

# Messenger

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## BUC session and day of fellowship report

In this issue of *MESSENGER* we report on the British Union Conference session, which closes the chapter on the Church's activity in the United Kingdom for the years 2006 to 2010. It also inaugurates another five-year cycle of challenge and opportunity for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

This was a unique session, where the election of officers and committee members was run to a different timetable – thereby drastically reducing both the time and money normally required for Union sessions.

In this bumper magazine we have tried to capture the wonderful day of fellowship and worship that preceded the session – relying on a selection of photographs and an edited version of the Sabbath sermon.

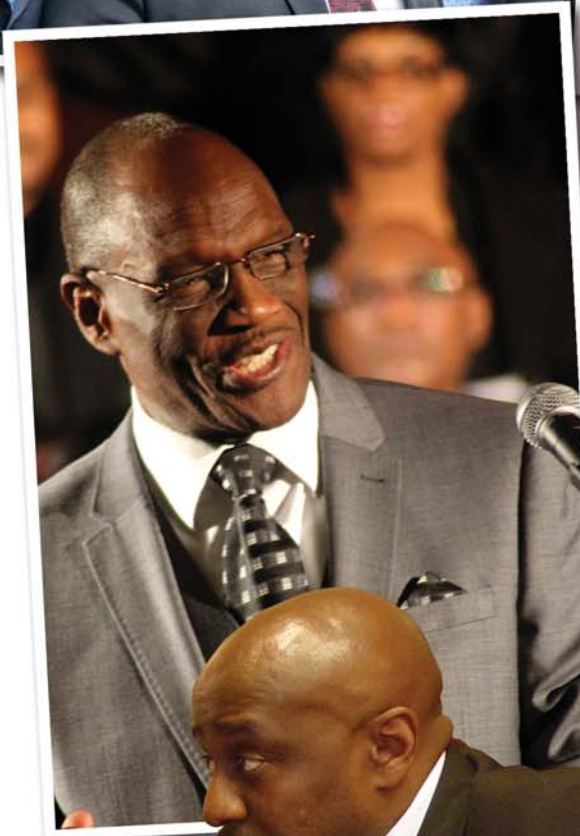
We have also given you an edited

version of the president's report, and some brief excerpts from those of the secretary and the treasurer. The full text of all the reports is to be found in the session booklet, which is online at <http://www.bucsession.org.uk/documents/index.php>, as is a lot of other good material that space would not permit us to publish here.

For the session itself, we have covered the main outcomes: the staff appointments and the next steps in the restructuring process.

We need to thank Pastor Victor Hulbert and Dr Richard de Lisser for their contributions on pages 14 and 15 respectively, and that of our respected former editor, Dr David Marshall, on pages 22 and 23. We also need to recognise the photo-journalism of Dan Sabatier, Victor Hulbert, Kevin Johns and Wes Kapon, which expertly captures the mood of both events. To see more photographs, please visit: [www.adventistpictures.org.uk](http://www.adventistpictures.org.uk). For online videos, visit: <http://www.hopetv.org.uk/content/media-library/show/ml/buc-session-2011>.

THE EDITOR





For months now we have been waiting for the BUC session. Some have entertained themselves with speculation about who the next leaders will be, while others may even have gone beyond speculation to agitation!

So, what happens next? How should we respond to these new leaders, whether they are our choice or not?

Do we adopt an aloof 'wait-and-see' attitude, secretly hoping that they will make heavy weather of their new responsibilities? Then, if they do, we can smugly broadcast that we 'knew it would happen'!

Or do we become more aggressive than that, creating issues that will put them to the test – so we can then 'put them to the sword'!

**The 'saints' have had practice**

This strategy is not new. Regular upstanding churchmen tried it on Jesus 2,000 years ago:

*'After dinner the Pharisees and the lawyers attacked Him with all kinds of questions, hoping He would say something wrong. From then on, they acted more like His enemies than His friends.'* (Luke 11:53, 54, The Easy English Clear Word.)

**Ingratiation**

Another approach to new leadership is *ingratiation*. Those who employ this strategy are often masters in the use of subtle compliments that gently caress the carnal nature. Suggestions that 'Things have never been so well-run before', or 'You fellows are a breath of fresh air', can create dangerous illusions of success for new leaders.

It is human to want to be close to our leaders and count them as our friends. But ingratiation slides easily beyond *compliments* to tangible *favours*, and *favours* build *obligation*, and *obligation* may cloud *objectivity*!

**Beware of 'courtiers'**

A 'courtier' was one of those people who once swarmed around the rich and the famous, especially royalty. The courtier couldn't 'buy' the regent's favour with gifts of money or land, but if he supplied *choice information* he gained a special status, and the protection of the king.

Some leaders have an insatiable thirst for certain types of information. They want to know about the latest alliances, what people think of them and their leadership style, the moral blind spots of their colleagues and counterparts – anything that may give them perceived leverage over those they lead!

But the real 'leverage' is in the clever courtier's hand. He may use information selectively, mischievously, partially, or in any way he chooses, to manipulate the gullible leader.

# So, what happens next?



Julian Hibbert  
Editor

**How does God want us to act?**

He can't support aloofness, aggression, ingratiation, obligation or manipulation. So what does he expect from us? Perhaps these ideas will be helpful:

**Join them in 'Gethsemane'** – Every leader is going to have moments of intense stress, or times when nothing runs to plan, and nobody seems to care. These are often very, very lonely moments – times when our leaders need to know there is someone else in their 'Gethsemane' with them – someone who is praying for them!

In Matthew 26 we see how much Christ would have appreciated the praying presence of Peter, James and John. Just listen to the sadness and raw human need in these words:

*'Then Jesus came with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane and said to them, "Sit down here while I go over there and pray." Then he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be in terrible pain and agony of mind. "My heart is breaking with a death-like grief," he told them, "stay here and keep watch with me.'* (Verses 36-38, New Testament in Modern English, J. B. Phillips)

His vivid anticipation of the next day's legal charades, public humiliation and inhuman torture, and the burden of humanity's measureless iniquity, squeezed blood from his pores – but they slept. He was in severe turmoil – but they slept. Three times he urged them to 'watch' with him – but they slept!

So, BUC members, let's join Ian, Paul and Victor in their daily 'Gethsemanes'.

**Hold up the leaders' hands** – On the way to the Promised Land, Israel was attacked by the Amalekites, and this is what happened:

*'As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, . . . Aaron and Hur held his hands up – one on one side,*

*one on the other – so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.'* (Exodus 17:11-13, NIV.)

Moses was holding up his rod, a symbol of God's power and grace, but he could not do it alone. He needed the ongoing support of Aaron and Hur, because *victory is always a team effort!*

So, when Ian, Paul and Victor are holding high the symbols of God's power and grace, let's support them tirelessly!

**Tell truth to power, but do it properly** – Bob Stone, a management consultant, makes the following observations:

*'Telling the truth to the boss is the first responsibility of an ethical subordinate. . . . Speaking the truth isn't just a matter of personal integrity; it's crucial for organisational success.'*

And he is right on target. The one thing that our new leaders wish for is that we tell them the truth. We need to be open with them about what we think should be *stopped, fixed or initiated* for God's work to be successful.

But we must make sure that we have the truth before we tell: that our motives are pure, our facts accurate and our perspectives balanced.

'Telling truth to power' is never easy. It takes courage – but it also needs to be done in a gracious spirit and with due tact. Time and place are also important. Many a true word has been wasted because it was said at the wrong forum. The rule of thumb for 'truth telling' is simple: *the smallest audience will usually deliver the best results!* Nathan confronted David about his sin, not Israel.

'Tell truth to power' – Ian, Paul and Victor are waiting!

<sup>1</sup>www.governing.com, January 9, 2008, 'Telling truth to power', by Bob Stone.



**R**eaching Up, Reaching Out, on a Journey of Hope' was the motto under which leaders in the Union office worked during the quinquennium. Being of service to God and to people around us is what Jesus himself said is the purpose of a Christian life. Our motto indicates an understanding of that purpose and the role of the Church in being a channel of hope to the lost.

Charles Dickens' opening words in *The Tale of Two Cities* seem to capture some of the contrasts that we experienced during the five years: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair . . .'

**The best of times**

- By the end of 2009 the accession total for the previous quinquennium was surpassed, with a year to go. We take no credit for this, but praise God for using his people to build his Kingdom.
- In 2009 the majority of our ministerial workers, in the field and offices, led out in outreach programmes, resulting in record accessions. This was followed up in 2010 by the 'Power of 31' initiative that saw a significant number of our churches involved in mass distribution of truth-filled literature on 25 September.
- Our education programme saw secondary and primary schools record outstanding performances in GCSEs and SATS.
- The health profile in our churches was raised considerably with the introduction of

the CHIP programme, the establishment of a partnership between the BUC and the health authorities on organ donation, and the provision of numerous resources for use by local churches.

- The Church's engagement with the public moved up a couple of notches, with a number of our workers and members appearing on national and local television.
- The Union changed its traditional system of conducting sessions to one that saves hundreds of thousands of pounds and potentially provides extra funding for more mission-focused areas of our work.
- ADRA-UK, the humanitarian arm of our Church, has been active in bringing relief to disaster-torn areas and improvement to the lives of some of the poorest people in the world.
- Despite the circumstances in which it came about, the 'new' headquarters of our Church, which has been built with today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities in mind, is a plus for our Church.
- The financial support of the Church by members was maintained in difficult economic times.

**The worst of times**

- The damage to the BUC building by fire in 2008 ranks in the 'worst of times' category. It brought in its wake disorientation for some BUC staff, having lost familiar surroundings, and dislocation for everyone who worked in the building.
- The difficulties over one of our schools, its falling into Special Measures and all the attendant issues were all depressing matters, which did little to advance the work of the Church, and left behind broken

bridges and relationships that will take years to mend.

- The sale of Roundelwood, our only health institution, was made after realising that none of the alternative measures considered was in the overall interest of the Church. We regret the negative impact this had on many faithful employees and the health ministry of the Church.
- Several workers who were made redundant in the North England Conference for obvious reasons may not be positive about the quinquennium. Leaders recognised the trauma that that action caused for families, but realised that for the good of the wider work of the conference there was no credible alternative.
- The quinquennium also saw a number of members lose their jobs, as the recession deepened and both public and private businesses shed staff in order to keep afloat.

While we express our praise to God for the good times and the developments in the Union that provided evidence of God's leading in his Church, we must also take time to reflect on those decisions that may have





hindered the progress of the Gospel, and how they can be avoided in future.

### Strategic plan

A strategic plan, the basic segments of which were ratified at the 2006 session, formed the basis for our work during the five years. Each year the work of directors was reviewed in line with the plan for their individual departments.

