

Messenger

News to the churches • 21 November 2008 • Volume 113 • 25

In the footsteps of Paul

by Dr Richard de Lisser, Communication director, SEC

On Sunday 12 October, seventy-two church planters from the South England Conference travelled to sunny Greece to the ancient city of Athens to walk in the footsteps of the great church planter, the apostle Paul. They visited such sites as Mars Hill, where Paul spoke about 'the unknown God', and ancient Corinth where he preached 'Christ and him crucified'. The modern-day church planters were welcomed to this historic setting by Mission

president Pastor Apostolos Maglis and Trans-European Division Personal Ministries, Sabbath School and Publishing director Dr Michael Hamilton.

The first ever SEC church planters' 'X-Change' was organised by Pastor Aris Vontzalidis, SEC Church Growth director, and his wife Sophia, and was held at the hotel Mare Nostrum in Vravra, Athens, under the theme 'Mission Possible!' The keynote address was presented by Pastor Paul Lockham, Executive

secretary of the SEC, who challenged the church planters to be all things to all men in order to win some. He ended his address by surprising Aris with a birthday cake to celebrate his sixtieth birthday on that very day.

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Should Islamic extremists frighten us?

asks Justin Thyme

Years ago I got to know a Muslim gent quite well. Well enough for him to ask me: 'What makes a Christian tick?' A tall order. Managed to convey the salient precepts, so much so that he admitted that it sounded good, before adding, seriously, 'I could never change of course. They'd KILL me!'

At the time I assumed his statement was an exaggeration. But since then 'honour-killings' have occurred, suicide-bombings become commonplace and Islamic extremists have plied worldwide terror.

When the recent news broke of a young Christian charity worker being murdered in Afghanistan — supposedly, *just* because she was a Christian — an icy hand gripped my gut.

Perhaps many of us feel ambivalent towards Islam, yet, as Borge Schantz tells us (*Islam in the Post 9/11 World*, p.160), 'Jews, Christians and Muslims all have Abraham as their father spiritually and, perhaps,

physically too.' How can we live with that? Accept that God loves *all* his children and is not willing that any should perish.

Paul, as I understand it, in the first chapter of Philippians, 27-30, is reiterating one of his favourite themes: 'For living, to me, means simply — Christ!'

So as a result, our behaviour, conduct and all aspects of our everyday life should surely be worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

God's amazing grace, once fully understood and accepted, will transform the life of a Christian. We should now accept that we are no longer our own, but have been bought with an inestimable price. Our Lord even thanks the Father for giving us to him, his redeemed (John 17:6,7), and prays that we may all be one, just as the Father lives in Christ and he lives in us.

Consequently, if we identify ourselves with Christ, deny our 'self', and are willing to follow him (Luke



9:23), surely the next step is to realise that, inevitably, we *will* meet opposition. Become participants in the Great Controversy, naturally apprehensive, but nevertheless ready and willing to stand fast with Christ and join battle against an already defeated enemy.

Our Saviour, who has defeated Satan and death by taking upon himself the cumulative sins of all mankind at the cruel cost of his own life, has once and for all rescued us as God's children from evil. Undeservedly, we must admit, but his sacrifice was for *our* sake. Why? Because he loves us.

Any enmity towards us should be borne courageously. It may be in the form of intimidation, ridicule or — rarely — violence, yet Jesus himself says: 'Be of good cheer, I have con-

quered all tribulation in the world.'

In actuality, this harassment (often merely mental) is positive evidence that we ourselves are being saved by God. All doubts we have, shortcomings, all feelings of a lack of faith should be banished!

So should we not consider it a privilege and an honour to serve Christ? Not only by gladly suffering for him too? As the *King James Version* has it: '... suffer for his sake'. Our love for him will then take on reality. Remain not just a mind-set, but become a vibrant, 'living' strength.

As Paul says at the end of Romans 8:31-39, we hold, in Christ, an impregnable position. If God is for us, who can be against us? Who can separate us from the love of Christ?



Will winter last forever?

David Marshall

Last night's deep frost did for my dahlias. Since July they've made gloriously huge banks of colour in the garden.

On Sunday I'll be out there with my secateurs, chopping them back in preparation for clearing the beds and shovelling barrow-loads of manure on them. That serves the dual purpose of keeping their tuberous roots warm through the winter and providing nutrition for next year's growth. Thanks to global warming's moderating effect on our winters, the tubers no longer have to be lifted in autumn, wrapped carefully and stored indoors during the winter, and planted again in the late spring. Not in my latitude anyway.

Nevertheless 'a northerly airflow', accurately forecast by Carol Kirkwood, and the deep frost that it blew down from the Arctic has blackened both flowers and foliage. Even the central trunks — almost as thick as your leg — have been reduced to mush.

It's a Jeremiah 8:20 situation. The harvest: past. The summer: well and truly ended. 'And we are not saved.'

Do you remember what the prophet said after that bleak statement?

'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' (8:22.)

It takes four seasons to make a year. And late autumn is the time for thinking through and careful evaluation. The coming winter will bring frost, wind and storm. How secure is our rootedness when the frosts of recession bite, the storms of falling stocks and shares blow our pensions away and the winds of unemployment impact our livelihoods? Those spiritual roots had better be deep and strong!

The Judah of Jeremiah's time had put its trust in a **taken-for-granted privileged position**. To souls who presume on a favoured status, Jeremiah's message is, 'Soul, beware! Look what happened to Shiloh!' (See Jeremiah 7:14.) Long years ago I followed Old Testament clues to the location of ancient Israel's spiritual capital. All I found was a handful of people doing a bit of excavation and finding nothing. Look at the fate of Jerusalem and its temple in AD70. To any branch of Christianity that presumes on a privileged position in the eyes of God, the

message of the Bible is, '*For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.*' (Romans 11:21.)

Jeremiah's Judah also put its trust in **ritualism**. 'If we steadfastly comply with the outward forms of our religion,' Judah believed, 'God is *bound* to save us!' God wasn't. God didn't. 'To what purpose is your multitude of sacrifices?' God asked. He wanted a people who did justly, loved mercy, walked humbly with their God and whose *heart* was right. If God came calling, would he find such a people down your way? We must *know* the God we worship. There must be repentance and faith; inward grace matched by outward graciousness.

Jeremiah's Judah displayed all kinds of symptoms on the surface that there was rotteness at the core. Pointedly, God asked, 'Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, "We are safe" — safe to do all these detestable things? Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.' (Jeremiah 7:9-11.)

Have we got hold of the idea that there is salvation from sin when there is no repentance?

Yes, there is more than enough grace in God to counteract the impact of winter's fierce frosts and storms that threaten to destroy us and blow us away. But God looks for repentance before he gives pardon.

Yes, it is possible to experience the assurance of salvation. But God gives that experience to those who are 'in Christ Jesus' (Romans 8:1). But those who are 'in Christ' are not then (in God's words through Jeremiah) 'safe to do all these detestable things' symptomatic of rotteness at heart.

Strong medicine is needed to deal with the disease of sin. To take that medicine we have first to open our mouths — *in repentance!*

Gilead was a region to the east of the Jordan which was well known for the medicinal plants and shrubs that grew there.

Jeremiah had pointed out that the grain harvest (in April) had been a failure. The fruit harvest (in September) had been disastrous. The last of the summer had faded and fallen. What could save them from disease and disaster now?

'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' (8:22.)

What was the cure for the disease from which Judah was suffering, *sin*? What is the cure for sin? Who is the Healer who will apply that cure?

Those are questions that we can answer. Hence Jeremiah comes in with a supplementary question: '*Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?*'

The Hebrew word translated 'healing' is not the same as the one translated 'health'. *Arukah* is Hebrew for the new flesh that grew over an old wound.

Jeremiah is saying, 'The sin of Judah is great, but the Physician of the soul is greater. So why does that open wound not heal over?'

There was not an absence of cure. There was a Great Physician to apply it. So why could the healing process not begin?

The *SDA Bible Commentary* (volume 4, pages 394-5) says that the people were too proud to accept the remedy, 'and thought they could cure themselves. Perhaps they had grown to love the disease. At any rate they would not look to the Healer and live.' Whatever the reason, you see, they were refusing to repent.

Healing could not begin until they repented. The winter outlook was bleak because 'they would not look to the Healer and live.'

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole,
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

To apply that balm we have to repent in the hearing of the Great Physician.

It takes four seasons to make a year, but without repentance winter can last forever.

