

Messenger

News to the churches • 28 September 2007 • Volume 112 • 21

Sixtieth Session of the South England Conference

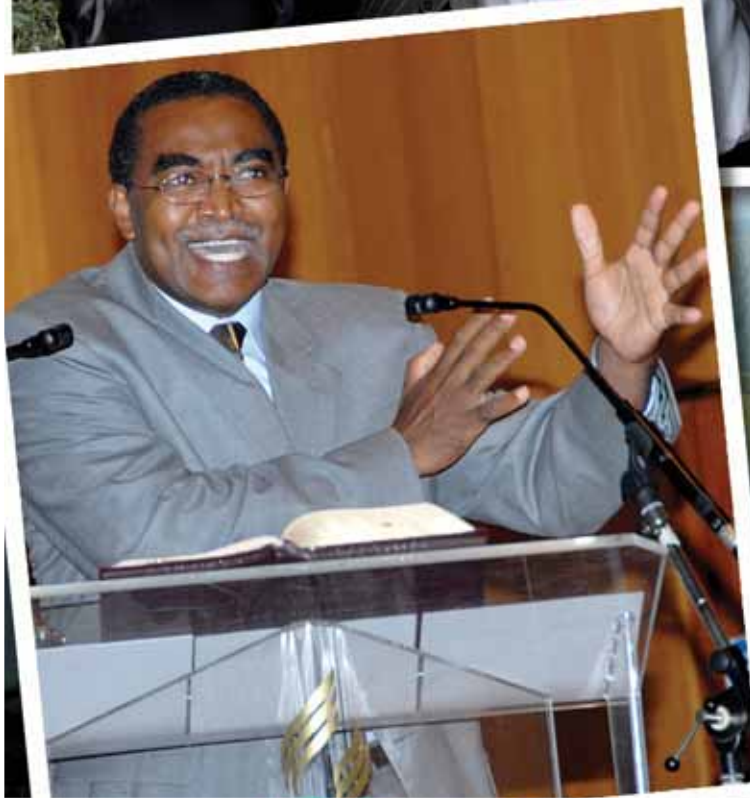
6-9 September, The Great Hall, Exeter University

Reporters: Sam Davis, Mary Barrett, Sharon Platt-McDonald, Jon Gendle, Victor Hulbert and David Marshall

Photographers: Leslie Hill, David West and Victor Hulbert



Left: Someone spoke from the platform of 'Aaron and Joshua holding up the hands of Moses'. Here Pastor Lockham and Earl Ramharacksingh hold up the hands of Pastor Sam Davis, the newly elected SEC president. Above: Ken Burton chats to fellow delegates who are enjoying the sunshine between sessions. Below left: The GC's pastor Pardon Mwansa provided the spiritual food for the session. Below right: The hilly campus of Exeter University provided delegates with excellent opportunities for exercise.



Newbold: BUC president challenges young Adventists

by Helen Pearson

BUC President, Pastor Don McFarlane, is issuing a challenge to young people in the British Union to 'take a year out'.

As hundreds of young Adventists think about the year ahead, Pastor McFarlane, vice-chair of the Newbold College Board, is challeng-

ing young people: 'As you think about your future, ask yourself, "Where do I really want to be in five or ten years time? What sort of friends do I want to make at this crucial time in my life? What am I doing to broaden my education and meet a wide variety of people? Where does God come

in? How am I going to make sure that God is not squeezed out by the pressures to advance my career, make money and get on the property ladder?"'

Pastor McFarlane, father of three children says, 'After listening to young people, the Newbold College Board understands that, under the pressures of 'A' level study and degrees, many students find it difficult to step back and think about their futures. So we are delighted that Newbold has developed a variety of well-structured 'years out' alongside their degree programmes. As church leaders, we want to support young people in this activity. That's why, for the year called, *The Newbold Experience*, we have put in place an offer of financial help to students from the Trans-European Division.'

Dr David Penner, Principal of Newbold College, says: 'The courses take only a year but they can be taken at any time in a young person's educational career. They enable young people to improve the sorts of skills which will enrich their personal, professional and church lives. What's more, they give them the opportunity to create a network of friendships with other young Adventists around the world.'

Last school year (06-07), Newbold offered the Gap Year and the Youth Leadership Certificate. These courses will continue this year, along with one-year courses in Christian Counselling and Christian Social Studies.

For more details, log on to www.newbold.ac.uk and click on 'One-Year Programmes'.

GC Medal of Distinction for Pastor Willis

At the time of the international board meeting of the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (ICPA), Richard Willis was awarded the Health Ministry Medal of Distinction. This is given to those who have dedicated their lives and made exceptional contributions in health and temperance.

DR PETER LANDLESS



The GC Health Ministries team: (left to right) Pastor Stoy Proctor (Assoc.Dir); Dr Allan Handysides (Dir); Pastor Willis; Dr Kathleen Kuntaraf (Assoc.Dir); Dr Peter Landless (Assoc.Dir. & ICPA Exec. Director). Photo: Gary Swanson

British Union Conference – Administrative Secretary to the President

The British Union Conference is seeking to recruit a full-time Administrative Secretary to serve the office of the president at the Union Office, Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts.

Applicants will have substantial experience working as a secretary or a PA. They should be able to demonstrate high levels of proficiency in the use of office technology, English usage and Microsoft Office software. Successful candidates will need strong organisational and interpersonal skills and be able to work independently without direct supervision, showing the utmost discretion and tact when handling confidential information. Salary upon application will be based on qualification and experience and will be in line with the church wage structure.

For a job description or an application form, write or email to: BUC Executive Secretary, BUC Offices, Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9JZ (email elowe@adventist.org.uk)

Closing date for applications: 30 September 2007.

Europeans under stress

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in 2001 found that most Europeans are working in stressful conditions. In the report, Dr Lennart Levi, Professor of Psychosocial Medicine at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden, stated that more than a quarter (28%) of the European workforce complain of stress.

Further studies by The Public & Commercial Services Union in 2003 produced the following alarming statistics:

- UK employees work the longest hours in Europe.
- Forty-two percent regularly work more than 48 hours a week.
- Sixty percent of all work absences in the UK are caused by stress.
- Stress costs the UK economy £8 billion a year.
- Fifty-two percent of employees often find work means they are too tired to enjoy their free time.
- One in three UK residents find their working hours prevent them from spending enough time with their family.

How stressful is your job?

Britain's 20 most stressful jobs*

1. Prison officer.
2. Police.
3. Social work.

4. Teaching.
5. Ambulance service.
6. Nursing.
7. Medicine.
8. Firefighting.
9. Dentistry.
10. Mining.
11. Armed forces.
12. Construction.
13. Management.
14. Acting.
15. Journalism.
16. Linguist.
17. Film producer.
18. Professional sport.
19. Catering/hotel industry.
20. Public transport.

* Research by Professor Cary Cooper from University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology in 1997, assessing 104 jobs.

Over 60% of the 104 jobs showed increases in stress levels from 1985 to 1997.

If your job is not on the list above, you may have wondered why it was missing! If you are experiencing work-related stress, then you need to raise your concerns with your employer.

Current law encourages employers to have workplace policies which reflect flexible working practices. This gives employees a chance of a good work-life balance by allowing them more say in how they undertake their working life. When this is achieved, research has found that employees are more productive and live healthier lives.

We examine the health impact of work stress in the next issue.

The River of Grace

David Marshall



Luther compared the human heart to a cow byre at the end of winter. 'What can we do with all that filth?' he demanded.

This was his prescription for the stinking cow byre. 'Turn the Elbe into it. [In place of Elbe read Trent or Severn, if it helps.] The flood will sweep away all the pollution. Not my own efforts, but the influx of that pardoning cleansing grace which is in Christ, and will wash away the accumulations of the years.'

That's grace like a river: the free, unexpected love of God to and through the undeserving. The grace that, while we were sinners and enemies, treated us like family members and heirs.

But that is not all there is about grace.

Grace is not just grace in the **function**: like a mighty river washing away uncleanness.

Grace is grace in the **presentation**.

Grace is **message**. Grace is also **behaviour**.

