

'Outstanding servant of the Church' retires at year end

Words and pictures by Victor Hulbert, BUC Communication director

Valerie Pearce has served as executive secretary to five presidents. By office staff and visitors she is seen as a warm and helpful presence in the office. For new recruits she is a mother and a guide. Starting as a shorthand typist in 1955, Valerie Pearce has been the longest-serving member of the support team in the history of the British Union Conference. Allowing for a thirteen-year break to raise her sons Julian and Simon, she had given forty years of service to the BUC office when she retired on 31 December 2007.

In 1981 she became secretary to the first of the five presidents for whom she worked. He was Pastor Harold Calkins (1981-86). Speaking from retirement in the USA, Pastor Calkins described her as a 'committed, considerate, confidential and excellent secretary'. Three of her presidential bosses were able to join with office staff at a reception in her honour on Thursday 29 November. Pastor John Arthur (1986-90) spoke highly of her skills and motivation, adding another two 'Cs', 'conscientiousness and a caring spirit'.

It is that caring spirit that brought tears to the eyes of a number of those at the reception. While working under pressure she always had time to make sure staff were OK, and took particular concern during times of sickness or stress. Pastor Cecil Perry (1991-2006) could not be at the reception due to overseas appointments, but shared

her concern for 'the little things' in a long and humorous letter in which he reminded Valerie of the times she ensured that he had some lunch before a long committee or a journey. Pastor Martin Anthony (1990-91) recounted how he had taken over the leadership at a difficult time in the Union's history and said that it was only the unflinching support from Valerie that enabled him to deal with issues such as the development of the new Stanborough Secondary School. Since the last BUC Session in 2006, Valerie has worked for the current BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane. He states that 'the quality that has made Valerie such an outstanding servant of the Church is her love for people'. She also loves her job and finds that there is nothing better than serving the Church.

Valerie is an unassuming soul, happy to work in the background. Her memories, stretching back over the years, are happy ones. She just loves to serve. Sadly the time comes for retirement for everyone, or, as Pastor Anthony put it, 'to move from tension to pension'. But she will be missed. Pastor McFarlane summed it up for the whole BUC staff when he stated: 'Her departure from the office will make our office poorer. Some will lose a mother, some a confidante, some a sister, some a listening ear, one

an outstanding secretary, and all a wonderful friend and a kind Christian woman.'

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A joyful and blessed New Year to all our readers

Below: Donovan receiving a parting gift from Victor Pilmoor.
Bottom: Valerie and 3 of the 5 presidents with whom she served, left to right: John Arthur, Valerie Pearce, D. W. McFarlane and Martin L. Anthony.





with Jonathan Barrett

Hope for the New Year

It's a new year! Don't you love this season? The days are getting longer; spring will soon be here. There is a feeling of newness and possibility in the air. Is it going too far to say that there could even be a heightened sense of hopefulness in early January?

We hope for different things though, don't we? Have you heard the story of the long and rough

Atlantic crossing where the seasick passenger was leaning over the rail of the cruise ship and had turned several shades of green? A steward came along and tried to cheer him up by saying, 'Don't be discouraged, sir! You know, no one's ever died of seasickness yet!' The nauseous passenger looked up at the steward with baleful eyes and replied: 'Oh, don't say that! It's only the hope of dying that's keeping me alive this long!'

We may smile at that, but the humour comes from the fact that we recognise some truth in it. We can imagine life being so hard for some, that death would be a welcome relief.

Hope is a central theme for Adventists. The words of Jesus in John 14:3 are the basis of our hope: 'I will come back'. Ultimately, the return of Jesus is the only real, long-term hope this world, and you and I, have.

In a recently published study, (PISA 2006 Science Competencies for Tomorrow's World), it was found that 15-year-olds were: 'generally pessimistic about the future, with fewer than one in six believing that problems such as air pollution and nuclear waste disposal would improve over the next twenty years. Those who performed better in science showed greater awareness of environmental issues

but were also more pessimistic.'

The teenagers of the world don't have much to be hopeful about, it seems. And the more educated and aware they are, the more pessimistic they appear to be.

As we enter a new year, one challenge you and I have is to maintain our hopeful outlook and to share that with people around us. If the New Year doesn't give us hope, or the challenges of our world don't give us hope, we can look to a central teaching of the Bible. As we begin this year, remember that all Jesus represents, including his return, is the only real reason to hope!

HOPE

'Set your troubled hearts at rest, Trust in God always; trust also in me.

There are many dwelling places in my Father's house;

If it were not so I should have told you;

For I am going to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I shall come again and take you to myself,

So that where I am you may be also.'