### Evangelism

Evangelism took various forms during the quinquennium. In large campaigns, such as those held in the West Midlands and London, and in Bible seminars, LIFEdevelopment centres, church plants and one-to-one Bible studies, the Good News of Christ's provision of salvation and his promise to come again have been shared with conviction and courage.

During the quinquennium ministerial workers and churches continued to experiment with various forms of outreach, in an effort to discover what approaches might communicate the Gospel most clearly and lead to a

positive response. A special message book entitled *Experiencing the Joy* was published in 2010 as a new tool for sharing the Gospel in a refreshing and imaginative manner.

The evangelistic highlight of the quinquennium

was without question the 2009 'Year of Evangelism'. Pastors were asked to conduct their own outreach programmes, without resorting to inviting guest speakers from overseas. The response was heartening, as pastors, directors, administrators and other ministerial workers in various parts of the Union played their part. As part of this programme the three missions joined forces in a 'field school of evangelism' in Cardiff, under the leadership of Geoff Youlden. The combined efforts of ministerial workers and the witness of members led to 1,255 accessions for 2009, a record for the British Union. This encouraging statistic shows what can be done when we combine our efforts in proclaiming the Gospel.

Another outstanding evangelistic feature of the quinquennium was the joint effort of a significant number of churches in the British Union, on 25 September 2010, to distribute Gospel literature to the public. Under the catch-phrase, 'The Power of 31', over eighty percent of churches reportedly participated in this simple but effective programme. 'We need to do this every year' was the response that came from a large number of churches.

### Membership and growth

The secretary's report shows that accessions (baptisms and professions of faith) from 2006 to 2010 amounted to 5,339. This compares favourably with the accession of 4,099 during the previous quinquennium. The membership of the Union grew from 25,520

at the start of the five-year period to 31,662 by its end, an increase of just over twenty-four percent.

Traditionally, net growth has been smaller than the amount of accessions, but the arrival of members in the British Union from various parts of the world has bolstered growth. The secretary's report shows that transfers into churches in the BUC during the period amounted to 4,164, and transfers out 2,547, resulting in a net transfer growth of 1,617. This figure indicates that, in addition to accessions of 5,339, approximately 1,600 members transferred their membership from abroad into the British Union.

The large number of members transferring into the British Union is a positive development. The Union benefits from their talents and other resources.

### Finances

Each year we vote a budget based on the expected faithfulness of members. The treasurer's report shows that the annual percentage increase in tithe was down on the previous quinquennium. This can be explained by the deep recession that the countries in the British Isles experienced, and the resultant job losses for many members. Nevertheless, it was clear that a large number of members continued to put the work of the Lord first in their list of priorities, and gave faithfully and generously to the Church. Total tithe for the five years amounted to £81,908,710, an increase of £22,310,539 on the sum for the previous quinquennium. This was a percentage growth of 37%. While this was remarkable, it was much less than the 54.7% growth achieved during the previous quinquennium. Sabbath School offerings totalled £4,399,334.

Eighty-two million pounds in tithe, which averaged out at just over sixteen million annually, seems a lot of money. However, when the cost of Church employees, department work, evangelism, pensions and contributions to the wider Church community are all factored in, it no longer seems such a large sum.

We give praise to God for providing for his people sufficiently that they in turn could provide for the work of his Church.

### Institutions

The Stanborough Press, under the leadership of Paul Hammond, was able to make a profit each year, against the general trend in the UK book business. Sales in overseas markets and prudent financial management ensured that this area of operations was not a burden on the finances of the Church. More importantly, the press was instrumental in the distribution of truth-filled literature to possibly millions around the world and the British Isles.

Roundelwood Health Centre in Scotland was regrettably closed in 2008, due to what its board concluded was non-viability in a very competitive market. The decision was a cause of much pain for church leaders, but it was taken to protect other aspects of the Church's programme from funding shortages. While many felt that the sale of Roundelwood was short-sighted and unnecessary, the Church had to face the grim reality that hardly

any Adventist health institution of the Roundelwood variety in the world was a financial success. A large number are kept going as a result of the largesse of wealthy benefactors. Sadly, Roundelwood was not blessed with such a benefactor.

Stanborough School played an important role in the overall strategy of the BUC during the last five years. Nevertheless, a combination of low enrolment and non-payment of fees by church members imperilled this important institution, to the extent that a decision was taken by the Union committee to explore external sources of funding. The Coalition Government proposed a number of pathways to establishing and maintaining schools, which the BUC has been examining in an effort to establish whether Stanborough might benefit from one of the available options.

Newbold College is not operated directly by the British Union. That privilege has been the Trans-European Division's since 1953. However, as part of the Division and the field in which the college is located, the British Union has been asked to play a greater role in the provision of funds for the college. Like Stanborough School, Newbold has been challenged financially, and in the latter part of the quinquennium embarked on a major re-organisation programme in order to ensure that this fine institution continues to serve the Church in the British Isles and beyond.

### Leadership changes

While the current structure of our Church exists, leaders are required to serve in different areas of the organisation. The past five years were in many respects not unlike the previous five-year periods in terms of staff changes. Some stalwarts of the cause fell asleep in Christ. Others decided to retire and take up new interests, while a limited number were called to work overseas.

Sam Davis succeeded Humphrey Walters as president of the SEC in 2007, while Egerton Francis, who served as president of the NEC for over twelve years, was replaced by Ian Sweeney in 2008.

Marcus Dove retired from the position of treasurer of the NEC in 2008, and was succeeded by Rejoice Kampengele, formerly an auditor for the Church, based at the Trans-European Division office.

David Marshall, after forty-two years of service, thirty-two of which were spent as editor of *The Stanborough Press* and editor of *MESSENGER*, opted for retirement and was replaced by Julian Hibbert, who came to us from South Africa.

Graham Barham, who carefully managed the finances of the press for ten years, accepted a call in 2010 to serve as treasurer of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, based in the United States.

Sadly, Dalbert Elias passed away unex-



pectedly in 2006 while serving as principal of the Adventist Discovery Centre. He was succeeded briefly by Michael Hamilton, who was called to serve at the TED office, and then by Desmond Rafferty.

Llewellyn Edwards accepted a call to serve as the president of the Egypt Field in 2009, and was succeeded as Scottish Mission president by Bernie Holford.

Donovan Cleary, Seventh-day Adventist Association secretary and BUC associate treasurer, accepted a call to serve as a field treasurer in the Middle East Union. He was succeeded as SDAA secretary by Steven Okelo.

Kofi Owusu joined our communication/media team in 2010, having brought with him a number of skills that are proving helpful in the media work, and in other areas as well.

Keith Davidson, who served in a variety of positions in the Church for nearly twenty years, including BUC Education director, left in 2010 to embark on a new career. He was succeeded as Education director by Mrs Anne Pilmoor.

Mrs Cheryl Allen, following eleven years as a teacher and head teacher at Stanborough Primary School, decided to take a break from denominational work. Her place was taken by Mrs Kathleen Hanson, who had previously served as a teacher there.

While I have highlighted the names of those individuals whose job situation changed during the quinquennium, I also wish to pay tribute to the scores of ministerial workers, teachers, institution workers, support staff and others, whose commitment to mission and dedication to duty helped to maintain the important work of the Union during the quinquennium.

### The Union family

The Church is pleased to refer to itself as a family. That fundamental belief has been at the root of the efforts of the leadership and members alike as they have sought to come to terms with the growing diversity in the British Union.

Every member of the family has a right to 'sit at the dining table' and partake of what is available. Throughout the quinquennium, leaders emphasised the common brotherhood of all believers, irrespective of their racial or national background. This, however, did not mask the difficulty that some members had in adjusting to people from different cultural backgrounds in an attempt to find common ground. This is an ongoing exercise, and goes to the very heart of what the Church is actually about. Our common fatherhood, since it is real, must express itself in our common brotherhood.

### Fellow officers

I have had the privilege of serving alongside two amazing men during the quinquennium. Eric Lowe, a gentle and Christ-like man, cared for the complex details of the secretariat and each week worked several hours beyond the call of duty. He is an example of what commitment to the cause of Christ entails. Sadly, Pastor Lowe, who has served the Church for forty-three years, nearly fourteen of which

were as secretary of the British Union, retired at this session.

He will be missed by the office staff, and his careful work in the secretariat will be a huge loss to the Church. On behalf of the Church community, I thank him for his outstanding service to the Church and wish him and Margaret a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Victor Pilmoor, who served as treasurer of the British Union during the quinquennium, is known for his analytical ability and for thinking outside the box. Every successful team needs an 'ideas person' and someone who will challenge sloppy thinking. Mr Pilmoor played that role unceasingly, and humorously at times, during the quinquennium, in addition to the careful management of the Union's finances. Following the fire at the BUC office in November 2008, he gave exceptional leadership in finding temporary accommodation for the office staff and in dealing with all the services, authorities and professionals involved in rebuilding the office. The new office building is a testament to his hard work and countless hours in overtime each week.

### The future

The future of the Church is safe in *God's hands*. There are some keys, however, that we as a Church hold in *our hands*, which must be used to open up new opportunities and access additional resources as we seek to expand the Kingdom of God.

One such key is the re-organisation of the Church in the British Isles. The current structure of the Union was put into place over a hundred years ago. Communication and travel at the time meant that the structure was appropriate then, and for several subsequent decades. However, modern communication and travel provide an infrastructure that allows us to make major changes to the way in which the Church has been operated, in order to make it more mission-efficient and to save on expenditure, while preserving the positive features of the past.

Being relevant to ourselves and to the wider community must be a continuing objective that we must not lose sight of as we journey into the future. The Gospel needs to touch our lives in practical ways – our work, recreation, desires, ambitions and hopes. To our neighbours, friends and the general public, the Gospel is to be presented, not just as a body of beliefs, but as a dynamic spiritual experience that changes attitudes and perspectives, and provides a reason for optimism amid the debris of social, economic and natural disasters that litter our world.

We must find ways to present the Gospel as being rooted in the man, Christ Jesus, and not in a creed. He stated it more succinctly than I can when he said, 'And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself' (John 12:32, NIV). This is done, not primarily by preaching eloquent sermons or building grand edifices, but by the 'aroma' that comes from a humble and surrendered life. God wants Christians to be *Christians*.

The role of our educational institutions at all three levels is another theme that should occupy our time and attention as we move forward. Being independent institutions, our

schools must, of necessity, be fee-paying. Over the years the Church has sought to keep school fees comparatively low, so as to make Adventist education accessible to a wide range of members and non-members. While the Church is committed to this basic principle, the cost of running our educational institutions is impacting other important areas of the Church's overall programme. It is imperative that alternative sources of funding be secured, or that student numbers increase significantly, if we are to maintain our current educational system.