For the last half of the nineteenth century the British scene was dominated by two great political rivals: Gladstone and Disraeli. An attractive woman sat next to each man at dinner on consecutive evenings. When asked to compare her experience of the two men, she replied thoughtfully, 'After I left the dining room after sitting with Mr Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England, but after sitting next to Mr Disraeli, I thought I was the cleverest woman.'

Gladstone was always 'on message'. But, on that occasion at least, Disraeli was the one whose behaviour was gracious.

The grace of Jesus was not just in what he said, but in how he said it. Yes, he was in the business of making cow byres come out smelling of roses. But he never lost sight of the fact that what he was really dealing with was *people*. Beneath and around the cow byre condition of the person was – *the person*. A sensitive, vulnerable, easily distressed person, who required rescue and was in search of the welcoming warmth of the Father's House.

To reach the Sychar woman with the cow byre life, Jesus walked through enemy territory. A mile out of Sychar, a town which has its own water source, the main road forks. At the fork is Jacob's ancient well. It is a hundred feet deep. Jacob found no spring there, but had to dig down until he reached the water table. Hence the water in that well was not what the

Jews called 'living' (that is, running) water. It was water percolated through the subsoil. The well survived to the time of Jesus – and survives to the present day – because it was Jacob's well, not because it was a good well.

Jesus arrived in the heat of midday and was parched dry but did not possess a traveller's leathern bucket. The woman had walked from Sychar in midday heat to the out-of-town well because she was a social outcast and believed that, by doing so, she could avoid all human contact. Too late she realised she had a Jewish rabbi for company and that, in addition to her five-weddings-and-a-relationship background, she was separated from him by five centuries of hostile history. In addition she would have expected him to turn away from her purely because she was a woman.

The Sychar woman was in for a surprise because the Nazareth Stranger was inhibited by neither racial nor gender prejudice.

Notice what Jesus did. He did not start in on the cow byre aspect of things. His initial approach indicated his own vulnerability: 'Will you give me a drink?' For one of the few times in her life she found someone with kindness in his eyes; not critical superiority, not even *tolerant* superiority.

She began to open her heart. *She* reminded *him* of the ethnic, gender and historical baggage they should both be carrying.

Jesus responded, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

The woman pointed out that Jesus had no bucket, that the well was deep and, further to that, if 'living water' was to be on offer, did he think he could do better than 'our father Jacob'?

That was Jesus' opportunity for a big put-down. Jews were outraged by the Samaritan claim to be descended from Jacob.

In place of a put-down, Jesus replied: 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.'

What was on offer was the new life, the great river of living water that can wash away all sin and uncleanness and bring with it new life.

A Jew would have had a chance of under-

standing this. Isaiah had spoken of drawing water from the wells of salvation. The psalmist had spoken of his soul being thirsty for the living God. Isaiah had said that the only qualification for receiving an outpouring of living water gratis was thirst. Zechariah had spoken of a new fountain that would spring up in Jerusalem to wash away all sin and uncleanness.¹

But the Samaritan woman was the victim of a truncated Bible (the Samaritans accepted only the first five books). Hence she responded to Jesus with a jest: 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't have to keep coming to this well!'

It was time to be direct: 'Go. Fetch your husband. . . .' The Samaritan woman stiffened and went white as if she had seen a spectre. She had. The spectre of her past and her present. The cow byre had been identified, *but only after the river of living water had been offered twice*. The announcement of the cure had preceded the declaration of diagnosis.

By dissolving every barrier that separated the Samaritan woman from the source of her salvation Jesus had made it clear that the river of living water is a mighty, unstoppable current that cleanses, renews, revives to the point at which even the cow byre itself can become 'a spring of water welling up to eternal life'.

Jesus introduced himself as the Messiah. As the disciples came along, the woman was rushing back to town, the first missionary to Samaria.

What had made the difference? The *message* of grace? More than that. It was the *personification* of grace.


How often do we hamper the message of grace by our failure to personify it?

Jeremiah² complained that the people had forsaken the fountain of living water – that great River of God – and hewn for themselves broken cisterns incapable of holding water. The danger that we should do the same is very real.

The River of Grace runs powerfully through Scripture, but needs our permission to run into and through our lives.

References:

- ¹Isaiah 12:3; 44:3; Psalm 42:1; Zechariah 13:1; 14:8. ²Jeremiah 2:13.



Enhancing Health

by Sharon Platt-McDonald RGN, RM, RHV, MSc, Health Ministries director, BUC

STRESS AND WORK Part 4a

Is your job stressing you?
This issue in the stress series comes with a disclaimer: *If your job features as highly stressed in the list below, the writer cannot be held responsible for any stress this discovery may cause you.*
Life in the Western World today consists of longer working hours and associated escalating stress levels.

Europeans under stress
The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in 2001 found that most Europeans are working in stressful conditions. In the report, Dr Lennart Levi, Professor of Psychosocial Medicine at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden, stated that more than a quarter (28%) of the European workforce complain of stress.
Further studies by The Public & Commercial Services Union in 2003 produced the following alarming statistics:
• UK employees work the longest hours in Europe.
• Forty-two percent regularly work more than 48 hours a week.
• Sixty percent of all work absences in the UK are caused by stress.
• Stress costs the UK economy £8 billion a year.
• Fifty-two percent of employees often find work means they are too tired to enjoy their free time.
• One in three UK residents find their working hours prevent them from spending enough time with their family.
How stressful is your job?
Britain's 20 most stressful jobs*
1. Prison officer. 2. Police. 3. Social work.

4. Teaching. 5. Ambulance service. 6. Nursing. 7. Medicine. 8. Firefighting. 9. Dentistry. 10. Mining. 11. Armed forces. 12. Construction. 13. Management. 14. Acting. 15. Journalism. 16. Linguist. 17. Film producer. 18. Professional sport. 19. Catering/hotel industry. 20. Public transport.
* Research by Professor Cary Cooper from University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology in 1997, assessing 104 jobs.
Over 60% of the 104 jobs showed increases in stress levels from 1985 to 1997.
If your job is not on the list above, you may have wondered why it was missing! If you are experiencing work-related stress, then you need to raise your concerns with your employer.
Current law encourages employers to have workplace policies which reflect flexible working practices. This gives employees a chance of a good work-life balance by allowing them more say in how they undertake their working life. When this is achieved, research has found that employees are more productive and live healthier lives.
We examine the health impact of work stress in the next issue.

Coming to Exeter for the sixth SEC Session brought back fond memories. In the years when SEC owned Broomhill House this was the place for many retreats. Nestled among the rolling hills of the Devon countryside, the Teign Valley brought a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of the city.

The Session, of course, was a much larger event than the youth retreats, pensioners' holidays, or Community Services weekends of yesteryear. Exeter University campus, spread out across several square miles, and surrounded by beautiful countryside, welcomed us.

The start of the Session was a low-key affair with most of the delegates absent. That was due, no doubt, to the long distances the delegates had to travel, combined with the fact that keys to accommodation could not be collected before 2pm, the time the Session was scheduled to start.

SEC president, Pastor Humphrey Walters, welcomed the few delegates in attendance. He said that this was to be a time of celebration, reflection, decision-making and prayer. Prayer, he emphasised, was a priority.

Pastor Walters stressed that we were facing many new opportunities for presenting the Gospel message. It was a time of growing concern occasioned by global warming, climate change, recent flooding and turmoil in the Middle East. Shootings and stabbings had become regular occurrences in the cities where many of us lived. Against that background, he said, 'Our sufficiency is in Christ.'

The opening prayer was given by Pastor Aristotle Vontzalidis. Pastor Paul Lockham reminded us of our civic responsibilities by introducing the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Marcel Tules.

Councillor Tules had delegates laughing and applauding when he said, 'I have discovered that you are a people who do not smoke or drink. If you could convert the people of Exeter to that way of life it would certainly make my life a lot easier!'

Greetings to the delegates were extended by Exeter's resident minister, Pastor Bertie De Nysschen.

Opening Session – Thursday afternoon

Reporter: Sam Davis*

'Welcome to the hills of Devon – as you huff and puff to your various venues,' said Pastor De Nysschen. His counsel to the delegation included the words: 'Unless we put the heavenly mission before our earthly status we are undone.'

BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane, acknowledged that 'sometimes we have our own agendas'. Then he added, 'We have prayed for this Session. Let us leave things in the hands of God. If this Session is to be remembered for anything, then let it be remembered as a Session of prayer.'

SEC Executive secretary, Pastor Paul Lockham, shared greetings from Pastor Bertil Wiklander of TED, Pastor Egerton Francis of NEC, and Pastor David Neal of the Irish Mission. When at 2.45 Paul Lee, SEC Music director, led in the singing of 'Crown him with many crowns', it became evident that the auditorium had filled up and that the assembled delegates were in good voice.

At 2.50 Dr Pardon Mwansa of the General Conference was welcomed as the Session speaker. As a Zambian national, Pastor Mwansa is a General Vice-president of the General Conference. He was president of the Southern African Indian Ocean Division until his appointment to the GC. He brought greetings from GC president, Dr Jan Paulsen. The theme for the opening address was from Acts 3:1-7. In response to the lame man's request at the Gate Beautiful, Peter had said, 'Silver and gold have I none, but that which I have give I unto thee.' Pastor Mwansa challenged us: 'What do you have to offer?'

Following the address Pastor Perry led in a season of prayer. 'Prayer,' he said, 'is a word from God as well as a word to God.' Including the Deputy Lord Mayor and a professor from the university in the prayer session, Pastor Perry urged: 'Create a clean heart in us; and renew a right attitude in us.'

Pastor Nathan Stickland led in the first singing of the Session theme song, 'Send the light'.

Business begins

Pastor Lockham announced that 121 delegates had registered, 68% of the total. Arthur Campbell was voted as parliamentarian, and business began.

A number of companies were welcomed into the sisterhood of the churches of the South England Conference: Luton North, West Bletchley, Woodford Green, Barnet, Bracknell, Elephant and Castle, London Romanian, Hope Community, Reading Angaza and Edmonton Central. It was voted to seat the delegates from those new congregations.

A motion was passed to endorse the programme as the agenda for the Session.

Discussion began on the SEC budgets for the forthcoming quadrennial. From the floor Dr Steve



Pastor Walters, a president of broad vision, hard work and many people skills, presents his report

Thomas (Reading Central) suggested an amendment. He wanted a full-time SEC Education director and another half-time Church Property Acquisition director.

A second speaker, from Reading Whitley, supported the idea of someone at the Conference who was specifically responsible for seeing through the acquisition of church properties.

Humphrey Walters accepted that best practice had not always been followed in church property acquisitions, but said that that argument did not warrant a whole new department.

When another speaker from Reading Whitley spoke for the amendment, it became clear that there was a local grievance. The Reading Whitley congregation had been trying to acquire their own church. Subsequent experience had taught them that it was necessary to have someone at Conference level who could assist in the acquisition of a suitable building and ease the pressure on the Conference treasurer.

Earl Ramharacksingh, SEC treasurer, pointed out that £80,000 was the cost of one department for one year and that, for such a sum, it would be possible to place two pastors into the field.

He made the point that, on average, 1.5 church buildings were acquired each year. Pastor Walters added that a whole new department would be a 'disproportionate and excessive' response to the issue.

Other delegates stressed the need for the employment of professionals with regard to the acquisition of church buildings.

Confusion was caused by changes made to the list of budgets being projected onto the

screen. This confusion was drawn to the attention of the delegation by Martin Luther Rodney.

Finally the main motion (containing the original list of budgets) was carried by a majority.

Two other Portuguese-speaking congregations in London were accepted into the sisterhood of churches in the South England Conference (North-West London Portuguese and East London Portuguese).

Recommendations Committee

At 4.30 discussion began on the composition of the Recommendations Committee. It was clear that local churches had been requested to submit names for the Recommendations Committee prior to the Session. Protracted and noisy discussion ensued for some

twenty minutes in the auditorium. In the course of this discussion there were long queues from the floor to speak to the Conference Executive secretary.

Finally, at 4.50, order was restored, and the names of the 149 nominees to comprise the Recommendations Committee were read out by Pastor Lockham. There was good-natured applause from the delegation for his good-natured attempts at the pronunciation of difficult African names.

As the main delegation broke for the evening meal the Recommendations Committee began work on the composition of the various standing committees of the Session: Nominating, Licences and Credentials, Plans and Constitution (the latter committee to serve for the complete quadrennial).



Paul Lee, so familiar to BBC audiences through regular appearances on Songs of Praise, led in the singing



After a wet summer Exeter was blessed with anti-cyclonic conditions during the Session. Days began with mist but, subsequently, featured clear skies and heat.



Arthur Campbell, parliamentarian, makes one of his characteristic interventions



Steve Thomas was concerned about the SEC's church building programme

* Pastor Sam Davis regularly reports for MESSENGER and did so despite being elected president.

Friday morning's Business Session

by David Marshall

Who would have thought that, after a summer featuring flood and tempest, the best of the weather was waiting for our September Session?

'The best of the summer was saved for the Adventists and the TUC,' said the porter at Hope Hall. And, in the course of Thursday afternoon's session, I was wondering if some of the TUC delegates had turned up at our session!

The battle to keep spiritual values and mission alive in our business session was won, thanks to the fine worships of Pardon Mwansa and some excellent contributions on Friday and Sabbath from, among others, the Holfords.

Secretary's Report

Friday morning began with Paul Lockham's report from the Secretariat. The youthful eight-times grandfather was in good humour and on form. Time was taken, however, to remind us that some of our number had fallen in the preceding quadrennium, including the man elected to do his job just four years ago – Pastor Dalbert Elias – and a valued member of the SEC Executive, headmaster Maurice Brooks.

The quadrennium had seen unprecedented membership growth: there had been 2,258 baptisms and 264 additions by profession of faith. Out of a total SEC population of circa 30 million souls, 18,075 were Seventh-day Adventists. However, the ratio of Adventists to the general population was radically different from area to area. It favoured Adventists the most in the major cities. Pastor Lockham's pie chart demonstrated that 68% of the SEC membership lived in Greater London. The quadrennium had seen the opening of 70 new churches.

The delegation gave Pastor Lockham an easy time of it, and his report was voted after minimal discussion.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Earl Ramharacksingh, the graduate of a distinguished universi-

ty in the north of England, had a slightly tougher time. He spoke about the purchase of new church buildings and showed us pictures of them; and spoke about the challenges from gazumping property developers. Tithes had increased by 6.6% over the four years and had reached £9,586,329 by the end of 2006.

Steve Thomas was soon at the mike to voice more concerns about the SEC's church building programme. He was especially concerned about the protracted Balham project and the state of repair of the Advent Centre. To what extent were professionals engaged to handle these matters? he asked.

It appeared that any employment of professionals was likely to be at a local level. The treasurer expressed concern about the state of repair of Hyland House School.

A questioner expressed concern that so many members were still not involved in the Gift Aid programme. Orville Baxter (Tottenham, West Green Road) wanted to know how reserve funds were held. The treasurer said that they were in interest-bearing accounts yielding between 5 and 6%.

A questioner from the New Life congregation stated that they had been given eight weeks to leave their premises. Could the treasurer, therefore, be rather more specific about SEC's policy towards the acquisition of new buildings.

Mr Ramharacksingh explained that the available resources were pooled. The SEC had 'accepted criteria' in relation to which each case for a new building was measured. Among the criteria he mentioned were 'length of time' and 'involvement in evangelism'.

Another questioner stressed the importance of a special 'Harvest Offering' to assist with church building and asserted that £90,000 had been raised elsewhere by that means.

Debate then centred on the pension fund. A questioner alleged that £20 million was reserved in such a fund. Victor Pilmoor, the BUC treas-



The change of presidents showed both men to advantage as mature Christian leaders



Pastor McFarlane welcomes Pastor Davis to the SEC presidency



Humphrey Walters and Sam Davis have been close friends for many years



Elsie Staple on Health Ministries



Humphrey and Ava Walters. Pastor Walters told the Sabbath ordinands, 'Prepare for disappointments in ministry.'

urer, corrected him: £13 million was invested; but £32 million was needed. He stressed that retired pastors were not 'a dead loss' to ministry but that most were active. He spoke of the constraints of law and church policy which governed the funds set aside for pensions.