Jesus in John 14:1-3, *The Revised English Bible* (Oxford and Cambridge, 1989)

Ever wanted to sing with an internationally renowned choir both in the UK and abroad? Why not come along to:

The London Adventist Chorale's Open Day

on Sunday 28 January 2008 at 2pm
The Advent Centre, 39 Brendon St
(off Crawford St), London W1.

- Information on life as a member, recruiting requirements
- Displays
- Light refreshments
- A chance to meet members and talk informally
- Sample a Chorale rehearsal and sing with us!

For further information please do not hesitate to contact: Trevor Johnson, Projects and Promotions – Mobile: 07767-817151; Email: trevorjohnson@londonadventistchorale.com

The London Adventist Chorale is now recruiting in particular for the following voice parts: Females only: 1st and 2nd Sopranos, 1st and 2nd Altos.

Can you volunteer two Sundays in each month, weekend and occasional weekday performances? Do you enjoy learning music and thrive on sharing a busy schedule with other committed ministers of music? If yes, we definitely want to hear from you!

LAC is an institution with over 27 years of professional music ministry service. The vision is even bigger now and in order to meet the future ambitions of this dynamic choir there is a need to augment the singing capacity. We are actively encouraging singers from all backgrounds as we wish to reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the Church body. (So please do not feel as though you cannot apply as all interested parties are welcome.)

Burdened down? Jesus lifts burdens

David Marshall



'Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you . . . For my yoke is easy to bear."'¹

'Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you will recover your life. . . . I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.'²

This is one of the Lord's 'Come!' invitations. It is the one that I need to hear and heed when I'm down, damaged and feeling hard done by. Ever felt like that?

For some, Sabbaths come not a minute too soon. When a teacher comes to church on a Sabbath morning she will, typically, have had a tough week. Teaching is not an easy career option these days. Hence our teacher arrives in church hungry for spiritual nutrition and eager for the Lord to lift the heavy burdens from her shoulders. I know some members (not all of them teachers) who pray before divine service that the Lord will provide the preacher with a message that will help lift their burdens.

But the preacher, perhaps, is not in the business of burden lifting. Hence the down and damaged may be exhorted to 'Awake out of sleep!' or 'Get up and get active and DO something!' or treated to a 'timely' tabloid interpretation of the week's news or the legalistic conditions for what sounds like an impossible salvation. Hence the down and the damaged go home with more bruises and a heavier burden than they came with. Every teacher of homiletics, and every coach on the laypreachers' course needs to say, and say often, that the sermon can be an exercise in spiritual abuse if it is prepared and delivered either in ignorance of the spiritual needs of the congregation or in total disregard for them.

It was an awareness of the reality of spiritual abuse – that there is such a thing as *bad religion* – that caused Jesus to offer rest and a well-fitting yoke to the weary and the worn out. It was the same awareness that led Ellen White to write the 'Lift up Jesus' passage in *Gospel Workers*. It concludes, you will recall, with 'Reveal the way of peace to the

troubled and despondent, and *show forth the grace and completeness of the Saviour*.'³

That last clause is key. When they recognise the grace and completeness of the Saviour the weary will heed the call 'Come', and they will shed their burdens. In the same way, the prodigals who recognise the Father's grace will return to the Father's house – in droves. Immediately before his 'Come to me', Jesus had said that he represented the heart of the Father's self-disclosure.⁴ If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. If you want to get through to God, come to Jesus. In the Father there is no unChristlikeness at all.

That is the claim that makes Jesus such a controversial figure. There can be no 'middle way' – such as, 'He was simply a great teacher' – with Jesus. He was mad or bad or God; and no one is saying he was mad or bad.⁵ Since we know him to be God, we know him to be the Way, the Truth, the Life, the all-gracious One, Burden-bearer to the weary and heavy-laden.

Twenty-first-century 'scribes and Pharisees' still impose the heavy burden of legalistic demands on the people. By contrast Jesus says, 'Come to me. Learn from me. Enter a disciple-relationship with One who is gentle and lowly of heart: *and you will find rest for your souls*.' Hebrews 4:1-10 speaks of a Sabbath-like rest remaining to the people of God.

'Take my yoke,' says Jesus when he invites us into partnership with him. The whole point of a yoke is to make life's burdens *easier* to bear. The Carpenter of Nazareth says, 'Trust me! My yokes fit well! They will help you carry life's burdens – not make them heavier!'

The yoke of Jesus is the yoke of love, not duty. It is the love-response of the liberated, not the legalistic duty of the obligated. And that makes all the difference.

'Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people, lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer. Let all your powers be directed to pointing souls, confused, bewildered, lost, to "the Lamb of God". Lift Him up, the risen Saviour, and say to all who hear, Come to Him who "hath loved us and hath given Himself for us".'

