

£3.2 million fraud case conviction

by Victor Hulbert and Richard DeLisser

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is to set up a review following the jailing of three of its members in a £3.2 million fraud case. 'The trust of our members has been abused,' Pastor Don McFarlane, president of the Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland, told members of the BUC Executive Committee on Thursday 13 March. Recognising that this kind of affinity fraud can happen in any trusting community, it was nevertheless of concern to the committee that so many church members were affected by the case, some losing many thousands of pounds. While the details of the review are still to be confirmed, it is expected that it will look back over four years at all aspects of how the fraud developed and will seek positive ways of helping church members to avoid such scams in the future.

The fraud case climaxed at Southwark Crown Court on Friday 7 March when the jury returned a guilty verdict on three of the four defendants. They were remanded in custody over the weekend and sentenced on Monday 11 March to a total of almost ten years in prison. The young men were all members of Adventist churches in the London area, as were most of the victims. Following a two-month trial, Lindani Mangena was convicted of fraudulent trading between 31 July 2003 and 1 March 2004, money laundering and carrying on an unauthorised investment business. Dean Hinkson and Curtis Powell were found guilty of 'communicating an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity'. Mangena is to serve a seven-year jail term and the other two will serve fifteen months each.

The three men, who had no financial expertise

and were not registered with the Financial Services Authority, principally targeted members of the Adventist Church. Stephen Winberg, prosecuting, stated, 'The victims were much more ready to believe what they were told because it came from members of the same tight-knit religious community.' Up to 1,000 people are estimated to have been affected by the scheme which promised high returns for investments over a short period of time. Many lost substantial sums of money. One man, who lost £70,000, was widely reported in

the papers as saying, 'We thought Lindani Mangena was like a modern-day Moses. I thought the Lord had blessed him.' However, he felt devastated when the truth emerged, stating, 'This caused a lot of people a great deal of financial difficulty and hardship.' The jury could not reach a verdict against a fourth defendant, and on Friday 14 March the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to pursue the case against him any further.

Victor Hulbert, spokesperson for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, said: 'We are obviously saddened when the trust of our members has been taken advantage of like this. It is a cautionary tale that people from all communities need to be careful and take sound financial advice.'

As a church we uphold the values of integrity, honesty and transparency. We regret that on this occasion some of our members have fallen short of the mark. We are a forgiving church and as such we will continue to pray for and provide spiritual support to all those who have been convicted or affected, along with their families, as they are a part of our church family. The doors of the church are always open to all.

Dealing with the aftermath

by Victor Hulbert, Communication director, BUC

It was October 2001. People were still reeling from the aftermath of planes crashing into the Pentagon and New York's Twin Towers. International travel was disrupted. The world was changed. And so was Junior Sabbath School. I was leading out in prayer time. The usual praise and requests came in. 'Thanks that I passed my test at school this week.' 'Please pray for Grandma. She's not well.' Then an 11-year-old girl put her hand up: 'Please pray for Osama bin Laden.'

That brought me up short. I certainly hadn't been praying for him. That morning was the first time. But I have been praying for him since. I mentioned it in a sermon a couple of weeks later. I was a visiting preacher. A woman in the congregation screamed. I had never had that reaction to my preaching before. The challenge of praying for

a man who orchestrated so much death and destruction was more than she could handle. I had a long talk with her afterwards. A middle-aged woman who had only recently started attending church, she was slowly coming to faith. But as we talked she came to the realisation that if there is one person in the whole world who really needs praying for it is Osama. As we grow in grace with God and our community, surely we would want that same grace to extend to others, including those who consider themselves our enemy.

The thought is not without biblical precedent. Manasseh was an incredibly evil king. The Bible records that the streets of Jerusalem flowed with the blood of the innocent. (2 Kings 21:16.) Yet,

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Dealing with the aftermath

later in life, and after being dragged off into captivity by the Assyrians, Manasseh came to his senses. He found God, or rather, God found him. (2 Chronicles 33:12-17.)

There are other stories like that. David, adulterer and murderer, wrote, 'Create in me a pure heart, O God.' (Psalm 51:10.) Samson, after a life ignoring God, cried out in his last moment, 'O Sovereign Lord, remember me.' (Judges 16:28.) And Saul, persecutor of the early church, was transformed into a mighty apostle of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:9-10.)

Which leaves me with a twenty-first-century tension. On Friday 7 March three young men were convicted at Southwark Crown Court. Lindani Mangena was convicted of fraudulent trading, money laundering and carrying on an unauthorised investment business. Dean Hinkson and Curtis Powell were found guilty of 'communicating an invitation or inducement to engage in investment activity'. They have been sentenced to a total of ten years. On the outside of that story are many people who are hurting. Many lost money. Behind that loss are stories of interrupted education, severe debt and

family struggles. The national and local newspapers have been full of their stories. There is no need to recount them here. They may have learnt a hard lesson in trust and the reality that if something seems too good to be true then it probably is. The story hits all the harder because these young men were members of our Church. So were most of the victims. Naturally that has created some tensions. There is need for support and healing.

