



Children matter!

Make 2009 the year your church brings its children closer to Jesus

by Karen Holford, Associate director, Children's Ministries, South England Conference

2009 is the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Child. It is also a year with a special focus on evangelism. The British Union Conference is joining with the Trans-European Division and the General Conference Children's Ministries department to highlight the special opportunity we have to evangelise the children in our churches and communities.

It is important for every member to consider the place that the children have in our churches, our worship, our evangelistic vision and the future potential of our faith. Research indicates that 30% of the children we reach for Jesus will stay faithful to him all their lives, but only 3% of those over 18 who encounter Jesus for the first time as an adult will accept and follow him. So it is much more cost-effective to focus our evangelistic effort on the under 10s than on the over 20s.

We also need to reflect on the week-by-week experience of the children in our churches and communities. We must take their needs, gifts and ideas seriously if we are to thrive as a Church in the twenty-first century. Every week that the children in your church sit through another divine service that excludes them, is too long, or is difficult for them to understand, our church's evangelistic efforts are undermined and we are actually turning our own children away from their loving and compassionate Father. They may not physically leave the church, as they are still young, but they may decide that as soon as they are old enough they will drift away and find more interesting places to go on a Saturday morning.

Too often our approach to children has been shaped by Victorian traditions of being 'seen and not heard'. But Jesus related to children in warm and positive ways:

PROMISES FOR OUR CHILDREN

I
We will help you to understand how much God loves you by the way we care for you.

II
We will help you to feel welcome every time you come to our church.

III
We will listen to you and put you and your needs at the very heart of our church.

IV
We will make sure you always feel safe, comfortable, and special.

V
We will be happy with you in your happy times and comfort you in your sad times.

VI
We will welcome you when you use your special gifts in our worship services.

VII
We will help you to learn that Jesus loves you, died for you, forgives you, and is making a special place for you in heaven.

VIII
We will be here when you wonder about life and God. We will listen to you and help you to find answers.

IX
We will be here to guide and support you as you learn how to follow Jesus in your everyday life as a Christian.

X
We will encourage you as you discover your special way to serve God and share His love with others.

Follow the Bible — 2009

by Victor Hulbert, Communication director

What identifies a Seventh-day Adventist? Diet? Day of worship? 'Unique' doctrines such as the Sanctuary or the State of the Dead? One prominent figure always identifies Adventists as 'the people who invented breakfast cereal'.

All of that may be true, but the pre-eminent distinctive characteristic of Seventh-day Adventists throughout their history is that they are 'People of the Book'. Adventists love their Bible. From quizzes in youth meetings to rustling pages during the sermon to personal Bible study, Adventists have always emphasised the Bible as their guide, their source of comfort and that on which all doctrine must stand. Children learn Scripture texts in Sabbath School and are encouraged to continue memorising Scripture up into adulthood. That is the picture of Adventism. Any church. Any Sabbath. Any home. 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good

works.' (2 Timothy 3:16, 17, KJV) The Bible is central and important.

Recognising that importance, an 'Olympic-size' programme encouraging Bible reading and study is now running through until the next General Conference Session in July 2010. Currently, a special leather-bound Bible, written in sixty-six languages, is travelling around the world, covering all six continents. It is due to visit the UK in September 2009. Called 'Follow the Bible', the initiative is intended to emphasise to Adventists and their friends the daily need for a connection with the Bible. Adventist world president, Pastor Jan Paulsen, says, 'This is a commitment that we believe will make the Word of God more central in our lives.' Special meetings and rallies will be held across the BUC on Sabbath 12 September.

But a rally is only a small token of the difference the Bible can make. More important is the daily and weekly difference it can make in our lives. Here are some suggestions to help make the Bible come alive for you and your family this year:

- Use the 'Follow the Bible' yearly reading plan supplied with the last *MESSENGER* to read the whole Bible in one year. www.followthebiblesda.com.
- Read the Bible in a different version to the well-worn and loved Bible you keep by your side. This will help the passages you are very familiar with to jump out at you with new life.
- Try downloading the Bible to your ipod, pda or mobile phone. This can give you 'Bible on the go' for a few moments at various times in the day.
- Buy a dramatised Bible to listen to with your family or while you are driving in the car. Zondervan have published 'The Bible Experience'. Scripture Union have 'Word Alive', or www.faithcomesbyhearing.com provide a free downloadable audio New Testament.
- Play Bible games with your family as a fun way of building Bible knowledge.
- Take a Bible course from the Adventist Discovery Centre. Encourage neighbours or friends to sign up with you and study together. www.discoveronline.org.uk.
- Open a 'Church Family Bible'. Newbold church has bought a

Bible with wide margins. During the year families are underlining texts and commenting on why they are special for them. Children are encouraged to draw their favourite Bible stories on paper that will build up into a special Children's Bible. These will be regularly highlighted in church. The whole church family is 'buying in' to the Bible.

- Run a Bible competition in your church — a monthly or weekly quiz based on the 'Follow the Bible' reading plan.
- Climax the day by reading the Bible for a few moments before dropping off to sleep.

There are many other ways to make the Bible special. Why not make 2009 a special year as along with millions of Adventists worldwide we 'Follow the Bible' together?

Sources for mobile Bibles:

Iphone/PDA & Mobile:
www.olivetree.com
For the ipod/iphone:
<http://www.youversion.com>
For PDAs: www.e-sword.net
For mobile phones:
<http://www.biblephone.net>



The Chasm or the Cross?

David Marshall

Exactly one hundred years before Hitler became chancellor of Germany, German poet Heinrich Heine made an amazing statement: 'All that holds back the lust for war is the Cross of Christ.'

To Heine the Cross was just a talisman with magical powers. Hence, to his first statement, he added these words: 'That talisman is brittle, and the day will come when it will break, pitifully. The old stone gods will rise from the long-forgotten ruins and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes. They will leap into life with giant hammers and smash all your cathedrals to smithereens.'

Half a century later Guido von List stood in St Stefan's Cathedral, Vienna, and vowed to build a temple to 'the old stone gods' of Germany. Subsequently he founded a secret occult-religious society. As a symbol for his religion he chose a *broken cross*: the swastika.

When Hitler went to Vienna as a young man he came to know and admire List. So much so, in fact, that when he later founded the Nazi Party he adopted List's broken cross as its symbol. For Christian champions in Nazi Germany there was a choice of crosses: the Cross of Christ or the Broken Cross.

For some time the broken cross of Hitler's Reich seemed triumphant. Some believed that it would, as Hitler boasted, last for 'a thousand years'. But it managed only twelve appalling years. Even that was made possible by the connivance of the world's other evil empire — the Soviet Union — with its hammer-and-sickle symbol.

But one evil empire turned on the other. The worst excesses of human history belong to the years of conflict between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR. A chasm at Babi Yar near Kiev became emblematic of that conflict in which the Cross of Christ seemed to be in eclipse. The chasm was found to contain 300,000 bodies massacred, group by shuffling group, in a single day. There were other more spectacular atrocities than that one. But the chasm at Babi Yar came to represent what happens when 'the lust for war' is given free rein and 'the old stone gods' supplant the cross.

What symbolised the survival of Christian

civilisation was a photograph taken during the Night Blitz on London in September 1940. Towering above the billows of debris resultant from the saturation bombardment of the capital was the dome of St Paul's on top of which was a cross.

To some who survived the Blitz, that image

'We are living through times in which many of the constant factors are not looking all that constant and much of the wisdom is not looking all that wise'

stood for a God-given deliverance that would be followed by a world begun anew.

But scarcely was the swastika menace vanquished than the hammer-and-sickle menace loomed large and the ancient nations of Eastern and Central Europe were enwrapped in an iron shroud. Many alive today lived through the Cold War years.

In the 80s the iron shroud was removed. It seemed that capitalism had been embraced in the East, together with some democratic practices. However, in the last few years it has become evident that the seed of democracy is still some way from germination, and the form of capitalism which has replaced Communism is an ugly one, insensitive to individual freedoms. To lovers of freedom in Western democracies, the economic sub-structure is looking very wobbly at present!

Sound advice from the psalmist: 'Don't put your life in the hands of experts who know nothing of life, of *salvation* life. Mere humans don't have what it takes. . . .' (146:3, MGE.) 'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.' (118:8, KJV) Notice that word *confidence*. When there is a crisis of confidence in financial institutions, stocks and shares, and real estate values are plummeting — you can still put your confidence in the Lord.

'Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age?' Paul once demanded. 'Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?'¹ Like Paul, we are living through times in which many of the constant factors are not looking all that constant and much of the wisdom is

not looking all that wise. As ever, the Cross of Christ may look like a scandal (Gk. *skandalon*) to some and foolishness to others among those who count themselves wise.² From the perspectives of the smart thinkers the Cross has always been an invitation for mockery. But 'to those whom God has called' it represents the power and wisdom of God, and the means of man's eternal salvation.³ There is no reason to be 'ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes'.⁴

It is not 'the old stone gods' who are destroying what man has made. They are lifeless and always were. The wounds to our economy and institutions are self-inflicted. The thousand-year Reich of the 'broken cross'

— like all man's other *isms/wasms* that compete/have competed for our attention — didn't last long. And over the wrecks of time towers the Cross of Christ — unbroken and pointing the way to Heaven.

'[The Gospel] is all about the true God confronting the world of posturing, power and prestige, and overthrowing it in order to set up his own Kingdom, a Kingdom in which the weak and the foolish find themselves just as welcome as the strong and the wise, if not more'.⁵

When the evil empires have done warring, how many of their emperors have credibility ten years on? All that is left are the chasms.

On the bottom line there is a choice of two directions in life.

The first says, 'Life is a meaningless journey. Man is no more than an enlarged protein molecule. Human life began by chance and will end by chance — whether by bang or whimper.'

The second says, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.'

At the end of the day, then, a choice — between and futility and purpose — between the Chasm and the Cross.

References:

¹1 Corinthians 1:20. ²1:23. ³1:24-31. ⁴Romans 1:16. ⁵Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians* (SPCK), page 13.



Enhancing Health

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

Brain Health Part 11

Improving brain function?

Brain training, memory enhancement and improving brain efficiency are topical areas of research in current neurological studies on the brain. In this segment of the brain health series we explore the range of opinions, reports and findings and get involved with some of the exercises which put these theories to the test.

In the book *Mind, Character and Personality*, volume 2, E. G. White writes about the improvement of our mental capacities. She states: 'God gives the talents, the powers of the mind; man makes the character. The mind is the Lord's garden, and man must cultivate it earnestly in order to form a character after the divine similitude.' (Positive Influences on the Mind, page 800.)

Research has shown that keeping the brain fit, particularly as we age, has a positive impact on

emotional and mental well-being and guards against age-related illnesses such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Several publications now boast the solution to optimum brain enhancement.

Over the holiday period, while shopping for the seasonal break, my eyes caught a magazine entitled *Puzzler Brain Trainer*. Scanning through the contents, I saw such titles as mind-toning workouts; memory jog exercises; live and learn — how learning can keep you young; brain box and a number of other intriguing activities aimed at maximising brain stimulation. The author, Ian Robertson, is a neuroscientist, a trained clinical psychologist and a leading world expert on neuro-psychology relating to brain rehabilitation.

Throughout the magazine he uses various brain teasers, exercises and tips to challenge the readers to use their brains to their full potential. In the

next issue I'll update you on how I got on with the tests. In the subsequent issues I will be encouraging you to take part in similar mental challenges to test the theories of brain improvement.

Another useful resource is the book *Use It or Lose It* by Allen D. Bragdon and David Gamon of the Brainwaves Centre. The book is based on recently published research in the area of neurosciences and is a useful resource which offers readers mental acuity tests, mind maintenance techniques and exercises that build mental skills.

It has been stated that individuals learn best when their experience is not just theoretical but incorporates more practical, inspirational and fun aspects. Over the coming months we hope this, too, will be our experience as we learn more about brain health together.

Good health!



58% of young people lose faith in the Church and stop attending. SO WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

Jim Redmond's son, Derek, a UK athlete, was favoured to win the four-hundred-metre race in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Halfway into his semi-final heat, a fiery pain seared through his right leg. He crumpled to the track with a torn hamstring.

As the medical attendants were approaching, Redmond fought to his feet. 'It was animal instinct,' he would later say. He set out hopping, pushing away the coaches in a crazed attempt to finish the race.

When he reached the stretch, a big man pushed through the crowd. He was wearing a T-shirt that read, 'Have you hugged your child today?' and a hat that challenged, 'Just Do It.' The man was Jim Redmond, Derek's father.

'You don't have to do this,' he told his weeping son.

'Yes, I do,' Derek declared.

'Well, then,' said Jim, 'we're going to finish this together.'

And they did. Jim wrapped Derek's arm around his shoulder and helped him hobble to the finish line. Fighting off security men, the son's head sometimes buried in the father's shoulder, they stayed in Derek's lane to the end.

The crowd clapped, then stood, then cheered, and then wept as the father and son finished the race.

What made the father do it? What made the father leave the stands to meet his son on the track? Was it the strength of his child? No, *it was the pain of his child*. His son was hurt and fighting to complete the race. So the father came to help him finish.

You may be a father, mother or another family member who is seeing a loved one hurting because in the race of life they have been hurt by the effects of being a sinner. They have wandered away from the heavenly Father's side and sometimes deliberately stayed in the pigpen. But are there ways we can prevent this happening?

Losing faith in church

Seventh-day Adventists in the 1960s numbered around 1.55 million worldwide. Tom Ashlock, then an associate in the General Conference Sabbath School department, wondered what would have happened if the Church had never done any evangelism but had consistently retained all the children growing up in Adventist homes.

He got out his calculator, started with the number of Adventist families in 1848, considered the average family size in each generation up to the time he was working, and made a shocking discovery. Without evangelism, but just by maintaining Adventist children in the Church, there would have been 128 million Adventists at the time of his calculation – the 1960s! Fifty years later the worldwide Church has only reached 15.5 million.

Every Sabbath morning the largest group of mission people from church are the ones needing to be reclaimed.

In 1973 Ila Zbarashuk estimated that 50% of Adventist adolescents sever their connection with the Church. She found:

Ten main reasons for becoming a prodigal

1. Church membership without personal conversion
2. Impersonal, uncaring attitude on the part of older members
3. Phoney-appearing lives of adult members
4. No sense of relevance to needs
5. Religion didn't make a difference in own life and didn't want to be a hypocrite
6. Absence of thinking for oneself
7. Misplaced emphasis with non-essentials too important
8. Academy (church school) disciplinary methods
9. Preoccupation with the organisation on the part of leaders
10. Quality of sermons

Since the 1990s the Youth department has relied on the Valuegenesis surveys, done by the youth in the Church, for guidance on how to understand their needs.

At a meeting of Youth directors, the 2007 Valuegenesis study of the Trans-European Division was discussed and they concluded from its results that there are:

Six ways the church can prevent prodigals

1. A church that is intentional about young people; that knows the names and is current with email/mobile addresses.
2. A church that makes young people feel they have a place, that they are valued and can be involved.
3. A church that designates a young adult elder and a special budget to assist this age group.
4. A church that is committed to developing tools/mechanisms to evaluate what contribution they can bring to the church.
5. A church that is willing to undertake a careful review of the membership lists (including non-baptised youth) and is committed to staying in contact with anyone who for whatever reason has taken a break from active church fellowship.
6. A church that regularly communicates clearly to its youth what they can expect from the church, and informs them in turn what they can do to assist the mission of the church.

Parents pass on their faith

Parents' primary role is to teach their children how to think and act in their relationship to God and those he has created. Exodus 12:26, 37; Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 6:1-7, 31:12-13; Psalm 78:4-6; and Proverbs 22:6 all include the idea that the

by Heather Haworth,
Family Ministries director, BUC

parents are to pass on the story of God's salvation to their children.

God created each individual with the ability to respond to a parent's spiritual teaching in a positive or negative way. God the Father experiences the lows and joys a parent feels when a child accepts or rejects his advice. (Genesis 3:1-9; Luke 15:7.) The cry of the heavenly Father, 'Where are you?' is echoed in every book of the Bible and heard in the call of Jesus to 'Follow me.' (Matthew 4:19.) Unfortunately, not all prodigals respond to his call.

Studies confirm the primacy of parents in mentoring and discipling.

In Christian homes where this does not happen, 80% leave church before the age of eighteen.

In homes where parents actively, lovingly mentor, the retention rate is 80%.

Over the last two decades the results of the Valuegenesis studies have not altered in the area of what is the greatest influence in a child's life. It is the parents' faith, love and support that is the number one factor. The survey lists:

Eight key aspects of spiritual parenting

1. Quality family worship
2. Learning to help at home and doing service activities as a family
3. Mother sharing her faith with the child
4. Father sharing his faith with the child
5. Loving, caring, supporting parents
6. Parents set limits and exercise control
7. Parent and child frequently communicate
8. Parents often help with school work

A joint role

Currently the statistics show that out of every 100 children born into church-attending families, children give their lives to Jesus at these ages:

32% at 5-12
4% at 13-18
6% at 19-death

This adds up to 42%. What happened to the 58%? These are the ones who lost faith in church and stopped attending.