Gospel Workers, page 160.

The most constructive piece of sermon criticism I ever received came from my niece, Joanne, when she was 7. 'Uncle David, why were you so *angry* when you preached the sermon this morning?' Of course, I wasn't angry, just unduly earnest. But it *looked* like anger to Joanne and, for her, it blocked out the picture of Jesus.

'I end up with a thumping headache every week,' a harassed young woman said to me as she poured a glass of water and reached for the paracetamol. 'Why does he have to shout the whole time?' I had been blessed by the preacher's sermon that week. The preacher's theatrical, high decibel retelling of the fiery furnace story of Daniel 3 had (pardon the pun) fired up my imagination, but it had been all too OTT for a group of women in their 30s and 40s who were queuing to use the kitchen tap. One said, 'He was just spitting testosterone.' Later I discovered that the young bulls at the back had thought the preacher's macho style had been great. But the weary and heavy-laden had not been helped.

Preachers must consider the needs of the children, the youth (including the 'young bull' element), the matrons, the young mothers, the vulnerable and the struggling. You can't please *all* the people, true; but there has to be *something* for the weary and the burdened. . . .

Jesus says, 'Are you tired? Worn out? Come to me and find rest for your souls.' If the tired and worn out come week after week and find that their spiritual needs are not met, they will change their arrangements for Sabbath mornings.

The preacher's challenge is not just to compete with the visual fireworks of Hollywood. It is to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation, including the weary, bruised, discouraged and downtrodden.

References:

¹Matthew 11:28, 29, NLT. ²Matthew 11:28, 29, MGE. ³Pages 159-160. Italics mine. ⁴Matthew 11:28. ⁵C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, chapter 3.



Enhancing Health

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

STRESS Part 9

Impact on ageing

In this issue we analyse the hormone cortisol and its relationship to the stress in our life. Increased levels of this hormone are associated with abnormal ageing processes. We also identify simple steps we can take in order to gain control of our life, reduce our stress level and live a longer and healthier life.

Effects of cortisol

When we become stressed it leads to the increased accumulation of the hormone cortisol. This vital hormone is often referred to as the 'stress hormone' as it is activated in the stress response. It increases blood pressure, blood sugar levels and has an immunosuppressive action

which means that the efficacy of the immune system is reduced.

Cortisol regulates cardiovascular function and affects blood pressure. It enables the body's use of fatty acids as a source of

energy for our muscles and impacts our body's use of proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

Dangers of excess cortisol

While cortisol may be an essential hormone in maintaining good health, excess cortisol may lead to adverse health conditions. Ten years ago studies like Khalsa DS and Stauth C. (1997) began to identify that a prolonged increase in cortisol leads to a decrease in brain cells, a reduction of bone density and a loss of vital muscle mass. Current research suggests that excess cortisol, brought on by excess stress, will reduce our longevity.

The *New Scientist Journal* (November 2004) published research from the University of California which indicated the impact of stress on the cell. They found that chromosomes age ten years with psychological stress.

Advice

- If you control your stress, you can control your cortisol.

Applying these simple techniques will help to lower stress:

- Maintain a consistent and healthy diet.
- Avoid caffeine, it aggravates the stress response.
- Don't use alcohol.
- Establish a routine bedtime and get adequate sleep every night.
- Moderate physical exercise helps reduce stress.
- Say 'no'.
- Prioritise your 'to do' list.
- Improve time management – over-scheduling is a primary cause of stress.
- Set realistic goals.
- Increase your prayer life.
- Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling.
- Get a massage.

Key points:

- We release cortisol in response to stressors placed on our body.
- We can lower cortisol by reducing stress.
- If you reduce your stress, you lengthen your life.

Good health!



Black History Weekend: Telling Our Story

Once again, Willesden church contributed to the Black History Month, with programmes from both the music and the Sabbath School departments.

The Sabbath School event took place on the last weekend of October and adopted 'Telling Our Story' as its theme. There were sermons, an interview and a question and answer session.

Many organisations and churches across the UK focused their Black History event around the slave trade and its legacy, the celebration of the Abolition Act and the contributions and achievements of black people in a variety of fields. We decided to pause and think: 'What is our story?' We wanted to hear the voice of God, for his voice was not heard among all the other celebrations. What had he done for black people that they should shout about? Was there a parallel with the Bible's Exodus story? The Scripture reading from Deuteronomy 6 provided the foundation as we read the Lord's command to the people of Israel to remind their children when they asked their parents the meaning of the testimonies: 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand . . .'