Generally our Church has a good track record on strong financial planning. The biblical principle of tithing and the generosity of our members with their freewill offerings has not only benefited the work of God in this country and across the world, it has also helped develop good principles of stewardship in family life. For many, this has resulted in the promise of Malachi becoming a reality, God pouring out the blessings – spiritual, communal and physical (Malachi 3:10-11).

My father was a teenager during the Great Depression of the 1930s. His father had to leave home, seeking work in other parts of the country. As a young boy, life was hard, supporting his mother and his younger brothers and sister. The difficulties of that upbringing filtered down throughout his life, making

him very conscious of the value of money. He carefully worked through the family finances to ensure we could make ends meet and that there was always a little bit set aside for a rainy day. My children would probably accuse me of the same thing. I remember overhearing my son tell a friend, 'My dad would prefer to walk half a mile than pay 5p for a car park ticket.' There were certainly times when I thought of my father as stingy. I am sure he would have used the word 'frugal'. The truth is, he cared for us deeply and wanted to ensure that we had a sound future.

At the same time he was very generous. Someone in need would never be turned away. He supported the Church and many other good causes with far more than 10% of his income. We knew he cared. That was important to us as children.

It is something I have really come to understand and appreciate. I appreciated it in my father. I really appreciate it in my Heavenly Father. He cares! He wants the best for me!

So where does that leave me in relation to three young men who have undoubtedly done wrong and been found out? Where does that leave me in relation to those many people who trusted them? Some would argue, perhaps harshly, that

they have 'sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind'. (Hosea 8:7.) It is certainly true that there are consequences to our actions and decisions. Very often those consequences affect not just me and my family, but my friends and my church. Yet I am constantly amazed how God will take the likes of Saul, the scourge of Christianity, and work with him and turn him around to become the great but humble apostle Paul. That was something Paul never forgot. In his old age he wrote, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I'm proof – Public Sinner Number One – of someone who could never have made it apart from sheer mercy.' (1 Timothy 1:15-16, *Message*.)

I come back to the prayer of my 11-year-old friend. In a crisis she knew whom to pray for. As the consequences of the events at Southwark Crown Court become a reality, both victim and perpetrator need our prayers. They also need our support in an uncertain future. This is not the time of judgement. The courts have done that and on the final day God is my judge. But God makes surprising decisions with prodigal sons, wayward kings and future apostles. He is still making surprising decisions in the twenty-first century.

Seek first his kingdom

Don W. McFarlane, president, British Union Conference



Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the British Union and further afield have followed with interest the case in the Southwark Crown Court involving four young men from our community. One of the four has been sentenced to seven years in prison while two of the others have each been given a fifteen month prison term. We have learned that no action is to be taken against the fourth defendant.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, though mentioned in a number of articles, is not in any way responsible for the financial irregularities that resulted in the imprisonment of the three young men. Nevertheless, the whole affair has been painful for the Church community. I am personally acquainted with the four young men, some of whom have been very active members in the church. It is doubtful that when they embarked on their financial escapade they had considered the possibility of imprisonment. I am also of the opinion that they did not set out to swindle their 'clients' of millions of pounds. It appears that they got caught up in the momentum of their scheme, which was always destined to fail, as is the case with all such schemes. They always end in tears.

Sadly, three of the young men are now behind bars. What is even sadder is the fact that many ordinary members of the church and community, who can least afford it, have surrendered their hard-earned savings or have borrowed heavily in the hope of scooping the 'jackpot'. Naturally, there is some degree of sympathy for the young men who have been incarcerated, but the greater sympathy lies with those who have been duped into parting with their funds, those whose trust has been abused.

The question that many are asking is how was it possible that so many people, including approximately one thousand members of the Seventh-day Adventist community, were sucked into a scheme that obviously lacked financial integrity? Some articles in our national and local newspapers have described the victims of the scam as 'gullible', 'greedy' or 'naive'. My experience suggests that the truth lies elsewhere. There is a tendency for members of a tight-knit community to place a level of trust in one another that would not normally be given to anyone else. They are prepared to suspend critical analysis in favour of accepting the pledges and promises of fellow adherents. Some may remember the Davenport case in the USA in which millions of dollars were lost by church members and church workers. There was also the Sovereign Ministries Florida-based 'investment' plan in the 1990s that milked

millions of dollars from church members in and outside the USA. Other religious organisations have their own stories to tell about members who fell prey to 'investment' schemes that promised exorbitant returns.

There are important lessons that must be learned if we are to avoid similar disasters in future. In the first place, we need to take God at his word to provide for us and meet our needs. 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?' (Matt 6:25-27.) God has a thousand ways to supply our needs, but it is doubtful if one of them is an investment scheme that offers returns that stagger belief. He uses our mental and physical faculties to aid us in meeting our needs.