Discussion then reverted to the vexed question of church buildings. It was stated from the floor that a larger proportion of Conference

funds should be devoted to church building. The session chairman accepted that the delegation wanted an overhaul of the church building programme.

At 11am the Treasurer's Report was voted and Pastor Eric Lowe, chair of the Recommendations Committee, introduced the names of those to serve on the Plans, Licences and Credentials and Constitution Committees.

Midday Business

by David Marshall

When the Session reconvened at 11.30 Pastor C. R. Perry prayed that 'the atmosphere of heaven' would prevail in the ensuing meeting.

Children's Ministries, appropriately, was the first departmental report to be presented. It was fronted by Pastor Bernie and Mrs Karen Holford. A number of powerful points were scored on behalf of the department. Jesus had told adults to become as little children, not children to become as adults. To 'become as little children' was the essence of rebirth theology.

At present the Church was 'losing 70% of its children'. All worship services should be structured with children in mind. Every 'boring' service could push some children further away from God. 'Some of our children tune out aged 2 and never tune back in.' By the age of 9, children had already reached a decision on whether to stay or go. Every encouraging, affirming word could lead

some child to stay with Jesus. The challenge of Children's Ministries was: 'How can your church be a place where the children experience God's love each time they come?'

In response to the 'old chestnut' 'How old should children be when they are baptised?' Karen stuck her neck out. Children baptised before they entered secondary school were more likely to stay by.

At noon Dr Richard DeLisser presented the Personal Ministries and Sabbath School Reports, flanked by the BUC's Bert Smit and Eglan Brooks. Pastor DeLisser did not refer to his detailed and well-thought-through report but it was clear from floor responses that it had been studied and well received.

One questioner expressed the view that the Sabbath School materials for children were inadequate for the needs of twenty-first-century children. It was clear that the view had considerable support in the delegation.



Dr Keith Davidson was at the heart of the session's most impassioned debate: Education

inated as President of the SEC. Pastor Davis is currently serving as pastor of the Holloway and Muswell Hill churches and has served in administration before, as well as serving as a pastor in South Africa. Pastor McFarlane then paid tribute to the outgoing president, Humphrey Walters, by saying, 'It has been a privilege to work with him for several years.'

He described Pastor Walters as a man of stature, who loves the mission of the Church. He had no doubt that his skills would be used in the Church for many years to come. He concluded that the entire

conference was indebted to Pastor Walters and his wife, Ava, for their leadership. It was with much warmth that Humphrey Walters then received a standing ovation.

The new president then spoke. With humour and humility, he explained that it was 'with mixed emotions' that he took up his new position as he and Pastor Walters were 'old friends' and it was Pastor Walters who had encouraged him to train for the ministry so many years before. Thanking Pastor Walters for his leadership, he asked for God to be with Humphrey and his wife, Ava. →

Friday Afternoon Session

A change of President

by Mary Barrett

Reports on Friday afternoon

The reports on Friday afternoon began at 2.15 with Pastor Aris Vontzalides giving thanks to those who had supported him in his role as Church Growth director. He affirmed that Church Growth was a department that was responsible for formulating strategies for growth and that the bulk of its work was devoted to church planting. He asserted that our Church emerged as a result of church planting and expressed the belief that the work would be completed in this way.

Several questions were taken from the floor. Marc Russell from Bodmin queried how many doctrines candidates had to accept in order to be baptised. Pastor Vontzalides replied, 'We are here to raise fully fledged Seventh-day Adventists and so it is important to teach the full 28

fundamentals to those seeking baptism.' In response to a question concerning ethnic groups, Pastor Vontzalides said, 'We should encourage those of various ethnic groups to learn the language of this country, so that they can reach out to those in our local communities.' When asked about the apparent lack of evangelistic programmes to be conducted in the provinces, Pastor Vontzalides confirmed that the SEC wanted to do all that they could to evangelise the provinces more effectively.

New President

The questions were then suspended at 2.40 as Pastors Don McFarlane and Ashwin Somasundram came with a report from the Nominating Committee. It was announced that Pastor Sam Davis, a man with a wealth of experience, had been nom-

Pastor Davis went on to say, that he felt that his new position was a call from God and he asked the conference to pray for him and his family.

Pastor Paul Lockham was then asked to continue to serve as Secretary to the SEC and Earl Ramharack Singh was asked to continue to serve as Treasurer.

Health Report

Elsie Staple began her report by thanking God for allowing her to work as the Health director for the last four years, as she loves working in health ministry! She was accompanied onto the platform by those who had supported her in this work, including Sharon Platt-McDonald from the BUC. Her report was unique! She used not words, but a variety of slides to show some of the events with which she had been involved. The floor was then opened for such queries as:

'Do you think it is feasible to have a health facility in the SEC?' 'What else is the SEC doing to use health as a means of outreach?' 'What is the SEC doing to help with the binge drinking and drug culture that is affecting the youth of Britain?' In response to the last question, Elsie Staple said that the SEC would need to train people to facilitate some kind of programme to deal with the problem.

Elsie's energy, enthusiasm and excitement made her report a memorable one.

Education

As predicted, there were many questions for Education director Dr Keith Davidson. There was no doubt about the passion of those in the Great Hall as one question after another demonstrated the commitment that our members have towards a good, solid, effective educational programme for our children.

As the questions began to roll in, Dr Davidson confirmed that as we focus on the writings of Ellen G. White, we see that 'the work of Education and Redemption are one'. He viewed education as a form of evangelism and challenged members to support SDA education. He also stated that parents should be supported by the local church if they had children who attended our schools. He said, 'Education is not to be seen as a liability, but as an investment. As a Church we need to improve our performance in this area.' He said that the SEC needed

to make accountable those teachers who are not performing fully.

Many questions were related to the bad Ofsted report concerning John Loughborough School. Those questions included the following:

'If John Loughborough School is struggling as a result of the Ofsted report, why is it still being promoted in our churches?'

'Do members know about the Ofsted report?'

'Why did we have to close the Theodore McCleary School?'

'The Roman Catholic Church seems to support its schools. Why can't we?'

'How do you see the future of our schools?'

Keith Davidson acknowledged that some teachers were consistently under-performing and that our children deserved the best from our teachers and that they were doing all they could to ensure that this would happen.

Karen Williams from Holloway commended Keith Davidson for his commitment to the children of our Church, but was concerned that there seemed to be a difference between the teachers at Stanborough Park School and John Loughborough School. It was also acknowledged that 4 children from the John Loughborough School were baptised recently – affirming what Dr Davidson had said at the beginning of his presentation, that education and evangelism worked together. A suggestion was also made that former students from John Loughborough be encouraged to give something back to the school.

Family Ministries

Karen and Bernie Holford, directors of Family Life and Children's Ministries, began their report by talking about what they had been responsible for in their department. They spoke of marriage retreats, family camps, creative worships and lone parent camps. Time was also taken to introduce Thembe Masingire, the Cornerstone Counselling manager, who paid tribute to the many volunteer counsellors.

The hard work that Karen and Bernie have put into making their department effective was emphasised by the fact that each person who had a question for them preceded it with a word of affirmation and praise. Questions that were asked included a query as to

whether there should be a Singles Ministry, what was being done to support the elderly, and what were the problems that people were needing counselling with – so that the Church could address those issues.

Karen and Bernie responded by saying that there is a growing case for a Singles Ministry, that the community services of our Church were providing support for the elderly, and that marriage and abuse within church families were the paramount needs of those who attended the counselling sessions.

Ministerial Association

'I haven't been mowing the lawn since retiring,' said Pastor Perry. 'I have been holding a baby called "Ministerial Association"!'

His report was a short one, giving time for questions. However, with good humour, Pastor Perry stated that he would only take easy questions!

Two of the concerns that were expressed dealt with evaluating the work of a pastor in the local church and the fact that some churches in the provinces were without a pastor for over a year. Pastor Perry responded by stating that each church should receive an evaluation sheet concerning their pastor on a yearly basis and that the new administration would be dealing with providing pastoral care where

needed as quickly as possible.

In his report Pastor Perry told us that a 'new man' would be taking over from him. We wish him well in his retirement, but we do hope that he will never truly retire, as his wit, wisdom and spiritual leadership will be missed by many of us in the South England Conference.