We reflected on our responsibility to tell our children down the generations what the Lord has done for us. Knowing where they came from would tell them where they were going. 'Our children will know that Black History is not just about slavery and suffering but more about a loving God who stretched out his hand to save a wretched people whom he has nurtured and strengthened. Our story is both spiritual and temporal,' we learned.



Many responded to the weekend's exceptional events. Church members turned up in numbers on Friday 26 for the opening ceremony and on Sabbath 27 they were joined by more non-Willesden members and several non-SDAs. Our guest of honour, Deputy Mayor of Brent, Councillor Ralph Fox, commended the church in his address for its teachings on love, respect and peace at a time of religious zeal. Brent councillors James B. Allie and Bobby Thomas, Mrs Lurline Champagnie (a Conservative party nominee for Mayor of London and also a panellist) and her husband were also present. Tony Wiltshire and Ms K. Igbo-dike respectively represented The Barbados and Nigeria High Commissions.

The panellists were Mia Morris, well-known in the black community as the owner and founder of www.black-history-month.co.uk; police sergeant Trevor Nash, Dr Kay Traill, lecturer in History at

Newbold College, Tolu Dare, a solicitor from the Nigerian church, and Tunde Garrison, a young man from the Origin programme in Brixton, whose father set up the Museum for Black History in Brixton.

The juniors and the teens played their part too by, respectively, displaying flags and a dramatisation.

Ronald and Veronica Williams insisted that the church approach and work with local authorities, the local police force and the community workers.

Our powerful and compelling guest speakers included Pastor Alonzo S. Wagner III from Milton Keynes and Elder Mark Doyley from Stoke Newington church. Both highlighted the plight of the black community, particularly the issues of young men killing and being killed and the problem of drugs.

The last event of the day gave the opportunity to discuss the theme with a panel of learned men and women of experience, facilitated by Marlene Simpson-Thomas.

Musically speaking, the church was blessed with such talents as 3Ds, Camille Dantzig (violin) and his brothers Ben (guitar) and Sep (saxo), Proclaim and Willesden Senior choir.

For more pictures to go www.secadventist.org.

MICHELLE RONDOP

Leicester Central gives thanks

In a year which saw even the Pope complaining about falling church attendances, Leicester Central has striven to win the souls, if not the attention, of the East Midlands city.

Early on in the year the Community department, headed by Vince Halliday, organised a thanksgiving service to honour the work of the local emergency services with awards on 7 April.

The service, which received extensive coverage by the local media, was attended by the British Union Conference president, Pastor Don McFarlane.

The church invited the Lord Mayor, Paul Westley, and 102 representatives from other faiths, and the general public to join them in celebrating the unsung work of the emergency services at a time when the ever-increasing demands made on them seem almost unattainable.

'The police are under scrutiny because of bad press, as are the ambulance and the fire service. We don't recognise them enough unless we call on their assistance,' said Vince Halliday. 'The Church is at the forefront of acknowledging them and if we have to lead out, then we are not ashamed to do that,' he said.

The invited guests included Chris Garnham, Chief Superintendent, Leicestershire Police Constabulary, Mark Speight, Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Services, and Mick Gregory of the East Midlands Ambulance Service, who each received an award for their services.

All three representatives were moved by the display of the Pathfinders who were also in attendance and the church's positive attitude towards the emergency services.

W. G. DACRES



How has religious freedom been affected by 9/11?

On December 1 and 2, Newbold's Centre for Religious and Cultural Diversity assembled an impressive panel of speakers for a major conference to discuss religious freedom since the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001.

Lecturers from the House of Lords, the Universities of Buckingham and Reading, the Seventh-day Adventist Church UK and World Headquarters and Newbold College staff stimulated wide-ranging discussions on contemporary freedom of religion in the workplace and the wider society. The words of American president, Thomas Jefferson, were much quoted: 'The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.'

Lincoln Steed, editor of *Liberty* magazine, highlighted the potential problem by citing the words of a leading American politician: 'Religious freedom is no longer a luxury we can afford.'

Pastor Don McFarlane, leader of the Church in the UK, used Adventist responses to the Sexual Orientation legislation in this country as a case study to consider the Church's response to threats to freedom of belief. Dr Jonathan Gallagher, United Nations representative for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, explored the effects on religious freedom of the United Nations agenda.

Baroness Cox of Queensbury described her visits to Nigeria, Sudan and Indonesia and her observations concerning the effects of jihad in those countries. 'The Christian churches have been slow to respond to the issue of child slavery and the manipulation of humanitarian aid as weapons of Islamisation,' she said. 'Western democracy and Christendom have been asleep at the switch.'

In Newbold's newest conference space – The Smith Centre – forty participants from around the UK heard and questioned the various speakers and each other.