Ways to do reconnecting evangelism

The reconnecting evangelism website, www.letsconnect.org.uk, is a place you can encourage those on the edge of the church and those who have wandered away to 'click on' to its pages. It is sponsored by the BUC Women's Ministries/Family Ministries departments. Each month it looks at twenty-first-century-relevant topics, but includes a Christian approach. As a church attender, you will enjoy it, too.

There is a pack of CDs, seminars and a DVD available to run a 'reconnecting evangelism ministry'. This is available from

the BUC Women's Ministries department:

- Prayer and love saves – 11 seminars to present to those whose loved ones have stopped attending church.
- Heartcall – training programme for those wanting to know the best way to reconnect with non-attendeess.
- Praying home the prodigal – 5 short presentations and Bible study guides.
- Are you missing someone from church? Leaflet advertising this ministry to church members.

- LetsConnect advertising card to give to non-attendeess.

During this Christian Home and Marriage week (7-14 February), value your young children and teens in a practical way. Tell them they are special to you and their heavenly Father. Tell them whatever happens in life God is always there for them. Tell them he is even more eager for them to win the race to Heaven than Jim Redmond was for his son to win an Olympic gold medal.

Depression MUST be treated

by Sharon Platt-McDonald, Health Ministries director, BUC

She was tearful as she recounted the experience. Many years previously, a student of hers had tried to explain to her that he was struggling with depression and, as a result, felt too low to study and didn't feel that he could go through with the forthcoming exams. She remembered being quite flippant, telling him that he needed to pull himself together as his exams were approaching and that he would get over the 'blues' as it was only exam nerves. Then came the shock when, days later, she learnt that the same young man had taken his own life. He had left behind a suicide note, informing his parents that he could no longer live under the blackness that was clouding his mind and the sadness that seemed to swallow up his entire life.

The young lady sharing the tragic story ended by stating, 'I never took depression lightly from that day on and sought to listen to and be there for those sharing with me that they struggled with depression.'

This may seem an extreme case but it demonstrates the extent to which depression can lead an individual. Remember, depression is a common experience and can affect any individual at any point in his or her life. However, depression in its severe form is categorised as an illness and should be treated as such, *which necessitates intervention*.

Depression in church?

It is common in religious circles for depression to be seen as a spiritual condition that just needs to be cured through prayer alone. Unfortunately, well-meaning individuals, attempting to encourage those suffering from depression, chide them for a lack of faith and an inadequate prayer life. This can leave the individual feeling guilty, misunderstood and alone, further isolating them, and driving them into a deeper depression.

How should the Church deal with the issue of mental health challenges? Before I answer that question, let me first make a bold statement. *We must learn to see mental health challenges in the same light as we see physical health challenges. When we stigmatise, pass judgement and withdraw from people with depression, the Church, rather than being part of the solution, becomes part of the problem.* The answer: We need to learn how to deal with all afflictions of the spirit, mind and body with the compassion of

Christ, demonstrating unconditional love, support and understanding.

In the book *I'm Not Supposed to Feel Like This: A Christian Approach to Depression and Anxiety*, authors Whitton, Richards and Williams use insights from the psychiatric profession, a biblical standpoint and the Christian pastoral profession to guide the reader to a deeper understanding of the subject. The authors write for those Christians experiencing depression and anxiety to enable them to understand why they feel the way they do and encourage them to draw on God's love and grace to guide them through depression and anxiety. The book also speaks to church leaders and members to enable them to be more supportive in practical and helpful ways to those experiencing depression. It challenges the misguided who say that 'real Christians' don't experience depression and that psychiatric problems are the result of a poor or faulty relationship with God.

In attempting to support those suffering from depression I have found it useful to consider the following:

Spiritual support and prayer

It is reassuring to hear someone tell us, 'I'm praying for you,' when we are going through difficult circumstances. This is a supportive act to those experiencing depression as they sometimes find it difficult to pray. Anointing is also appropriate as the biblical directive is for all who are sick.

Working with medication and therapy

Depending on the cause and severity of the depression, medication may be prescribed. Patients should be encouraged to note the effects of the medication and report any side effects (including suicidal thoughts) to their doctors so that other treatment options, alternative medication or therapy can be considered.

Depression recovery programmes

Therapeutic interventions like Dr Neil Nedley's world-renowned depression recovery programme delivered via books and workbook, DVD or residential setting, have helped thousands in their recovery from depression.

Food factors

A change in eating may occur when individuals



Relating to depression

In 2 January issue two specialists, Wallace Cyrus and Newbold's Dr Andreas Bochmann, explained the meaning of depression, and how best to recognise it and relate to those who are suffering from it.

Pages 5, 6 and 7 of this issue carry three further articles on depression:

- Sharon Platt-McDonald explains why it MUST be treated;
- Dr Clemency Mitchell gives a GP's perspective on depression; and
- Pastor Bernie Holford provides the pastoral perspective on depression.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in The British Isles operates a comprehensive counselling service, involving a team of specialists. They are trained to help those suffering from depression and other challenging life situations. Cornerstone Counselling Service: 0207 7238050, 0845 7413602

experience depression. Lack of appetite, overeating, comfort eating or craving for junk food are common. Some essential vitamins and fatty acids are often found to be lacking in the diets of those suffering from depression and are sometimes recommended as supplements for managing the condition.

Fatty acids make up 15% of the brain's weight. Deficiencies in these nutrients (omega 3 fatty acids) are thought to contribute to severe mental health challenges, including depression. Vegetarian source: flax.

B vitamins, particularly B6, B9 and B12, are believed to be particularly beneficial for people with depression. Vegetarian sources: B6 – bananas, nuts and seeds, potatoes, whole-grain cereals; B9 – asparagus, nuts, peas, whole-grains, yeast; B12 – seaweed, yeast extract.

Tryptophan is a naturally occurring amino acid used by the body to make serotonin (important brain chemical affecting mood). Rich sources are bananas and oats.

Exercise

In mild cases of depression, exercise has been found to be as effective as antidepressants in reducing symptoms. Exercise is effective because it increases the levels of endorphins (also known as happy hormones), which makes you less sensitive to pain and engenders a 'feel good' factor. Exercise enhances health and well-being, improves physical appearance, boosts confidence and raises self-esteem. All these factors help to improve mood and fight depression. The challenge, however, is the motivation to begin exercising or maintain it. Gentle encouragement to commence a manageable programme is useful.

Counselling and support

It is useful to ask the person suffering from depression how best they feel you can help them. Robert Frost in his insightful *MESSENGER* article on depression (22 August 2008) gives his personal experience of depression and what he finds helpful. Key first steps are to be a good listener, non-judgemental and consistent in our follow up.

Professional counselling is encouraged for ongoing or severe depression.

A GP's perspective on depression

by Dr Clemency Mitchell, a retired General Practitioner who lives in Berkshire

Here are some of the things I learned about depression when I was a GP. Mild to moderate depression is very common, may last a long time, but normally gets better eventually, whatever the treatment. Most mental health problems can be treated by GPs and only the more serious ones need referral to specialists. Medications have their place, but more important are support and encouragement that come from the sympathetic ear and the unhurried consultation.

I also learned that depression and anxiety states with all their variations usually begin not so much as diseases that come out of the blue, but as mental reactions to events, relationships and beliefs, or are due to physical factors such as fatigue, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and such personal poisons as alcohol and caffeine.

I learned about the two great resources that Adventists have for dealing with anxiety and depression. The first, which they share with other Christians, is their faith in God and the Bible which tells us: 'In his divine power he has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who has called us by his own glory and goodness.'* This includes the weapons we need to fight anxiety and depression. This doesn't mean that other help may not be needed as well, and that's where the second Adventist advantage comes in — our scientifically verified health and lifestyle message.

Mind cure

I learned to value the counsel of Ellen G. White in all areas of health, both mental and physical, particularly as it is stated in *The Ministry of Healing* — that timeless physicians' handbook. As a doctor, I strongly advise anyone who has mental or emotional problems to read and follow the encouragement and advice in the 'Mind Cure' chapter. Key principles are:

- the healing power of God's Word
- the importance of gratitude and praise
- the power of the will
- the danger of centring attention on self
- the healing power of helping others and
- the need for a healthy lifestyle.

Medicalisation is one of the problems with our materialistic society.

Many think that happiness is their right, and that material things or relationships will provide it. When these fail, their unhappiness is considered to be a medical problem, but feeling depressed is by no means always a disease. It can become a disease when it seriously interferes with our functioning, but the boundaries are seldom clear. It can begin as an understandable reaction — say, to a bereavement — or can descend suddenly, for no apparent reason. It's the same with anxiety states which often overlap with depression. Both can have physical as well as mental causes and both can be chronic or acute.

nhs.uk/depression

How do we know if we or the person we want to help is clinically depressed or just unhappy? The NHS website is very helpful. Go to nhs.uk/depression and you will find a checklist of psychological, physical and emotional symptoms of depression. There is also a list of physical conditions that may cause depression.