Without repentance, 'To what purpose is your multitude of sacrifices?'

If we are too proud to repent we shall be as devastated as my dahlias. And there will be no springtime.



Enhancing Health

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

Brain Health Series

Part 9g

Brain response to body chemicals and stress hormones

With increasing scientific insight into the consequences of stress on the brain, the picture that emerges is a sobering one. Chronic overreaction to stress overloads the brain with powerful hormones only intended for short-term work in emergency situations. The cumulative effect of continuous stress in particular impairs the brain's ability to remember and learn new information but also damages and even kills brain cells. This is because the continuous over-secretion of stress hormones like cortisol adversely affects brain function and memory.

Brain response to stress

The key brain area dealing with stress is

called the limbic system. It is frequently referred to as 'the emotional brain' because of its enormous influence on emotions and memory.

Renowned brain researcher, Robert M. Sapolsky, reports that

sustained stress can damage a part of the limbic brain — the hippocampus, which is central to learning and memory.

Corticosteroids (cortisol) and adrenaline are secreted from the adrenal glands during stress. Once in the brain, cortisol remains much longer than adrenaline, where it continues to affect brain cells.

Memory formation and retrieval

During a stressful situation we sometimes forget important information. This is because cortisol interferes with the function of neurotransmitters, the chemicals that brain cells use to communicate with each other.

Excessive cortisol can affect thinking ability and retrieval of long-term memories.

Memory loss

Stress hormones divert blood glucose to key muscles, which reduces the amount of glucose (energy) reaching the brain's hippocampus.

This results in an energy crisis in the hippocampus, compromising its ability to create new memories.

In his book *Brain Longevity*, Dharma Singh Khalsa, MD, identifies some older people losing 20-25% of their hippocampus cells. This causes short-term memory loss resulting from a lifetime of stress.

Cortisol and brain degeneration

Mayo Clinic researchers, using magnetic resonance imaging, found that specific hippocampus changes were linked to altered behaviour associated with ageing and Alzheimer's disease.

Neurologist Ronald C. Petersen, principal author of the study, states: 'When certain parts of the hippocampus shrink or deteriorate, specific, related memory abilities are affected.' Hippocampus size averaged 14% smaller in the group showing high and rising cortisol levels, compared to the group with moderate and decreasing levels. The small hippocampus group also fared worse in memory tests and pictures they'd seen twenty-four hours earlier.

Stress less!



New irrigation methods increase food supply in Mali

by Bert Smit, Executive director, ADRA-UK

Situated inland on the edge of the arid Sahel region in western Africa, food production has been entirely dependent on weather. For

the past year, ADRA has been changing the fragile situation that often results in famine and deadly hunger. Women's groups are being taught



to use low-pressure drip irrigation, a new method that conserves scarce water, reduces the use of fertilisers and provides consistent irrigation throughout the season. This system increases yield by concentrating the water directly onto the plants' roots. The women are taught to use the new method and given seeds and tools to grow food for their families, as well as surplus to sell in the marketplace and earn cash income.

The one-year pilot project will end in December. The hoped-for outcome is that once its benefits are observed, this new technique will be copied

widely in the region. The real impact of the £17,500 project will come next year and the year after as the new technology spreads far and wide, making significant inroads into chronic starvation among the people of Mali.

Mali ranks as the third poorest nation on the globe, according to the UN. ADRA-UK provided £10,000 towards this project, with other contributions coming from ADRA International and ADRA Germany. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) provided matching funding in kind.

Barnsley Visitors' Day

'This story could change your life for good' was the theme of Pastor Eric Lowe's sermon at Barnsley's Visitors' Day on Sabbath 25 October.

It echoed the aim of the day, which in its planning was to demonstrate the work of the Adventist church locally, nationally and internationally. Local members presented interesting items about medical work, ADRA in action, Special Needs Camp, Ingathering, radio evangelism, The Stanborough Press and helping in the community. Various displays and free literature were in evidence.

After a tasty lunch, Malcolm Watson introduced the CHIP programme, bringing with him some delicious recipes. Throughout the day Recall from St Albans ministered beautifully in song.

Visitors and friends were given insights into the mission of the church and encouraging feedback was received, which augurs well for the 2009 Year of Evangelism.

HAZEL SCHOLES

Church planting and the power of God



Church planting is gaining ground in the SEC and more and more people are catching the vision of our Church becoming again a church-planting movement as it was when God first gave us this very special message for a lost world.

By God's grace we have over thirty church plants and groups across the SEC, all different in size,

composition and form, trying to reach people living in their communities in various ways according to God's call and the bestowment of gifts and talents.

You will agree that one of the most thrilling things for all of us is to hear how God is impacting communities and changing lives for his glory as he has been changing our own.

My wife and I met Louis and his wife at 'The Church', a church plant in Enfield under the leadership of Pastor Jon Gendle, and I was impressed by his testimony, zeal for

his Lord, and his willingness to help others find Jesus. Thank God he has found in that church a real and caring spiritual family with unconditional love and acceptance, and where he and his wife serve as baptised and active members.

May to God be the glory and may we all continue to pray and work, and work and pray, for there is a rich harvest of souls out there who need his touch. And the harder the times will get, the richer the harvest will be!

ARISTOTLE VONTZALIDIS, Church Growth, Life Development and Adventist Mission director, SEC

The Louis Field story

My name is Louis Field. I am a recovering alcoholic and drug addict of the worst type. First and foremost, I would like to thank God for another clean and sober day today. It has not always been that way. Of sinners I may probably be the worst. I was a cheat, a thief, a liar and a drunk. I did not care for anyone but number one.

I do not write this to brag. I write this to show the power of Jesus Christ and the miracles he has worked in my life. I am going to tell you briefly about three stages of my life. First, my life without Jesus. Second, how I came to find Jesus. And third, living with Jesus in my life.

As far back as I can remember I never felt the same as other people. I used to feel that the spotlight of the world was on me and it seemed to follow me wherever I went. I didn't like that. I felt an emptiness that I can only describe as the hole in the middle of a doughnut. But the hole was in my life.

At the age of 13 I discovered alcohol and found that it took the horrible feeling away. It was as though the hole inside was filled. I felt like the person I was supposed to be. Confident, accepting of myself, a feeling that life was great. . . .

Through the years my alcohol consumption grew. By the age of 15 I was using drugs. From time to time the emptiness returned and when it did I would fix myself with drink, drugs, clothes or food – anything to change the way I felt. I now know all these were just quick fixes.

I was from a broken family so throughout the years there had been no guidance. I knew I was loved, but I was left to get on with it. My father is an alcoholic. And I wanted to be just like my dad. He was the life and soul and I looked up to him.

In 1995 I met a beautiful girl who is now my wife. It was love at first sight. She came like a lifeboat in a stormy sea. I knew my substance use was getting serious. But here was the solution to my problems, I thought. *She* could fix me and fill that hole.

Well, she did – for about two years. But then I was off and running again, lying, cheating, manipulating people, including her. I was going out, leaving her with our baby daughter alone, not coming home all night. As the years went by my binges got worse, the lies got bigger. My using was now no fun, just problems and consequences. We had another daughter. I thought that this would straighten me out. Two days after my second daughter's birth I was back out again, lying, doing what had become the norm for our family. *But I wanted to stop.* I found I couldn't stop. Drink and drugs were my masters and I obeyed their demands. My home had become a war zone. I finally got to the point of regularly trying to commit suicide. I didn't want to die, but I certainly didn't want to live.

Alcohol and drugs were taking everything I held dear, one by one. Then one afternoon I bumped into a friend I knew who was an addict. He told me he had not used any mind-

altering substance for six months and he was so happy. I thought: I want some of that. My life was unbearable.

I asked how he had done it. He said, ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS and working the twelve-step recovery programme. He took me to a meeting that evening. People shared their stories with me, how they felt and how they drank and used like me. And how they were now free from the pain and misery of addiction. I asked how. Then came the shock of my life. GOD HAD HEALED THEM, they said. GOD had become the power that had enabled them to overcome. I thought: Oh no! What would God want to do with me, given the life I had led? So I decided that my deceased Nan would be the 'higher power' to which I would appeal! I could not get my head around the God idea.