Nomination of departmental directors

At 5pm a further report came from the Nominating Committee, where the following were nominated and voted into position:

Personal Ministries and Sabbath School – Dr Terry Messenger
Church Growth – Pastor Aris Vontzalides

Communications and Stewardship – Dr Richard DeLisser

Ministerial Association – Dr Emmanuel Osei

Health and Community Services – Mrs Elsie Staple

Family Life and Children's Ministries – Pastor Bernie and Mrs Karen Holford

Youth – Pastor Colin Stewart, assisted by Pastors Nathan Stickland and Eddie Hypolite.

Don McFarlane paid special tribute to Robert Hines, the outgoing Youth assistant, saying that the Church would always benefit from his gifts and talents. He also spoke of Cathy Boldeau, (former →

Communications director), describing her as very intelligent and vivacious. He continued to say that Cathy had been unable to do all that she had wanted in her department due to ill health, but acknowledged the contributions she had made to the South England Conference.

Communications

Cathy Boldeau began her report by saying that she had been ill for fifteen months during the quadrennium. She then spoke of some of the things that her department had achieved during the previous four years – including an exhibition, where 1,000 contacts had been made, and a communication conference for ministers.

Cathy also spoke of some of the

– vibrant, exciting, fast-paced, encouraging and also challenging.

We learnt about the 'GO MAD' ministry taking place at the Peckham church. The speaker for this outreach programme, which is primarily led by young people, grabbed our attention by talking and displaying photographs of some of the seventeen teenagers who had been murdered in Peckham. Andrea then said that, to help deal with the problem of knife crime, the youth of her church had decided to 'Make A Difference'. With a ministry involving no fuss, no frills and no friction, she showed a video snippet of the youth of her church singing, stepping out and speaking to the public. A youth campaign then resulted in the baptism of many. Andrea also acknowledged that even though this ministry

weaknesses in the department that needed to be looked at. She talked of needing a webmaster, more funds for the department, and the need to communicate more effectively to members. She concluded her report by thanking the following people with whom she had worked – Susan Watt, Vivienne Evers, Jacqui Grant, Paul Lee, Sharon Platt-McDonald, Becky De Oliveira and finally, God.

From the questions that were taken, Cathy Boldeau affirmed that the websites would need to be updated regularly and that the talks with Premier Radio to advertise the Church would have to be put on hold as the advertising package that Premier was offering was not a viable option for the Church at the moment.

is spearheaded by the youth, it is one where the whole church works together.

Tabitha Cummings then spoke for the Clapton Community church. Tabitha thanked Dr Terry Messenger, who trained members of the Clapton church to approach people using the survey method. She said 1,000 contacts were transformed into 60 baptisms, as a result of a campaign that followed the survey work. Tabitha urged those of us who are shy and reserved to work with this method, for with the right training, door-to-door work can be done with confidence!

IMPACT LONDON was next to hit us! With an excellent video prepared by Pastor Samuel Neves, Pastor David Burnett spoke about the recent outreach programme undertaken by the ministers and members of London district 6A. It was a big undertaking – 93 missionaries from the Caribbean worked in 5 venues for 3 weeks with local church pastors and members, sharing the Gospel! However, what really made this ministry different was that all the 'upfront stuff' was undertaken by those under the age of 25. Impact London was about encouraging youth to take an active part in evangelism. It was bold, different and courageous! The results? David Burnett said, 'The young people have begun to finish this work and the impact has truly begun!'

Pastor Andrew Leonce then told us of the Dunstable Community church. The church has one aim – to reach out to the residents of the Downside Estate, a socially and economically challenged area.



Dr Richard DeLisser

Pastor Leonce shared the story of one young girl, who had been expelled from three schools. His wife, a teacher, began working with the girl. She improved academically and, with a letter of recommendation from Pastor Leonce, this girl was once more admitted to a school. Her family were so impressed by what the Dunstable Community church had done for her that they attended church with the girl's brother. He now attends church regularly. He also told us of the football teams that they train, involving thirty youngsters. The teams differ from other football teams in that they open and close each game with prayer! At times, forty to fifty people from the community eat Sabbath lunch with members of the Dunstable Community church.

London Live

We watched a video clip from Murray Harvey, the leader of the London Live outreach ministry, who explained how London Live began in May 2006. Their aim is to work with young professionals in the city and approximately 150-200 attend their programmes each month. They use a variety of methods to reach these young people – social events, creative worships, accountability through small groups and through

service and outreach projects. London Live is ministering to unchurched people off the street, members who no longer attend regular church, as well as young people in the church who are seeking to experience God through creative worship. They are now seeking ways of targeting university students.

The Living Room

This is a church plant taking place in South Croydon, led by Pastor Bobby Bovell. It began with nine people who made the decision to serve God through planting a church. They are establishing interests in the area by conducting surveys and debates. They have also run a marriage course in a restaurant and held a gospel event.

Pastor Bovell emphasised that the success they are having is due to the fact that they are a people of prayer. Everything they do is based around prayer. In fact, he is so convinced of the power of prayer, that he invited members of the session to be a part of his prayer support team.

The whole evening was concluded by Richard DeLisser, paying tribute to the late Pastor Dalbert Elias, who was 'God's Champion' in sharing God. Also mentioned was the late Pastor Mike Stickland and his dedication in outreach work.

Friday Evening

by Mary Barrett

The Peace of God

It was good to walk into the Great Hall at the beginning of Sabbath to hear soothing music and watch scenes of nature displayed on a screen. It helped us to forget about the busyness of the day's business and to focus our minds on God.

The vespers service was brought to us by Karen and Bernie Holford, accompanied by Paul Lee.

We were invited to 'Experience the Peace of God' through Scripture, songs and reflective questions. With much creativity and thought, Karen and Bernie invited us to 'remember God, listen to God, experience forgiveness and show forgiveness to others, release our burdens, receive God's joy and peace, and, finally, commit ourselves to God.' There was also time to share with others our

gratitude for what God had done in our lives. We concluded by singing the hymn 'To God be the glory' with much gusto and emotion. We closed by saying the benediction together. The programme achieved its aims – we really did experience the peace of God!

'EVANGELISM IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE!' So said Dr Richard DeLisser as he and Pastor Aris Vontzalides led out in the evangelism feature of the evening. At the beginning of the programme Dr DeLisser commended the former SEC president, Pastor Humphrey Walters, for wanting this to be a part of the session. Anyone who knew him could not fail to see his passion for sharing Christ. The programme was truly an inspiration



Bernie and Karen Holford



Aris Vontzalides

Sabbath Morning Highlights

by Sharon Platt-McDonald

Sabbath school

Walking into the Great Hall on Sabbath morning, one could sense the presence of the Holy Spirit. A stirring song service was conducted by Paul Lee, SEC Music director, accompanied on the piano by Cathy Anthony Boldeau.

In his welcome, Dr Richard DeLisser challenged the congregants to reaffirm their commitment to ministry. Stella Jeffery presented the Scripture reading from Psalm 51, which set the backdrop for the morning's discussion. The service was further enhanced by Paul Lee who presented special music in the prayer song, 'Give me Jesus'.

The lesson study was delivered in an interactive and engaging format which brought much audience participation. The visual aids provided focus for the group discussions and made possible time for reflection and self analysis. Using key points from the week's lesson, Pastor Paul Cleo, TED Field Secretary, highlighted the story of



TED's Paul Cleo



TED's Paul Cleo taught the liveliest Sabbath School lesson most of us had heard in a long time. The congregation split into groups of four to discuss certain points.

David and Bathsheba and the parallels for our Christian journey as we contemplated the impact of sin, the importance of accountability, the need for repentance, and the power of forgiveness and God's love.

An exciting mission spotlight ensued in which the work of church plants was highlighted.

Divine service

As we moved into the second service, it was clear that this Sabbath would be one which would long be remembered.

The introit, 'Create in me a clean heart', was sung by the London Adventist Chorale under the directorship of Ken Burton.

A vibrant welcome and introduction of the platform party was also given by Pastor Humphrey Walters, outgoing president. He thanked God for the privilege of serving and the blessings of sharing in the great commission. BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane, in thanking him for his outstanding service and focused leadership on church mission over the past term, led the congregants in a rapturous applause. A lengthy standing ovation followed as we reflected on the contribution that Pastor Walters had made during his term of office.