### Gratitude

Despite all the setbacks during the five years, God manifested his power through his people. Record accessions, an encouraging financial performance during difficult economic times and full churches each Sabbath were primarily due to God's guidance and the power of his Spirit in the hearts of his people. To him we express our gratitude for his leading and for blessing his people. 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power . . .' (Rev 4:11, KJV).

Thanks to all our members for their continued belief in the promises of our Lord and their response to his love, without which this report would not be possible.

Our department directors have been instrumental in delivering the programme of the Union and in ensuring that strategic ideas and plans became action and experience. I thank them for their positive attitude, sacrificial spirit and creative initiatives. Working with these committed men and women has been a special experience for me.

The role our support staff played in ensuring the smooth running of the Union was pivotal to all our achievements. Their technical skills, their sensitivity in dealing with members of the Church and the public, and their personal commitment to the mission of the Church were key features of their work. I wish to thank them all.

My personal thanks go to Mrs Valerie Pearce and Mrs Jacqueline Johnson, who served consecutively as my assistants during the quinquennium.

The Union is indebted to the presidents and their respective teams in the local fields for the leadership they provided, and for serving as good advisors to the Union leaders on various Church matters.





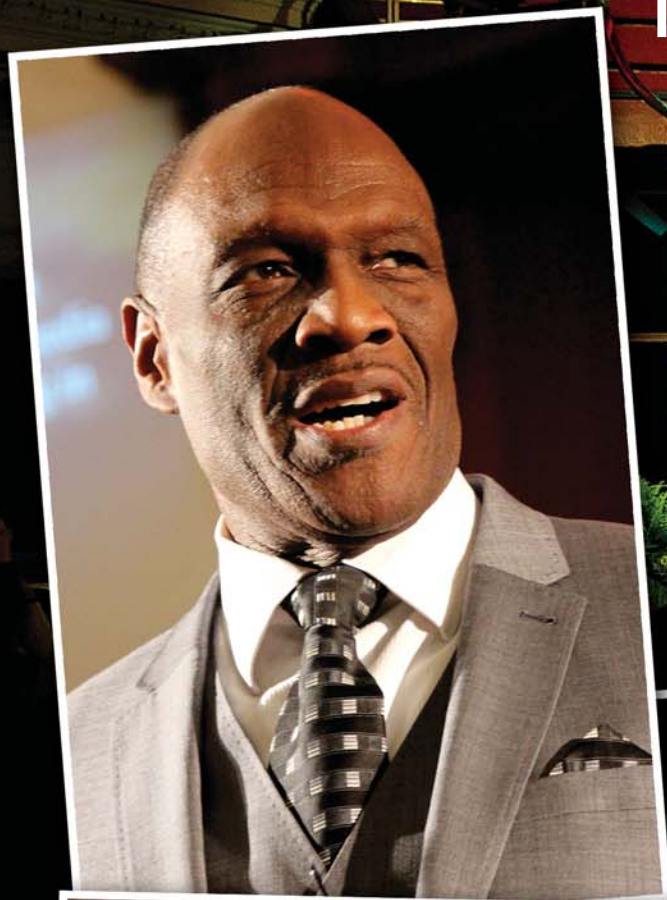
# Day of fellowship

Sabbath 2 July 2011

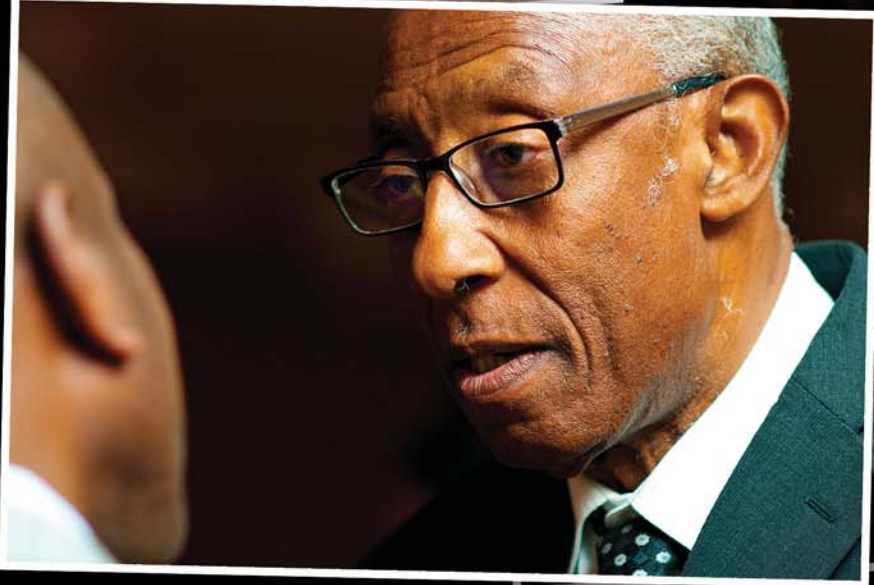
That the world may know!

I will sing of Jesus' love  
Endless praise,  
my heart shall give  
He has died that I might live  
I will sing His love to me

I will sing of Jesus' love  
Endless praise,  
my heart shall give  
He has died that I might live  
I will sing His love to me

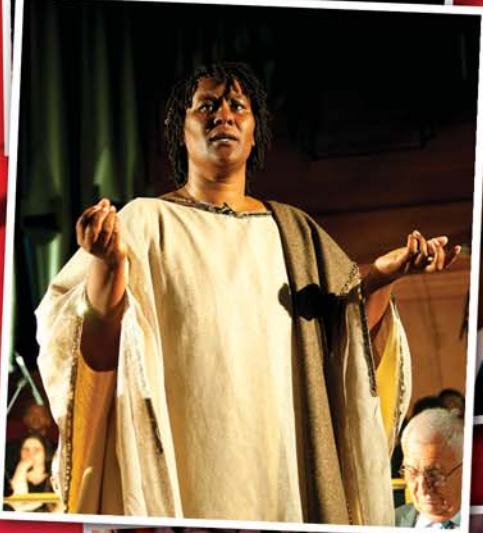


To be able to see more pictures from the BUC day of fellowship, go to:  
<http://www.adventistpictures.org.uk>. Audio and video content can be found at:  
<http://www.hopetv.org.uk/content/media-library/show/ml/buc-session-2011/>.





# Day of fellowship



## sermon

# A new kind of love

Pastor Charles A. Tapp

An edited version of the day of fellowship sermon

Without a doubt, *love* is considered by many to be the most powerful word in the English language. And what a force love is! It is a force that can move the highest mountain, but so tender that it can wipe away the tears of a crying child. Love is so powerful that it allows a black man and a white man to come together, and work together. It allows neither to see the colour of the other's skin, but rather the colour of the other's heart.

But when we look at what has happened to love in recent years, we just have to shake our heads in disbelief.

Although love is still the most popular theme for music and movies in our culture, in many cases it has been reduced to a mere commodity; something to be bought and sold.

But as disciples of Jesus Christ, we don't take our cues from the world when it comes to love, because we have access to the very Source of love itself. And although the world may view love largely as a noun, God's Word describes it as a verb; an action word. This theme probably permeates the Gospel of John more than any other. In John 14:15 (NKJV) Jesus says, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' In John 15:13 (NKJV) he says, 'Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.'

Today I invite you to take a look at another such instance in John 13:34-35 (NIV):

*'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'*

Jesus recognised that his days with his disciples were quickly coming to an end, and here he leaves them some final instructions (John 13-17).

He begins by giving them what is referred to as a 'new command'. In essence it was a command to love. Now, this wasn't a commandment in the sense of how we view the Ten Commandments. In other words, Jesus wasn't adding an eleventh commandment. But 'command' in this context simply refers to a new instruction or saying that Jesus was leaving his disciples. It was an instruction that he expected them to adhere to, and pass down to future generations.

But I'm certain that as they heard these words they must have felt somewhat confused, because the Gospel of loving one another was nothing new. Leviticus 19:18 counsels that no one should seek revenge, but that everyone should love their neighbours as they love themselves. So, in essence, Jesus' words could be viewed as merely a restatement of the Mosaic principle of loving one's neighbour as oneself. Even in Matthew 7:12, which has been referred to by many as the 'golden rule', Jesus himself admonishes that we treat others in the manner that we would have them treat us.

So in reality, there was nothing 'new' about what Jesus was saying: that is, until he added the words, *'As I have loved you'*. Now this changes everything. You see, Jesus wasn't giving his disciples a new commandment as much as he was giving them a new way to love. It was a command to love others, not as they desire to be loved, or even as we would desire to love them, but in the same manner that God loves us. And how does God love?

In the manner of Matthew 5:43-48 – perfectly!

So this was not a new commandment, but rather a new twist to an old one. No longer could they be free to love selfishly or indifferently – now they were required to love unconditionally and sacrificially. The newness about this command is that it now required them to love as God loves, perfectly and completely. This is definitely a departure from how love is viewed by our culture today. Today, love has been reduced to a mere feeling that changes with the blowing of the wind. Here today, gone tomorrow. Today, our love lacks dedication and commitment. But the kind of love that Jesus commands us to have is a love that is so intense that it causes us to lay aside our feelings, even to the point of being willing to lay down our very lives.

One of my favourite definitions for this kind of love is found in the book, *Living God's Love*, by Douglas Cooper. Cooper describes it this way. He says:

*'Loving is using one's God-given power of choice to do or say that which is in the best good or interest of another, regardless of feelings.'*

You see, Jesus wasn't one who simply preached this kind of love, but he was willing to live it. He was willing to lay aside his personal feelings to endure the cruelty of the cross in order that we might have the right to eternal life. That's not the kind of love to which the disciples were accustomed. It was tough enough for them to love their enemies as Christ admonished them in the Sermon on the Mount, but now it meant that they would have to love them with this 'new' kind of love. And because this instruction was given to them to be passed down to future generations, we must be willing to do the same.

In giving a new commandment for a new way to love, in essence Jesus was setting a new standard of love. But this was not to be a standard for everyone, but only for those who claim to be one of 'his' disciples. Remember what Jesus said. 'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (John 13:35, NIV.)

Don't miss this! Jesus has made it crystal clear that the identifying mark that will set us apart from everyone else is the love that we demonstrate for each other. It is a love that should mirror the love that God has for each of us.

There are many ways in which a person can be identified: for instance, by wearing a badge or a name tag. Even one's speech can reveal or identify what part of the world a person is from.

As Christians we have our own unique way of letting the world know who we are. For some it means wearing a cross around their necks, while for others it's plastering bumper stickers on their cars with slogans like, 'Honk if you love Jesus.'

