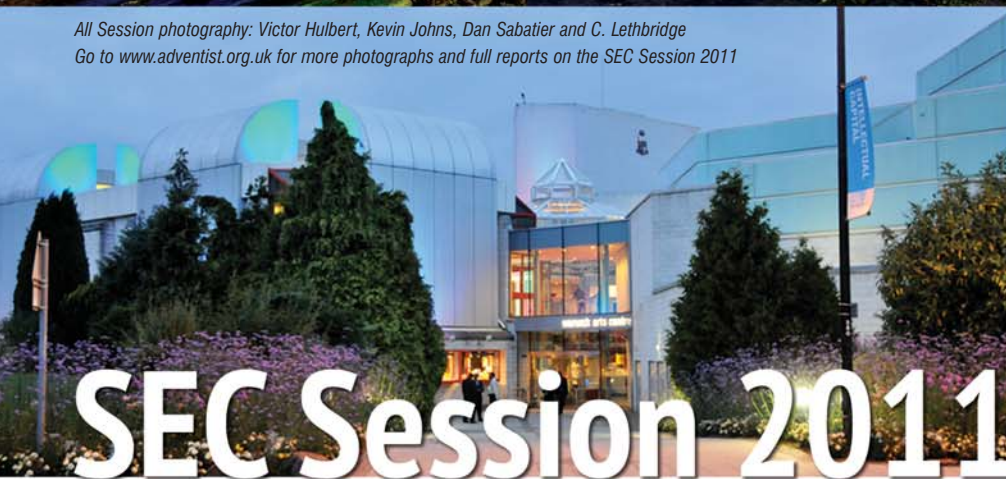


Messenger

News to the churches • 30 September 2011 • Volume 116 • 21

All Session photography: Victor Hulbert, Kevin Johns, Dan Sabatier and C. Lethbridge
Go to www.adventist.org.uk for more photographs and full reports on the SEC Session 2011



SEC Session 2011 Warwick University

A message from the re-appointed SEC president

It has been an honour and a privilege to have served the South England Conference over the past four years. When I was appointed in 2007 it came as a complete surprise. In preparation for this session I

literally cleared my desk, said goodbye to office staff and prepared for life back in the churches. However, God had something different in mind.

I wish to thank our members for the

resounding endorsement and mandate that they have given to me to lead this great conference of ours for another term. In this role I have learnt that prayer never fails. Man may have his schemes, plots and methods, but God will have his way.

Under God's guidance our delegates have chosen quality leaders for the next four years. During the past four years we were able to deliver on 80% of the recommendations that came from the plans committee and the session breakouts. We will continue to listen to our members as we seek to deliver the corporate plan under the heading of 'Reach Up, Reach Out, Reach In, Reach Across', in line with the strategic theme adopted by the world Church.

Evangelism will continue to be at the heart of what we do. We will continue to explore new and innovative ways of bringing people to Christ. We will encourage more small groups and church-plants. I would also like to see more task force workers coming on board to work with us in some of our provincial towns. We will continue to place great emphasis on winning the indigenous people of this country.