It is also imperative that we do not suspend our critical faculties when dealing with fellow Seventh-day Adventists, whatever the product or service they are offering. As a principle, there is some benefit to the community for church members to use the services of fellow believers. Employing the services of an Adventist builder, financial adviser, dentist, plumber or physiotherapist is desirable but it should not be done at the expense of securing the normal guarantees that would be required from non-Adventist professionals. Additionally, unless the standard of service or the quality of the product being offered by a Seventh-day Adventist is of similar standard or quality, or even better than that which is being offered by a non-member, I would strongly urge caution.

Caution should also be exercised with respect to peripatetic speakers who go from country to country, city to city, church to church, peddling products, which if you eat, drink or read are 'likely to make you stronger, fitter, healthier, wiser or more knowledgeable.' Members are urged to be wary of anyone who makes an appealing presentation and then urges their audience to buy their books, tapes, DVDs or health products afterwards, especially when those products appear to be very expensive. Some recognise that the members of the Church are a ready and open market and are prepared to take full advantage of that.

When the British Union Executive Committee met on 13 March it spent a considerable

amount of time discussing the fraud case. While the Committee realised that there was nothing it could do regarding the sums lost by church members, great concern was expressed over the fact that so many church members got caught up in it. Consequently, a decision was made to undertake a review of the circumstances that led to the participation of so many members in the scheme. The purpose of the review is primarily to establish whether there was any violation of certain ethical principles and what lessons can be learned that might have a prophylactic value for the future. There is also a need to establish a whistle-blowing procedure whereby church leaders at regional and national levels can be informed as soon as members are contacted regarding any money-making scheme that defies common sense and logic. The process by which the review is to be carried out is yet to be decided. Nevertheless, it is our intention for a report to be brought to the next meeting of the Executive Committee in June.

My heart goes out to all who have lost money in the 'investment' scheme and trust that in time what has been lost will be restored through hard work and enterprise. The families of the three young men now behind bars are also in my thoughts and prayers. The Seventh-day Adventist community has been embarrassed by the whole affair but the greater embarrassment has been suffered by family members, some of whom are church leaders of long standing. They need the prayerful support of the wider Church. Then there are the three young men who are currently in prison. Let us not forget them. It is my hope that in the months to come those who have lost money with them will find it in their heart to forgive them.

To all who aspire to great wealth I recommend the investment scheme that our Lord spoke of in Matt. 6:19-21 & 31-33: 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. . . . So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.'



Enhancing Health

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

Brain Health Series

Part five

EXERCISE IMPACT

Over 100 years ago E. G. White made the following statement in relation to the impact of exercise on the brain:

Manual labour relaxes the mind – 'The whole system needs the invigorating influence of exercise in the open air. A few hours of manual labour each day would tend to renew the bodily vigour and rest and relax the mind.' (*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, page 383.)

Today studies continue to demonstrate that exercise prevents the negative effects of chronic stress on the brain at the molecular level and boosts the brain's biological battle against infection.

Cell research shows that changes occur in the brain's learning and memory centre. Scientists are studying whether exercise alters the molecular mechanisms that are important

for learning and memory.

All the current research on the impact of exercise on the brain has indicated that an active lifestyle plays an important role in maintaining the function of the brain. Additionally, more extensive research indicates the possibility that specialised exercise regimens may help repair damaged or aged brains.

Facts:

Regular physical activity helps the blood flow to the brain. It also helps reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke and diabetes – all risk factors for dementia.

A recent study showed that people who exercised three or more times a week had a 30-40% lower risk of developing dementia compared with those who exercised fewer than three times a week. (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Exercising releases chemicals in the brain, like serotonin, that have a strong effect on mood,

helping reduce anxiety, stress and depression. (The Mental Health Foundation.)

Advice:

- Recommended level of physical activity is at least 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week.
- Build up gradually if you're not used to being active. Sessions of 10-15 minutes 2-3 times a day is a good start and still produces results.
- Moderate activity includes brisk walking, strenuous gardening or jogging. This encourages good blood flow – enough to make you feel warmer and increase heart beat.
- Do activities that you enjoy.
- Go for regular walks or join a walking group.
- Instead of taking the car, walk or cycle, especially for short journeys.
- Get off the bus a stop or two earlier.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift when possible.
- Try something new like joining a gym, swimming or even dancing – at home!

Get moving!



Willesden: Three church baptism

Three churches – Romanian, Portuguese and Afro-Caribbean – came together as one on Sabbath 9 February for a special baptism. Willesden church welcomed the presence of two non-English-speaking churches. Each pastor presented his candidates. While the candidates and the pastors were getting ready, the mixed multitude of 350 sang in their own languages such hymns as 'Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it'.

Two women and a young man decided to give their lives to Jesus. First was Marion Herbert, a Guyanese-born woman whose son Mahlon came to support her. After growing up in the church and giving her life to Jesus back home, Marion went away from the Lord for a number of years. In 1996 she was baptised in the Pentecostal church. While in Brussels, she received an email from her brother which started

to put her back on track. 'I feel that I have come back home and have a new life with a new family,' she said. Marion could feel especially at home because Willesden's new pastor, Keith Thomas, is also Guyanese.