But as powerful as these kinds of signs can be, they are not the litmus test that Jesus has set for the world to determine that we truly belong to him. In giving this 'new' commandment, Jesus now sets our ability to demonstrate this kind of love as his litmus test. Now here's the clincher. Our test is not





how well we are able to demonstrate this 'new' kind of the love to the world – those who don't know God – but it's **our ability to express it to other members of the family of God.** Please don't miss this! The test of whether or not we are true disciples is not based on the size of our congregation, the number of ministries we have in our churches or the many religious celebrations that we observe. It is whether or not we can love the brother or sister who is seated beside us on the pew. Now you would think that would be an easy accomplishment, but it's not. For some reason, it's more challenging for us to love those who are part of our own family than it is to love those who aren't.

In 1 John 3:14 (NIV) the Bible says: *'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.'*

What powerful metaphors are being used here. In essence, what is being said here is that the only way that we will be able to demonstrate this 'new' kind of love for one another is through the power of Almighty God. The power that Christ used to resurrect Lazarus from the dead is the same power that will be needed for us to keep this 'new' commandment!

But here is what I find interesting. It is not God who will decide whether or not we have been successful in accomplishing this great feat, but rather the world that will ultimately be our judge. In my opinion, one of the reasons why so many have turned away from the Church is because they see us fighting each other over many of the same issues that they see being fought out in the world. They see discrimination over issues such as gender and race in the Church, just as much as they see it in the world. They see politics being played out to the same degree, and in some cases more vigorously, than it is in government.

But Jesus says to us that if we can show the world that we truly love one another as brothers and sisters, regardless of our differences – in the same manner that he loves us, unconditionally – then there won't be a need for us to place any bumper stickers on our cars or crosses around our necks. You see, we've been trying to impress the world with our doctrine and our understanding of prophecy, but they are not impressed. Now please don't misunderstand me. All of these things are important and have their place, but if they are not presented with a heart of love, as the apostle Paul reminds us, they are just *'sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.'* (1 Cor. 13:1, NKJV.) In other words, we are just making a lot of noise. It has been said that 'People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.'

This reminds me of a sign that I saw posted outside one of our churches. The sign had a list of prohibitions such as: 'No short dresses to be worn in the church. No jewellery to be worn in the church. No trousers to be worn by women in the church. No foul language to be spoken in the church.' And the list went on and on. And if this wasn't striking enough, at the bottom of this list was the word *'Welcome'*!

I have discovered that when individuals leave the Adventist faith it is rarely due to some doctrinal dispute, but it is usually over this thing called love – or should I say the lack of it. And how can the world experience God's love if the church members, the primary instruments that have been placed on the earth to demonstrate it, can't even express it properly to each other?

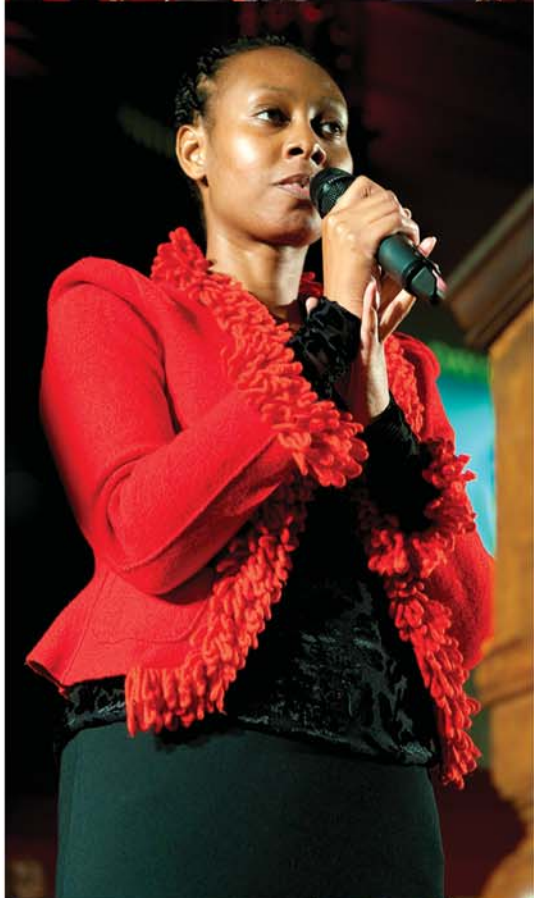
In my first church many of the members were new in the faith, and not truly grounded in their beliefs or in the Adventist lifestyle. Not too long after I had arrived, I discovered that a few of them had left to join a brand new church that had come to town. When I began to investigate what was going on, I discovered that this new church that was growing by leaps and bounds was simply called 'The Love Church'. When I questioned those who had left my church about the doctrinal beliefs of this new church they responded with one word: **love.** 'But what is it about this church that is so different from our church?' I asked. And again I received the same response: **love!**

I'm sure some of you are probably saying, 'Well, that may be nice, but love is not enough.' And that may be true, but if **love** isn't the foundation for all that we do, then what do we really have? I don't think Mark 12:28-31 (NIV) can be clearer than this:

*'One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.''*

I don't know about you, but what I hear Jesus saying to us today is that the one thing that he wants us to be known for more than anything thing else is our ability to love the way he loves. In other words he wants us to be **The Love Church.** And what is more important to God than the name itself is that it should not be given to us by ourselves, but rather it should be an honour bestowed upon us by those around us.

The question that each of us should be asking is, 'What name has my church been given?' Let us never forget that the name that means most to our communities is not the one that we have nailed to the front of our buildings, but rather the one that we have nailed to the front of our hearts.



## Executive secretary's observations\*

by Eric C. Lowe

### Membership

BUC membership at 1 January 2006 stood at 25,520, and enjoyed a net increase of 6,142 members to take it to 31,662 by 31 December 2010. This gave a net overall growth for the period of 24.07% – equivalent to a net annual average of 4.81%.

The total number of accessions by baptism and profession of faith for the period was 5,339.

While we give thanks and celebrate the miracle of God's grace in the lives of the 5,339 accessions, the Church continues to be challenged in reaching out to the majority population of the British Isles. This remains the greatest mission challenge in the BUC.

### Members dropped and missing

While we rejoice with those who have come to faith and committed their lives to a path of Christian discipleship, we are pained by those who, for one reason or another, have travelled in the opposite direction. 435 members were dropped, or recorded as missing from the church membership roll, during the past five years.

### Ministerial worker changes

Of the 187 paid ministers and Bible workers (not including task force workers) as of 31 December 2005, just over a third (seventy) left the employment of conferences and missions in the BUC in the five years to 31 December 2010. In total, eighty-four paid ministers and Bible workers left within the period, and eighty-seven joined the ranks – some fourteen starting and leaving within the period.

Those who left were divided between the following categories: nine responded to calls from outside the BUC for their services, twenty-six retired, two left to pursue further studies and seventeen transferred overseas independently. There were four deaths, six redundancies, and twenty who left the ministry for a variety of personal reasons.

The eighty-seven who replaced them came from the following groups:

Thirty-five were provided by graduates of Newbold College, twenty-nine made independent transfers from overseas, eleven former BUC workers returned to work in the British Isles, and twelve senior lay persons, some with prior ministerial training/service, were also engaged.

### Deaths and obituaries

It is with sadness that we record the death of 731 members during the period. The figure shows a decline of just over 100 from the previous quinquennium, which is probably due to the increasing longevity of members rather than a swing towards an increasingly younger Church.

### Acknowledgement and appreciation

At the heart of the BUC secretariat have been the excellent and dedicated secretarial and personal assistant skills of Judith Willis, who during her twenty-two years in this role has served four executive secretaries with distinction. For the past ten years she has also served the three missions as their membership secretary, preparing the final copy of their minutes and collating all the necessary documentation for final binding. Having given over thirty-two years of secretarial service to the Church in South Africa, Newbold College and the TED and at the BUC office, she is taking a well-earned break following the session, and we wish her well in her retirement.

It has been a privilege to work with my counterparts, Paul Lockham and Paul Haworth, and their respective conference secretariat departments. In addition we acknowledge the support and advice that the BUC has received from the secretariat team at the TED.



Judith Willis

## Gratitude to treasury colleagues\*

by Victor Pilmoor

As treasurer, I am privileged to work with an in-house team of close friends whose commitment to the cause is beyond question.

Pastor Michael Taylor, who for many years was the engine of financial detail in our department, came to retirement, and has continued to serve in a voluntary capacity as church auditor for Ireland, Wales and some West Country churches, and as a trustee of the retirement plan. He has also assisted in various consultancy tasks. We thank him for his contribution.

Donovan Cleary served as GCAS auditor for several years, and joined us for two years as associate treasurer before being 'head-hunted' by the Middle East Union, with which he has family connections. Donovan was fully versed in Church accounting and its systems, and made a significant contribution in establishing the new SunPlus accounting system.

Daniel Smith comes to us from Bermuda by way of Newbold College. His comfortable manner and fluency with data and IT systems have been a benefit to us all. He remains at the centre of things that get efficiently done.

Stephen Okelo has a long-standing attachment with the Church, first in Kenya, then through education in Sunderland and membership in London. He has had particular experience in property management, and serves both as associate treasurer and association secretary-treasurer. His commitment to the Church is deep-seated and his integrity impeccable, and he is a fine servant of the Church.

Mrs Maritza Sabatier has continued her service as cashier and Missions Income accountant. Her varied abilities and communication with church treasurers are appreciated.

Mrs Carolyn Bellamy joined her husband in retirement after a full working career in the Treasury department. She held a deep sense of history and tradition, having served five treasurers. She was the custodian of every document, meticulous in presentation and order. That this tidiness was disrupted by fire was a particular injustice to a well-kept system. She was stalwart in the transition to our temporary accommodation. As a gentle and kind friend to our department she is much missed.

Mrs Lucinda Calvert, a graduate in Secretarial Studies from Helderberg College (South Africa), joined as departmental secretary in the depth of our chaos, soon after the fire. She has been the dynamo in re-establishing the order of our department and has facilitated the requirements of the office as a whole. Her energy and kindness are an inspiration to us all; she is much valued.

### Personal comment

Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined being used in the Lord's service in the manner Providence has determined. For me, being used in the land of my birth, and commissioned by those around me, is a particular honour. Each day brings something different – visiting publishing houses, marketing books, developing schools and colleges, administering pensions, buying and selling churches, building an office, and working with pastors and members – not to speak of the fulfilment of engaging with ADRA and those in need.

As a department we see ourselves as 'stewards of a faithful people' above the detail and transactional nature of our work; we are 'builders of trust'. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to live such an abundant life.

\*Space does not permit us to include the full reports of the executive secretary and treasurer, but here are a few highlights. Their reports are available on the BUC website at: [http://www.bucsession.org.uk/documents/buc\\_session\\_book\\_2011.pdf](http://www.bucsession.org.uk/documents/buc_session_book_2011.pdf).