Pastor Don McFarlane introduced the newly elected officers and their spouses who were seated on the platform. When introducing the newly elected president Pastor Sam Davis, Pastor McFarlane stated that

he was 'a man of integrity, vision and a passion for service' and requested our prayers and support for his leadership in the days ahead.

In his presidential speech Pastor Davis alluded to this being a special weekend, as he and his wife Rowena were celebrating 28 years of marriage and, therefore, they had other plans which he stated had now been 'foiled' by the new appointment.

Reflecting on the task that lay ahead, he asserted, 'I cannot say like Moses, I cannot speak; I cannot say like Jonah, I am running away. However, like Solomon, I can say, 'Lord give me a wise and understanding heart.' He then went on to affirm: 'God has laid his hands on us, we are available to his service. I pray for patience, tolerance, as we move forward in the next few years . . . we pledge ourselves to serve you and by the grace of God to take this church forwards and upwards. Pray for us as God guides us into the future.'

The Filipino International Chorale gave an excellent rendition of 'The King' as we were reminded again of the sovereignty of our Lord.

Having inspired the delegates throughout the session with powerful presentations of God's words, Dr Mwansa, General Vice-president of the General Conference spoke with conviction under the caption 'Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' In his introduction Dr Mwansa stated that he regarded speaking to the people of God as 'the highest honour'.

In his address he posed the question: 'How do you send out the light and witness to a world that is hostile to Christianity?' Reflecting on the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, he examined 2 Kings 2:4-14 and recounted the impact of ministry when God's power is behind it. He declared, 'It is an insult to the Lord for men and women to think that they can do kingdom work in human power.' Then expanding on verse 9, he admonished us, like Elisha, to ask for a double portion of the Holy Spirit to rest on our lives. He concluded by leading us in commitment with the singing of the hymn 'Lord I hear of showers of blessing'.

Ordination Service

by Jon Gendle

'You can't miss it,' said one pastor to another. He wasn't talking about the prominence of the Great Hall at Exeter University, but about what was happening inside. Why would hundreds of people sit inside a stuffy hall while a beautiful sunny day beckoned outside, unless something special was about to happen? And, of course, it was.

The buzz of countless conversations died as the last members of the platform party entered for that special occasion when five pastors would be set apart through ordination for the Gospel ministry. Pastor Humphrey Walters welcomed family, friends and observers. Timeless instruction followed from Pastor Alan Hart, reading Paul's instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-5. In prayer, BUC president Don McFarlane recalled our hope in the Gospel message and the subsequent need for messengers, emphasising that it wasn't just the ordinands who were being called to something special, but their wives and families as well.

Adrian (Bobby) Bovell and his wife, Mellezia, were introduced by Pastor Brighton Kavaloh who described Bobby as 'someone full of life, very spiritual, passionate . . . who embodies everything that entails being a faithful minister of the Gospel in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.'

Clive de Silva and his wife, Sharon, were escorted to the platform by Pastor Richard DeLisser, who said that he could speak of Clive's dedication, his humility and much more, but instead spoke of fulfilling a promise made to Clive's mother by the very act of escorting Clive to the platform.

Augustus Lawrence and his wife, Barbara, were also escorted to the platform by Pastor Kavaloh who spoke of his joy when officiating at their wedding. Augustus was commended as 'a speaker of the word . . . short and to the point'. Behind him sat his friend, Pastor Paul Hunt, who had flown in from America for this special occasion.

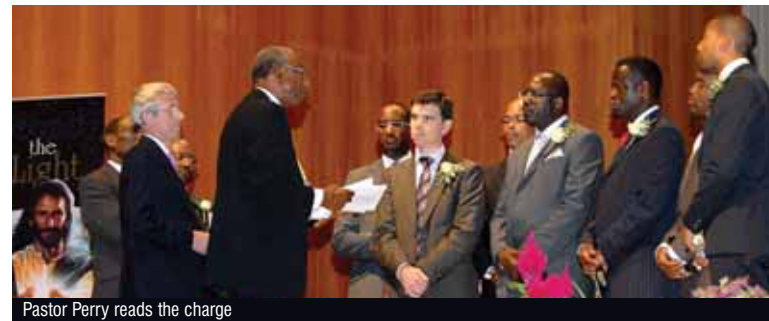
As he introduced David Riley and his expectant wife, Joanne, Pastor Gifford Rhamie began, 'When I look at the calibre of the man to be

ordained today, it gives a person pride to say to the Church that our future is assured.' He then expanded on the three words which summed David up: 'leadership, integrity and internationality'. His final comment, 'He doesn't tan easily and he can't sing to save his life!' provoked much laughter from the congregation.

Steve Roberts and his wife, Louise were brought to the platform by Pastor Hamilton Williams. To much mirth, Pastor Williams recalled the many times that his instructions to his junior pastor were questioned, but assured that this denoted a

strong leader. He also noted Louise's strength of character and spoke with sincere heart of the privilege afforded him by his role today.

The beautiful harmony of the special music of Tessera preceded the sermon by Pastor Alan Hodges, BUC Ministerial Association secretary. Pastor Hodges emphasised that we are 'living in important days, in dangerous days, so what do you say to ordinands?' The answer lay in 2 Timothy 4:2: 'Preach the word!' Referring repeatedly to Paul's counsel to Timothy, Pastor Hodges called the ordinands to commit their lives every day to the Lord Jesus Christ and plead for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some practical advice was given: 'Don't seek arguments; don't ride hobby-horses; defend the truth; and respond in love.' The



Pastor Perry reads the charge



The five ordinands. Left to right: Steve Roberts, Clive de Silva, David Riley, Augustus Lawrence and Adrian (Bobby) Bovell



Pardon Mwansa gives the ordination prayer

character of a minister was a major theme of his message: 'Don't undermine church leadership; you and your wives are a team – build each other up.'

The many ordained ministers on the platform gathered around on bended knees, with hands stretched out to the shoulders of colleagues before them, as the inner circle laid hands on the ordinands. GC Vice-president, Dr Pardon Mwansa, in praying for the ordinands, asked for the blessing of God to be extended to their families.

Pastor Cecil Perry read the charge to the ordinands, and with a delivery matching the weight of his statement, he affirmed, 'You are now invested with full ecclesiastical honour.' Cries of 'Yes sir!' responded across the platform as Pastor Perry continued: 'No higher honour can be given a person . . . you are a pastor.' The significance of that simple title was communicated in the solemn charge which Pastor Perry unpacked in fine detail as he spoke of their future duties,

Sabbath Evening Programme

by Jon Gendle

Many were intrigued by the title, but few would have guessed that they would be given an opportunity to put a GC Vice-president on the spot. Nevertheless that is exactly what happened on Sabbath evening. GC Vice-president, Dr Pardon Mwansa, introduced 'Panorama: Adventism Today' by revealing something of the work of the General Conference and the current state of the world Church. He spoke of a weeklong review which took place annually every January, involving some of the highest levels in the GC and its Divisions. The pertinent question was always: 'How are we growing as a Church, knowing that our mission is to bring people to Christ Jesus to try and build a kingdom of God?' He reminded us that the world Church is administered through 13 regionally located Divisions. Two of these are growing 'exceedingly fast'. Over 600 people every day are baptised by the Inter-American and South American Divisions. Others such as the Trans-European Division and Euro-Africa Division are 'at the other end of the scale', with 11-15 baptisms daily. The highest concentration of

their character formation and their ultimate responsibility to God.

BUC Executive Secretary, Pastor Eric Lowe, emphasising the support of fellow pastors and the wider church, officially welcomed the ordinands into the pastorate.

Mary Barrett delivered a moving address to the pastors' wives that was full of humour and insights drawn from her own experience. The list of 'perfect' characteristics, which brought much laughter from the audience, included: 'looking like Madonna'. Most importantly, though, she stressed: 'We are to be the pastor's wife that God has called us to be, but there is one thing I would encourage you to do; to take the prayer of Psalm 63:1-8 and make it your own. God will reveal to you how best to use the gifts and the talents that he has given you. Ask God to help your husband to be an earnest seeker too.'

In his response, and on behalf of his fellow ordinands and their wives, Pastor David Riley's message was one of thanks.