Here is a summary of the symptoms:

- persistent low, sad mood
- feelings of worthlessness and that life isn't worth living, even thoughts of suicide
- lack of energy with or without slowing down of movement and/or speech
- loss of interest in things you normally enjoy
- poor concentration and memory
- increased anxiety and irritability
- disturbed sleep, especially waking very early
- appetite change — either decreased with weight loss, or increased, especially for high-calorie foods like chips and cakes, with weight gain.

Any of these symptoms that persist and are unexplained need to be dealt with, and there are lots of simple things we can do for ourselves that may be effective. If several of these symptoms persist, and if they don't respond to our efforts, we need help.

Lifestyle factors

Now about the Adventist health message and the lifestyle factors that profoundly affect mental health:

FOOD — The 'normal' high-sugar, high-fat British diet affects mental health in two ways — the high sugar intake encourages symptoms of anxiety

and irritability and the high fat content clogs the circulation, making it harder to get the oxygen and nutrients to the brain cells. It also lacks the B vitamins and omega 3 fats that are especially important for brain and nervous system function. For optimum mental and physical health, diets should be based on a wide variety of whole, unrefined plant foods.

POISONS — anything that artificially stimulates or depresses the brain should be avoided, as they all, in the long term, contribute to anxiety and depression. Alcohol, tobacco and 'recreational' drugs are obviously bad, but caffeine is important too. I've seen quite a few acute anxiety states cured within days, simply by cutting out the coffee.

EXERCISE is very important in the fight against depression and is now accepted by many as the most effective treatment for mild to moderate depression. Vigorous exercise has a powerful antidepressant and calming effect — it needn't be anything more drastic than a brisk walk, and if it's in a pleasant place with a good friend, even better.

SUNLIGHT, even in winter, lifts the spirits and stimulates the production of endorphins in the brain. These are natural antidepressants and tranquillisers, so sufferers should make every effort to get regular outdoor daylight exercise. **SLEEP** — adequate sleep is vital, but remember that lying quiet and relaxed in the dark will give you almost as much rest as sleep, especially if you use your willpower to displace negative thoughts with positive ones. Think about Bible promises and songs of praise — they have genuine healing properties.

SABBATH — a regular weekly rest day is as important as regular nightly rest — another big Adventist advantage. We need the time it gives us away from everyday work and worries, time for the healing activities of worship, thanksgiving, praise and enjoyable socialising.

ORDER AND REGULARITY — this is vitally important in the prevention and treatment of all mental and emotional problems. Our brains and bodies need regular times for eating, sleeping, exercising, worship, work and relaxation. **The power of the will must be activated**, not only to control negative thoughts but to practise a disciplined lifestyle.

TRUST IN DIVINE POWER is certainly the most important factor. Praise, whether sung aloud in joyful hymns or

just repeated in thankful thoughts, has a powerful influence on mood and mental activity. Choose to start each day with thanksgiving and praise. Even though emotionally one may feel anything but thankful, thinking, saying or singing thankful words generates healing endorphins.

As Christian believers, we wonder how individuals can avoid depression, especially as they get older, if they have no religious faith. If this life is all there is, and if there is no superhuman source of guidance or protection, why would anyone not be anxious? On the other hand, with the Lord as our Saviour and the Bible as our guide, however we *feel* now, we can *know* that there is a way out, and that our depression and anxiety will not last forever. 'His grace is sufficient.'**

Frequently asked questions

Q: What about medical help for Christians with depression and anxiety?

A: Sometimes medication is needed to get people to the point where they can start to use their will.

Q: What if you are already on medication, perhaps have been for ages? Is it worth changing your diet and lifestyle?

A: A resounding YES! It is always worth improving one's diet and lifestyle. In fact, whatever the illness, improved lifestyle will help you to recover more quickly.

Q: What about psychotherapy?

A: Most of the hundreds of different types of psychotherapy have serious weaknesses — they centre attention on self, the problems and the past, failing to emphasise the power of the will or the need to put the past behind us and move on. Therapies emphasising self-discipline and learning new habits of thought and behaviour are the most likely to help. The Bible, our personal prayers and worship should be part of our therapy.

Q: Where can we find out about medically reliable Bible-based help?

A: I have found *Depression, the Way Out* by Dr Neil Nedley very helpful. Dr Nedley is the newly appointed director of the Weimar Institute and he has a ten-day reversing depression programme which can be followed at home. Go to DrNedley.com for more information.

A final note of caution: A healthy lifestyle will help medical and other treatments to be more effective. If you are taking regular medicines, whether for mental or emotional problems or for physical conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes or other chronic problems, do tell your medical advisers about any major lifestyle changes you are making, as they may change your need for medication.

*2 Peter 1:3, 4. ** 2 Cor. 12:9.

Depression — a pastoral response

by Pastor Bernie Holford, MSc in Systematic Psychotherapy, Family Ministries director, SEC

John* recently lost his job and became increasingly depressed the longer he was unemployed.

As an expressive person, he started questioning his friends and asking why God had allowed this to happen to him. He said he felt worthless. No matter how much I told him that things would work out, my words didn't seem to make a difference. He became very depressed and could not believe that God loved or cared about him. He found little encouragement when people said that they would pray for him. It seemed they did not know what to do or say that would really help.

Attitudes

Depression and other mental illnesses are taboo subjects for many Christians. We often give the impression that if we had more faith we would never feel really down. Reinforcing this idea are songs such as 'Always cheerful, always cheerful, sunshine all around I see; Full of beauty is the path of duty, cheerful will I always be.'** Our cheerfulness can be encouraging to those around us, but it can also cause people who are down to feel even worse. As Solomon says, 'Singing to someone in deep sorrow is like pouring vinegar in an open cut.' (Proverbs 25:20, CEV.)

What can we do when the growth of sadness in ourselves and others becomes uncontrollable and unbearable?

Depression is a real and normal experience for many Christians. David was regarded as especially close to God but was still able to write psalms despairing that God cared for him. Psalms 22, 42, 88 and 102 give expression to some of the classic symptoms of depression. Could it be that God wanted these verses in Scripture to challenge our fear of depression and force us to face its reality, even for those who are after God's own heart?

Talk about it

We need to re-examine our beliefs about the expression of emotion. These psalms teach us some very clear messages:

- Experiencing depression is normal.

- It is right to talk to God about our frustrations and feelings about him.
- It is good to speak out to others about the despair we experience.
- God never promises to remove the threat of depression from us. Verses such as 'My peace I give to you' (John 14:27b) must be set next to verses like 'Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? . . . Darkness is my closest friend.' (Psalm 88:14,18b.)

Be open

The psalmist calls for us to be open and honest about our emotional states. We must work together to create a culture of 1 Corinthians 13 love for each other, as it is perfect love that casts out our fears of being vulnerable with one another (1 John 4:18). We need to know how to help those around us feel safe about expressing their emotional vulnerability. We can do this by:

- Telling our own stories of past emotional swings and depression to friends.
- Recognise that each individual's experience of depression is very different.
- Understanding and discussing the whole range of happy and sad emotions expressed in the psalms.

Helping sufferers

How can we as a community of believers help someone who is suffering from depression?

- Listen to, and stay with, the experience of the depressed friend. 'Listen before you answer.' (Prov. 18:13.)
- Allow our hearts to hurt with the friend in pain — 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it;' (1 Cor 12:26a). 'Mourn with those who mourn.' (Rom. 12:15b.)
- When offering encouragement, think about how the other person might be hearing what you say. Could you be 'pouring vinegar on the open cut' of their emotional pain? How can you put into action a 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love that helps to cast out their fears?

- Bear each other's burdens by offering practical support. Would the depressed person appreciate help with childcare, chores and so on?

Jane is a pastor's wife in another denomination. She was told by her doctor that she was clinically depressed. It was a real struggle to get to church, but when she did, an elder was notified she was on her way. The leaders took special care of her, meeting her at her car and escorting her into church. After the service, if they noticed her getting tired during a conversation, they would interrupt and explain, 'Sister Jane has an important engagement to attend to.' They would then take her back to the car to go home.

Jane says the care and protection of the elders was a major factor in helping her recover from her depression. Jane and her husband had chosen to go public and tell the elders about her illness. In sharing her pain, she invited their compassion. With the support of the church community, she was able to make faster progress than if she had kept her illness confidential.