# Session outcomes 3 July 2011

A Union business session should achieve more than just a series of collective decisions about *staffing, policy, constitution and strategy*. It must also result in the following:

**God's people must meet, greet and grow their relationships.** They must become aware of the extensive nature of our Church family; that we are a diverse group from 'all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues'; but that we are united 'before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes'.

**God's people must hear each other's concerns, pain, disappointment, failure, success, joy and vision for the future.** They must speak plainly, seeking answers to their questions – and they must listen and be listened to.

**God's people must sense that we are on a 'new page' in the life of the Church – a time to try new things, or pursue past successes with renewed passion.**

If we measure the 2011 BUC session against these outcomes, hopefully it was a success!

<sup>1</sup>Revelation 7:9, NKJV



## Appointments

One of the tangible outcomes that our members are interested in will be the following list of appointments for the new quinquennium:

**BUC officers**  
President: *Pastor Ian Sweeney*  
Executive secretary: *Pastor Paul Lockham*  
Treasurer: *Mr Victor Pilmoor*

**Mission officers**  
Irish Mission president: *Pastor David Neal*  
Scottish Mission president: *Pastor Bernie Holford*  
Welsh Mission president: *Pastor John SurrIDGE*  
Missions' secretary-treasurer: *Referred to BUC executive committee*

**BUC departmental directors**  
Communication & Media: *Pastor Victor Hulbert*  
Education & Sabbath School: *Mrs Anne Pilmoor*  
Evangelism (Personal Ministries, Church Growth, LIFEdevelopment, Literature Ministry): *Pastor Eglan Brooks*  
Family Ministries & Children's Ministries: *Mrs Heather Haworth*  
Health Ministries & Women's Ministries: *Mrs Sharon Platt-McDonald*  
Ministerial Association, Discipleship & Continuing Education: *Pastor Brighton Kavaloh*  
Youth, Pathfinders & Chaplaincy for Students in Tertiary Education: *Pastor Nathan Stickland*

- BUC executive committee**
1. BUC president (chair)
  2. BUC executive secretary (secretary)
  3. BUC treasurer
  4. Newbold College principal
  5. Stanborough Press manager
  6. Editor of the BUC MESSENGER
  7. NEC president
  8. SEC president
  9. Irish Mission president
  10. Scottish Mission president
  11. Welsh Mission president
  12. Head, Stanborough Secondary School
  13. BUC Communication & Media director
  14. BUC Evangelism director
  15. BUC Health & Women's Ministries director
  16. SEC lay person: *Mr Kwao Tetteh Abbequaye*
  17. SEC lay person: *Mr Brian Davison*
  18. SEC lay person: *Mrs Stella Jeffery*

19. SEC lay person: *Mrs Sophia Nicholls*
20. SEC lay person: *Ms Asha Wije*
21. SEC pastor: *Pastor Richard Holder*
22. SEC pastor: *Pastor Patrick Johnson*
23. NEC lay person: *Dr Christine Burt*
24. NEC lay person: *Mr Philip Emm*
25. NEC lay person: *Dr Richmond Muimo*
26. NEC pastor: *Pastor Michael Simpson*
27. Mission lay person (Irish Mission): *Mr Joseph Donaldson*
28. Mission pastor (Welsh Mission): *Pastor Jeremy Tremeer*





# Restructuring Report by Victor Hulbert\*

It was the last item on the business agenda but was the one most anticipated and discussed – not just on the day, but in the months leading up to the session. The debate had been building up since letters started appearing in the *MESSENGER* almost a year ago suggesting it was time to look at modernising the Church structure in the British Isles. And it was not just *MESSENGER* readers. Discussions also took place at both Conference and Union levels. This led to the document that appeared in the 13 May *MESSENGER*, 'A mission-driven structure for the British Union'.

The document itself, however, was not the primary focus of the ensuing debate. Even earlier in the day Pastor Don McFarlane had hinted that the proposal being made might not be quite what delegates were expecting. Chairing the session, Victor Pilmoor noted that things have changed over the years, and we need to ask the question, 'How can we do things better?' One of the reasons that there had not been change was, he argued, that 'Turkeys don't vote for Christmas'! What we need now, he suggested, is a substantive conversation, not about contraction or failure, but on how best to take this Union forward.

Illustrating his Sunday afternoon presentation with PowerPoint, Pastor McFarlane outlined the history of the organisation and structure in the Adventist Church, looked briefly at various models, and then noted that this was a time for consultation to see if there was a will among delegates and membership to look at restructuring in any form. His final motion to the delegates was that the British Union should set up a study committee to review the whole structure of the British Union (see insert on right).

Debate then opened on two fronts: 1. Was restructuring necessary? 2. Was the motion too restrictive?

Speaking to the first issue, Dr Keith Davidson noted that change needed to be 'driven from below' and wondered whether this was the case. Dr Steve Logan echoed Pastor McFarlane's comment that everywhere he went in the Church people were discussing the document, and that, if there were no change, delegates would

'have to justify the status quo'. Pastor Steve Wilson added that the very exercise itself was useful 'even if there were no change', as it would give us a greater understanding of our resources, our needs and where we are. Mr George Acquah wanted to ensure that the proposal was primarily about soul-winning, not just finances.

A number of delegates indicated that they felt the motion was too restrictive. Mr Steve Mitcham stated that 'It was too narrow, putting a hedge around the committee.' Pastor Garth Anthony proposed an amendment limiting it to just the first three of the seven points. This amendment was passed by a narrow majority, but a later amendment reducing it further was substantially defeated.

Mr John Wilson was one of those who thanked Pastor McFarlane for undertaking a difficult task. 'That the leadership is looking at it is commendable', he said, while equally wanting to ensure that the committee taking this forward would be appropriately qualified and representative. A round of applause followed Mr Dereck Morrison's cry for change as, he argued, our members are frustrated that even with all the good we are doing, we are only scratching the surface evangelistically. 'This,' he said of the motion, 'is a very positive move.' Mr Samuel Annor also noted that this is in line with many charities that are streamlining their operations to be more efficient and effective.

In the final vote delegates agreed 'To set up a study committee, in harmony with GC policy, to review the structure of the British Union, with a view to: eliminate unnecessary duplication; reduce expenditure on executive/departmental leadership; and provide more resources (financial and human) for local churches, where the mission of the Church is carried out.'

Following the vote, former BUC president Pastor Cecil Perry thanked Pastor McFarlane for the work he had done on the document, then challenged us with the devotional theme of the weekend, stating, 'Let us leave this place with the mind of a Church that loves.'

\*[http://www.bucsession.org.uk/responses/RESTRUCTURING\\_OF\\_BUC\\_presentation\\_at\\_session.pdf](http://www.bucsession.org.uk/responses/RESTRUCTURING_OF_BUC_presentation_at_session.pdf)



## Initial motion

To set up a study committee, in harmony with GC policy, to review the structure of the British Union, with a view to:

- Eliminate unnecessary duplication;
- Reduce expenditure on executive/departmental leadership;
- Provide more resources (financial and human) for local churches, where the mission of the Church is carried out;
- Position leadership closer to members and the community;
- Operate the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK as one charitable organisation;
- Streamline HR and financial services;
- Provide stronger and closer support and evaluation of pastoral staff.



# BUC session 2011

Report by Dr Richard de Lisser\*

Sunday 3 July 2011 will go down in the history of the BUC as a watershed moment, as we saw the practical impact of the changes made to the BUC Constitution in 2009. Those changes meant that most of the committee work was completed before the session started, shortening the time required from four days to only one!

Although the time and cost-saving was appreciated by all, not everyone was entirely happy with all the proceedings. For some the venue was too small, too crowded, and too hot. For another, the monopoly of the microphone by certain speakers was an annoyance. Many had waited five years to raise their concerns, but felt that they were not given enough time to adequately express them on the day.

One delegate questioned whether the BUC was being accountable enough by limiting the question time on the reports to a mere forty-five minutes. Another delegate said that delegates had travelled from Scotland, Ireland and Wales to have their questions answered,

and not to engage in 'breakout sessions'.

On the point of participation, some delegates felt that the use of a church venue limited their freedom of expression, as well as their feeling of community and oneness, because delegates were seated on both the upper and lower levels of the church.

Further to this, some delegates felt that more time should have been given to debate and discussion over vital issues that affect the Church.

The question of the 'validity' of the Union was also a point raised by a number of delegates, as was the issue of the duplication of departmental roles and functions at different levels within the BUC structure. There was a strong feeling that money could be saved for use in the soul-winning mission of the Church.

It was felt that the discussion on the restructuring was much-needed, and the BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane, was congratulated for bringing this issue to the fore.

Brian Davidson of the Stanborough Park church, a member of the new BUC executive, observed that the session was well-planned and that he had enjoyed the day of fellowship.

On a point of history, the election of Pastor Ian Sweeney as the BUC president at age 44 makes him the youngest person to serve in the office of president in the BUC's history. The election of Pastor Paul Lockham as executive secretary keeps up his family's tradition of service to the BUC, as his grandfather, Pastor John McMillan, served as BUC president from 1958 to 1967. The election of Pastor Nathan Stickland as Youth director puts him in the footsteps of his father, the late Pastor Mike Stickland, who served in the same office from 1985 to 1991.

At the end of the session many delegates may have left wondering what the future holds for the BUC, but the new BUC president, Pastor Ian Sweeney, has no doubt that it will include evangelism – everywhere, and to everyone!

\*Pastor Victor Hulbert and Dr Richard de Lisser are the BUC and SEC Communication directors.





# Farewell message

*Dear brothers and sisters*

**M**ary and I so far have had the privilege of serving in the British Union for thirty-three years. The cold wind and overcast skies that greeted us that October morning as we emerged from Heathrow airport, that whispered to us that we had made a mistake in coming here, are now a distant memory. The memories that we cherish are those of being engaged in heart-racing evangelism in the Midlands, of the youth's responsiveness in Handsworth, Newtown, Northfield, Camp Hill, Castle Vale, Windsor Street and Tamworth, and of our various phases of leadership. We will also cherish the memories of the friendships that we have formed, and the love that members have showered on our children.

Twenty-seven of our thirty-three years have been spent in Church administration. I was taken by surprise when Pastor Ron Surridge, NEC (then North British Conference) president, chose me to work alongside him as executive secretary in 1984. I did not think that I had any special ability for such a position, but Pastor Surridge did. I want to thank him and his wife, Rachel, for believing in me and for being there for us over the years.