That weekend my family and I went away to Walton-on-the-Naze, just to get away from everything. As we went for a walk my wife said, 'Let's have a look round the town church.' Reluctantly I went into it. I felt very uncomfortable and could not wait to get outside again. But as we left my wife tripped on the leaflet stand and over went all the leaflets, so she and an elderly lady picked them up. When they had finished, the elderly lady gave my wife a little booklet called *Journey Into Life*. That afternoon it rained so much that I sat in the caravan – with only the leaflet to read. It talked about Christianity and said that Jesus came for the lost in spirit and how he died for my sins and how much he wanted me to let him into my life. It asked me to come to him as I was, warts and all. Then, on the next page, it said: 'This is a prayer to invite Jesus into your life. . . . If you

are ready, carefully think about what you will be saying and doing. . . . This is the prayer I prayed. I hope it inspires someone and that you will say it as I did:

Lord Jesus Christ, I know I have sinned in my words, thoughts and actions.

There are so many good things I have not said, thought and done. I am so sorry and I turn from everything I know to be wrong.

You gave your life upon the cross for me.

Gratefully I give my life back to you.

Now I ask you to come into my life. Come in as my Saviour to cleanse me.

Come in as Lord to control me. And I will serve you for all the remaining years of my life in complete obedience. Amen.

I pray this will change your life as it changed mine. As soon as I said that prayer I felt the Spirit of Christ enter my body. There was a warmth in my heart and a feeling that things were going to be fine. My spirit had awoken. I felt alive. The barriers came crashing down. I felt a love for Jesus and I felt his presence. I have not had a drink or drugs since that rainy day, and that was nearly two years ago.

Thanks be to God through the Lord Jesus. My life today is one of hope, faith and courage. My wife and I have been baptised. We are members of a wonderful church that has other recovering addicts in it. I am now a part of two ministries to help those still suffering addictions and to share the Gospel and the power of Christ. My life has changed beyond belief.

Life is not perfect. I still have struggles. But the difference today is that I am not alone. I have a Father, Friend and Counsellor to guide me, and a loving church that is always there to support me. I am no longer alone. Our family is now one in Christ and we devote our lives to him in gratitude for all he has done. I believe that this is my purpose. Although I could not see it when I was stuck in the middle of all the mayhem, he made everything beautiful in his time. I was once empty, now I am full. I was once lost, and now I am found. Praise be to God through our beautiful Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith always shows itself.

If anyone would like to speak to me about addictions or anything at all my email address is fieldmaintenance@yahoo.co.uk.

Children's Pages name competition

Soon we'll be unveiling some brand-new pages in the *Messenger*, just for children.

We've called these pages 'Stars' to begin with because we think that you're all like special stars in Jesus' crown. But because we think you're so great we want you to come up with a name that you like. It needs to say something about how much God loves children. It's best if it's just one word, like 'stars', but be as creative as you like.

Email your ideas to us at children@adventist.org.uk. We'll choose the best name and the winner will receive a prize from the new range of children's books at the Stanborough Press. Or post your entries to Heather Haworth, Children's Ministries Department, BUC Offices, Stanborough Park, Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9JZ.

For Personal Ministries secretaries

From the beginning of 2009 the first issue of *MESSENGER* each month will have a special centre spread prepared and illustrated for children.

The idea of the Children's Ministries department is to give our children a sense of belonging, to make sure they feel it is their church and that they are a valued part of it.

Depending on the opinion of the pastors/elders of your church, we are tentatively suggesting that from the beginning of 2009 the first issue of *MESSENGER* each month should be distributed to children *between services*.

Be sure to consult with your pastor/elders first. They will not want it distributed at that time if your church already runs services for children at the same time as divine service or if they think that it will

distract adult worshippers.

HEATHER HAWORTH,
Children's Ministries director, BUC



Youth Leadership Convention — on a cruise liner!

by Pastor Colin Stewart, South England Conference Youth director

- We have a Young Adults' Day of Fellowship taking place in Bristol. The address is Carmel Christian Centre, 817a Bath Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS5 5NL.

The theme for the day is 'Leading from the front: Stand up and take your place'. We expect young adults from all over SEC to gather in Bristol to worship, praise and rededicate themselves to God in a new and dynamic way. We believe we will have a full house as we witness powerful drama, preaching, seminars, multi-media presentations and outreach reports from all eight areas of the conference. We also will be blessed by community and youth choirs. Certainly this will be a Sabbath

of difference. Tickets are free and can be ordered from the SEC youth website, www.secyouth.co.uk or ordered direct from the conference office.

- On 29 June to 4 July 2009 we will be holding our sixth annual Youth Leadership Convention, otherwise known as YLC. This training programme will take place in Greece and will be themed as 'Paul's Missionary Journeys Today'. The whole convention will be geared towards youth, Pathfinders, teens and young adults over 18 to learn, trace and apply today the missionary exploits of the apostle Paul.

The whole YLC experience will take place on a cruise liner and we will have exclusive use of the

on-board conference facility. We will also have enough time to take in the sights and sounds of the five different islands we will visit, some of them where the apostle preached and taught. Places are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment. The cut-off date for cheapest prices that are held down for us is mid-December. The speaker list so far is: Pastor Samuel Leonor from La Sierra University; Dr Herbert Thompson, president, Northern Caribbean University; Dr Leslie Pollard, vice-president, Loma Linda (LLU); and Pastor Gifford Rhamie, Newbold College. The whole cruise starts in Bodrum, Turkey, and ends for us in Athens, Greece. Get passports ready!

For more information on any of the two programmes please check our website, www.secyouth.co.uk or call us on the office number 01923 232728 or speak directly to Colin Stewart, Youth director, SEC.

Leading from the front
Stand up and take your place

Sabbath 29th November

SEC
YOUNG ADULTS
DAY OF
FELLOWSHIP

9:30am - 3:30pm
Carmel Church Centre

25yrs+
Only 500 places available. Lunch provided.
For tickets visit: www.secyouth.co.uk

817a Bath Road
Brislington
Bristol

Volunteer befriending opportunity

My name is Angella Wells and I am a member of the Cornerstone/Hanworth fellowship group in Area 6D.

I am a manager of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation unit for women and their children based in south-east London. Women who reside with us remain for approximately six months and we teach them skills and techniques to enable them to remain drug and alcohol-free once in the community. We offer a six-month after-care programme in the community for these women to help them make the transition to successful community living without illicit substances.

Many of the women who come to our project have lost or broken ties with their family and have developed dysfunctional relationships with drug-users or friends from prison and therefore need to break these ties to enable them to lead a positive life. This results in many of the women feeling isolated and lonely in the community, which potentially raises the risk of them returning to their old lifestyle and relapsing.

The women who come to us resettle all over London and some return to other areas in England. However, all need to be supported in some way, whether it be by a phone call or face-to-face meeting.

I am looking for other women who have an interest in providing practical, emotional and spiritual support in this way. Any volunteers could meet with a client at the project in the first instance and maybe go out for a herbal tea, walk in the park, shopping, visit church and so on. The idea is that the volunteer is able to reveal Jesus to these women in an informal way, supporting them where they are at, introducing them to a new way of living or supportive friendships.

Can you spare 1-2 hours a week to befriend someone in need and share the Gospel in a practical way with them?
The Maya is a drug and alcohol rehabilitation project providing therapeutic care and support to women with drug and alcohol problems.

We are looking for volunteers who are willing to provide informal/practical and spiritual support to these women on an individual basis, making friends with them, supporting them and introducing them to Jesus, meeting them where they are at.

For further information or if you would like to express an interest, please contact Angella Wells on 07764 815 228 or email me at a.wells@addaction.org.uk or angellawells73@hotmail.co.uk.

SEC YOUTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTS
YLC SPECIAL

**PAUL'S
Missionary
JOURNEYS TODAY**

A MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE TO GREECE AND TURKEY
29TH. JUNE - 4TH. JULY. 2009

OVER 18s

Speakers:
Pastor SAM LEONOR (Keynote Speaker)
Doctor HERBERT THOMPSON
Doctor LES POLLARD
Pastor GIFFORD RHAMIE

In the footsteps of Paul

The principal presenters were Dr Jon Paulien and Pastor David Cox. Dr Paulien is Professor of Religion and Dean of the School of Religion at Loma Linda University. He is the author of nineteen books and is a specialist in Johannine literature in the New Testament and the interaction of faith and contemporary cultures. Dr Paulien led the church planters through various seminars entitled: God meets people where they are; The Post-Christian Environment; The hand of God in Postmodernism; the Gospel in a Postmodern World. He challenged the delegates that if they are to plant successful, sustainable churches they must be aware of the times and the people of the times in order to appeal to them.