We, as a loving community, have been given the challenge of caring and helping the healing process for those struggling with depression. Research is showing that supportive relationships are the most important factor in the recovery from depression. My friend John lifted out of depression when he finally found work. If you had been in his church, what would you have said and done to help him?

Who will you talk to about this feature on depression? What are your dreams for how your local church will address this issue?

* Retold with permission. Names have been changed.

** Attributed to *Gospel Melodies*.

'Depression and other mental illnesses are taboo subjects for many Christians'
'Be open and honest about your emotional states'

Adopt a Newbold student in 2009

Andrew Layland was 32 years old and struggling with a decision about his future. 'I don't see lights flashing or feel the earth moving when God speaks. It took me about two years to make the decision to go to Newbold – and the decision was not easy for me. I had a steady job. My wife and I had a six-month-old daughter, a mortgage, and very little in the bank. "Is it right for me to take my wife and child from this comfortable existence into debt?" I asked myself. "Does God want me to put that sort of unnecessary pressure on my family?"'

As he struggled with the sense that God was calling him, Andrew was not alone. In the decision-making process more people were involved. Not just his wife. Not just his family – but his whole church. He knew that the British Union contributes 25% of the first year for students who have been members of an Adventist church in the UK for one year. But Andrew had local support too. As he struggled with the decision as to whether he should apply, the business meeting at his local church in Leamington Spa voted to set up a monthly direct debit into his student account at

Newbold for £250 – an arrangement planned to last for ten months.

Following on from the decision of the church, Andrew received an anonymous donation of £1,000. Another church member offered him £5,000 to cover his accommodation costs in married student housing for the first year, including gas, electricity and council tax.

What about your church? Are there some potential students there who need help to study at Newbold? Of course, Newbold trains ministers, but it does more than that. Newbold's internationally-recognised Business degree offers students the opportunity to study in a diverse environment which prepares students to function with ease in the global community. Some of Newbold's Business graduates are working for the Church and some are working for humanitarian organisations. Others are working in top-flight for-profit organisations and



Andrew Layland, his wife and daughter

making their contribution as lay people and as financial supporters of the Church.

Of course, not all Newbold students are looking for degrees. Some come for one-year courses like the Gap Year or the Worship and Music Certificate. Many of them go back to strengthen and enrich churches like yours with a variety of lay ministries.

As you take up the Newbold Offering on 7 February, please think about adopting a student. Look around your church and see if there is a young or a more mature person who might benefit from your finan-

cial support in coming to Newbold. Remember, it's not just the outstanding ones who need encouragement! If you don't have anyone in your church, perhaps you would like to make a contribution to support our Student Aid Fund. More and more students now come from economically disadvantaged families and regions, but these talented students deserve an education as much as anyone else. And it's amazing how encouraging it can be to a student to find even a small but regular amount appearing in his or her account at the College.

In this *MESSENGER*, you should find a reply-paid envelope. Please fill in the form below and include it with your gift.

Thank you for thinking about the future of your Church.

HELEN PEARSON



Annual Toy Service at Stanborough Park

by June Coombs

Sabbath 13 December saw the 47th Annual Toy Service taking place in Stanborough Park church. As usual there was a large display of donated toys on the platform but organiser, Pat Walton, was especially excited about this year's service. The reason was that, unusually, Watford Borough Council had three representatives forming part of the platform party – and it was a return visit for all of them! Mayor of Watford, Dorothy Thornhill, sat alongside Chairman of the Council, Jan Brown, and her consort, Councillor Ian Brown. The Mayor remarked that it was not often that she managed to attend an event alongside Councillor Brown and the latter later pointed out that she had attended the service before – as Mayoress alongside her husband when he was Civic Mayor. To help avoid confusion between their roles, the Mayor explained that the Chairman (who accepted the toys 'on behalf of the community') wearing her chain of office was 'the bird with the bling', while she was 'the chick with the cheque book'.

Pat's father, the late Alf Kelly, started the annual event as a result

of witnessing the poverty among local families at first hand. But is there still a need for such an event nearly half a century after its instigation? Surely times have moved on? Not so, according to Cathy, a senior social worker with Hertfordshire County Council's Children, Schools and Families Department, who also attended the event and was very appreciative of the donation. Having the responsibility of ensuring that all the toys are distributed in time for Christmas, she explained that many parents, especially mothers, came under a lot of pressure at this time to give their children the type of Christmas that other children will enjoy, and that they themselves enjoyed as a child. However, they are unable to afford the toys themselves, so the dona-

tions by community groups – reflecting the true spirit of Christmas (something Pastor Patrick Boyle reminded us of in his meditation) – are a lifeline and

take the pressure off them. So thanks to the generosity of Stanborough Park members, needy children in West Hertfordshire did not go short of toys this Christmas.

Break-time missionaries

One Sabbath morning in a church in East London the children's story time was about a boy called Zak. He was eight years old, keen on Adventurers, and he was also in his school football team. Zak was enjoying life, but Zak got ill. It was serious, and he had to go to hospital. There they made him take some nasty tasting medicine. The medicine worked. Zak got better, but all his hair fell out.

Zak went back to school, and some boys there laughed at him, and called him 'Onion Head'. If you have been called names at school, you'll know how upset Zak felt. He did not want to go to school. When Zak's friends heard what had happened, they, too, were upset, and determined among themselves to do something about it. What do you think they did? Seek out those boys who upset their friend Zak, and beat them up? No, they did something else: they shaved their heads to show they were friends of Zak.

That made Zak happy, because he was no longer the odd one out.

Having listened to the story of Zak, the storyteller asked the children if they wanted to be missionaries when they grew up. Up went the hands. Then the storyteller asked, 'Who is ready to start on Monday morning?' The hands went up but slower this time.

The storyteller explained how anyone could be a 'break-time missionary'. When out in the school playground, look out for the sad and lonely; you will find them standing close to the school fence or wall, heads down, wishing they could be invisible. Approach them quietly and invite them to join with you in a game. In no time at all you will have made a new friend. That doesn't sound difficult, does it?

Would you like to be a break-time missionary? You would? Well, you can start tomorrow. Now there are a few things you will need to know.

1. You must go to school every day; you can't do this important work for Jesus by hanging out round the shopping centre.
2. You can't be at your best as a missionary for Jesus while in detention, so disruptive behaviour in class has to go; right?
3. Doing something new is scary. But here is what you need to know. The scary bit goes away once you have made that first friend. Don't stop there. Look out for your next new friend, and the next, but go on looking after your first one.

Want to take it to the next level? You do? Tell them about your friend Jesus. Talking about someone you don't really know is not easy, so don't neglect your Bible study, because the more you learn about Jesus, the more your mission will grow.

When you're ready, go to level three: invite all your new friends to church.

May God bless you in your new role as a worker for him.

TED SHIRLEY

I/we would like to 'Adopt a Student'. Please contact us to discuss it.

I/we have someone in mind in our church. His/her name is

I/we would like to support the Student Aid Fund. Please accept the enclosed gift for that purpose.

I am a British taxpayer and I want the charity to treat all donations I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations.

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel: _____ (day) _____ (evening)

Email: _____

Notes:
 If you are a British taxpayer and you give a Gift Aided gift of £100 to a student who is not related to you, the student will receive £125. If you give £1,000, they will receive £1,250.
 You can give Gift Aided money to Student Aid in the same way.
 You can set up direct debits or give with your credit card over the phone.
 If you want to find out details or get advice on the best way to give, call Simone Smit, Director of Student Finance, on 01344-407411.
Thank you for thinking about the future of your Church.

THE NEC YOUTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTS...

ADVANCE

"BE YE READY"

ADAM RAMDIN
PASTOR AND INTERNATIONAL EVANGELIST

CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN
GENERAL CONFERENCE SABBATH SCHOOL QUARTERLY EDITOR AND APOCRYPH

DON MACKINTOSH
AMAZING FACTS

IAN SWEENEY
NEC CONFERENCE PRESIDENT AND INTERNATIONAL EVANGELIST

LOUIS TORRES
VICE PRESIDENT, MISSIIONARY COLLEGE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATOR AND EVANGELIST

LYLE SOUTHWELL
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF 1313 MISSION AUSTRALIA

MATT PARRA
EVANGELISM DIRECTOR, ADAM INSTITUTE AND INTERNATIONAL EVANGELIST

PETER GREGORY
AGENCY LECTURER, AMAZING FACTS, INTERNATIONAL EDUCATOR AND REVIVALIST

£115* EACH

9 - 13 April 2009

NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY (JUBILEE CAMPUS)
WOLLATON ROAD . NOTTINGHAM . NG8 1BB

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND BOOKING DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT
 Rachel Braithwaite – rbraithwaite@necadventist.org.uk
 Alan Hush – ahush@necadventist.org.uk
 Tel: 0115 960 6312
 Visit: www.necyd.com (book online from January 2009)
 *price will increase after Friday 30 January 2009

Making the Gospel accessible

A report on the 2nd annual Special Needs Coordinators' Training Conference by Sophia Nicholls

On 9 November at the Stanborough Park Centre, thirty-six delegates gathered for the 2nd annual Special Needs Coordinators' (SNC) Conference, hosted and organised by the British Union Conference (BUC) and the Adventist Special Needs Association (ASNA).