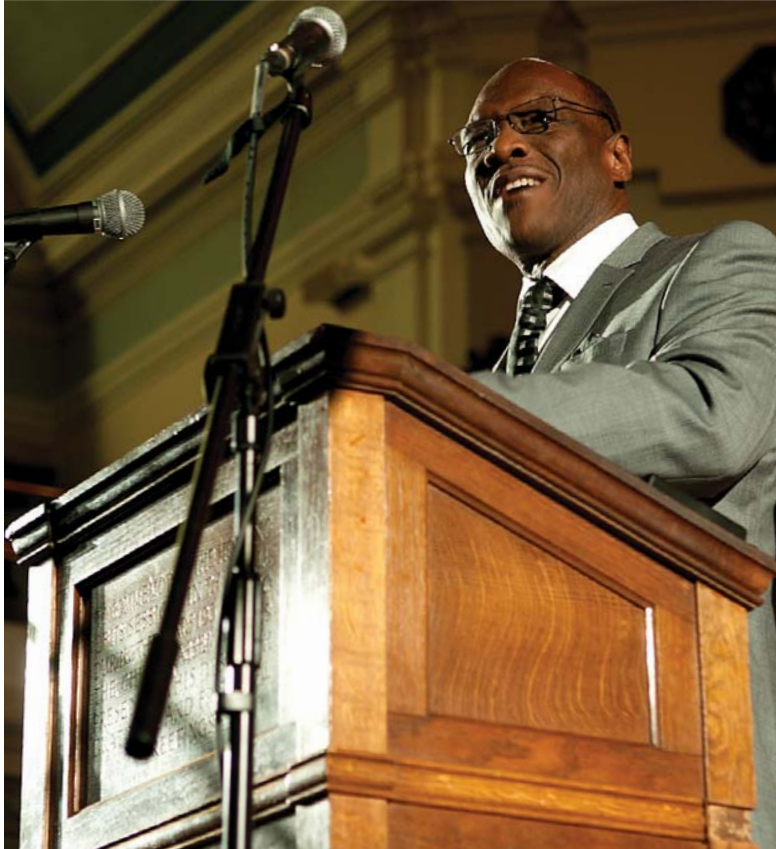
It is always dangerous to try and quantify that for which there is no objective measurement, but we would like to think that relations between members of various backgrounds are less fractious today than they were twenty-five years ago, and that we have, in some small way, contributed to that development. If that were our sole contribution, we would have fulfilled the purpose for which we were invited to the British Union as two young 'missionaries' in 1978, when racial fissures threatened the unity of the Church.

I have endeavoured to be

even-handed and fair in my work, and both colleagues and members know my dislike of injustice. Whether it was a new group of immigrants, the members from the majority population, or a person who was being taken advantage of, or a pastor being treated unfairly by his church, or a church not being served well by its pastor, or a church leader who was unjust in his treatment of a worker or member, I have sought to effect or maintain some degree of equilibrium for the good of all and the Church. Receptionists in Church offices in which I worked will recall that I instructed them to treat all people alike. The ordinary church member should be treated no differently from the way a pastor or even the president of the General Conference would be treated.

It is doubtful that I will have the chance again to influence the Church nationally, so let me share with you five matters that are imperative for growth in the British Union, particularly in reaching the wider society:

**Authenticity.** It often appears that Adventism is about 'talking', whether debating the Sabbath School lesson, discussing some great prophetic theme, spending hours on committees, preaching sermons or conducting seminars. We could be called 'the Talking Church'; but there needs to be far less talk among us and much more action on the principles of our Christian faith: compassion for the lost and efforts to share God's Good News with them; honesty with others; seeking the good of others; and being in the dark what we claim to be in the light. 'Who are you when no one is looking?' is a question that is worth asking by all. Its answer provides a fairly accurate index of whether or not we are authentic Christians. We need to be what



we say we are. Authenticity should be the outcome of any revival and reformation experience.

**Dealing with harshness and stridency.** We are not going to receive medals from God for being harsh with people, inside or outside the Church. We may receive medals from some brothers and sisters who see harshness as commendable, but I urge you to take your cue from Jesus. Study how he treated people. Whether it was a woman caught in adultery, one who had several husbands, a cheating tax collector, a Roman centurion, or a person from another faith tradition, he always treated them with respect, sensitivity and dignity. As Seventh-day Adventists we have no special claim on God's favour. What we have is a fuller understanding of God's message for these end times, which is to be shared with fellow Christians and the unsaved world with urgency, clarity and love. We have made much progress in recent times in understanding this fact, largely due to the silent impact of LIFEdevelopment, but there is much still to do to become a Church that truly loves and genuinely cares.

**Raising quality.** Apart from authenticity, perhaps the area of church life that requires greatest attention is the quality of the 'product' that we offer. Improvement of that product is

likely to have a very big impact on evangelism and church growth. One Sabbath morning, a young lady whom I knew said, 'Pastor McFarlane, now I am at a church to which I can invite my friends.' For years she had wanted to invite her friends to church but felt she couldn't because of the 'cringe factor'. There are many like her – members who would love to invite friends and acquaintances to church, but don't because they are afraid that church will not end on time; that someone will go up to the front and say something insensitive; that the music will be poor and unrehearsed; or that the sermon will not lift up Christ. I believe that if each church made the effort to raise the quality of its Sabbath School, its music, the sermon, the overall worship experience and the genuineness of its welcome, and to ensure that time limits are honoured, we would see many more new faces in church.

**Engagement with the community.** 'You are the salt of the earth,' Jesus told his followers. For salt to work it must touch that which it seeks to flavour. We will not touch our society by merely having inspiring worship services in our churches each Sabbath and then going home at the end of the day. We touch our society by rolling up our sleeves and getting into our towns, cities and villages to engage with the destitute, the

addicts, the poor, and the friendless. We touch our society by working with other Christian and non-Christian organisations and groups to make a positive difference in the lives of people. Peter Roennfeldt, who once worked in the Trans-European Division, asked the members of a newly established church in Australia when church really happened for them. Their answer is one which I hope that every Seventh-day Adventist would give: 'Church happens for us when we are out on the streets helping the addicts, giving food and shelter to the homeless and just assisting people with whatever challenges they have.' They went on to say that meeting on a Sabbath was to renew their spiritual energies so that they could go back out to *do church*. What an amazing concept! Amazing, but true.

**Joy.** Adventism is not just a body of doctrines – it is a way of living. It is by the way we live that we demonstrate whether Adventism works. If, as a people, we are bereft of joy and give the impression that life is burdensome, we will not attract many to the Lord. Jesus desires that his people be full of joy. 'I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:9-11, NIV.) This joy is not always the same as being happy. I am happy when Liverpool FC wins a game and sad when they lose. The Christian joy is of a wholly different character. It is unaffected by circumstances. It is a settled state of contentment and an unflinching confidence in God's promises. The Kingdom of God is here and now. Let it be filled with obviously joyful people, for whom the Lordship of Christ provides a heavenly glow.

'What will you do now?' is the question that kind members are asking me. At this moment I do not know. All I seek is a position where I can be of service to God and of benefit to people. Please pray that God will bring me to such a place.

Pastor Sweeney and his team have my prayerful support. I am confident that the British Union will continue to grow and prosper; should my counsel be sought, it will be readily given. As the book of Hebrews says, your confidence will be rewarded and the Lord will come without delay.

*Don W. McFarlane*

## BUC departmental directors\*

Communication & Media:  
*Pastor Victor Hulbert*

Education & Sabbath School:  
*Mrs Anne Pilmoor*

Evangelism (Personal Ministries, Church Growth, LIFEdevelopment, Literature Ministry):  
*Pastor Eglan Brooks*

Family Ministries & Children's Ministries:  
*Mrs Heather Haworth*

Health Ministries & Women's Ministries:  
*Mrs Sharon Platt-McDonald*

Ministerial Association, Discipleship & Continuing Education:  
*Pastor Brighton Kavaloh*

Youth, Pathfinders & Chaplaincy for Students in Tertiary Education:  
*Pastor Nathan Stickland*



Victor Hulbert



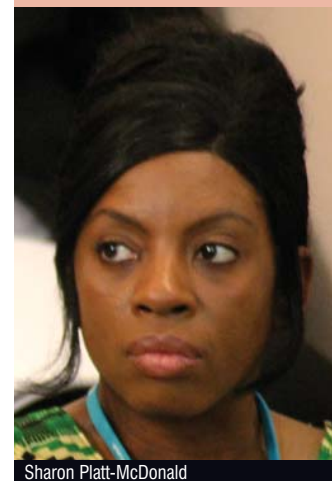
Anne Pilmoor



Eglan Brooks



Heather Haworth



Sharon Platt-McDonald



Brighton Kavaloh



Nathan Stickland

\*Certain BUC directors are appointed by their boards or the executive committee, and this is why they are not listed in the nominating committee report.



\*These are excerpts from the Mission presidents' reports. See the BUC website for the full text: <http://www.bucsession.org.uk/documents/index.php>.

## Scottish Mission challenges

Bernie Holford

We praise God that our membership has risen from 332 to 487, which is an increase of 155 over the term. Along with Ireland, this more-than-31% increase is the largest in the BUC. However the population of Scotland is over 5 million, which means there is less than one member for every 10,000 people in the country. We rejoice at every person who comes to Christ from any nationality. As most of us know, our church growth has come largely from the gift of immigration of members from England, Eastern Europe and Africa. The number of white, Scottish-born members in our churches is extremely small, with the Crieff church possibly having the highest proportion of about 25%. There are probably only seventy-five 'white Scots' in our Church in Scotland!

Both our black and white members ask me how we can reach the indigenous people. How are we to address the challenge of reaching the 5 million with the 500 or so active members we have? Firstly, I believe we should pray and 'Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field' – Matthew 9:38 (NIV). Secondly, we must prioritise evangelism in the life of our churches and share the methods that are working with others in similar contexts. It is really important to work with those people of all cultures and backgrounds who are open to the Gospel. Thirdly, we have been exploring the possibility of inviting missionaries to come to Scotland. Adventist Frontier Missions is one organisation which is exploring this possibility with us.

It is our prayer that during the next quinquennium God will dramatically grow our congregations and that we will reach the people that he loves, from all communities and people groups, including those of Scottish descent.

## Irish Mission growth

David Neal

### Membership

For the Irish Mission over the past five years there is only one characteristic that can adequately describe what has taken place – 'change'. The world has changed; the Church has changed. In 2006 it seemed for Ireland and its people that there was only one way for us to go, and that was up! A couple of years later – we were bust! The Church during this period, however, continued to thrive. In 2006 we started with a membership of 398, and by the end of the quinquennium it was 579, with ninety-four baptisms and forty professions of faith – for which we praise the Lord.

Even though the nations of Ireland and Northern Ireland have struggled economically over the past five years, the Church has gone from strength to strength, due primarily to the influx of 'New Irish' from Brazil, Romania,

South Africa, Ghana, and the Philippines. The arrival of the new members has been a positive experience for the Irish Mission. Where we once had no presence in certain towns and cities, we now have members.