Participants included pastors and lay people, teachers and students. They used words like 'informative', 'practical', and 'thought-provoking' to describe the course. Cynthia Lewis from Lewisham said: 'The conference covered a wide variety of topics. The lecturers were approachable. There was plenty of time for questions and good interaction between participants.'

Newbold's vice-principal and director of the Centre for Religious and Cultural Diversity said: 'The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a diverse family whose members often know what it feels like to live on the margins of society. This conference demonstrated our insights into issues of religious and cultural diversity and encouraged us to continue to champion the cause of freedom of religion for all people.'

Pastor Don McFarlane, president of the British Union, reflected: 'What encouraged me about the day was to see a varied group of Adventists – both professionals and members from different countries – all concerned about religious freedom. Seventh-day Adventists have a history of taking the lead in this subject and we should continue to do so.'

For more information and pictures visit the Newbold website.

HELEN PEARSON



Male voice choir at Southwark Cathedral

The London SDA Male Voice Choir (LSMVC) was very privileged and honoured to be invited by the High Commissioner of Jamaica to participate in the Service of Praise and Thanksgiving on the occasion of the 45th Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence at Southwark Cathedral on 4 August 2007. The theme was 'Unity, Peace, and Justice'. The choir performed two songs, 'Steal Away to Jesus' and 'Amen' as their opening pieces to over a thousand attendees. Soloist Leony Titus sang 'My Lord What a Morning'. The bishop, Dr Joe Aldred, delivered the sermonette on the theme of 'Honour thy father and mother'. After the sermonette the choir sang, 'It May Be At Morn' and 'What a Day That Will Be'.

W. HINES

The F-Word

'Forgiveness is a process and a repetitive process. Seventy times seven may not be different events. It may be the same event.' These were the words of a mother whose daughter was killed in a bomb attack. Her story was part of the Forgiveness Project which ran in November at Crieff church and was told on BBC Radio 4's Midweek programme with Libby Purves.

Ginn Fourie and Letlapa Mphahlele shared a story of forgiveness following the murder of Ginn's daughter by the Azanian People's Liberation Army in Helderberg, South Africa. Letlapa was the man who ordered the attack. They were in the UK for the 'F-Word' exhibition at Crieff Adventist church which ran until Tuesday, 20 November.

Their story highlighted the reality of how forgiveness can make a difference in your life today. Ginn said, 'Christ's example on the Cross was a very strong example of forgiveness. Anger is not self-serving. After my daughter died I prayed that healing would come through the people she touched, especially those who had killed her.' Letlapa, an atheist,

said, 'Ginn's gift of forgiveness represented something very profound – the restoration of humanity in me.'

Lectures on Friday evening, 16 November, and a Day of Fellowship on Sabbath were followed by a service at Glasgow Cathedral on Sunday evening.

During the week they visited a Scottish prison, where they shared their experience with long-serving prisoners and with schoolchildren at nearby Crieff schools. Ginn and Letlapa also appeared on the BBC World Service programme, 'Outlook', and on Sunday, 18 November on Radio Scotland with 'Sally on Sunday'.

The exhibition featured twenty-two inspiring stories of forgiveness from around the world. Church member and organiser, Steve Logan, said, after reading the stories, 'It's hard, forgiveness, but it's an important issue and we need to deal with it.' Mission president and Crieff pastor, Llew Edwards, said afterwards, 'The challenge for me as an individual Christian is: Can I really evidence forgiveness? The challenge for the church is to evidence God's grace to the people around us.'

JOHN WILBY



Left to right: Dr Steve Logan and Pastor Llewellyn Edwards and Letlapa Mphahlele and Ginn Fourie

More on Stanborough School's high achievers

Under the heading 'Stanborough Secondary "Top among mixed ability schools"' we reported Speech Night on page 4 of *MESSENGER*, 7 December. At the time no pictures had come to hand. Thanks to Andrew Leonce they have now arrived. Once again we quote from the original report: 'Stanborough's highest academic performers achieved admirable grades, maintaining the school's top position among mixed ability schools and exceeding the GCSE national average by some 30%. . . . Subjects such as Religious Studies, English and the sciences reaching 100% pass at A* to C.'



Bournemouth's Shoebox Appeal

For eight years now, Bournemouth church has been a collecting point for shoeboxes bound for Romania through Link Romania, an inter-denominational organisation based in Worthing. Our own church members, mothers who attend our Mother & Toddler Group and various local groups, companies and churches, bring their boxes to the church, filled with goodies for a whole family. They are then transported to some of the poorest towns and villages where often there is no water, heating or lighting in the miserable dwellings in which many of them have to live. Imagine their joy in receiving a Christmas

present from a friend in England!