Adrian Butnaru had a very different story. As a teenager growing up in Romania, he would go to church with his mother. Following a call, he gave his life to Jesus but was not baptised until he came to England two years ago and joined his sister who was already a member of the Romanian church. Sabbath after Sabbath, Jesus grew on him until he decided to seal his life with Jesus through baptism. Adrian is, in his own words, 'feeling on top of the world'. The Romanian church in Harlesden is pastored by Sorin Petrof.

Finally, Patricia Guimaraes from the North-west London Portuguese



church, located in Kensal Rise, also said Yes to Jesus by committing her life to him. What joy poured into the heart of her husband, already an Adventist, when his wife told him about her choice to follow Jesus. Pastor Theo Rios was among the church members, friends and family gathered to

witness Patricia's baptism.

Exquisite bouquets were presented to the candidates. Willesden church members intoned some old-time rhythmic Caribbean gospel tunes and hymns. The atmosphere was electrifying, convivial and cheerful.

MICHELLE RONDOP

Mother's Day outreach

by Michelle Wisdom

Early on Mothering Sunday the Ilford communication team, along with the Pathfinders and some other church members, congregated at Ilford church, full of nervous energy waiting to be expended. They entered the sanctuary and watched as buckets of beautiful carnations were brought to the front of the church and gently placed on the floor. The communications team opened with prayer and the proceedings of the day began. These carnations were going on a journey to bless the hearts of the mothers in Ilford town centre and at Barking Station.

The members and Pathfinders were divided into two groups. Each headed for their destinations with the flowers. 'Would you like a free flower for Mother's Day?'

The question was repeated numerous times in the course of the morning with varying responses. The emotions ran from shock to warmth, flavoured with positive comments and actions. Some mothers simply smiled and thanked us and others were so touched they gave kisses in gratitude and a few remarked that 'This has made my Mother's Day' and 'I think it's so wonderful you are doing this.'

We also received cautious and curious questions and glances, and some people hurried by. We were even threatened by floral retailers to have the police called, but the angels of the Lord were there and the sun shone brightly and the wind nipped at our fingers and noses and played in our hair.

However the enduring question was: 'Why are you doing this?'

Why indeed? Just because we thought it was a good idea, or even because we thought it would be a great way to publicise the church on the cards

attached to the flowers, or because we thought it was about time we got involved in some evangelism? Well, all of the above, but the overriding reason is Jesus. If only one person

out of the three hundred who received a flower this Mother's Day was touched by our actions and gave their life to Christ, then it would be worth it.

Camp Hill baptism

Four new sisters were welcomed to the fellowship of the Camp Hill, Birmingham, church on 19 January: Evelyn Waugh, Ropa Moguta and mother and daughter Natalie and Courtney-Jade Whitehouse. Three hundred members and friends were present for the occasion. Pastor Jeffeth Nicholson preached a moving sermon that emphasised the importance for all true followers of Christ to be born again.

Ropa and Courtney-Jade are both young people who have been in the Young Hope children's choir for a number of years. Through this service they have had experience in testifying to God's love and the truth of the Gospel message of salvation. Ropa is a Pathfinder at Camp Hill. The curriculum she has followed in Pathfinder sessions on Spiritual Discovery, along with Bible studies, has helped her make a decision to live her life for Jesus.

Evelyn Waugh and Natalie Whitehouse recommitted their lives to Christ through this service. A special item rendered by Ropa's 5-year-old twin daughters was sung beautifully.

DR JACQUELINE HALLIDAY-BELL



Highlights from the March BUC Committee

by Victor Hulbert, Communication director

BUC MEMBERSHIP PASSES 28,000

'We need to develop the kind of churches where children can bring their friends, and members can bring their neighbours,' British Union Conference president, Pastor Don McFarlane, emphasised to committee members. The comment arose from the good news that membership across the UK and Ireland reached 28,110 as of 31 December 2007. This was a net growth of 1,215 members. The full statistics are available on the Secretariat page of the BUC website: www.adventist.org.uk.

Dr Bertil Wiklander, president of the Trans-European Division of the Adventist Church, praised God, noting that 'an increase of 1,215 is unique growth in this part of the world'. He equally noted the emphasis that is being given to improving ways of retaining members and increasing growth. Dr Steve Logan from Scotland noted how children in his home church are comfortable to bring their friends to church. It was on this basis that Pastor McFarlane made the plea for openness and change in our churches to make them more inclusive. Alfred Officer from Chiswick noted that lapsed members are coming back to his church with the sustained visitation

and encouragement programme of the pastoral team.

ADRA APPEAL – BEST YEAR EVER

Executive committees spend time scrutinising financial reports. Summaries of current Financial Statements and the Trustees' Report can be found on the Treasurer's page of the BUC website, www.adventist.org.uk. The most exciting financial news came from the ADRA audited statement for 2007. BUC treasurer, Victor Pilmoor, reported that £635,485.86 was raised in last year's annual appeal, an increase of 8% on the previous year. Pastor McFarlane noted that this represents one of the highest figures in the world. The committee also commended the high level of goodwill of the members towards ADRA.