Pastor David Cox, now serving as a pastor and church planter in Cyprus, encouraged the church planters to be radical disciples of Christ. He stated that as disciples we must be discipling and this will never end but will last into eternity.

One of the highlights of the programme was a lively, humorous and practical presentation by Dr Konstantinos Mouroutis, Health director for the Greek Mission, on how happiness or the lack of it has a direct correlation to our health. With visual images and role-playing activities he was able to relate how cancer can be prevented through our lifestyle. Elsie Staple, Health and Community Ministries director for the SEC, along with her team, conducted a total of seventy-eight health checks on delegates and members of the hotel staff and led out in the morning exercise programmes.

Other speakers included Pastor Petras Bahadur, SEC co-coordinator for Adventist Muslim Relations; Pastor Eglan Brooks, BUC Personal Ministries, Church Growth and Life Development director; Dr Richard de Lisser, SEC Communication and Stewardship director; Dr Terry Messenger, SEC Personal Ministries and Sabbath School director; Pastor Sam Neves, SEC Media; Pastor David Riley; Pastor Rosemary Lethbridge, SEC church planter; and Earl Ramharacksingh, SEC treasurer.

Reports were received from a number of church plants from across the SEC including the Dunstable Project (Dunstable), The Watering Hole (Southampton), The Living Room (South Croydon), The

Yeovil Project (Yeovil), Impact (Chadwell Heath), Focus (Newbold College), and Sureway (Clayhall).

Each day began with a morning devotional and ended with evening worship, the finale being the SEC media team summarising the day's events in video and pictorially. As the Sabbath drew near everyone headed for the beach to watch the sunset and welcome in the Sabbath with prayer and praise. Throughout the week, significant time was spent in prayer and worship led by the worship team comprised of Stephen Hulbert and members of the Living Room church plant.

On Sabbath SEC president Pastor Sam Davis, in presenting the sermon for the morning, spoke of the trials of a church planter. Using Genesis 12:1-5, he spoke of Abraham being the first church planter, stating that 'God called him to leave behind family and friends. He did not know where he was going but when God calls a church planter they must leave their comfort zone. Abraham recognised the call of a church planter. Once you've come out don't look back at what is left behind you. It is necessary for you to have a single-minded focus which will not allow you to look back.'

At the close of the Sabbath Pastors Davis and Lockham led in a commissioning service, sending out the church planters to higher, greater and wider service in the mission field of God, calling upon each one to be active and not passive, to be soldiers on the battle field ready to go!

On Sunday 19 October SEC church planters left Greece to make footprints of their own that others would follow.

Youth day at Oxhill

Oxhill church, Birmingham, is a predominantly Asian congregation that seeks to welcome and embrace all who want to follow Christ. The church is led by young people from all walks of life and has an enthusiastic and growing congregation. September 27 was a special day for the young people of Oxhill church.

The Sabbath School Bible study was an interactive session conducted by experienced teacher Kish Poddar. Pastor Adam Ramdin delivered a special message during the divine service, reminding the young people of the experience of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and how a crisis should reveal our

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true characters as followers of Christ. It proved to be a very successful gathering for Asian Adventist youth from around the UK. Friends arrived from Walsall, Langley, Manchester, Watford, Harlow and Yeovil. It was uplifting to see the support and enthusiasm of all the young people, especially during the afternoon programme of musical praise. There were musical contributions in various languages including English, Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi (the national language of India). It was particularly heartwarming to see the unity in collective praise. Teenagers

and young adults combined their talents to uplift the name of Jesus. It was also encouraging to be supported by the senior members of the church. The church minister, Pastor D. Masih, thanked all who participated in the events of the whole day. When people unite with one accord, the Spirit of the Lord can clearly be felt, and we pray that the youth will continue to be encouraged and make a valuable contribution to the work of the church. We hope that more will be able to unite with us in future events.

WILFRED MASIH



The First Lord of the Treasury



It was his first day in office as he stood with his wife on the steps of number 10 Downing Street amid the flurry of activity from the assembled world media. As the cameras focused on him and the door of this most famous of addresses, one could not help but notice engraved on the well-polished brass letterbox

another title that comes with the office of Prime Minister, that of First Lord of the Treasury. Created in the seventeenth century, the First Lord of the Treasury is responsible for setting the economic strategy for the country, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer serving as Second Lord of the Treasury.

What would be the equivalent in our church structure today? One would like to suggest more than ever before that these exacting economic times require our local church leaders, our prime ministers, our pastors, as first lords of the treasury, to stand up and hold high the stewardship standard for our members to rally around.

Enshrined in our twenty-eight fundamental beliefs, stewardship is perhaps the least spoken about doctrine in the Church. In economically fruitful times stewardship is seen as less important. However,

in economically lean times, stewardship, by definition, becomes most important.

Inevitably, any financial downturn will adversely affect the Church's ministry and frustrate the Church's mission. It is vital that our members are reminded regularly of the twenty-first fundamental belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: 'We are God's stewards, entrusted by him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to him for their proper use. We acknowledge God's ownership by faithful service to him and our fellow men, and by returning tithes and giving offerings for the proclamation of his gospel and the support and growth of his church. Stewardship is a privilege given to us by God for nurture in love and the victory over selfishness and covetousness. The steward rejoices in the blessings that come to others as a result of his faithfulness.'

The pastor stands at a pivotal point in the life of the Church to lift up the banner of stewardship and ensure that by precept and by example the tenets of our faith are not forgotten. In these fearful financial times we are called to faith and faithfulness. Let the first lords of the treasury set the economic stewardship strategy for the local church through meaningful ministry, passionate preaching and dedicated service. Then, and only then, will we all benefit in these turbulent economic times.

DR RICHARD DE LISSER, SEC Stewardship director



Simply put, a steward is 'One who manages another's property, finances or other affairs'.

So how are we doing?

by Sam Davis,
SEC president

The credit crunch has highlighted some very important points about stewardship. Our peace of mind, our livelihood, our welfare and security are all dependent upon the good stewardship of others. About eighteen months ago I had a brainwave. I decided that I would trawl the Internet and find the bank that was offering the best interest on savings. I didn't have to search very long before I came across a bank that was out in front, offering 6% on savings. The rate was also special to those who had reached a certain age.

After briefing my wife with my plans and getting her blessing, I transferred some of our savings into

the new online savings account. Everything appeared to be in order until one Sabbath evening I happened to be listening to the news as they talked about Northern Rock Bank being in trouble. To tell the truth, I had never heard of Northern Rock before joining. Now, here were scenes of people withdrawing their money in droves. I decided to wait to see what would happen. Eventually, the Government's assurance that no one would lose their money in the bank persuaded me to leave it where it was. Since that time many other banks have gone to the wall.

People have been incredulous at the thought that those who were entrusted as stewards of our hard-earned money had been so cavalier in the way they used, lent and invested it. This became evident when the American Congress rejected the \$700 billion bail-out of banks and financial institutions in the States.

'Under the terms of the \$700 billion bail-out the US Government was to take on bad banking debts. It was hoped that this would rescue beleaguered banks that would then be free to begin lending again.

'However, American politicians were growing increasingly wary that voters would regard the scheme as using the taxpayers' money to save wealthy Wall Street banks who should be allowed to fail.'¹

At the heart of the

Congress's rejection of the plan was the feeling that taxpayers were being asked to bail out 'fat cats' who had acted irresponsibly. No one was bailing out the poor house-owner whose house was being repossessed or the worker who was losing his job as a result of the actions of Wall Street bankers.

Clearly we are all concerned about the stewardship of those we put in charge of our goods. Simply put, a steward is 'One who manages another's property, finances or other affairs.'²

On this side of the Atlantic one of the biggest surprises was when one of the giant financial institutions, HBOS, was found to be in trouble and had to be rescued by Lloyd's TSB. The head of HBOS, Andy Hornby, has now been recruited to help Lloyd's TSB embark on shedding up to 20,000 jobs in order to make a saving of £1.5 billion. For his services Mr Hornby will be paid a staggering £60,000 a month.

'Hornby has been widely blamed for the HBOS debacle. His gung-ho growth plan saddled the Halifax owner with billions of pounds of high-risk, buy-to-let and self-certification mortgages. News of the eye-watering fee is bound to enrage taxpayers who are bankrolling the rescue merger deal and reignite the controversy over "rewards for failure" in the city.'³

Jesus said, 'Who then is that



faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.' Luke 12:42-44.