We were shown a video presentation in which many of the recipients stick the pretty Christmas wrapping paper on the wall – often the only bright spot in the room. Also, once the boxes are emptied, they are flattened out and serve as floor covering for part of the earth floor!

This year we exceeded all previous records and finished up with 380 boxes in the church. A team of willing helpers came to the church on Sunday afternoon, 19 November, and packed all the boxes into black bin liners, ready for collection by Link Romania the following day. We



have got to know these two gentlemen who give up such a lot of their time to this wonderful work and they are always pleased to chat with us

over a cuppa before heading off towards Dorchester to collect more boxes.

JOY ELLIOTT

The ADRA Shoebox Gift Appeal 2007

by David Balderstone, ADRA Volunteer transport driver

What an exciting time we had in November as, from all parts of the UK, gifts for the very poor children of Madagascar came flooding in to us here at the Stanborough Park collection point. Towards the end of October I started to get telephone calls from people all over the country telling me that they had 90, 160 and in some cases 500 gifts or more! Collection points were set up in various locations and then, on the appointed Sunday, cars and vans started arriving – and continued to do so over the next seven days.

It was exciting to see the numbers quickly rise and thrilling when last year's total of 4,400 was reached and exceeded. I never imagined,

however, that our total would reach the amazing sum of 7,164! It is humbling to realise that all of us will have a part in ensuring that children who have never received a present before will have a very happy time to celebrate 'Bon'Année' in January (a custom like Christmas in Europe).

Having watched orphaned and disadvantaged children opening shoeboxes like these I know what excitement a pencil, a pen, a small plate, a drinking cup or a toy can generate. Can you imagine how wonderful it is to have your very own toothpaste and toothbrush? What a thrill it is to own a pair of flip-flops, or a hat or a T-shirt? Imagine the excitement as the children gather

around the delivery truck and their gifts are handed out. I have witnessed this and it is an experience which has moved and motivated me over the past eighteen years of working for ADRA.

The volume of gifts meant that we had to order a second 13-metre container to take the surplus shoeboxes. This in turn enabled us to add to the load so that, in addition to shoeboxes, we have been able to send school desks, chairs, hospital beds and mattresses. We were also given some bicycles and a specialist sports training machine, all of which have been dispatched to Madagascar along with the shoeboxes.

Christmas reminds us of the gift of Christ to this world. Thank you for helping disadvantaged children capture the thrill and excitement *this* year, of what we are privileged to experience *every* year!

I want to thank all of you most sincerely for your generosity. In particular I would like to thank the local organisers for all their support and hard work for this very special appeal. Thank you also to those who contributed £1 per box towards the transportation costs. You will be pleased to know that these gift boxes are being distributed to children in orphanages and socially deprived areas where ADRA is working. What a great combination this is: teaching people how to grow better crops; teaching about fertilisers, irrigation, sanitation and the benefits of clean water – and then giving gifts to orphaned children.

The first, drawn from Matthew 22:37, encourages Pathfinders to pursue relationships above all others – H(ear) + S(oul) + M(ind) + N(eighbour) = 10 (commandments). Using Steve Chalk's trust equation, the second emphasises the high calling given to leaders to build trust, in order ultimately to lead the young people to love Jesus Christ – T(rust) = C(redibility) + D(ependability) + R(elationships). Thirdly, the Church must positively influence its young people – I(nfluence) = L(earning their

Kenya — Mission Accomplished!

by Ellen Bryant

'Oh! It's not fair. . . . I need five more minutes! There has to be a law against this – it's still dark and I'm still tired!' This was my ritualistic cry pretty much every morning in Kenya while on the Mission Project. I am nocturnal. I function better during the night-time. To have to get up at 6am while it was still dark, in the cold, was too much. Life is so hard, right?

Worship was really the best possible way to start our day and I felt invigorated, *slightly*, afterwards but I still had an 'I-wish-I-could-sleep-for-15-minutes-more' feeling! As we started walking to the school to begin the day's work the sleepy feeling began to dissipate. . . . we spoke of what we would be doing that day. . . . which part of our body was aching from the day before. . . . the usual pre-9am banter!

We crossed the railway line and

gave a few cockney 'Jambo' greetings to the Massai people we saw with their brightly-coloured clothes and couldn't help but smile. We felt ever so proud of ourselves when they replied, as if we had mastered and were fluent in the Swahili language!

Walking up the dirt road towards the school, no matter what mood we were in, for that moment, in that first glance of the day, nothing else mattered. That was the reason why we were there. On the skyline, against the blue-grey backdrop of the early morning sky, was our purpose. The classrooms we came 8,000 miles to help construct for some of the most beautiful and inspiring girls I've ever had the privilege to meet at the Kajjado Rehabilitation School.