UNION SESSION RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL

There are many ways of running a Conference Session. Last year the Executive Committee asked Pastor Jim Huzzey to head a small team looking at how Sessions are structured in other parts of the world and find a formula that might enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Session and election process in



Union officers, Eric Lowe, Don McFarlane and Victor Pilmoor

the British Union. Among recommendations they reported back with is to shorten the duration of the Session to two days from four. Camp meetings and other days of fellowship have reduced the need for a 'high Sabbath' at Session time. Removing the day of fellowship makes it easier to find a suitable venue and allows delegates to focus attention more on the business of the Session. Suggestions were also put forward to appoint the Recommendations and Nominating Committees well in advance of the Session and supply reports from these committees to delegates before the actual Session begins. No decision has yet been taken but it was encouraging to see the openness of the committee to explore more effective and positive ways of managing change in the twenty-first century.

STANBOROUGH SCHOOL

Concern and praise came in equal amounts for Stanborough School. Head teacher, Mr Roger Murphy, reported excellent SATS results with 81% of Key Stage 3 pupils achieving level 5 and above, and all of them achieving level 5 and above for English.

Stanborough's pass rate is almost double that of other mixed ability maintained schools in the area. Last year 81% of pupils gained five or more A-C grades, with a 100% success rate in RE, biology, chemistry and physics.

The biggest challenge for Stanborough is finance. Fees are low compared to most of the private sector but some parents struggle, even with the support of the local churches. Currently around 90% of all fees are paid and the school is looking at ways to reduce bad debt. The committee voted an additional grant of £150,000 to help secure financial stability.

The two schools on Stanborough Park serve some 260 pupils: 160 in the secondary and 100 in the primary. With just under half the pupils from a non-Adventist background the school has just recruited a new chaplain. In addition, a recent OFSTED inspection commended the school for its spiritual, social and moral achievements.

STANBOROUGH PRESS

When many Adventist institutions around the world are struggling it was good to hear from Stanborough Press manager, Paul Hammond, that the Press achieved an increase in sales of almost £330,000 over the previous year. The Press provides and develops materials both for this country and for a number of African nations. A number of new books have been produced over the last year and there is a particular drive towards improving children's resources.

JOHN LOUGHBOROUGH SCHOOL COMMISSION

The committee took considerable time to look at the current situation at the John Loughborough School. As a Seventh-day Adventist Voluntary Aided School it comes under the auspices of the South England Conference and Haringey Council. Recently Haringey imposed an Interim Executive Board and is investing additional money into the school to help improve standards. The SEC and BUC have together agreed to ask the Trans-European Division to head a commission that will independently look at the school, reviewing circumstances that led up to Haringey's intervention, but, more importantly, searching for steps that will help build and move the school forward and gain lessons that can be used for future reference.



Paul Hammond: 'Stanborough Press is producing a massive range of children's books'

Restoring trust



Victor Pilmoor, BUC treasurer, reflects on the issues raised by the £3.2 million fraud case covered by the national media. 'Trust enables exchange to happen smoothly, without the burden of research on each transaction.' Should trust ever be extended to the point where, not only do we fail to take reasonable precautions, we totally suspend our critical faculties? How can we restore authentic trust? 'There is a difference between the perception of being trusted and the objective reality of being worthy of trust. . . .'

Remembering is not my forte, but I do recall a gem from the anthology of Adventist mantras: 'The greatest want of the world is the want of men, men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.' *Education*, page 57 (1903).

Recent events suggest that we may need to brush up on this one! That so many succumbed to an opportunity for gain is not so much about ignorance, naivety or even greed; rather, betrayal and social pressure appear to be the issues most painful. Why is it that our church family, which prides itself on integrity and the expectation of trust, should find these virtues so cynically exploited?

When virtue is exploited there are inevitable consequences. In church, like a healthy family, members should be embraced on the basis of positive shared experiences, rather than fears about strangers. Isolation comes when we trust only those 'who have the truth', when we infer that the 'worldly' are without integri-

ty. To survive in life we must trust, and by raising suspicions on the many, we concentrate our dependence on the few, and when the few are compromised, deceit spreads like a virus.

It is a mistake to confuse moral and spiritual distinctiveness with professional and material necessities. Some suggest that advice should have been sought from better informed Adventists. Though well meaning, this serves to entrench unhealthy isolationism. There is value in seeking *independent* professional advice.

Though families prefer to solve their problems privately, they are not good at calling each other to account. It takes courage to defy social conventions. The pain of this tension is often greater than the tolerance of loss, while whistle blowing on a 'brother' is just not done. We learn that in school camaraderie. To make life worse, owning up to being duped diminishes our self-esteem and so we seethe in silence until exposure becomes inevitable. Wholesome families hold one another to account in love. We need to learn to do this better.

