tells a different story. Like the little boy in Robert Southey’s poem ‘The Battle of Blenheim’, it asks all too often ‘But what good came of it at last?’

Even though the Old Testament is full of war, it speaks also of a time when ‘nation shall not lift up sword against nation’ (Isaiah 2:4). Even though many of Christ’s professed followers for the last two thousand years have been as ready as anyone ‘to prove their doctrine orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks’ (Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*), he is nonetheless still the Prince of Peace. Even though the first war took place in heaven, heaven is still the place of peace (Luke 19:38), where ‘neither shall they learn war any more’ (Isaiah 2:4). War and death are not the ultimates. Christians, looking on bewildered and in agony of mind, at events here and now, can cling to the promise (from the Old Testament) that in the coming eternal reign of peace ‘the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind’. All terrestrial things are ephemeral; the truly celestial alone abide for ever.

* Dennis Porter, a popular lay preacher in the South England Conference, is a member of the Oxford church. He is a professional historian, has taught History at Newbold College and worked as an archivist at the Bodleian Library.

Prayer Feature

If my people pray

with Tracy Dixon

I wonder if you, like me, have been watching the continuous coverage of the war in Iraq on television. It was difficult not to believe that this was what God meant when he spoke of the Earth’s last days’ ‘wars and rumours of wars’ (Matthew 24:6), when daily we heard ‘unconfirmed reports’ of street fighting, massacres and bombings in the various towns and cities that the coalition forces were passing through on their way to Baghdad. However distressing the reports and the images were – and are – it is important to hang on to the second half of the verse quoted above. Jesus simply says, ‘but see to it that you are not alarmed’. In Jeremiah 29:11 we are told, ‘For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’ These are such wonderful words in the light of the pain and suffering that we see on our television screens. There is hope and that hope is Jesus, and his second coming is our ‘blessed hope’ (Titus 2:13). So let us pray as John did in Revelation 22:20 that the end will come soon and thereby release God to enter into the chaos-of-human-making that is war, to end the suffering and persecution that seems to be everywhere. ‘For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones.’ (Psalm 37:28.)

We, more than most, must have great confidence in approaching God in prayer because as Adventists we are faithful to Jesus and to all ten commandments and therefore can claim the promise that we will not be forsaken. So keep talking to him. H. M. S. Richards – founder of the Voice of Prophecy – called prayer ‘the most talked about and least practised of all Christian beliefs’.

Let’s change that right now.
Please send prayer requests to: Tracy E. Dixon, 83 Penygroes Road, Caerbryn, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, SA18 3BZ.

Adventurers GBK

‘Adventurers for Jesus, this our earnest prayer’ and the sound of marching feet were all that could be heard as 11 children aged 6-9 marched into divine service for Adventurers’ Day at the Great Brickkiln Street church, Wolverhampton. On 14 December they were invested into the Adventurer Club.

The adult Sabbath school had been given a taste of things to come by a special item from Sweet Harmony (a singing and miming group from within the Adventurer Club), who had written and composed an item, ‘Now I know I’m a Christian’.

Mike Rossiter oversaw the investiture, ending with a sermon entitled, ‘Be a hen not a duckling’, especially for the children.

For the after-

noon meeting the children displayed the work they had done throughout the year and had the congregation guessing which Adventurer law they were role-playing. This is the first time in four years that an Adventurer Club has been invested in the church and we pray that we will continue to invest more children into the work of God.

WENDY WATSON-TEAGUE

From left: Joshua Bronk, Destiny Malcolm, Wendy Watson-Teague (Helper), Louis Clarke, Jordan Campbell, Casslene Sewell (Adventurer director), Zhane Simpson, Mike Rossiter, Hanif Henry, Adam Hazel, Beverly Perry (Helper), Abigail Hazel, Olivia Harvey, Sue Jeffers (Helper), Nikeeta Campbell, Jordanne Allen



Zimbabwe: Church leaders stress urgent, practical involvement in AIDS crisis. The time has come for urgent and practical involvement in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Seventh-day Adventist church leaders told delegates at the first regional workshop on the issue held here in March.