### Conclusion

Our pastors have worked hard. Our elders are faithful in their leadership of the local churches. The work in Dublin continues to grow significantly. In 1998 there were twenty-five members attending church – today there are 450. This city now has three churches, and a fourth is on its way! By contrast, in other parts of Ireland and Northern Ireland, some members worship in isolation or travel 70 miles to attend church. A new group of believers suddenly appeared in the city of Kilkenny in 2008, claiming to be Adventists from the Sudan. Today thirty-five worshippers (adults and children) meet faithfully each Sabbath under the care of a volunteer lay pastor.

The Irish Mission held its triennial session in autumn 2010, and a full report may be found online at: <http://irish.adventistchurch.ie/irish-mission-session-2010>.

## Welsh Mission report

John Surridge

### Media ministry

The Welsh Mission website, [www.adventist-wales.org](http://www.adventist-wales.org), plays its part in evangelism and outreach, and is now the primary means by which people find their way to our churches, whether they are visiting members or curious contacts.

At the beginning of 2009 another website was launched. Located at [www.quiz28.org](http://www.quiz28.org), this site was designed to offer an alternative outreach approach by simply inviting people to complete an online Bible quiz. As an incentive for completing ten online Bible studies, participants are rewarded with a free Bible. After just five months of operation, this new website had resulted in forty Bibles being given out to members of the public and many more contacts being made.

### Welsh language outreach

This Mission is unique in the BUC in having a significant number of people who speak the native language of their country. In 2006 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wales had a

stand at the National Eisteddfod in Felindre Park, Swansea. Thanks to the dedication of our Welsh-speaking volunteers, magazines and Welsh tracts were distributed, and many contacts were made with people from the Welsh-speaking community.

A further Welsh-language initiative took place in the summer of 2010, with more than 10,000 Welsh books being distributed throughout Wales: *A Day to Remember*, or, in Welsh, *Diwrnod I'w Gofio*. The initial translation was carried out by Cliff Tomos, a member of the Ystrad Mynach church, and The Stanborough Press arranged the most economical printing possible.

### Church planting and growth

Numerical growth in the Welsh Mission over the quinquennium has been close to 20%, with a net increase in our membership of ninety-two. This includes forty-nine baptisms and twenty-six accessions by profession of faith. However, with thirty-nine deaths and seventeen names dropped, it can be seen that membership transfers were in fact the main reason for this growth. While we are of course very grateful for the members who have transferred in from elsewhere, we are well aware that our focus must be kept on evangelism and making new contacts within the territory of the Welsh Mission.

### MESSENGER

Another form of nurture is the distribution of the *MESSENGER* magazine to every member in the Welsh Mission. This initiative was started in November 2006, and it is still unique to the Welsh Mission. It is costly, but the programme has a number of benefits, besides the obvious one of keeping everyone well-informed: we can keep a very accurate record of our members' names and addresses. When someone moves house we usually hear about it straight away and can quickly redirect the magazines. The mailing also gives us a quick and effective way of helping newcomers feel that they belong. We don't wait for membership transfers to come through, we simply add people to the distribution list as soon as we know that they are in our territory. A further benefit is that of reclamation ministry. A number of our members and contacts are on the fringes of the Church, and rarely attend church. The *MESSENGER* mailing provides a link to the Church and a reminder that we are still interested in them.



Mission presidents, left to right: Pastor Bernie Holford, Scottish, Pastor David Neal, Irish and Pastor John Surridge, Welsh.



# From the heart of our new president

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I am honoured to have been asked to serve in leading our Church for the next five years, as well as humbled by the task that is before us.

Firstly, I would like to thank Pastor Don McFarlane for the wonderful contribution of ministerial service and leadership that he has given for more than three decades within the British Union. I am also grateful for the support and mentorship that he will continue to offer.

It is a daunting task to lead 31,662 Seventh-day Adventists; however, the even more daunting prospect is that we have to reach out to a population of approximately 62 million people! If we were to share this evangelistic responsibility equally it would mean that every Seventh-day Adventist in the UK would need to make contact with some 1,958 persons.

Presented in such a stark and clinical manner, our evangelistic task appears impossible. Indeed, the sheer magnitude of the figures might result in evangelistic 'inactivity' born of fear. Some may even pose this question: 'If we can't save all, should we even bother trying to save one?' The answer is a resounding YES! Our

*raison d'être* as Seventh-day Adventists is to proclaim the message that God has entrusted to us, one person at a time. We may not be able to reach everyone, but it must be both our individual and our collective determination to see every day as a God-given opportunity to reach out to someone who does not know Christ.

I recognise that God equips us with different spiritual gifts, in differing quantities, but we are *all* called to evangelistic activity in some form or other. I believe I am justified in stating that we are *all* called to evangelistic endeavour, if only based on the fact that we made vows at our baptism and acceptance into the Seventh-day Adventist Church that we would use our talents 'in personal soul-winning endeavour to help others to be ready for Christ's Second Coming' (Baptismal vow 7).

It is my vision to see every one of us realise and employ our God-given gifts, talents and strengths for witnessing throughout the UK.

It is my prayerful desire that every Seventh-day Adventist in the British Isles would feel a greater burden for souls that have not accepted Jesus Christ into their lives. We should not think

that our Saviour Jesus only went to the cross for us. We should remember that Christ loved and died for the people who live next-door to us, who live on our streets and in our neighbourhoods. He also died for those who sleep on our streets, who work alongside us, who live in the numerous towns and villages where there is no Seventh-day Adventist presence. We cannot be indifferent to those who are ignorant of the Gospel.

It is sometimes said that we should first get our house in order before we reach out to the lost, and I understand the basis of such sentiments; however, there is a paradox with which we must live. Assuming we get our house in order, we then cast out a 'net' according to Matthew 13:47-50 – one which will draw in all manner of fish, both good and bad – and then what do we do? In a similar fashion the devil 'sows' his devilish 'tares' among us – and again, what are we to do?

As Jesus highlighted in John 13:35, we are mandated to love one another, and Christ prayed in John 17 that we might be one. However, are we justified in not reaching out to people who do not know Christ because we cannot yet see the fullest expression

of oneness and unity in our churches? Quite simply, is it ever justifiable to allow anyone to go to his or her grave without a knowledge of Christ? Putting our house in order is not an activity that is to be conducted at the expense of evangelism; I believe that they are to be conducted hand-in-hand.

The theme of the session weekend, as reflected through the messages of Pastor Charles Tapp, was that of *love*. I believe that placing an evangelistic emphasis before us all is an emphasis that has *love* at its heart. We ought to witness, not because we feel guilty, but because we love people and are concerned for their eternal welfare. Ellen White wrote: '*Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ – the Spirit of unselfish love and labour for others – you will grow and bring forth fruit.*'

It is my prayerful hope that we can join together by investing our energy to reach the lost.

Yours in Christ,  
Ian Sweeney

*'Christ's Object Lessons*, by Ellen White, page 68.



The *MESSENGER* editor conducted interviews with Pastor Paul Lockham, newly appointed Union executive secretary, and Victor Pilmoor, who was returned to office as Union treasurer.



**Paul Lockham**

**Editor:** Paul, your election as executive secretary is barely a day old, and you must be processing a wide range of thoughts and emotions. Please share some of them with our readers.

**Pastor Paul:** While I am excited at the challenge, I am awed by the responsibility that the delegates have placed upon me, and the confidence they have expressed in my ability to carry out this leadership role. I feel that I can only serve the Church in this way by God's continued leading.

When I stepped onto the platform, with Helen at my side, all I could think of were the many significant events that had taken place in our lives at the Stanborough Park church. Facing the delegation, I realised this was another of those monumental moments in which God has touched and shaped our lives. My eyes swam with tears as I realised how the hopes and prayers of my grandfather had led me in the pathway of service

in the Church to this point. It seemed to me so special that this BUC session was being held in the church I grew up in, where my grandfather had been a pastor in retirement and had baptised both Helen and myself.

Looking at the delegation, I realised how much we all need God in order to carry out the mission with which he has entrusted us.

**Editor:** Please give our readers a brief sketch of your career so far?

**Pastor Paul:** I was led by God to leave a career in photographic chemicals research, and, after completing a period of study at Newbold College as a married student with children, entered pastoral ministry as an intern with the SEC. I was then called to the Irish Mission where I served in three church districts and various youth leadership roles for seven years. Helen and I were then invited to be the Boarding parents at Stanborough

School (our old *alma mater*). From Stanborough School we were invited to serve in the Welsh Mission, where again I was both church pastor and youth leader for the mission, this time for a period of nine years. In January 2002 I commenced a very different role as NEC executive secretary, from which I was called to serve in the same role for the SEC from October 2006. I feel as if all the moves around our Union territory (over the past twenty-eight years) have possibly been a preparation for this new area of service to the entire Union.

**Editor:** You are no stranger to the office of secretariat. What are the skills required for this important function?

**Pastor Paul:** One must be methodical, analytical and approachable, with an eye for detail: also structured, able to carry on more than one process at a time, able to take and give counsel, keep confidence and be a lover of people. You must be able to organise and have a love and respect for God and his ways, with an ability to adapt to the changing legal frameworks that impact employment, immigration, and the operation of a charity.

**Editor:** What is on your 'wish list'?



for the BUC to achieve during this quinquennium?

**Pastor Paul:** Top of my list would be that our Church could move closer to being a place where the love and grace we see in Jesus' ministry is seen in our churches and members' lives. I hope that we will be able to resource more ways of reaching out to those who live in the countries of the BUC, who do not have any real knowledge of God and his love for them.

I pray that we can be united as a Church but not uniform, respecting that God created variety, and that different things speak to different people.

I wish for a Church that is secure in its knowledge of God and able to go beyond conformity to rules to live by eternal principles of righteousness. From the thought of Pastor Tapp on the day of fellowship: I would hope that we grow to live in a way that people will see and believe that we care, so that they can then care about what we believe.

**Editor:** Lastly, Paul, on behalf of our readers, I trust that you will be both blessed and a blessing to our Union during the next five years.

**Pastor Paul:** Thank you, Julian.



**Victor Pilmoor**

**Editor:** Victor, congratulations on your election to a third term as BUC treasurer. It was clear from the vote that you have the support of the constituency. Share with our readers what you consider to be the core issues the new administration will have to face this quinquennium.

**Victor:** The headline buzz is about 'Revival and Reformation' – the inference being that we could be more effective in our lives and work, more consistent with our message and more vibrant in our witness. For most people this means change, and most of us would prefer the change to be in other people, from whence the tension may come, even in our convocations. The choice for us all is whether we manage the change, or wait for circumstance to impose it upon us. We have freely acknowledged the asymmetries of our current structures, and agreed to do something to draw the best out of each other and those who serve with us. There is a lot of healing and trust-building to be done.