When God made Adam and placed him in the garden to 'dress and to keep it' he became the very first steward. It is required that a steward be found faithful. We have all followed in the footsteps of Adam and have become stewards of God's goods. Psalm 24 reminds us that 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof'.

It doesn't matter what we may own, whether it's a 200-acre farm or a one-bed flat; it all belongs to the Lord. We are accountable to him how we manage and use that which he has entrusted to us.

We can get so mad when those to whom we have entrusted what we own get it wrong. The God of the universe who has entrusted so much to us has every right to expect the highest standards in stewardship from us.

The parable of the ten talents demonstrates that God expects nothing less than 100% commitment to the task. Bad stewardship will be called to account.

Good stewardship demands that everything that we have used to the best of our ability. Our means, our time, our talents, our health — everything belongs to

God. The time will come when the Master of the house will return and call for an account.

When the Master learned that the one-talent servant had hidden his talent he was not best pleased. In modern parlance, he laid into that servant, saying, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Matthew 25:26-30.

Each one of us has been given talents by God. We are his stewards. One day we will be called to give an account. May it be that we will hear from his lips the words 'Well done good and faithful servant.' Anything else will result in weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

¹Robert Winnett, www.telegraph.co.uk, 'US economy: \$700 billion Wall Street bail-out rejected on Meltdown Monday 2'. ²The Free Dictionary by Farlex. ³Simon Duke & Ben Laurence, *Daily Mail*, 'Boss behind bank collapse back on £60,000 a month', p. 6.

Health and stewardship

Timing, Gift Aid, time and talents are words often associated with stewardship. This article introduces another dimension of stewardship, which is the body temple, and will consider the connection between stewardship and health. Health means different things to different people but encompasses an holistic approach which involves well-being of mind, body and soul. A steward is a person who has the ability to manage the goods of someone else.

In the beginning God created this marvellous machinery called the human body. Man is God's workmanship, his masterpiece. Then man sinned and decay, deterioration and death, for the wages of sin is death, have been the consequences (Romans 6:23). Jesus died to salvage us from the penalty of sin. Therefore we were created by him and are now redeemed by him. We belong to him by creation (Genesis 1:26). We belong to him by redemption (John 3:16). Our bodies are Christ's purchased possession and we are not at liberty to do as we please. *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, page 18.

Another reason for stewardship is the question asked by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17: 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God

destroy for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are.' We need the Holy Spirit to empower us to glorify God. As the Holy Spirit dwells within us we will be guided and taught to be good stewards. 'For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Philippians 2:13. So whatever we do and whether we eat or drink, we are being stewards. Lifestyle is very important in this health and stewardship relationship. Here is an acronym which you should practise daily to encourage you: CELEBRATIONS.

Choices. Every day we must make choices — from what time to get out of bed to the friends we associate with.

Exercise. Our body is a machine which incorporates a variety of different organs and functions. If we do not use them, their ability to function effectively will diminish. For example, brisk walking for thirty minutes every day, at least five times a week.

Liquid. The body is made up of 70% water. Although at least eight glasses of water daily is recommended, the actual amount needed depends on your body weight.

Environment. We are stewards of the Earth and the environment. How much are you recycling?

Belief. Pause and reflect on how your beliefs are impacting your health.

Rest. How much rest and sleep do you have? Are you destroying your health to generate wealth?

Air. Do you open your windows to allow fresh air to circulate your room? Do you take deep breaths when exercising? The oxygen in the air assists in the functioning of the body.

Temperance. This practice will promote good health. Abstain from those things which are harmful.

Integrity. How honest are you? Do you practise what you encourage others to do? Can your friends trust you?

Optimism. This encourages you to have a positive outlook on life. This is important as it prevents depression and aids healing. God created you and redeemed you, so he is well able to care for you.

Nutrition. You are what you eat so it is necessary that you have a balanced diet. Your diet will contribute to optimal health.

Social support. God created us with needs which can only be met by others. You cannot be a good steward in isolation. Form social networks to encourage and support one another.

ELSIE STAPLE,
Health Ministries director, SEC



Stewardship of opportunities and abilities

Use them. Don't lose them!

Multiplication. That's the name of the game; and God is in the multiplication game. Creation reveals God's delight in setting off chain reactions. He has endowed each human life with a deposit of faith and talents and an exciting capacity to develop both to the glory of God. Like a good coach he promises to open doors of opportunity so we can experience the exhilaration of seeing these skills multiply as they minister to others.



Unfortunately the Creator's dream is often thwarted. Sometimes we are tempted to feel that God has dealt us a poor hand. If only my fingers could glide along the keyboard like Darren's. If only I could make people laugh like Rachel. If only I had a fistful of aces I could really do something big. We forget that faithfulness in little things is evidence of fitness for greater responsibilities.

What would have happened if Ananias had not seized the occasion to make a challenging visit? What would have been the outcome if the little unnamed maid had decided to keep her head down and her mouth shut? What untold ripples Philip set in motion by recognising the golden opportunity to introduce a total stranger to the story of the risen Christ! How often Hezekiah must have kicked himself for missing a chance to bear witness to the God of Heaven, misappropriating it to show off to his foreign visitors.

So use them, don't lose them! Start dropping your pebbles in the pond of life and watch with excitement as God multiplies the ripples in ever-widening circles of blessing.

ERIC C. LOWE, Stewardship director, BUC



Stewardship of time

'The Sabbath is a cathedral in time'

'The Sabbath is a cathedral in time,' argues Rabbi Abraham Heschel, and should not be merely worship that is place and space-centred.

More than observing the sacredness of Sabbath hours, Seventh-day Adventists recognise a God who strategically intervenes in human history. God is about time and timing. The 'Seventh-day' of our name refers to the beginning of time and the 'Advent' as conclusion to Earth's history at the 'on ramp' of God's eternal Kingdom. We further regard the Cross and its timing as the pivot around which salvation history revolves. The interplay of these fundamental perspectives influences the value we place on time.

The stewardship of time is, therefore, not just about the efficient use of the twenty-five to thirty thousand days with which we are endowed. Certainly, sloth has no place in our ethic because productive work is part of who we are. Our service is not about survival and self-sufficiency, but about restoring Eden, building community and communing with the Creator; for each person comes to this Earth at a particular time and for a particular purpose. As such, every moment is a meaningful occasion in God's plan.

We take the view that everything we have comes to us by virtue of God's generosity. Many of us lapse into the belief that we can generate, own and master material things, as represented by money. Time is something that we can neither generate nor control. It transcends us all. Therefore, the use and offering of our time is critical in reflecting the nature of our spiritual relationship.

We can see how the regularity of the Sabbath creates a rhythm for the music of life. We either choose to live in harmony with the rhythms of God's grace or to spend our lives jarringly off-beat.

VICTOR PILMOOR, Treasurer, BUC

Stewardship of the earth — Caring for Creation

Pastor Raafat A. Kamal, TED Stewardship director

Did God give human beings 'dominion' over the Earth to control it as we see fit, or did God give us 'stewardship' of creation as a sacred trust?

It's not really a new thing that fellowship with God includes care for Creation — it goes back to Scripture. The relationship between humans and the earth is one of stewardship. That we are stewards of Creation brings in, fundamentally, the notion of responsibility. First, to God as the One whose stewards we are. Second, to the rest of Creation, as ones who stand in the place of God. Christians are commanded to love their neighbours, and you can't do that by polluting their air and water.

A strong challenge for our Church today is to include environmental concerns as part of our mission.

On the one hand, Christians have a much higher calling than protecting the planet.

Our primary purpose is a heavenly one — preparing ourselves and others for a right relationship with God here and through eternity. On the other hand, God created the world and takes pleasure in it (Psalm 104). He has left

it up to humanity to rule over it and take care of all Creation (Genesis 1:28). The psalms tell us that Creation is not only given for our use, but that all Creation — animals, plants, hills and sky — is intended to praise and glorify the Lord (Psalm 148).

When humanity, through greed and short-sightedness, weakens and damages the earth, we are guilty of wasting not only a precious resource, but of defacing a beautiful work that God has made.

I encourage our church members to consider how their daily decisions are either contributing to healing God's Creation or to the destruction of it.