The meeting, sponsored by the Church's Southern African-Indian Ocean region, drew experts from around the continent and overseas, as well as denominational leaders from eleven other Christian churches. All speakers agreed that Christian churches – including the Adventist Church – have been late in responding to the crisis.

Pardon Mwansa, president of the Adventist Church in the region, said the meeting was organised because of the staggering number of HIV/AIDS cases in sub-Saharan Africa. Experts say the region is home to 70 to 80 per cent of worldwide HIV/AIDS cases, or some 28 million of the 40 million infected persons around the world.

Mwansa believes the church is not immune to those statistics and is in real danger. 'Unless the HIV [pandemic] is addressed, there will be no workers to work in our congregations. There will be no church members to pastor. There will be no people to lead. Some of us here will be dead,' Mwansa said in his opening address.

Although there are no statistics available on the number of Adventist members who are infected with HIV/AIDS, at least four countries in southern Africa – Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho – have nearly one third of their population living with HIV/AIDS.

Attendees praised the open nature of the meetings in which Adventist church members living with HIV/AIDS spoke publicly – many for the first time – about living with the disease and the stigma they often face in their own churches.

According to experts at the conference, AIDS is a scourge that is killing millions of people around the world, including thousands of Adventists.

'I have buried people who have died of HIV – church members. There are pastors who are HIV positive, that I know of, and I counsel with,' said Mwansa. 'This is not something far from us. This is something that we're dealing with.'

Jona Adams, an Adventist member from Harare, spoke of having to deal with 'judgemental and discriminating' church members. He said he hoped that this meeting would lead to greater acceptance of Adventist church members living with HIV/AIDS.

Charles Sandefur, president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, said that church leaders were touched by the presence of Adams and other Adventist

members with HIV/AIDS. 'That changes the whole mood and conversation. It makes this whole workshop experiential and not just informational.'

Experts and leaders from other churches praised the Adventist Church for this initiative, which they saw as a significant step towards a more practical role in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Dr Arthur Ammann, president of Global Strategies for HIV Prevention in San Rafael, California, said that the church was making a bold statement by holding this conference.

'It's incredible – as far as I know this is the first denomination that has addressed it as a denomination,' said Dr Ammann. 'There have been individual churches that have talked about what to do with AIDS, but I don't know about any gathering where the church officials have so openly had people with HIV/AIDS talking about the issues and listening.'

ANN

Death of Newbold College student

A Newbold student died in a car accident at 12.01 on Tuesday morning 18 March in Popeswood Road, Binfield.

Twenty-year-old Seung-Won Han from South Korea had been studying English as a Foreign Language at Newbold College since January. He was a rear seat passenger in a Rover 214, and died from the injuries he sustained. The driver, also a Newbold student, was detained by the police for questioning, but has been released on bail. The other passengers required minimal medical treatment. The police are further investigating the incident and are appealing for eyewitnesses.

Ursula Lewis, Seung-Won's English Language teacher for the six weeks he has been at the College, said, 'Seung-Won was an intelligent, lovable young man with a great sense of humour. His teachers, classmates and other fellow students are devastated by his loss and feel that a part of us is missing. We are continuing to support one another.'

'Our hearts go out to the family and friends of Seung-Won,' said Dr David Penner, principal of Newbold College. 'We have been deeply saddened by this incident but are supporting each other in this time of grief. On Tuesday evening, the College chaplain held a service of reflection which was attended by about two hundred people. Counselling is being made available to students and staff who are trying to come to terms with the tragedy.'

A memorial service for Seung-Won was held at 11am in the Newbold Church Centre on Friday 21 March.