Lastly, as in Israel of old, people marginalised by race or religion yearn to believe in the success of their champions. They want to

believe in the efficacy of their kind. This causes them to place an unreasonable amount of faith in kinsmen. Time and again the Bible warns us to place our faith in God, and not in 'princes'.

How can we restore authentic trust?

Trust is one of those ideas about which we are intuitive. Like the chemistry of life, the alchemy of relationships can be better understood. Trust enables exchange to happen smoothly without the burden of research on each transaction. Its purpose is not to create a risk-free environment; rather, its purpose is to create a haven from which individuals extend their radius of trust. Unhealthy families restrict trust and hinder the venture of enterprise.

Francis Fukuyama in *Trust: The Source of Social Prosperity* suggests that a nation's prosperity relates to the ability of its people to trust themselves in the first instance, their immediate family, through organisational barriers to society at large. Poverty is associated with clan fixated societies. He quotes Max Weber who observes that certain ethical codes tend to promote a wider radius of trust by emphasising imperatives of honesty, benevolence and charity to the community at large. This, Weber argued, was one of the key outcomes of the doctrine of grace. Trust in his view, critical to economic life, arises from religious conviction rather than calculation. In short, trust is one of the fruits of Christian living. This radical conclusion surely underpins authentic stewardship.

Curiously, there is a difference between the perception of being trusted and the objective reality of

being worthy of trust. Experts may be worthy of trust but are occasionally not trusted. By contrast, advertisers use non-expert 'celebrities' to endorse products, because their faces are known and trusted. Similarly, honest personalities in church circles are often trusted because of who they are, despite speaking beyond their remit. Trust and its worthiness can be understood with respect to its key components.

Competence is so self evident that it hardly need be mentioned. Competent people will have succeeded in learning their trade and be affirmed by professional associations that review their work and hold them to account and insist on continual professional development.

Openness is essential for competent people to earn trust. Those who are secretive in their undertakings soon lose the right to be trusted. Trusted people willingly offer accountability rather than have it thrust upon them.

Trust is earned when people deliver what they say they will, within the best traditions of practice. They usually produce more than they promise.

Suspicion thrives in unjust societies. It is hard to trust when the gap between 'haves' and 'have nots' is wide. Trust is engendered when opportunities and outcomes are equitable for all, regardless of identity or affiliation. In our diverse society this indicator is crucial. Marginalised people are tempted into taking short cuts in order to level the playing field.

The failures of men are the failures of men! They are not failures of faith, or faith in God. These things may try us, they may break us, but the Gospel of redemption calls us to learn, to be disciplined in Christ's love, care and forgiveness.

'In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.' Psalm 62:7-12, KJV.

Scottish Mission's Church Officers' Training Day

On Sunday 24 February, thirty lay church leaders from all parts of Scotland descended on Crieff. They were joined from further afield by Victor Hulbert and Eglan Brooks, BUC Communication and Personal Ministries & LIFEdevelopment directors, respectively, and by Annette Moore, Welsh Mission Children's Ministries sponsor.

The Scottish Mission's annual Church Officers' Training Day provoked such comments as, 'I feel really empowered now to enhance my children's lesson studies' (Skha Ndlovu, Personal Ministries Secretary, Glasgow); 'It will give me much more confidence in fulfilling my new role' (Sonja Eikum, Communications secretary, Aberdeen).

Victor Hulbert prefaced his Communications workshop by paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 12:1-7 with a 'Scottish Mission Body of Christ' – all departments being interdependent and most effective when working together. His wide-ranging workshop included the following advice to those responsible for effective church communications:

Church directory inserts: Make sure visitors can find your church, for example, in Council websites, telephone directories and university church lists.

Church appearance and signage: View your church through the eyes of a first-time visiting non-Adventist. Is it well maintained and welcoming? Is your external sign up to date and using language others can understand? Remember, 'Sabbath' to most people means 'Sunday'. 'Bible Study' is more descriptive and meaningful than 'Sabbath School'.

Responding to TV, radio and press enquiries: In times of trouble, if a journalist calls or stuffs a microphone in your face, you don't have to answer immediately. Unless you have been briefed previously with the facts and are authorised to comment, say you may be willing to talk later or refer them to someone who can. NEVER say 'No comment'!

Writing for the *MESSENGER*/BUC News/local newspaper: If you haven't caught my attention in the first eight seconds you probably haven't caught me. Put the most important thing at the top of the story.