Stewardship of money

Deborah Harris*

Faith: *The substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen.* And to some extent the loss of faith has been one of the major contributory factors to the current financial crisis, known commonly as the 'credit crunch'. For the more technically minded, the ten-year tide of money previously available, with ever cheaper sources of credit, has frozen — with earth-shattering consequences. The seemingly never-ending 'wall of money' allowed the creation and

sale on a global scale of very high-risk loan products as economies in both the East and West boomed. The Bible is clear about how faith (trust) can be re-established: by hearing (understanding) the Word of God. (Romans 10:17.)



Understand the basics. We need to gain a real understanding of the basic tenets of finances. The common mistake made is that lots of money equates to financial freedom. Our finances are just one of the assets God has bestowed on all of us in varying degrees. As with all of our assets, finances are to be used to build an everlasting character that is fit for God's Kingdom.

Set your foundations. The management of debt is often the most stressful area of personal financial management and money is the one thing that people say they argue about most in marriage. So how do you use your finances in a way that will build your character as well as your wallet?

Here are ten Bible-based principles about money that we recommend.

ALL things belong to God. Recognise that all things belong to him and you are only a steward.

LEARN. Commit your financial plans to God using godly principles, remembering all things are possible with God.

MASTER the basics — become financially literate. Use the church-based resources and local advisory services where you live.

STOP. Don't move on to more complex finance issues until you have truly mastered the basics (budgeting, handling personal debt and investments).

KNOWLEDGE. Recognise and understand the risk of the opportunities you find. If you don't understand it, either learn about it or don't do it.

REVIEW. Regularly evaluate your financial choices

to confirm you are still on the right path to financial independence.

ACCOUNTABILITY. Become accountable for the impact of your actions.

DAILY INFORMED ACTION. Take one step towards God-centred goals each day, every day.

GIVE. Share your knowledge as with all other assets. Freely you receive, freely give.

WORK. It is always going to be hard work!

Take informed daily action. The reasons for the current meltdown in the global financial markets have been many and varied but boil down to issues of understanding and risk. As we review stewardship of our personal finances, it would be useful to keep in mind these issues and the lessons to be learnt when reviewing our own finances.

References

Stanley & Markman, 1997, as quoted in *Making Marriage Last*, published by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

* Deborah Harris has been a Chartered Accountant for over ten years and specialises in investment banking consultancy on Risk Management and Corporate Governance. She is also a non-executive director in the NHS and the current Chairman of the London Adventist Credit Union.



'It's all about him' summer campaign

After months of planning, the 'It's all about him' summer campaign started in Sheffield, hosted in the Carter Knowle church. In planning the campaign, the planning team had continued the theme taken from Spring Evangelism held in April, focusing on the centrality of Jesus Christ.

One aim of the programme was not just to have the evening preaching and worship session, but to have community-focused programmes running through the day. Hence, for the second year in succession, the Noah's Ark play scheme ran at the church.

On average forty-five children and young people attended each day and were engaged in Bible-based arts and crafts, sports and trips out.

One of the highlights of the play scheme was the old-fashioned church trip. This was so successful, with over 200 people and large numbers from the community enjoying a day out in Skegness.

The spiritual side of the campaign was about as high as we have had in Sheffield for many years. Evangelist Costa Vaggas had been one of the speakers during Spring Evangelism and was invited back to minister again for our summer campaign. The preaching and persona of Costa truly impacted the district. Jesus Christ was made real, relevant and radical to both visitors and regular members.

What was striking in this campaign, perhaps more so than others, was that parents of the children who came to the play scheme visited the campaign in the evening, and then kept coming back and also brought visitors with them.

Another highlight of the campaign had to be the healing service held on the second Wednesday, when non-church visitors from as far away as Nottingham came. It was standing room only, even with the use of the marquee provided for the

purpose of the campaign.

It's always hard to measure success after these events. Yes, nine precious souls were baptised into the Kingdom, and we give God thanks and praise for allowing us to be part of his programme.

Visitors who started to attend during the campaign are still attending and, with God's help, we'll love them into the church family.

DAVID BUSSUE



Battersea: a winning combination

On Sabbath 25 October Ann Marie and Cameron, a mother and son, rocketed into an unassailable lead when they arranged all thirty-nine books of the Old Testament in canonical order in a time no other

parent-child combination could even come close to.

Another mother and son success was that of Melanie Campbell and her son Cyrus when he scooped the Pathfinder of the Month award.

The occasion was the showcasing of the newly-revived Pathfinder club, under the direction of Edwardson (Araldo) Davis, who is also the Personal Ministries leader and Sabbath School superintendent of the Battersea church.

Pastor Esson, the church's minister, was present and took part in the handing out of prizes and awards to Pathfinders who were outstanding during the past month.

Other awardees included Ayprel Greenland and K'eana Aitcheson. Both received cash awards, respectively, for recording correctly all texts from a previous sermon and for presenting the best-decorated Pathfinder folder. Ayprel and K'eana are not yet baptised. Nevertheless they are active members of Hand of Praise, a performance sign and mime group, which was recently featured in the London Borough of Wandsworth's Black History Month celebration in association with the African Caribbean Community Library. K'eana lost her grandmother recently but despite this she continues to attend church regularly and has expressed her desire to join the church through baptism.

S. MATTHIAS ESSON



Children's Sabbath

'What a difference it makes when you take care of the lambs first! When the lambs are fed, everyone's happy!' That was the central message of 9-year-old Chipu Mashiri's sermon during this year's Big Children's Sabbath at Newcastle church. In her message entitled 'The parable of the hungry lambs', Chipu adopted the BUC resource material, but made it her own, urging the church to pay attention to needs of the children.



Maranatha comes to Scotland

He will be familiar to Hope Channel and 3ABN viewers as the face and voice of Maranatha Volunteers International, the Adventist organisation that builds thousands of churches around the world. But when Dick Duerksen accepted an invitation to speak at the Scottish Mission's Youth and Pastoral Retreats from 17 to 22 October, few of the participants could have anticipated such a spiritually-enriching experience.

His story-telling spiritual gift brought amazing new insights into biblical truths for young and old. Logically and imaginatively filling in the gaps of scriptural episodes, he highlighted the breadth and depth of God's care and love for the human race. Chloe Mukisa who attended the Fife Youth Retreat said, 'His telling of the Gideon story emphasised the need for a close relationship with God. It showed us that God may tell us to do things that may embarrass us in front of our friends and which may not make sense to us, but we just have to trust him in everything he tells us to do.'

Commenting on the follow-up Pastoral Retreat at Pitlochry, Pastor David Hatch said, 'His expressive contemporary true story of the drug-selling Hell's Angels biker's road to Jesus illustrated how God meets us where we're at and does his best to bring us to where he wants us to be.' Drawing on his wide-ranging international experience, Pastor Duerksen also led on such topics as how the pastoral team might meet the cultural and spiritual challenges facing them in Scotland.

JOHN WILBY

A month in advance, the children were asked to write what their dreams for Newcastle church were, and it was illuminating to see what children hoped to see at church. 'More involvement', 'more child-friendly sermons, not boring ones',

'more activities such as picnics and walks', were some of the submissions by the children.

Every aspect of the programme was extra special and different, as the children led out in the entire programme. The three Sabate family girls – Hadleigh, Heather and Hyndei – led the morning congregational praise session, while the kindergarten class recited Psalm 23 to prepare the church for worship. The adult church pianists were redundant as two young people, Karolle Bencito and Alexa Ramos, took turns to render excellent performances as pianists for the day. Five-year-old Clywd Hallasgo stunned the audience by reciting the lyrics of Cecil Alexander's popular hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' from memory.

Those who stayed for a sumptuous lunch and afternoon programme were witnesses to an array of talents displayed by the children as they presented a gospel concert. Solos, duets and instrumental performances, using guitar, piano, violin and flute, were all part of concert pre-

Isle of Wight inspiration

On Friday 19 September a group from Ipswich, Colchester and some from Kent travelled to St Rhadagunds, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, for a spiritual weekend retreat. Upon arrival we were directed to our rooms and received the programme for our stay. On the glossy front we noted our theme, 'Deciphering the Message', and some Greek writing, plus the picture of a bottle washed up from the shore. We realised later that the strange writing was the familiar text from John 3:16.

We would like to thank Pastors Paul and Geoff Smith for spearheading the wonderful time we enjoyed. We would also like to thank Area 8 for their financial contribution. The weather was ideal – blue skies and blue sea reminded some of us of the country of our origin. The atmosphere was peaceful, the staff hospitable and the food excellent. At our early prayer session on Sabbath

morning, it was suggested that we write prayer letters to our heavenly Father – anything that was on our minds – and at the bonfire in the evening we should place them on the fire, symbolic of our prayers ascending heavenward.