The theme for the day, 'Achieving access: the way forward', built on the conference from the previous year, where the then new SNC were supported to understand and develop their role in their churches and local communities. This conference addressed the **challenges faced, the choices made and the changes achieved** from the training received in 2007.

Nigel Nicholls, chair of ASNA, and Sharon Platt-McDonald, BUC Health Ministries director and BUC SN coordinator, welcomed the delegation. The opening address, presented by Pastor Don MacFarlane, president of the BUC, identified the issues facing the Adventist Church today with respect to the needs of members with disabilities and special needs. His message strongly supported the theological model of disability which advocates that everybody is a child of God and, therefore, has a right to be part of his Church. This powerful address 'to seek to include the whole body of Christ in the Church' set the tone for the day.

The first delegates to arrive at this training event were the SNC team from Wolverhampton: Gloria Gordon (GBK), Gustave Williams, Jillian Derry-Williams and Maureen Thompson (Wednesfield). During the 'Sharing Good Practice' seminar, both churches presented excellent accounts of the challenges faced and changes they had made in their respective churches. The changes made in one year by GBK and those made over three years by the Wednesfield church were an inspiration to other SNCs. Their well-documented reports provided an opportunity for sharing ideas, successes and experiences, all of which contributed towards enabling and empowering the SNC role.

Comments such as 'A truly informative and learning process', 'A wonderful and inspirational day',

'Looking forward to going back and making changes', were heard from some of the SNCs.

Some of the outcomes from the conference included: the need for a full day workers' meeting on disability and the Church; the establishment of a BUC-wide disability awareness day; and the need for the development of a forum to discuss



the issues around disability and culture. The conference also provided a great opportunity to be part of an active group of Christians seeking to make the Gospel accessible for all.

This year's conference also saw the launch of the Special Needs Coordinator manual – *Making the Gospel Accessible* – a tool developed by the BUC and ASNA. Authors Sharon Platt-McDonald, Sophia Nicholls and Trudy Young presented the manual to the delegation and invited their comments on the content and the potential benefits the manual would provide to support their work as SNCs in the BUC. The comments from the SNCs included: 'An excellent, professional document', 'An essential resource for our church', 'A great idea to have the ring-bound format for the manual, allowing the contents to be updated.' All churches and companies in the BUC will receive a copy of the manual.

The manual has been produced to be a resource for leaders in the Church. It is to enable the work of



supporting people living with special needs and disabilities and to bring all closer to accessing the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The organisers of the conference would like to thank the excellent workshop leaders Geoff Evans (Autism Awareness), Colin Thompson (Deaf awareness, RNID), Francine Bates (Mental illness), and Pete Winmill from Causeway Prospects (Understanding learning disabilities), for their essential and informative training. Thanks also to Mrs Cynthia Goodman and her

daughter Caroline Kamara for the wonderful meal and refreshments provided throughout the day; to Dawn Tompkins and ASNA trustees; Karl Johnson for photography; and the staff at the Stanborough Centre

The Bible has a voice!

I ran into church to escape the cold one Friday night, only to find, huddled in a corner of the foyer, a couple of our teens. I approached them wearily, 'You do know teens' meeting is cancelled tonight?' I thought about the hectic day I had just had and was sure I had sent them all a text message.

'Yeah, we know. We've just come

for their support on the day.

We thank God for his continued leading and guidance in this special ministry. All Special Needs coordinators, pastors or elders are encouraged to contact Dawn Tompkins (01923 672251) at the BUC office for a copy of the *Making the Gospel Accessible* manual. For further information about the manual, please contact Sophia Nicholls (email asna@special1.fsnet.co.uk, 01491 833395) or Sharon Platt-McDonald (BUC Health Ministries director and SN coordinator) at the BUC office.

early to practise for tomorrow's Impact London Bible Challenge,' said James, his bright blue uniform peeping through his coat. Suddenly, another set of doors flung open and in bounced Hayley, her eyes lit up with anticipation, carrying in her hands a CD player. I couldn't see the connection. 'We're going to listen to the book of Luke on audio CD. Kirk

Rejoicing and growth at Brighton and Hove

In problem times, there is still reason to rejoice. On Sabbath 29 November, a small family joined a bigger family of believers at the Oasis Christian Fellowship Centre in Brighton and Hove. We celebrated the rebirth of Valerie, Shelter and Marvel Chikoto as they were baptised and welcomed into fellowship by Pastor L. H. Hill, who had spent several months studying the Word of God with the three young siblings.

There were feelings of excitement as friends and family joined together in the celebration. Special songs were dedicated to the newly baptised and words of encouragement were spoken. Dr Terry Messenger preached on the theme: 'Feel the fear and do it anyway'. He encouraged the young candidates to step out in faith and in the



power of the Holy Spirit.

Following a fellowship lunch, which was much enjoyed by all, Dr Messenger presented ways of witnessing for Christ in the workplace, since we spend most of our days in contact with colleagues. He especially highlighted that, in order for



Franklin plays Peter!' she cried. I suppressed a grin as she went on to impersonate a passionate quote from the man: 'Lord, you know all things – you know that I love you!' I was impressed. This sight and sound generation was employing whatever means possible to win this Bible Challenge.

And they were not alone. As I sat in the pew the following day, I scanned the sanctuary: over 400 loyal friends and church members from across north London, cameras stationed in random places, studio lights bouncing off the glowing faces of team members as pearls of sweat ran down the chins of the orators. As I sat there, enjoying the Master-Mind-like tension and enthusiasm, I was reminded that the Bible did indeed have a voice, and it wasn't the smooth tones of Blair Underwood or the passionate cry of Kirk Franklin on the audio CD, *The Bible Experience*. It was our young people.

The Impact London Bible Challenge started off the way it meant to continue, creating a new wave of enthusiasm for the Word of God across the whole spectrum of the Church. I found myself caught up in the euphoria as young people from Edmonton, Hampstead, Barnet, Tottenham West Green Road and Holloway participated as the competition worked its way through

Adventist history, analytical questions on the book of Luke, and the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs. Each question was carefully designed by Newbold lecturers who sat along the front pews, calm but equally ecstatic at the response this challenge had provoked among the churches.

Loyal audience members struggled to contain themselves at times but became progressively quieter as the tension built towards the end. It was clear, however, that the teens had caught the vision more than the adults, with over eight teams within the teens category and five in the over 20s. Nonetheless, each church produced no fewer than two teams of four for each category – some even four!

Winners were more than bountifully awarded, too, for this was not your typical AYS programme. There wasn't a souvenir bookmark in sight! The under 12s category, won by Edmonton Central, were presented with mobile camera phones; the over 20s, won by Barnet, received a £25 M&S voucher each, and Barnet, who almost stole the show, won the teens category, walking away with iPod nanos. However, others left disheartened but not defeated, determined they would be walking away as winners the next time.

RANETTE PRIME

us to minister for Christ, we first need to build and develop a relationship with him.

The day was filled with laughter and celebration as we all came together as a big church family to

give praise and thanks to God. Our prayers and support are with Valerie, Shelter and Marvel as they continue to grow in the faith and look forward to the Second Coming of Christ.

AMANDA ANOZIE

BUC office relocation

The former Headquarters office of the Church in the UK and Ireland is now covered in scaffolding, tarpaulins and a corrugated iron roof. 'The aim of covering the building is to allow it to dry out, protect the brickwork from frost damage, and to allow a proper assessment of how much needs to be done in terms of reconstruction,' states BUC treasurer, Victor Pilmoor. Together with architects, he is working with the administration and trustees to rebuild a representative and spacious office for the needs of the Church in the twenty-first century. 'We hope to have the ADC (Adventist Discovery Centre) and the ABC bookshop up and running again within three to four months,' Mr Pilmoor says. These were in the largely undamaged new wing of the building.

Two weeks before Christmas the BUC relocated to new, temporary offices in Frogmore, five miles from the Stanborough Park. For the next 18 months the staff will work in offices situated in a light industrial area.

Pastor Alan Hodges led the staff in a period of worship on 16 December and gave thanks that no one had been hurt or injured in the fire. He also drew lessons from the experience.