Being human, it is in our nature to be impatient. It is very rare in this



life that you see immediate results that make you proud and happy. By the time we saw the building, tiredness, although it had not entirely disappeared, was replaced with an excited happiness. We were blessed! Every day we saw progress firsthand. We saw the difference we were making both individually and collectively.

This is the feeling that got us up every day, kept us going, and gave us the determination to keep each other encouraged. It gave us the energy to 'put our all' into the work we were doing. As hard as it was, we loved and enjoyed every minute of the experience, regardless of the little things the devil tried to put in our way to dishearten us so that the work would be slowed down and even delayed.

Seeing the completed pictures of the classrooms, we individually and as a team felt the most amazing and unique sense of pride. An encouragement that is beyond description. A motivation to live life with a zeal never before experienced.

Being a vocational person, who was not a great fan of school, isn't it ironic the difference a classroom has made in my life!

This is the reason why we came. Not for one moment will I ever forget how blessed and grateful I was to have had the opportunity to be a part of something so great.

Truth be known, as much as I hate early mornings, I would do it all over again. I might even be happy to get up half an hour earlier – without complaining! There are some things MasterCard can't buy after all.

Life-forming Equations at Glasgow Pathfinders' Investiture

by John Wilby,

Scottish Mission Communication sponsor

What do H + S + M + N = 10, T = C + D + R and I = L + P + M have in common? Pastor Marcel Ghoialda, Scottish Youth sponsor, used these equations at Glasgow Pathfinders' Investiture Day on 17 November to sum up the essential elements of youth investment.

The first, drawn from Matthew 22:37, encourages Pathfinders to pursue relationships above all others – H(ear) + S(oul) + M(ind) + N(eighbour) = 10 (commandments). Using Steve Chalk's trust equation, the second emphasises the high calling given to leaders to build trust, in order ultimately to lead the young people to love Jesus Christ – T(rust) = C(redibility) + D(ependability) + R(elationships). Thirdly, the Church must positively influence its young people – I(nfluence) = L(earning their

names) + P(aying for young people) + M(entoring).

At a time when the church is embarking on the KID (Kids in Discipleship) Programme, it was gratifying to witness more than 40 Pathfinders, Adventurers and Eager Beavers receive their badges and certificates. The day was an inspiring and refreshing reminder of the talent and commitment which exist among our youth in a rapidly growing congregation.

Pastor Ghoialda says, 'Young people are at the centre of our ministry in the church. While ministering to them intentionally, we are actually growing ourselves and fulfilling the God-given command expressed in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.' Former Pathfinder leader, Andy Mckie, put it this way: 'When you take a child by the hand, you take the parents by the heart.'

Obituary

FELICIA ABAKAH (1981-2007) d. 22 April 2007. Felicia Abakah's favourite Bible text was Psalm 46: 'God is our refuge and strength, a present help in trouble.' For Felicia, God was always bigger than her circumstances, and she turned to him, no matter what. Felicia was born in Mphohor, western Ghana, on 22 November 1981. She was the first child of Ebenezer and Rebecca Asirifie and later became sister to Esther, Ernest, Stephen and Gladys. Most of her upbringing was spent in Takoradi. She took college courses in hairdressing and this became her occupation. Felicia was raised as an Adventist by her mother and this led to her joining the choir at her local SDA church in Mphohor and her baptism on 25 April 1998. Before Felicia and Richard Abakah were married, Richard took Bible studies as he intended to become an Adventist because his interest was sparked by his wife's devotion to her faith. Their marriage took place on 12 August 2004 in Ghana and Felicia joined Richard in Hull in October of the same year. On 22 September 2005 a baby girl, Michaela, was born to the Abakahs, but a few months later she developed stomach problems and was taken to hospital for treatment. Some weeks later the symptoms recurred and Michaela died on 27 March 2006, aged only 7 months. Things started to look up when Richard completed his studies and became qualified as a chartered accountant and Felicia became pregnant again. On Valentine's Day, 2007, baby Rachel was born. She joined her parents at home after a short

stay at the Hull Royal Infirmary. On Thursday 19 April, while taking a bath, Felicia called to her husband Richard, as she had a blinding headache and the pain was shooting down her neck, through her body and down to her legs, causing her numbness. Richard quickly called an ambulance. Tests revealed that she had suffered a brain aneurism. She was taken into surgery to correct the problem. Her condition deteriorated and complications in other parts of her brain set in. Felicia didn't regain consciousness. Felicia is at rest. Her passing was mercifully swift and, as far as we know, painless. We who remain, of course, feel the pain now. Richard had been bereaved of his mother shortly before he came to England, then his daughter Michaela in Ghana and now his wife of less than 3 years. He is left to take care of their daughter, Rachel. One very heartening aspect in the midst of the tragedy was the way the Hull church members supported Richard practically, financially and spiritually, including rallying the Ghanaian community in Hull and beyond, with large amounts of money being raised to help him with the high costs of laying his wife to rest on her home soil. The Hull church members miss Felicia and Richard too, now that he has returned to Ghana with his daughter. Life is fragile. God will restore it for those who believe in his Son, Jesus Christ. And God is from everlasting to everlasting. Nothing takes him by surprise. God makes all things new.