On Sabbath and Sunday morning we were delighted to welcome some local members who live on the island. A sincere 'thank you' to Angela who played the piano for us. On Sunday we listened and considered the importance of the spiritual nature of God's law, followed by our Communion celebration, the highlight of the weekend.

Some of us visited the beautiful scenery, and the able-bodied went on a long, arduous walk to see the Needles.

The trip was great and we are looking forward to the next spiritual weekend retreat.

DELORETA WILLIAMS



sentations. The kindergarten class spiced up the entire programme with a recital of the memory verses from their Sabbath School lessons of the previous quarter.

Among the guests at the event was 9-year-old Eve who came with her mother and three siblings. The family enjoyed the kids' performances and Eve and her lay-preacher classmate, Chipu, showed off their violin skills by rendering a special musical item as a duet. The Sabbath School and Communications departments did not miss the opportunity to present the guests with special tokens of appreciation.

To ensure that 25 October is remembered, each child left church with a special souvenir gift from the Sabbath School department.

VICTOR SAMWINGA

Kent baptism

The water in the Canterbury church pool was almost freezing, but for Glen and Toochi this was not disheartening. It was Sabbath morning 17 September, and these two youth from the Ashford International church were determined that they were going to take their stand for Christ, cold water or not. Growing up in the church, it is often taken for granted that our young people will naturally gravitate towards things spiritual, but with the devil on the rampage, the members at Ashford were rejoicing that these two young people had defied Satan and had chosen Christ. Members and officers were on hand to greet Glen and Toochi and to welcome them into the church family.

KAREN LEARMOND



Newbold's Black History Week

by Helen Pearson and Anita Kelman

A Londoner now living in Alabama was the main guest speaker at Newbold's Black History Week, a special annual event at Newbold College to celebrate the African-Caribbean contribution to the world. At four major events and in many smaller conversations, writer and teacher, Dr Keith Burton, shared the fruits of his research into the importance of Africa in Christian history.

The special week began at the Tuesday morning assembly as Dr Burton asserted that 'each of the world's nations, including Africans, brings something to the "Christian table"'. He suggested that if the biblical concept of Africa was more clearly understood, we would see that 'the majority of people in the Bible could be seen as Africans.' African-Caribbean food on the Newbold table attracted extra punters for lunch in the College cafeteria that day!

Dr Burton's Tuesday evening Diversity Seminar was entitled, *Africa's Contribution to the Protestant Movement: Papal Hegemony and the Battle for the Sabbath in Ethiopia*. It focused on the history of Sabbath consciousness in Africa, especially in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and examined the conflicts between African and European Christians between the fourth and the nineteenth centuries.

Ukrainian MA student Oleg Kostyuk said, 'Keith has brought a new perception to my understanding of African history. I have been focused on European history and have heard very little about Christianity and Sabbath-keeping on the African continent.'

Beth and Rollyon Rennalls' distinctive cuisine made the Caribbean dinner party on Wednesday evening an authentic occasion. Students got plenty of opportunity to ask Keith questions and discuss the themes of the week. MA Theology student Tabitha Cedenio described the discussion which followed as 'honest and open'. 'It touched people both emotionally and intellectually,' she said.

Dr Burton's third speaking appointment was with the student worship *Experience* on Thursday night where he spoke about demon-possession and the power of faith to break the chains of poverty and oppression. He quoted American civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, 'I would rather have dirty hands and a clean heart than have clean hands and a dirty heart.'

At Friday night vespers, Keith was joined by his brother Ken Burton, the principal conductor of the award-winning London Adventist Chorale, to give an account of the history of slavery and freedom in Africa. Finnish MA student, Sirpa Karstenberg,

said, 'I could feel both the sadness and joy springing to the surface as the two men gave their account of slavery and freedom. It was beautifully captured through the songs and presentation. Ken captured the audience's emotions through the story of Africa's history.'

Pastor Eddie Hypolite concluded the week's spiritual emphasis at Newbold's contemporary service. His sermon, entitled *Simon says*, focused on Simon of Cyrene, an African making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and being caught up in the drama of Jesus' crucifixion by being forced to carry the cross.

The week's closing event was a Saturday night movie screening of the musical *Sarafina*, a story of a young woman struggling with the South African apartheid system. American Diversity student Kaitlyn Rasmussen said, 'It was only because the story was broken up with songs that I was able to get through watching it without breaking down'.

Gifford Rhamie, lecturer in Theology, one of the organisers for the week, said: 'We need to celebrate all our differences and all of us need to be conscientious regarding our vocation as a human race.'

More details and pictures on the Newbold website www.newbold.ac.uk.



Compulsory sex education

In late October the Government announced its decision to make education about sex and relationships in schools compulsory for children of all ages. The BUC asked Mrs Anne Pilmoor, BUC Associate Education director, to comment on how these proposals may affect Adventist schools and parents.

There has been a flurry of reports, articles and bulletins in the media since the Government announced its intention to introduce a compulsory programme in sex education. Ministers have referred to it as a graduated, age-appropriate programme for children aged 5-6. While sexual health campaigners have welcomed the plan, many parents have made a strong plea to leave the very young out of it and to stop eroding their childhood and innocence.

Schools have long been required to have a sex education policy in place, stating where and how the topics are to be covered through the appropriate areas of the curriculum. Reproduction is usually covered in Years 5/6 through Science topics. Relationships are covered in all the years through the PSHE curriculum in the primary school. Safe sex and reproduction are covered in the Biology curriculum in the secondary years.

However, the delivery has been somewhat hit and miss with outcomes that are an embarrassment to the Government and are now a matter of concern. The programme has not worked, since Britain, when compared with neighbouring countries, still hits the top of the league table when it comes to teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. These two issues alone have prompted the review of the programme. The practical measures to tackle them come in the form of a compulsory curriculum to be delivered in schools.

Faith schools will not be allowed to opt out of the rules, although they will be given separate guidance in due course. Some faith groups have been involved in the discussion and it appears they feel able to deliver the programme without compromising their faith. We have looked at the programme outline, but have not yet seen the draft for faith schools and so cannot comment.

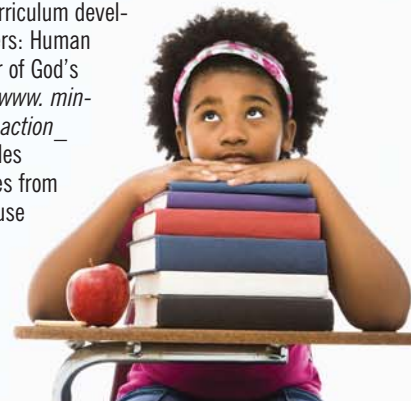
The concern of many Christian parents relates to the context in which the themes are presented. Parents do not want to be coerced into conforming to 'alternate practices' which run contrary to their moral values or their understanding of the Bible.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists published a graduated and age-related curriculum on sexuality in 2004. This is an excellent resource for teachers in Adventist schools and for parents, pastors and youth leaders in our churches. It actually offers much more than any state curriculum because its starting point is deeper than the mere reduction of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.

Seventh-day Adventists maintain that sexual conduct is part of a sacred marital relationship. They also believe that parents are the primary educators and have the first line of responsibility to share relationship understanding with their children. Where parents are concerned that they will be taught contrary to their faith position, we recommend that they contact the school and ask for a copy of their sex education policy.

Meet with your child's teacher and find out what, how and when the various topics will be taught. This will help you to assess your comfort with the delivery. You also have the right to request your child be withdrawn from a lesson if the content conflicts with your beliefs, though you may wish to balance this with the opportunity for parental discussion with your child. We highly recommend parents investing \$14.95(US)

in the General Conference Curriculum developed by Karen and Ron Flowers: *Human Sexuality: Sharing the Wonder of God's Good Gift with Your Children*. www.ministerialassociation.com/transaction_detail.php?id=179. It provides sexuality education for all ages from toddlers to adolescents. The use of this resource will enable you to enrich your children's learning and understanding beyond the offerings from school.