Email, fax and Internet services are now fully functional. The new phone system was installed in the second week in January.

VICTOR HULBERT



Peckham: Now is the time!

A prayer vigil was held at the Peckham church on 6 December. The theme for the night was 'Now is the time'. Watchers were invited to join the vigil for the full length of time from 9pm to 7am Sunday morning, when a prayer breakfast would be spread. A call went out to church leaders to come over and help us. Rallying to the call were SEC president Pastor S. Davis and SEC Health director Elsie Staple. Pastor Davis kept the members wide-awake – with pinching exhortation – to be on guard for termites, eating away the fibre of the family. No one could sleep for the itching! Sister Staple sounded the loud cry and got the blood circulating with some good singing before taking us back to the sanctuary and the blood that was shed for us. It was blood chilling; no one slept while considering the deep purpose of the sanctuary service. Among the topics covered were Family Matters and Keep Communication Clear. All were interspersed with prayer sessions for all topics. At the highest point, fifty members and visitors were present. Breakfast served no less than twenty visitors and friends between 7.15 and 8.15 and was an enjoyable prayer fellowship. It is an event to be recommended to all our churches. **Now is the time!**

ANGELLA ROBERTS AND CAROL JOSEPH

Plumstead Pathfinders' march

On Sabbath 15 November the Plumstead Community SDA (PCSDA) church hit the road in a march for Christ and against some of the atrocities in society. This march drew the attention of everyone as the sound of the marching band from Brixton church led the approximately two-mile march up and down Plumstead High Street. The people waved at us, joined in our singing and happily received the numerous pieces of literature we distributed.

The street march immediately followed Sabbath's divine hour service in which the investiture of forty-two members of the PCSDA church Pathfinder club took place. There were four Master Guides, namely, Fayeonnie Ball, Jean Smith, Jodiene Ball and Jamil Jack; seven Pathfinders and thirty-one Adventurers. Trevor Harewood, the Pathfinders' area coordinator, conducted the investiture service.

The theme for the day was, 'Not For Sale'. Pastor Esson, the resident

minister, challenged and charged those to be invested: 'The Pathfinder movement is one of the greatest movements in the SDA Church. Its members are not for sale and neither should its members undersell the Advent movement.' He then went on to quote the words of Dr B. L. Melbourne, his club director when he was in Savanna-la-Mar, Jamaica. 'Don't undersell the Advent movement in your thinking. Don't depreciate it with your ignorance. Know why you are what you are and let the world know it.'

This service was immediately followed by a street march shepherded by Sergeant Wray and his force from the Plumstead Police Station. Pastor Esson thanked the police for the support they continue to give to the church in the execution of her mission, and took the opportunity to present to them an award of appreciation.

One of the stories from the march was that of a young man



North Wembley: Power in your praise

On 1 November the Women's Ministries department hosted a fundraising concert at the North Wembley Community church. The day was advertised as 'Power in your praise', and it lived up to its title. The women took full control of the planning and execution, from advertising to hosting the concert and even selling food in the kitchen.

As the performers came up to do their songs they were met with a twist, as they were asked about what inspires them to give their talent back to the Lord. In the interval the audience had the opportunity to buy food and drink, books that had been displayed from The Stanborough Press and browse different stalls that had been set up by people in the church who had merchandise to sell.

The concert lifted the spirits of everyone and the audience responded with requests for encores of one particular performance. Ultimately, God was given all the honour, glory and the praise and everyone felt the presence of the Lord as the music lifted hearts and minds heavenward.

GREGORY LEE



from the crowd who joined in the singing of the Pathfinders' song. The club members were pleasantly surprised and mentioned the incident to Pastor Esson. He immediately found the young man and, after a short conversation, the young man revealed that he had been brought up in the SDA Church and had once been a Pathfinder. Gary promised to be in church the next Sabbath.

PASTOR S. MATTHIAS ESSON

Peckham's great day

Sabbath 8 November was a high day in Peckham, not because Barack Obama had become US President, but because four souls decided to give their lives to Christ!

Harvel Morant, Meredian Simpson, Ashana Allen and Aida White, all regular visitors to Peckham, decided to make their presence a more permanent fixture and join the family of Peckham church! After a rousing song service, the baptismal candidates took their vows and prepared to enter the pool.

Pastor Ebenezer Jones-Lartey had previously discussed with Aida the idea of joining Peckham's membership by the Right Hand of Fellowship, due to her being wheelchair bound. However, when her name was called, Aida asked to see the pool. Unlike the man at the side of the pool of Bethesda, she decided that she *could* make it into the pool! With the help of deacons and



deaconesses around the pool and Pastor and Elder Cliff Blake in the pool, Aida was assisted into the water and the baptism took place. Due to Aida's physical restrictions, she, with the help of Pastor and Cliff, dipped down into the water and came up out of the water rejoicing! It was an extra special day for Aida as it was also her 77th birthday.

CAROL JOSEPH



GBK Choir Day

October 25 was Choir Day and at 6.30pm a fundraising concert was staged at the Great Brickkiln church, Wolverhampton. Talented religious artists, including groups such as GBK Sanctuary Choir, Wednesfield and Oxford St Choir, Children's choir and the Messengers, rendered quality items of praise. The

event was well attended and attendees were quite generous with donations. Adequate funds were successfully raised for the Birmingham Children's Hospital Kidney Appeal Trust.

The day had begun with Interactive worship, providing food for thought and majestic spiritual praise. A congregational choir, conducted by Dr Sinclair, captured the theme of the day. Soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices rang out from a packed church with the use of the hymn 'Then Sings My Soul'.

ALASTAIR AGBAJE



Yes, the efforts of the Sanctuary Choir and their organised team made a remarkable difference on Choir Day.

DELVA CAMPBELL



Brian's story

During November a series of seminars was conducted in Croscombe church by Pastor Joe Gresham from Texas. They were advertised in local papers, and cards were distributed in the immediate area. Although the response to these was perhaps not what we had hoped for, we do not know the long-term results.

Brian Clark was a young man of 20 who came from Kenya to study mechanical engineering at Bristol, where he lived with his mother and two brothers. During his studies he sustained a leg injury while taking part in a path-lab experiment. Unfortunately, in January this led to hospitalisation and to a cancerous tumour being diagnosed in his leg. In the days to come, his health deteriorated seriously and he battled with collapsed lungs and a lung tumour. Indeed, at one point he was given only two or three weeks to live.

In February he asked for a visit from an Adventist minister and Pastor Dranca responded. Brian asked for the service of anointing, following which there was an apparent improvement in his health. After studies with Pastor Dranca in the days that followed, Brian expressed a strong desire to be baptised as a sign of his commitment to Jesus Christ.

This service took place at Croscombe church on Sabbath 29 November in the presence of his mother and brothers and many friends and church members. The service was carried out using a portable baptistry, as the church does not have baptismal facilities. The joy that such a young man had taken this step was to be followed by the sad news that Brian's health had deteriorated again a few days later and he had died in hospital. But we can rejoice that his example led to his brothers indicating their desire to follow Brian's commitment to baptism at a later date.

YVONNE BAXTER



Willesden baptism

It must surely be the desire of every pastor to see individuals who have been touched by the love of God and who decide to seal their lives with him. Carle Collins and Charlene Walters made a public demonstration of their decision to follow the Lord in baptism on Sabbath 7 November before the congratulatory presence of their Adventist mothers. The church was reminded that there were only two camps possible – that of God and that of Satan, and everybody is knowingly or unknowingly in

either camp. All are given the opportunity to choose eternal life or death; and there are consequences for the choices made – bliss or doom. After the baptism ceremony, Pastor K. Thomas made an appeal to anyone wishing to be baptised. There is no doubt that the person who responded will be a member of Willesden church very soon. Elders Keith Allen and Simpson joined our pastor to welcome our two fresh members.

MICHELLE RONDOP

The Edmonton Nativity

On the evening of Saturday 20 December, if you were looking really closely, you would have seen 'the star in the east' shining over a church in the north. Why? Because on this evening members of the community joined Edmonton church members to see a production of 'The Nativity' as performed by the teens and youth of Edmonton church.

And it was a truly wonderful production – from the literally moving star to the amazing props, which included Mary's donkey. All this was a reminder of the real reason for the Christmas season – not the glitz, parties, overspending and overeating, but that God kept his promise and sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer. What a wonderful gift!

'The Nativity' was written by Scherron McKenzie-Cook and beautifully enhanced with musical renditions celebrating the gift of Jesus. We were especially blessed with the newly-formed Pure Gospel Community Choir whose presentation of 'Gloria In Excelsis Deo' left us in a spirit of worship to our God.