ANN



ADRA-UK sponsored walk by Chantal Alen

The Great Scottish Walk is taking place on Sunday 22 June and is Scotland's biggest annual charity walk event that takes place each summer, giving the general public an opportunity to raise funds for a charity of their choice. We are looking for supporters of ADRA-UK to participate in this sponsored event and help raise funds to further its work. A great day awaits all those who are interested in having a bit of fun as well as a bit of exercise!

Starting and finishing at Edinburgh's Meadowbank Stadium, the 12-mile route will be fun to do and great to complete, with finishers receiving commemorative medals and certificates. With plenty of entertainment at the start and finish, it's a real family day out too. Walkers will be accompanied by the dulcet tones of pipe bands, route entertainment, goody bags, after-walk show, first aid, water stations en route, etc.

Participants will need to make their own travel arrangements. However, members of the Crieff church are willing to accommodate walkers in their homes if necessary.

If you would like to participate in this sponsored walk please contact Chantal Alen on 01923 681723 (England) or Harry Wilby on 01764 654369 (Scotland) for more details.

TENDERS INVITED TO PROVIDE LUNCH-TIME SCHOOL MEALS AT HARPER BELL ADVENTIST SCHOOL

An Independent Day School owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Harper Bell Adventist School has pupils aged 3-11 years. The meal provider would be required to produce a weekly variety of wholesome vegetarian meals, catering also for children on more restricted diets. Kitchen facilities are available on-site and the meal provider would be expected to meet Health and Safety Regulations. The school presently has 100 pupils and staff who would require daily meals. The provider would be responsible for the purchase of ingredients, production and serving of meals. Prospective providers should submit their tender, along with a suggested 5-day week's menu, references and copies of relevant Catering and Health and Safety Certificates to: Mr O. Stewart, Headteacher, Harper Bell Adventist School, 29 Ravenhurst Street, Camp Hill, Birmingham, B12 0EJ. **CLOSING DATE: 30 MAY 2003**

ABC BOOK SALES 2003

May			
11	West Midlands		10am-2pm
18	Newbold Graduation		10am onwards
June			
9-15	SEC Camp Meeting, NEC Camp Meeting,	Prestatyn Southport	
29	Scottish Mission Session,	Crieff	

WEDDING

FACEY-HAY. The wedding of Jemma Hay, youngest daughter of Helena Hay and the late Ivan Hay, to Perran Facey, youngest son of Carolyn and Roy Facey, took place on a sunny and crisp 18 December, at Sheldwich church near Faversham, Kent. The service was conducted by Revd Mike Johnson, together with Pastor David Spearing in the presence of numerous relatives and friends. Perran and Jemma were babies together in St Austell church, Cornwall, and later met up again at Newbold College during an art and craft weekend. The young couple, who both study at St Mary's College, London University, attend London Central church and have set up home in Barking, Essex, after a honeymoon in Lapland. May God richly bless this young Adventist home and union!

HELENA HAY

Congratulations to Carlyle London of Stanborough Park church who has obtained his MSc in Health Promotion at Brunel University.

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UPCOMING EVENTS				
EVENT	WHEN	WHERE	WHO	HOW
'Prayer Warriors V' Empowered by the Spirit	Bank Holiday weekend 2-5 May	Alton Castle, Castle Hill, Alton, Staffordshire.	Calling all youth 15 yrs+ £50 per person.	Contact the NEC on 0115 960 6312 for application form
West Midlands Cultural Day of Fellowship	Sabbath 3 May	St John's Methodist Church, St Paul's Road, Smethwick, W.Midlands	Pastor E. Francis, NEC president	Phone Judith Asare on 0121 544 3990

Please submit advertisements in this format. Please make the church connection clear. For a complete list of upcoming events check out the database on the BUC website, www.adventist.org.uk.

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	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Apr 25	8.13	8.25	8.21	8.39	8.45
May 2	8.25	8.37	8.34	8.53	8.59
9	8.36	8.48	8.46	9.07	9.12
16	8.47	8.59	8.57	9.20	9.24

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