Photography: Take action shots. Shots where people are interacting! They're a lot more interesting and

NELLIE WALTON (1913-2007) d. 6 June. Nellie was the widow of Pastor Bernard Arthur Walton. Mum led a saintly life. 'In the sweet by and by we shall meet on that beautiful shore' – a line from *Gospel Melodies*, one of Nellie's favourite song books, represented an affirmation of her faith. She was born in Barnsley, and raised as a Baptist. Her life-change happened when she met a young Adventist minister at a campaign. She married Bernard in 1938. Their love for each other, for Christ and for music became their lifelong calling and inspiration. They worked as missionaries in West Africa for twelve years, where their three daughters were born: Margaret, Hilary and Barbara. Nellie helped Bernard in all aspects of church life, serving in the cities of Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham, York, Manchester, Halifax and, finally, Aberdeen. She was known for her angelic voice, singing many solos, duets and trios at meetings and in homes. They retired to Halifax, Yorkshire, where Bernard died in 1983. Nellie was small in stature but had a heart of gold, opening her home to church members and strangers alike, willing to share food, friendship and loving-kindness to people of all ages. One minister said, 'She was a mother to many.' Nellie is remembered also for her lovely smile and sense of humour. For her last two years she moved to Prestatyn, North Wales, near her daughter, Barbara. She died at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Rhyl, aged 93. Her funeral service in Colwyn Bay was led by Pastor John Surridge and Pastor Eric Lowe. Scriptures were read by Nellie's grandson, Gary Wynne, and by Kendall Down. Leslie Riskovitz played the organ. A tape was played of Nellie singing, a recording made over thirty years ago: 'After the toil and heat of the day, I will see Jesus at last. On his beautiful throne, he will welcome me home, After the day is through,' lines from a hymn she sang many times as a solo and a duet with Barbara. Nellie leaves two daughters, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. All her days she worked hard in simple, devoted faith. Her life is treasured by those who knew and loved her. Nellie is dearly missed for her generous, warm spirit – until the Day of Christ, when, I'm sure, her crown will sparkle with many stars.

BARBARA GRIFFITHS

KENNETH SYLVESTER HARRIS (1949-2008) d. 5 February. It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of our brother Kenneth Sylvester Harris. Kenneth was born in Jamaica on 4 September 1949. He emigrated to England with his parents and lived here until his death on 5 February. Kenneth went to school in



England as a child and his education led him to architecture. He was baptised as a youngster at the New Gallery Evangelistic Centre and remained a faithful Christian and member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Kenneth employed different evangelistic tools and tried various methods in his personal ministry to get the message of Jesus to whomever he met. It was to this end that Kenneth set up the www.freewebs.com/kingdom-love website. It was heartening to hear his GP testify to Kenneth's keenness in expressing his belief and his commitment to that belief. His GP said he had developed great respect both for Kenneth as a person and for the belief he advocated. The funeral service took place at the Walthamstow church in Boundary Road on 13 March at 12 noon. The interment was at the Chingford Cemetery. May our brother rest in peace and rise in glory.

J. UGBOMAH



DENNIS HALL (1928-2008) d. 16 January. Dennis Hall was born on 18 May 1928 to Seventh-day Adventist parents who lived in Balham, London. His parents, who ran a health food shop, were

members of the Wimbledon church. He and his elder brother Victor dedicated their whole lives in service to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In his youth Dennis and the other young people of the Wimbledon church acted as stewards during evangelistic campaigns of C. A. Reeves in Wimbledon Town Hall. The influence of his parents and the church led Dennis to attend Newbold College where he made many friends and graduated. After meeting Beryl Williams, the love of his life, they were married in the Cardiff church in 1952. In 1958 the family moved to Plymouth with the main purpose of giving their children an Adventist education by enrolling them in Fletewood School. Their children, Carol, Graham and Raymond, all attended the school and, in more recent years, four of their grandchildren have also attended Fletewood. When moving to Plymouth, Dennis started his own printing business in Gilwell Street and later transferred to premises in Greenbank. He produced quality work and over the years completed many jobs for the church, including handbills, programmes and tickets for evangelistic meetings. In 1984 Dennis suffered his first heart attack. After recovering, the family moved from Plymouth to Plympton where Dennis continued his printing business from the basement of their home. He kept the business going until he was well into his 70s. Dennis had a great desire to see God's work progress, especially in Plymouth, where over the years he made a valuable contribution to the work of the church, serving as church elder for nearly

fifty years. Many members and friends who have attended Plymouth church over the years will remember Dennis playing the organ, preaching and teaching the Sabbath School lesson. He will also be remembered for the valuable service he gave as treasurer of SEC's Area 1, a position he held for many years. In the past few months Dennis's health deteriorated and he fell asleep on 16 January. The funeral service was conducted in the Plymouth church on 22 January by the writer and Pastor Ron Clemow. His granddaughter, Jennie, recited a poem and his daughter, Carol, gave a moving tribute. Dennis is survived by his wife Beryl, their three children, Carol, Graham, Raymond, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. We all look forward that great day of resurrection and reunion when we will not only meet our loved ones again, but we will meet Jesus and life will be unending.

PASTOR ALAN HODGES

Thank you, dear friends, young and old, near and far, for your beautiful cards and messages of sympathy, each one a comfort and reminder of happy memories. Dennis would be humbled to know that his life and influence had touched so many lives.

Beryl, Carol, Graham, Ray and their families

MYRTLE NEWMAN (1912-2008) d. 30 January.