Adventists is to be found in the Indian-Ocean Division in Africa. While tithe and offerings continue to grow worldwide, it is notable that the North American Division contributes more than 60% of the income of the world Church.

Pastor Mwansa highlighted major facets of evangelism in the modern church, such as the 'Tell the world' strategy, promoting evangelism to the big cities of the world and the use of modern media for spreading the Gospel, such as the Hope TV channel which is available globally, 24/7.

Pastor Mwansa opened the evening to questions from the floor. Many questions followed, touching on the areas previously raised and additional topics often labelled as 'hot potatoes' – such as music styles and the ordination of women. No matter the nature of the question, Pastor Mwansa comfortably responded with an obvious depth of knowledge and an ease which often belied the difficulties suggested by the subject matter. He informed us of one general principle which was applied to issues worldwide. Regional issues are addressed →



The officers and their wives: Left to right, Helen and Paul Lockham, Sam and Rowena Davis and Earl and Jackie Ramharacksingh

directly by the regions, whereas questions having a wider impact, such as doctrinal issues, are addressed centrally by the General Conference. On the question of music, Pastor Mwansa's initial response brought laughter as he responded: 'If you came to my house you would find that issue there.' He added, that a GC committee commissioned to study the question of music reported more than a year ago, finding that the debate is so complicated that no action would be taken. This statement again brought forth much laughter. The position in his own home was clarified before basic principles were applied to answer the question from the floor: 'I listen to what is good for me; my children listen to what they think is good for them; the local church decides what is good for them.' He concluded the discussion on music by saying: 'Until we have a clear revelation from God, let's respect one another.'

Evening Concert

Sabbath evening at Session time has always been an occasion for the Church to display some of its finest talent. This Session chose to continue with that custom in an evening concert hosted by Paul Lee.

The Great Hall had slowly filled throughout the evening in readiness for the Filipino International Choir to lead out in the evening programme. The ladies were very colourfully dressed in beautiful evening dresses, while the men were smartly

adorned in white tops over black trousers. Their singing showed great range, with the piano being played with gusto. The audience response grew more enthusiastic with each piece, but a medley beginning with a striking rendition of 'In Christ Alone' was particularly notable.

The London Adventist Chorale followed. Ken Burton began by thanking the people for allowing them to represent the Church, and also the Church, for their support. What can you say about the Chorale that hasn't been said before? Their parts, their harmony, their range, their tempo changes – everything that one hears is taken to the limits of what is possible, while it all just seems to come so naturally and effortlessly, without hint of any contrivance which might display their undeniable abilities, but fit ill with the chosen song. One is taken along as on a rollercoaster of rising and falling voices and tempo changes. 'Christ is Lord' began the first of many which would please the audience that night. The applause, which began strongly enough, was soon supplemented with hoots of delight. But the Chorale were only just getting into their stride. I closed my eyes and for the first time during the Session I felt the poor acoustics of the hall had been mastered by this majestic choir. I might have been in any grand cathedral listening to the best the world had to offer in gospel music – and surely I was. One could feel the special spiritual dimension to the sound penetrating every corner of the hall. Then suddenly it was

over, and even the applause seemed to reflect the holiness of what we had just heard.

An accomplished performance of an altogether different nature was given by Austin Blackburn, who had played in the ordination service and who initially switched instruments to the oboe, while his mother accompanied him on the keyboard. For his second piece of the evening, Austin produced a saw and began a remarkable rendition of 'You raise me up'. There were smiles from some on the platform as the first notes drifted across the stage, but these were mingled with a look of wonder. The audience too sat spell-

bound, as if it were impossible for such a beautiful interpretation to emanate from an instrument as strange as this. But nevertheless here it was for all to see and hear – and one had to be there to appreciate the 'wow' factor inherent in the effect this young man's playing had on the gathered throng. At the conclusion, members of the Chorale and the audience stood in admiration, the smiles on many faces reflecting their shared experience and the applause even louder than before.

Pastor Paul Tomkins concluded with thanks for those who had taken part and spoke of his pride and joy in the music of the Church.

Sunday Morning Session

by Victor Hulbert

We came for a business meeting but received a spiritual retreat.' These words, in a Sunday morning prayer summed up for many the mood of the whole session. Delegates had surged to the front following Pardon Mwansa's challenge that God's unstoppable people will follow the example of the apostles in Acts 4, being filled with the Holy Spirit, knowing no other name than Jesus, spending time in quality prayer and knowing the Word of God.

Youth Report

The devotional set the tone. Youth director, Colin Stewart, supported by his youth team, emphasised that 'God has a great work to be done in a short time'. Commending the previous session for unifying the various strands of youth leadership under one umbrella, Colin emphasised that he 'looked forward to unify further and build on the good work we have done so far'. He gave special thanks to his predecessor, Japhet De Oliveira, who accepted a call to serve at the Centre for Youth Ministries at Andrews University last year.

Then it was questions. Joy Alexander raised an issue on many minds. With the recent spate of teenage killings and knife attacks, 'What more can we do to empower our youth to get inside these communities and bring the good news?' She emphasised, 'Young people can reach young people.' Fully supporting the direction of Joy's question, Colin

responded, 'Our young people have been taught church for a long time. What we are trying to do now is to train young people to be able to reach out beyond their social group to help others.' He emphasised that AYS must be in the community and demonstrated how this is happening with activities such as the 100 years celebration march, the St Austell project, London Live and this summer's 'Community Camp' on Chapel Porth.

Many of the questions focused around the perennial questions of dress and music. Colin responded with an emphasis that the Youth department has not knowingly compromised any standards but 'have tried our best to be spiritual, accommodating and to give room to young people, especially those on the edges of the church, to allow them to come'. He emphasised that as a result of this approach young people are making commitments and being baptised. He also challenged that while the Youth department takes a lead role in encouraging our young people, 'it is not a baby-sitting service,' noting that, 'The programme begins at home.'

David Baxter (Tottenham West Green) stated: 'We get sidetracked with ideas of entertaining the youth rather than making an impact on the community.' Colin agreed.

One of the youngest delegates present, Chelise Currow (Newbold church), made an eloquent speech to thank the whole Youth department for the work they had done over the

last four years. Hyacinth Walker (Brixton) added, 'We must support our young people. Why is it that we pay so much attention to the music? Why not pray for our young people?'

With the report voted, Colin Stewart then paid special tribute to Robert Hines and the work he has done in Teens Ministry. Robert responded by thanking God for 'the incredible things I've seen working with teens for the last four years'.

Prison Ministries Report

Quoting Baroness Scotland, Pastor Chisholm reminded delegates, 'Faith communities have a vital role to play in the care and rehabilitation of offenders.'

Noting that his department cares for more than one hundred Adventist prisoners, he emphasised that his concern was more for the 24,000 in prison with no religion at all. He said, 'We need to minister to them. This is crucial community work. This is our real outreach.' A round of applause swept the hall as he told one questioner that there had been 10 baptisms of prisoners in recent years.

Stewardship Report

Mrs Cathy Boldeau stated that people had a wrong concept: 'Stewardship is about lifestyle and your relationship with God.' Her programme, therefore, revolved around the balance found in the total commitment of Romans 12:1-2.

Sunday Afternoon – Standing Committee Reports

by Karen Holford

By Sunday afternoon all of the Departmental and Associate reports had been presented and voted. The distant hills invited some delegates to explore Devon, and the long journey back home beckoned others to leave Exeter early. So it was a challenge to seat enough delegates to reach quorate.

Fortunately, after several recounts, the chair, Pastor Paul Lockham, assured us that there were sufficient voters for the proceedings to continue, and prayers were offered, thanking God for His Holy Spirit which had been so evi-

Women's Ministries

Mrs Julia Smith had been Women's Ministries director for most of the period and was invited to make the report. She gave particular thanks to the Women's Ministries council and emphasised the progress the department had made in empowering women to serve the Church more effectively as well as dealing with very sensitive issues, such as abuse, in an appropriate manner.

When asked what the biggest challenge in her department was she responded, 'Motivating women – particularly around spiritual values and evangelism.'