FRANCES MATILDA HAYLETT (1911-2008) d. 21 September. Frances was born in Haddiscoe Hill, Norfolk, on 4 June 1911 to a farming family. On leaving school she went into service, as did many girls of her generation. A casual meeting with Bob Haylett in 1931 led to their lifelong friendship. In November 1931 Pastor R. S. Joyce began an evangelistic campaign in Great Yarmouth, where there were only two Adventists. Bob invited Frances to go along with him and his mother. On 6 October 1932 all three were baptised, along with fifty-four others, and, with the two previous members, the Great Yarmouth church was organised with fifty-nine members. Pastor R. S. Joyce had bought a run-down property, and all the members helped to transform it into a suitable place of worship. Every Friday Frances and Bob cycled to the church to rake out the ashes, replenish the coke and stoke up the fire to heat the sanctuary for Sabbath and the water when there was to be a baptism. From its organisation Frances was elected as church clerk, an office which she held for many years, and she also served as deaconess and in the Sabbath School and Welfare departments. When the War came in 1939, and with it National Service, Frances and Bob were separated. As a Conscientious Objector, Bob was sent to help build a hospital and to do farm work. Pastor A. G. Tapping was the minister at that time and he helped Frances to get work looking after the two children and the elderly mother of a teacher in Dereham. After the War Bob returned, and on 11 September 1946 they were married. Bob had obtained work on the Somerleyton Estate, and they were given a cottage to rent. Frances worked on the estate serving teas at 1/6d a head! She also kept chickens, and anyone who visited her always came away with either a box of eggs or a jar of her delicious homemade marmalade. Although she had none of her own, Frances loved children, and they loved her, and she was much in demand as a baby-sitter. For several years she gave a home to Frazer, the young son of a neighbour who had fallen on bad times. As she grew older, Frances developed her phone ministry, keeping in touch and encouraging other church members. Bob died in March 2003, leaving Frances as the last surviving charter member of the Great Yarmouth church. During the last two or three years, Frances's health declined, but her faith in God remained strong. She missed being able to attend church regularly, but was able to be with us for the church's seventy-fifth anniversary in October 2007. We all loved Frances and she is greatly missed. She loved her church and was always concerned for the welfare of its members. We miss her lovely welcome

ing smile, her cheery word and her quiet, sweet nature. After a series of going in and out of hospital, Frances finally accepted the need for more specialist and palliative care, and went to live in the Elms Residential Care Home in Gorleston where she fell asleep in Jesus on 21 September. We look forward to a joyful reunion on the resurrection day.

VERA COWLEY

HERBERT THOMAS FARMER (1916-2008) d. 19 October. Tom, as he was known by all, is remembered by the Bournemouth church as a faithful and loyal worker for God. He served the church for twenty-four years as an elder, a much-appreciated youth leader, head deacon, and in many other offices. He was willing and able to turn his hand to anything he was asked to do, from preaching to looking after the fabric of the church building. Tom was an engineer, a popular and trusted employee, ending his career as Quality Control manager for Hamworthy Engineering, a large company in Poole. Earlier in his working life he lost the chance of becoming manager at another company, and had to take a cut in wages, due to his faithful stand for the Sabbath. Tom was born into a loving family in the Midlands and, at the age of 24, he met and married Betty, so beginning a loving, dedicated life together, lasting sixty-six years. The couple moved to Bournemouth, having enjoyed post-war holidays in the town. Tom's skills were seen in the kitchen he built for their new bungalow, and in designing and working on their garden. A long illness in later life was to rob Tom of his strength and even his powerful preacher's voice. It is a testimony to their love that throughout these difficult years of disability, Betty herself cared for and nursed Tom. He died at the age of 92, following one night in hospital, with Betty at his bedside. Bournemouth church gives thanks to God for having had this fine, faithful Christian gentleman in our family, and we look forward to that happy day of reunion, when Jesus calls his faithful home.

PASTOR IAN LOREK

Congratulations

to Jacqueline Kelly, 21, of the East Kilbride congregation, on graduating with a First Class Honours degree in Accounting and Finance from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. She is currently working as a student missionary.

to William Kelly, 23, formerly of the East Kilbride congregation, on graduating with an MSc, and who is currently working as a materials engineer in Aberdeen.

EDITOR

'Do you remember? We met at Newbold.'

Seventy retired church workers met for their autumn get-together at Newbold College. Some greeted old friends they hadn't seen in forty years with the words, 'Do you remember? We met at Newbold.' One lady in her eighties met up with a friend from student days whom she hadn't seen in over sixty years. The result was a lot of smiles, warm handshakes, hugs and a few happiness tears.

The group enjoyed tours of the

to restore it to its former beauty.

Dr John Woodfield followed with a characteristically pithy and amusing talk about his work as a teacher in the early days of Stanborough School. John also showed the group some of the results of talents he has developed in retirement – beautiful oil paintings and exquisite wood carvings.

The retirees were delighted to meet the new principal of Newbold, Dr Jane Sabes. However, at the end



'new' church and were amazed at its Scandinavian-style grass roof. They also enjoyed walking in Sylvia's Garden. Dr Harry Leonard, in an excellent PowerPoint presentation, told the story of Moor Close and how the owner, Mr Crisp, a prosperous city financier, unexpectedly became a father again and to celebrate, as only the rich can, built a garden to commemorate the event, which became known as Sylvia's Garden. Over the years the garden became overgrown and broken down but now Harry and others are endeavouring



The retirees enjoy Sylvia's Garden once again

Retirees meet up at Aberdaron

With the 'new' cabins at Aberdaron being such a great addition to the campsite, they made a get-together, such as our week in August for retirees, an ideal get-together.

Our 'camp director', Pastor Martin Bell, invited us to worship each morning and evening if we were able to join in, and just about everyone did. The evening devo-

tionals were conducted by former camp helpers and retired pastors and their wives, among them former youth directors. All were deeply spiritual experiences.

After exploring around all the once-familiar areas, often in sunshine, we all agreed that we had enjoyed a lovely week together.

BARRYMORE BELL



Retirees enjoying the sunshine at Aberdaron

Photo: Barrymore Bell

Administrative Secretary to the Treasury department

The BUC is seeking to recruit a full-time Administrative Secretary to serve the Treasury department at the Union office, Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9JZ.

Applicants will have experience working as a secretary/PA. They should be able to demonstrate high levels of proficiency in the use of office systems and technology, English usage and Microsoft Office software. Successful candidates will need strong organisational and interpersonal skills and should be able to work independently without direct supervision, showing the utmost discretion and tact when handling confidential information. Salary £20-22k, depending upon qualifications and experience.

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

Closing date for applications: 12 December.

of her presentation, when she told the group of some of her plans and aspirations for the College, one of the retirees apologised to her publicly because he had passed her without speaking on the way to the dining-room, thinking that she was a mature student and obviously too young to be the principal. Dr Sabes enjoyed the compliment and gave the confessor a warm hug.

The group enjoyed an excellent meal together in the College refecto-

ry and many email addresses were exchanged. It is good that our teachers, pastors, institution workers, colporteurs and office staff from past years have the opportunity to meet like this, share experiences, worship together and laugh together. It reminds them that they are valued by the Church and are still part of the Adventist family. We thank Newbold for providing such a delightful day.

G. MARTIN BELL

FAQ: 'When did my article appear in MESSENGER?'

Answer: If you have lost your copy, visit *MESSENGER* online: www.adventistnews.org.uk/messenger.

ABC BOOK SALES

November

16 Harper Bell 10.30am-2pm
23 Lay Bible workers' retreat (N'hampton)
30 granoVita (Wellingborough) 10am-2pm

ABC Shops

Watford, BUC
11am - 5.30pm Monday to Thursday
10am - 2pm Friday
1st & 3rd Sunday 10am-2pm
Advent Centre,
Sundays 11.30am-3.30pm

Messenger

Volume 113 • 25 – 21 November 2008

EDITOR: D. N. MARSHALL

DESIGN: DAVID BELL

COPY FOR No. 1 – 1 December 2008

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

Fax No: (01476) 577144.

Email: Editor@stanboroughpress.co.uk

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

ABC Sales line: (01476) 539900
Mon-Thurs only, 8am-5.30pm.

www.stanboroughpress.com

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

Printed in Denmark.

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

Sunset

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

	London	Card	Nottingham	Edinburgh	Belfast
Nov 21	4.04	4.16	4.01	3.55	4.13
28	3.57	4.09	3.54	3.47	4.05
Dec 5	3.53	4.05	3.50	3.41	4.00
12	3.52	4.04	3.48	3.38	3.58

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