Myrtle Newman, wife of the late Pastor Walter Newman, passed to her rest in Lowestoft, with her son Roy and wife Lyn by her side, just nine days after her ninety-sixth birthday. She was born and grew up in London where she met her future husband just ten days before he was to return as a missionary to Africa. Yet within those ten days they courted and became engaged. Walter Newman had to return to Africa without her but six months later Myrtle Crooks took the last passenger boat before World War II prevented further civilian traffic. They were married in Ibadan, Nigeria, on 24 April 1940. Myrtle bore three children, David, Gillian and Roy, all born in Africa. Not only was she their mother, she was also their school teacher. Although leaving school at age fourteen Myrtle could hold her own with anyone in an intellectual discussion. She was well known for her prowess at Scrabble and loved to do crossword puzzles. She sang and played piano and organ. But there was one thing she never learned to do – drive a car. Myrtle was active in the British Women's Temperance Movement, was president of the local chapter of the White Ribboners and also served as vice-president on the national level. She lived in her own home except for the last couple of weeks of her life spent in the hospital. She loved Jesus and often reminded her children to be ready for Jesus to come. She is survived by her children, David (and his wife Phyllis) in the United States, Gillian in Canada, and Roy (and his wife Lyn) in England, her grandchildren, Michelle, Heather, Lee and Kirsty, and her great-grandchildren, Gavin, Gillian, Gabrielle and Neve.

PASTOR J. DAVID NEWMAN

The family would like to thank our relatives, her church family (who visited her every day in the hospital) and friends for their kind words of comfort, cards, letters of condolence, flowers and donations to the British Temperance Society.



Another child's Christmas

Valerie Austin,
ADRA-UK Office manager

A young girl is walking in the middle of a busy road with traffic buzzing on either side of her. She is begging pitifully at the window of each passing car. No more than 5 or 6 years old, she is carrying a tiny baby in her arms. This sight of desperation will remain with me for a long time to come.



This is Madagascar. Having passed so many women and children without footwear, I can already see the reason why flip-flops had been requested by the ADRA Madagascar team.

Masses of smiling and excited children greeted me in the first orphanage. I watched in awe as one of the smaller children danced and sang for me. Here I was, thousands of miles from home. I had watched the many thousands of shoeboxes being delivered to the ADRA-UK office in Watford in previous weeks, and now I was standing in the middle of Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, seeing for myself what

their Christmas would be like! Each child waited patiently and then humbly thanked the UK people for their gift.

I was shocked to see the very basic conditions that these children live in. The poverty in this country was evident – frail children lie listlessly on their mothers' laps while they sell or beg in the street.

In another orphanage one girl eyed me curiously and another clutched a flip-flop as if it were the most precious thing in the world. Sometimes the excitement of the children could not be contained and they ripped the gift wrap off the boxes and jumped up and down

after seeing the contents.

The teachers from this site were amazed at the generosity of the UK people. 'Did people really give you all these presents for our orphans?' they asked. 'Yes,' I replied.

On my final day of distribution we visited a Rehabilitation Centre. Here a husband and wife have taken in not only orphans and street children but all of society's castaways: the disabled, the deaf, the mute, prostitutes and petty thieves. They have given these people the tools to provide themselves with an income and an on-site craft shop for them to sell their wares. This place is, in a small way, an example of what

SPECIAL NEEDS CAMP

Would you like to share our enthusiasm for working with special people and the blessing it brings? An Awareness/Training day will be held from 10.30am to 4pm on Sunday 13 April at 30 Ravenhurst Street, Birmingham (next to the Harper Bell School).

The programme will cover:
Where we have come from
Where we are now – who comes, who cares and who serves
What are our objectives?
What are our plans?

Please contact Joy Bussey to book a place, as lunch will be provided.
Telephone: 01923 461044
(answerphone available)
Email: js.bussey@ntlworld.com

MR DORREL SAUNDERS of Emmaville Smithfield, Jamaica, currently residing in the UK. A buyer has been found for the property in Jamaica. If anyone knows Mr Saunders or sees him, please ask him to contact urgently his ex-wife or Mrs Ledgister on 0208 764 1555.

ADRA-UK is endeavouring to do, not only in Madagascar, but in other parts of this world – to 'Give Opportunities'.

ADRA-UK funds projects like the shoebox appeal through the 2008 Annual Appeal. Help ADRA to give opportunities to people in need. We help to lift people in need and give opportunities to escape the cycle of poverty. Help us in 2008 to continue to give opportunities.

What do you give?

ABC BOOK SALES

April

13 Retired Workers' Meeting,
Stanborough Press 12.30 start
27 John Loughborough 10.30am-2pm

May

11 Harper Bell 10.30am-2pm

Messenger

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Sunset

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	Land	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Apr 18	8.03	8.15	8.10	8.26	8.33
25	8.15	8.27	8.23	8.41	8.47
May 2	8.26	8.38	8.35	8.55	9.00
9	8.37	8.50	8.47	9.09	9.13

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