Music Ministry Report

What had been a relatively quiet morning suddenly livened up as Paul Lee took the stage. 'I am standing here wearing a Superman suit with extra padding on the rear,' the Music co-ordinator for the SEC quipped, recognising that music had been the most contentious issue of the session. However, the focus was not so much on the positive achievements of the unpaid volunteers such as Trevor Johnson and Tony Best, but on the suggestion that Music Ministry should be recognised as an official, paid department of the Conference. Following lively debate, Sacha from the Hampstead church put forward a strongly supported motion to request the incoming administration to give full consideration at the earliest opportunity to look at employing a full-time Music Ministries co-ordinator.

Pastor Sam Davis – President
Pastor Paul Lockham – Secretary
Earl Ramharacksingh – Treasurer
Pastor Colin Stewart – Youth Department
Pastor Aris Vontzalides – Church Growth dept.
Pastor Berti de Nysschen – Area 1
Brenda Sabidin – Area 2
Judith Redman – Area 3
Pastor Israel Williams – Area 4
Nana Bonnie – Area 5
Dr Brighton Kavaloh – Area 6
Dave St Marie – Area 6a
Malcolm Martin – Area 6a
Jermaine Wong – Area 6b
Mfakazi Ndebele – Area 6c
Jennifer Philips – Area 6d
Gina Abbequaye
Kevin Sterling – Area 7
Jean Gittens – Area 8

comprehensive report that responded to the 48 needs that had been identified during the Thursday evening break-out groups, as well as other needs that had been reported prior to the Session, or that had arisen from the proceedings of the Session. As there was insufficient time to discuss each of the plans in detail, it was voted that they be passed, with a few minor amendments, to the incoming Executive Committee, for their consideration and implementation.

Closing Ceremony In the closing session Pastor Claude Lombart expressed the gratitude of everyone present to the delegates, the families from whom they had been parted, past and present departmental directors, administrators, pastors and support staff, as well as thanks to the SEC and BUC Executive Committee members, and the BUC and TED directors, who had attended to offer support, wisdom, prayers and chairmanship during the Session.

Pastor Sam Davis offered the final thoughts, urging the delegates to remember their calling to be like salt in their communities. He spoke of the increasing lack of trust and love in our society and the need for Christians to make a difference in the world. As the theme song was sung for the final time, glow-sticks were passed to each delegate, the blinds were lowered and the lights were turned off. An invitation was given to activate the glow-sticks with a gentle snap. The chemicals blended into pale mauve radiance as the verses were sung, and rods of glowing light danced in the darkness of the auditorium to create an inspiring and memorable finale. Pastor Pardon Mwansa offered the closing benediction.

One young man, only nineteen, spoke of his experience. 'This was the first Session I have ever been to. At first I was shocked at all the business that needed to be done and the procedures that had to be followed. But, as I listened to the reports and heard the questions and began to understand the process, I was inspired with a deep respect for my Church and the way in which it has such a transparent system. While I have been here, the Holy Spirit has touched my heart and I have sensed a strong calling to go to Newbold College and train for the Ministry.'



Left to right: David Penner, Edna Scarr, Roy Scarr, Patti Catalano, Richard Catalano, Myrna Dorland and Frank Wood

Smith Centre Opening

by Anita Kelman

The Newbold College year had a fresh start with the opening of a new learning space in Salisbury Hall.

The room was named in honour of the late Dr Walter I. Smith who was Newbold College Principal from 1954 to 1956. The entire project was funded by the donation from the Smith Catalano family, the Newbold Council and alumni and friends of Newbold College.

Dr Smith dedicated his life to Christian education and one of his

famous sayings was that 'education is the only thing students will pay for and not take.' Before arriving at Newbold, Dr Smith was President of Walla Walla College and Pacific Union College. He also spent time working in the General Conference education department.

There had been discussion earlier in the decade about the need for a purpose-built building to hold classrooms. Dr Smith was present when the College Board approved the plans

for constructing Salisbury Hall and helped to push the project forward. The building was completed in 1957 after Dr Smith had returned to Walla Walla. Newbold College is celebrating the 50th anniversary of Salisbury Hall during September 2007.

The Smith Centre is situated on the first floor of Salisbury Hall. It is described as a modern classroom equipped with state of the art features including a remote controlled screen, surround sound system, and interactive white board. All the furniture is on wheels, allowing easy mobility.

Newbold College Principal, Dr David Penner, said, 'There is excitement about the new learning space. It is a bright and open area with the ability to draw the blinds and dim the lights when needed. The audio speakers around the room give it a feel of a concert hall. There has been a mad rush by lecturers to sign up to use the Smith Centre.'

Dr Smith's granddaughter, Patti Catalano and her husband Richard, travelled from California for the momentous occasion. Other guests included staff members who worked along side Dr Smith.

Former music teacher Roy Scarr described Dr Smith as 'a quiet man who was pleasant to work with. He had a calming influence and his presence at Newbold helped to create a settled period in the college's history.' He smiled as he recalled the night that Dr Smith revealed the 'secret' plan for building Salisbury Hall.

Former registrar, Frank Wood, recalls Dr Smith as 'a genial man who was kindly and always gentle. They were good times but we were always short of money.'

Guests were treated to special music by the Russian String Quartet. Light refreshments were served. Former and current staff mingled before gathering to hear a short speech about the 'painting, drilling and carpentry' that had gone into

finishing the room over the summer period.

Mrs Catalano cut the ribbon in honour of her late grandfather's contribution to Newbold College and the Smith Centre was officially declared open.

Mrs Catalano said 'I never dreamed that I would be here at Newbold in a room that honours my grandfather. I know he would have thought this room was perfect. It is a joy to walk in here and see everything working. I am excited about the students who will benefit.'

Newbold Church pastor, Patrick Johnson prayed on behalf of the students who will use the new room, saying that there is an incredible potential for learning and expanding their knowledge in a way that will help them understand God.

Two portraits, one of Dr Smith and the other of 1955 staff members, were unveiled by Patti and Richard Catalano and will be displayed at the entrance to the Smith Centre.

Newbold College is now looking forward to the future. New projects planned are the refurbishment of the homiletics room in Murdoch Hall and the upgrading of accommodation in Keough House, the men's hall of residence and family housing units in Woodlands.

ABC BOOK SALES

October

7 John Loughborough 10.30am-2pm

Messenger

Volume 112 • 21 28 September 2007

EDITOR: D. N. MARSHALL

DESIGN: DAVID BELL

COPY FOR No. 23 - 8 October 2007

Copy should be sent to the Editor, MESSENGER, The Stanborough Press Limited, Alma Park, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 9SL. Tel: (01476) 591700.

Fax No: (01476) 577144.

Email: Editor@mac.com

Send high resolution pictures to: dbell@stanboroughpress.co.uk

ABC Sales line: (01476) 539900
Mon-Thurs only, 8am-6pm.

The Editor may alter, clarify, précis or expand articles sent to him if he thinks it necessary. Published fortnightly on Fridays by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Printed in Denmark.

Visit the BUC website at: www.adventist.org.uk
ISSN 0309-3654

Sunset

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

	Land	Card	Nott	Edin	Bell
Sept 28	6.46	6.58	6.50	6.57	7.08
Oct 5	6.30	6.43	6.33	6.39	6.51
12	6.15	6.27	6.17	6.21	6.34
19	6.00	6.12	6.01	6.03	6.17

MESSENGER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Cost to member supplied in bulk to churches £6.
Single copy subscription by post £13.
Overseas airmail £27.50

NEWBOLD
COLLEGE a mind opening experience

tel: 01344 407407

fax: 01344 407405

www.newbold.ac.uk

Religious Freedom in Europe since 9/11

The Smith Centre, Salisbury Hall, Newbold College

Sunday, 25 November 2007

9:15am-6pm

Speakers

Baroness Cox of Queensbury

Professor John Marks

(University of Buckingham)

Dr Frank Tallett

(University of Reading)

Dr Jonathan Gallagher

(United Nations Liaison for the Seventh-day Adventist Church)

Lincoln Steed

(Liberty magazine)

Marinko Markek

(Lecturer in Business, Newbold College)

Conference Fee: £20 (includes lunch and afternoon tea)

Contact

Dr David Trim

T: 01344-407473

E: dtrim@newbold.ac.uk



Centre for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity
at Newbold College