The teens and youth of Edmonton decided to extend the season of goodwill by collecting an offering in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital. Approximately £190 was raised.

Please continue to pray for the youth of our church and the youth of the world.

KATHI HYATT



'Keep a song in your heart'

'Keep a song in your heart.' This was the call to more than forty west of Scotland Pathfinders, Adventurers and Eager Beavers at their annual investiture in Glasgow on 6 December. Cross-referencing the pessimistic and optimistic attitudes of Star Wars' androids CP03 and RTD2 and Joshua and Caleb's scouting party in Numbers 13, Mission Youth sponsor, Pastor Marcel Ghioalda, asked how those present felt about themselves and their relationship with God and his promises. 'How you think you are in God's eyes does matter,' he said, 'and always remember who God thinks you are.'

The influence such an attitude can have on others was borne out in a moving testimony from Angela Berocan, a non-Adventist, whose friendship with Pathfinders, Chloe and Clara Mukisa, led her to join the Glasgow Pathfinders. A full programme of recitals, and the range and number of certificates and awards issued, also reflected this message and yet another positive and progressive year for Scotland's youth. A special presentation was made to the oldest Master Guide present, Moyra Macdonald, who first became involved in the movement more than fifty years ago.

JOHN WILBY

75 graduate from Personal Witnessing and Stewardship courses

by Terry Messenger and Richard de Lisser

On Sunday 7 December a joint graduation service took place at London's Advent Centre for graduates from the Personal Witnessing course and the Stewardship Consultants course. A total of seventy-five graduates marched down the aisle to receive their certificates, fifty-five from the Personal Witnessing course and twenty from the Stewardship Consultants course.

To graduate from these courses, graduates had to submit written work as well as practical assignments. They attended various presentations from May through to November. On the Personal Witnessing course, lectures were given on such topics as 'Working with Muslims', 'How to give Bible Studies', 'Witnessing in the Workplace', 'Gaining Decisions for Christ', 'Studying in Small Groups', 'Studying the Bible with Teens', and 'Nurturing and Discipling New Members', to name a few.

Those who attended the Stewardship Consultants course attended lectures on: 'Biblical Stewardship, the 21st Doctrine of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church', 'The Historical Development of the SDA Giving System', 'Stewardship as Leadership in the Church', 'Stewardship in the Writings of Ellen White', 'Tithes & Offerings & the Role of Money in Stewardship', and 'Wills & Estate Planning'. Many thanks to our ministers and lay people who presented the excellent material.

In the keynote address, Pastor Don McFarlane, BUC president, stated that this wasn't the end but in fact the beginning and urged the graduates to put their learning into practice when they got back to their churches. John and Brenda Wilson, members of the Canterbury church who participated in the Personal Witnessing course, stated in the student response that they had appreciated the warm fellowship throughout the course as well as the academic and practical training. They also pledged to return to their church ready to put into practice what they had learned.

One of the graduates stated, 'At first I was daunted by the Bible studies we had to do, but I'm really glad we had to do them because the people I'm studying with are really excited. It makes me

want to share the Bible with more people!'

Dr Terry Messenger, Personal Ministries and Sabbath School director for the SEC, who organised the course, plans to meet with the graduates early this year with the view of helping them to run courses and train others for outreach activities in their local districts. Dr Messenger has a dream that the local churches will become training centres where people can be equipped on a regular basis to become more and more effective in their witness for Jesus. The equipping of the fifty-five as Bible instructors will go some way to making that dream a reality.

The twenty Stewardship consultants not only received a certificate from the SEC as certified Stewardship Consultants, but in addition they were also awarded a certificate as Budget Coaches, having received budget coach training from the charity Stewardship. These newly qualified Stewardship Consultants will endeavour to help church members and those in the communities where they serve to survive these difficult financial times.

Health outreach in Ipswich

The Ipswich church, through its health department, is reaching out to the community. On 22 and 23 November the health department sponsored a health weekend. Dr Chidi, a practising GP, addressed the church on Sabbath with a vibrant presentation on the topic 'Prevention is better than cure'. He showed the relation of health to spiritual uplift and explained the common causes of heart disease and cancer and ways in which we can prevent them. In the afternoon the church was treated to a very informative lecture on oral hygiene by Dr Chidi's wife, Dr Euchenna, who is a dentist. Her topic was 'How to become a new you and have the best smile'. The high spirits continued on Sunday when people braved the cold winds and trudged through the snow to come and have their health screening and massage. According to the health leader Mrs Verley Roberts, the department began functioning in June 2007 and since then has successfully held a total of five health-screens, touching the lives of scores in the community. Among other things, the health department, together with the community and Women's Ministries, conducted a health evangelism outreach programme in the church in September last, as well as a MicroCHIP programme with the help of Elsie Staple which successfully saw eighteen persons graduating and testifying of the great success of their lifestyle changes.

VERLEY ROBERTS



<1
Children matter *continued*

valuing them as being the greatest in his Kingdom, enjoying their lively worship in the temple, appreciating their simple gifts and welcoming them with open arms. These ten promises have been written to help you think about what God wants children to experience when they come into your church and interact with the people there.

A special pack is being developed to help every church explore what the ten promises can mean to

them and to the children in their congregations and communities. The pack includes a poster of the ten promises, plus more posters that illustrate each of the individual promises. A group study guide for adults has been printed on the reverse side of each poster. These interactive outlines can help churches discover how they can be channels of God's love to the children in their congregations and communities.

Make 2009 the year your church brings its children closer to Jesus!

Hope Channel: What of the future?

by Victor Hulbert, Communication director, BUC

Regular viewers of HOPE CHANNEL EUROPE (HC-E) will find it hard to believe that it is five years since Hope Channel negotiated airtime on the Hotbird satellite to cover Europe, Russia, the Middle East and North Africa. With that contract under renewal, the Hope Channel administration, in consultation with the various administrations in Europe, have looked to see how best to maximise the effectiveness of the channel in the present broadcasting climate. Significant developments in the broadcasting world since 2003, including the development of web-technologies, and an increasing interest in satellite distribution for home viewing, have both increased opportunities and presented challenges for the Church in endeavouring to maximise Hope Channel as an evangelistic tool.

With many more broadcasters coming on board, the cost of airtime has significantly increased, but the imperative to share the good news is still just as urgent. The renewal quote for the new contract was actually doubled. This was an unacceptably high figure. Following serious negotiations, a new contract has now been signed with an alternative provider, but still on the same Hotbird satellite. This comes at a much more competitive price but will ensure that we can continue to provide a positive service, undisturbed by frequency change, for the next five years. Unfortunately, that does mean a frequency change right now!

Use the Scan feature on your remote control to pick up the new Hope Channel. Alternatively, you can enter the following parameters into your receiver.

Downlink Frequency: 11013.00 MHz
Polarisation: Horizontal
Symbol Rate: 27.500 Msps
FEC: 3/4

Our friends at www.jsd-satellite.co.uk are among those who are also willing to give you advice on retuning. The change came into force on 30 December.

So what of the future? Over the next couple of years the structure of HC-E will be changing. Some of the foreign language broadcasters will be moving to their own frequencies. The German Union has signed a contact on ASTRA that will suit their needs in 2009 and the Romanians also now have their own twenty-four hour satellite channel. English remains important on HC-E as a core language understood by a large number of TV viewers across Europe. English will therefore stay as a strong component of HC-E, particularly at peak viewing times for UK audiences. UK content will also continue to be provided for broadcast on demand via the website, www.hopetv.org.uk. As with all major broadcasters, Internet delivery is seen as a major way forward. Simply by logging on to the website, the viewers have total control over their viewing time, choice of programme, and whether they want to watch



Congratulations to William Mudahemuka from Rwanda on graduating with an MSc in Urban Water and Environmental Management from Abertay University, and who is currently working as a water engineer in Dundee.

ABC BOOK SALES

February

1	John Loughborough	10.30am-2pm
8	Harper Bell	10.30am-2pm
22	Stanborough School	10am-2pm

ABC Shops

Watford, BUC. Due to the recent fire, the ABC shop in Watford is closed until March

Advent Centre,
Sundays 11am-3pm

Messenger

Volume 114 • 2 – 23 January 2009

EDITOR: D. N. MARSHALL

DESIGN: DAVID BELL

COPY FOR No. 4 – 2 February 2009

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.

	Lon	Card	Nott	Edin	Bell
Jan 23	4.34	4.47	4.33	4.27	4.45
30	4.47	4.59	4.46	4.42	4.59
Feb 6	5.00	5.12	4.59	4.57	5.13
13	5.12	5.25	5.13	5.13	5.27

MESSENGER SUBSCRIPTIONS

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