BARBARA OMORO

The Naaba of Suldonde

by Bert Smit, Executive director, ADRA-UK

For two days ADRA-UK's executive director, Bert Smit, was a special guest in the village of Suldonde in the Bazega district of Burkina Faso in November. Village chief Zoando and his two wives, both coincidentally called Mariam, and family, permitted him to spend two days filming their daily routine. We observed how all their daily work centres around the objective of having food to eat for the family. Not an easy feat in this dry and barren land that has to survive long hot seasons on a few weeks of rainfall in the wet season.

ADRA followed chief Zoando from harvesting to composting to creating cordon dykes to gather rain-water. We observed his first wife getting water at the well, collecting firewood and laboriously preparing a simple meal. The only concessions to modern-day living in the homestead were a beaten up old transistor radio, plastic containers to collect water and a Yamaha motor-



bike, a simple matter of a status symbol for the chief of the village. Beyond that, life as we could observe it in this remote hamlet in Burkina Faso had changed little in probably hundreds of years. A thirty-minute feature presentation will be produced to showcase the hard existence in a Sahel country.

ADRA-UK is here to help create opportunities for the local population in providing access to drinking and irrigation water, to teach locals how to set up market gardens, introduce composting, literacy training and help with reforestation. These simple things can help the locals to combat poverty and its consequences.

This summer ADRA-UK is organising a development experience trip for young people aged 18-35 to this area. For three days participants will stay in a village and work with villagers like chief Zoando. It will be time spent away from all modern commodities, helping the young people to realise that many on this planet still have to fight daily for survival. Participants will also work to improve the facilities of the agricultural school ADRA runs nearby. A 4x4 safari to Tourareg country in the north will complete this rewarding trip. For more details see our website adra.org.uk or contact us on 01923-681743.

Colchester Farewell

On Communion Sabbath in November Pastor Paul R. Smith shook hands with and embraced our minister Pastor Fernand Lombart who, after a brief period with us, was leaving for Australia. As part of his farewell, Pastor Lombart played a guitar solo, 'No matter what happens I'll never let go of your hand.'

SUE INGRAM

Full-time Secretarial Vacancy at the NEC Office

An exciting and demanding role is open for an energetic person with good secretarial skills and a commitment to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The responsibilities will include routine secretarial and data entry tasks, preparation of workshop/seminar materials, and will require competency in the use of Microsoft Office or comparable software packages and desktop publishing.

Salary and terms of employment will be in keeping with denominational policies and are available on request.

Interested individuals are invited to send a CV and a request for an application form to: Paul Haworth, Executive Secretary, North England Conference, 22 Zulla Road, Mapperley Park, Nottingham, NG3 5DB.

Tel: 01159606312
Closing Date for Applications:
Monday 14 January 2008



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'Outstanding servant of the Church'

British Union Conference staff also said farewell to Donovan Cleary, the associate treasurer, at a reception on Thursday 29 November. Donovan has served for the last two years both as associate treasurer and as the director for the Church's legal entity, the Seventh-day Adventist Association Ltd.

From January 2008 he will take responsibility as secretary-treasurer of the East Mediterranean Field, based in Lebanon. Union treasurer, Victor Pilmoor, thanked Donovan for his good and conscientious work and noted that, while the Union were willing to 'lend' Donovan to the Middle East for a time, they would look for opportunities for him to come back in the future. 'He is an excellent, efficient and friendly employee,' Victor stated. BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane, added that Donovan is 'courteous, helpful, gentle, considerate and a very pleasant person. He has served the British Union with commitment and conviction.' The British Union Conference wish Donovan, his wife Lisette, and baby Christopher well as they head for their new life and responsibilities.

Jotsam

Is 'OK' as good as it gets? Is this all there is? When the last party popper has popped - what then?

'And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them . . ."' For the rest, read Revelation chapter 21 beginning with verse 2.

Messenger

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Sunset

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	Lon	Card	Not	Edin	Bell
Jan 4	4.05	4.17	4.02	3.52	4.12
11	4.14	4.26	4.11	4.03	4.22
18	4.25	4.37	4.22	4.16	4.34
25	4.37	4.49	4.35	4.30	4.47

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