**Editor:** I heard you use the term 'mission-driven' a number of times during the session, particularly with respect to budgets and the possible restructuring of the Union. What does this term mean?

**Victor:** I suppose that I use 'mission-driven' to emphasise the point that the driver for change is not money, but rather the purpose for which all our resources should be deployed.

Our mission is simply the proclamation of the 'Good News' that Jesus has done everything necessary for our salvation from sin and that he has a place prepared for his disciples, with the day of redemption being imminent. Our regional remit is toward the hurting people around us: to be effective, this means that we have to be acutely aware of their cultural and spiritual orientation and the media through which they learn.

There was a time when a soap box in the town square was enough, when the town crier shouted news in the streets, after which it was shared person-to-person. More recently, information and its interpretation cascaded through hierarchical layers or through literature. Today, information is available at the speed of light. We can discover anything we want to know from around the world, direct at the touch of a button and sent from anywhere. Yet our personal and emotional needs are still satisfied by personal touch. Leadership, to be effective, must be 'touchably' close.

Our task is not to defend patterns of hierarchy, but to position people to touch lives.

**Editor:** During your chairmanship of the restructuring discussion I heard you urging a delegate to 'see the big picture'. This is not the first time that I have heard you stressing the need for us to do that. Share a few thoughts on the importance of this 'big picture' thinking with our readers.

**Victor:** Julian, you will recall our

days on the slopes of Helderberg mountain: the ocean ahead, the mountain behind, a magnificent range in the distant east and rolling vineyards to the west, with Table Mountain on the horizon – each of them big pictures. I cannot imagine living in that environment while being obsessed with an 'iPad perspective'. Why look at little pixels when there are big pictures?

We are on a lifelong journey to the Kingdom, whatever the battle – God is in control, and he wins. Too often we lose ourselves to the passion of clauses and sub-clauses, the tyranny of small numbers, fickle personalities and trifling behaviour. Why do we need to be bound by conspiracies and fears? If God is for us, who can be against us? The big picture is of a family united, strong and healthy, humble yet proud, wise and discerning, clear and determined as a fearless example to the nations. We have the most wholesome take on life, we have the most calming view of death, we have the most hope-filled view of eternity. Yet we fret?



**Editor:** Finally, you are known for your prolific sense of humour, and your ability to defuse tense committee situations with a flash of wit. Is this strategically planned or largely impromptu?

**Victor:** Many of us suffer from the belief that all differences are reconcilable: they are not. We live in a world of contradiction and paradox. We can choose to be miserable and frustrated by these contradictions or we can find ourselves entertained, curious and fascinated with life's puzzles. Humour is a problem-solving skill – it is a gift that God gave uniquely to humans. It does not change contradiction. It puts difference in perspective. So there's the choice.

I recall a colleague, Johnny Smith, who, in the most tense of staff meetings, would imitate a bellowing bull. I mean a big one. Whatever the tension, we split our sides, from which the bile was just not recoverable.

I used to feel guilty about my propensity to see the funnier side of life. Of late I am prepared to concede that it may well be my gift. There are people who are inclined to be discouraged, even depressed. I have discovered that a daily dose of humour just tips their day. In these cases I'm often deliberate. In committees, humour is a studied technique, but delivered impromptu. Many people see committee work as an ordeal; in practice it is more like rehearsed theatre. Most actors have predictable lines and some come to the fore with an air of self-important righteousness. Like theatre, committees have their points of farce, but they also have serious pathos. The role of the court jester is to speak truth to power, in a manner that the powerful cannot resent – lest they, rather than the situation, become the subject of mirth.

Sometimes I get it wrong; most times people are forgiving.



# Two standing ovations

Dr David Marshall helps us understand why Don McFarlane and Eric Lowe received standing ovations at the BUC session

During the last quinquennium (2006-2011) the British Union has been served by an outstandingly gifted team of officers, two of whom were not re-elected at the session on 3 July 2011: Don W. McFarlane and Eric C. Lowe. Both men had given truly distinguished service in a variety of other posts prior to their becoming, respectively, president and executive secretary of the British Union.

## Pastor Don W. McFarlane

Don and Mary McFarlane arrived in Britain in October 1978, the first of the seven couples scheduled to arrive over a twelve-month period as a result of the 'Pierson Package', negotiated by the General Conference president earlier that year. Mary and Don, in common with the majority of the couples, came from Jamaica. These couples, together with the

Howells from Barbados, were all warm and inclusive in their approach to the host community.

In the first quarter of 1979, in my capacity as editor, I took the opportunity to take preaching appointments at churches where they pastored. Two of the families, the Perrys and the McFarlanes, invited Anita and I to their homes. (Those who did not invite us back were not wanting in hospitality, but were over-stretched work-wise and had commitments elsewhere.)

Though a relative youngster, I was in the confidence of at least two of the field leaders because I can recall their comments following initial meetings with the incomers. The Union president was most impressed by the spirituality, wisdom and maturity of Pastor Perry, and saw in him great leadership capacity. The North British Conference president, a former evangelist, was

dazzled by Don McFarlane and saw in him tremendous potential as an evangelist as well as a leader. He was not wrong. During his first twelve months at Handsworth, Don baptised a

hundred people. A few years later, he was appointed executive secretary of the NBC. Subsequently, he was executive secretary of the Union, and



served for fourteen years as president of the South England Conference, before serving for a brief period at the Division.

In seeing leadership potential in Pastors Perry and McFarlane, I believe that the brethren had identified in both men a vision of the Church as more than a hierarchy to be dominated by people of one ethnicity. Rather a structure whose sole purpose was to promote the nurture and growth of God's Kingdom. Both leaders have shown a capacity to rise above their ethnicity and to promote an integrated Church community.

In common with certain of his predecessors, however, Pastor McFarlane was a moderniser. If a given church practice or structure was too expensive, had passed its use-by date, ceased to be best practice or, perhaps, become a hindrance rather than a help to church nurture or growth, his instincts were, having taken counsel and examined all possibilities, to propose change. While acknowledging the changelessness of the everlasting Gospel, he is acutely aware that aspects of church practice would benefit from change. By recommending detailed proposals for such change he has identified himself as a man of courage.

Don has also been courageous in his advocacy of the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith, knowing that his constituency will always include an active minority of convinced, politically active legalists. Nevertheless, Don's presentations on Justification by Faith have been the best since the death of J. A. McMillan, another 'Mac' to be Union president here.

Don is an excellent chairman of committee, has endless patience with committee members who feel they have to speak on every agenda item, is decisive when challenged on issues of principle, has a better grasp of church policy and finance than most of his predecessors, and will not cave in under pressure.

Over the years these gifts have become conspicuous to those who have worked with him. To most they have been a big plus. Others may have felt threatened. The polished McFarlane style, including that *basso-profundo* voice, may have been perceived as intimidating by a few. 'Too Anglo', I was told by a person who thought that the style was 'assumed'. Assumed it was not. He had the same style when

he pastored (at the same time!) eleven churches in and around Kingston, Jamaica, thirty-five years ago.

Don McFarlane is among the most gifted church leaders with whom I have served. At 58 his eye is not dimmed, nor is his natural force abated! I feel sure that God has great plans for Don and Mary. Given that his gifts have been developed over three decades in the British Isles, I cannot help but hope that he has further opportunities for service here.

## Pastor Eric Lowe

Pastor Eric C. Lowe is, in regard to style, very different from his colleague but, in regard to substance, very similar.

Eric had enjoyed many years as a pastor of congregations great and small in northern England before he became a Conference administrator. He was born in North Wales and raised as an Adventist. Photographs of Eric as a young man reveal striking good looks and a fashionable sixties' haircut. His scholarly interests were scientific and he began work at the Meteorological Office in Bracknell. His lifestyle, like his motorbike, was fast and, for a time, he forsook the faith of his fathers. A very serious motorbike accident in Reading left him looking – from the tarmac – at the signboard of the Adventist church. When I interviewed him on the occasion of his appointment as North England Conference executive secretary to Pastor Egerton Francis, Eric gave me to understand that this was the occasion of his conversion. He enrolled as a ministerial student at Newbold, and graduated with one of the highest Grade Point Averages in the college's history.

Eric married Margaret Marshall. She is not related to me, just as Eric is unrelated to the other church leaders and prominent laity who have been called Lowe. Although Eric is not a relation – by marriage – I must, however, declare an interest where he is concerned. For more than six years Eric was my church pastor. In six decades I have been pastored by a great many men. None was a more efficient and effective pastor than Eric C. Lowe. He had all the gifts a pastor needs, and then some. A former elder, who served with Eric, remembers him as the best chairman of committee he has ever encountered. And, in case



that sounds cold and impersonal, permit me to record my recollections of his excellent preaching and visiting. Eric was always the professional, and any confidence shared with him was safe. He tried to avoid betraying his feelings and strongly-held views. However, on occasion he did, and was prepared to confront a church leader who was acting unjustly.

When Eric began his years as executive secretary of first the NEC and then the BUC, I have a feeling that he was not expecting promotion. The minutiae of church policy are not such as to provoke fascination, and I did wonder how Eric would take to them. He mastered his brief like none other, and his mastery of policy will remain legendary.

However, Eric's concern for justice and his gift of people skills are also remarkable. Those who consider the infrequency of Eric's interventions on the Union committee, and the professionalism which limits his statements of strong opinion, as indicators of an uncaring personality have seriously misunderstood the

man. The model committee chairman is also a model committee member: he speaks when he has something to say. His practice of economy of words makes the words he does use all the more important. It also benefits his preaching.

Those who like a good gossip would be well advised to avoid Eric Lowe. He doesn't do gossip. Those who like flowery speech would find Eric a disappointment. He doesn't do flowery speech or argument for argument's sake. He does gist. And he is a master of it.

Eric has been 65 for a few months now. If anyone deserves a long and healthy retirement, he does. He has been one of the most intellectually gifted and hardworking leaders in my experience. Like Pastor McFarlane, he knows how to handle the difficult people and pressure groups, and has an enviably unflappable temperament. Both men have a strong personal faith grounded in a close relationship with God, and have given principled, caring leadership.

## also leaving . . .

Joining them in retirement is Pastor Alan Hodges, outgoing Ministerial and Trust Services director and former Irish Mission president. His kindly demeanour and caring attitude endeared him to many. Pastors Des Boldeau and Curtis Murphy will also be moving on from the roles in Youth and Publishing.

Once again the delegates rose to their feet to express appropriate thanks for the way God has led these three men.







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**Sunset**

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	Lond	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Jul 22	9.04	9.16	9.15	9.39	9.42
29	8.54	9.06	9.04	9.27	9.31
Aug 5	8.43	8.55	8.52	9.13	9.17
12	8.30	8.42	8.38	8.57	9.03

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