We will continue with the work of diversity in our conference. We are a

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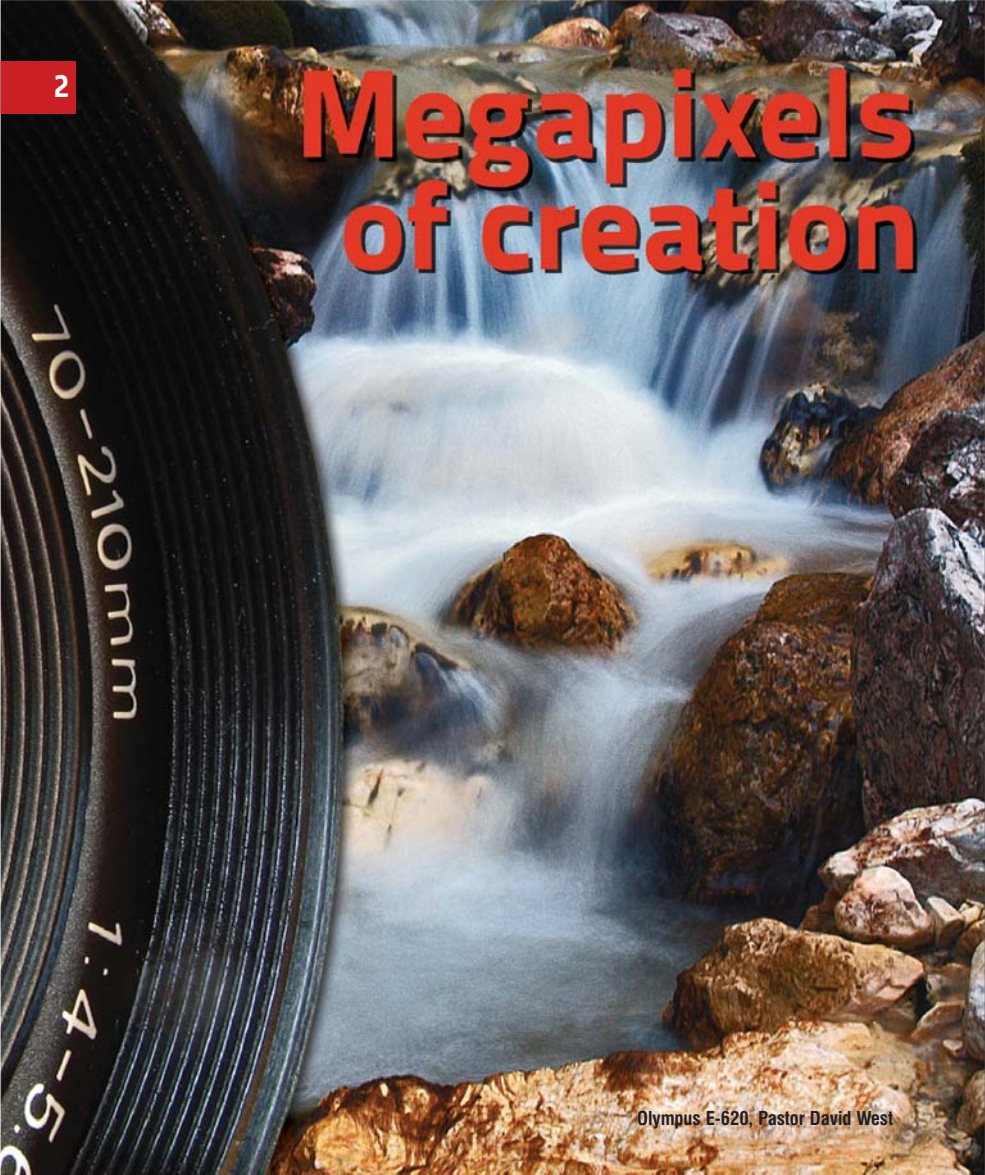


Earl Ramharacksingh

Pastor Sam Davis

Pastor Terry Messenger

Megapixels of creation



Olympus E-620, Pastor David West

MESSENGER is currently running a four-part series over a twelve-month period entitled *Megapixels of creation*, offering our photographers the opportunity to have their nature photography published in the magazine.

So far we have covered the spring season. Summer has come and gone, so now I am inviting you to send me your summer photography for our next spread at the end of September.

This is not a competition, and the only reward will be to see your photography in print!

Please send your photographs to me at: dbell@stanboroughpress.co.uk, or upload them to me through www.mailbigfile.com. Happy snapping!

DAVID BELL, MESSENGER DESIGNER

editorial

Let me tell you about Karl, one of those boarding school 'mates' who has popped in and out of my life over the years. He is of real blue-eyed German descent, and has spent most of his life farming on the border between South Africa and the land-locked Kingdom of Lesotho.

He was my senior by a year, and often led our small group of dormitory friends on impromptu nocturnal escapades. One of these was a tactical manoeuvre that he bullied us into one Saturday night because . . . 'the Russians were coming!' He had a fertile imagination that was well-watered by the 'cold war' tensions of that era.

The phone rang

Fifteen years or so later Karl popped into my life again – this time by phone. I recognized his distinctive gravelly voice immediately: 'Hi Julian, why did you publish that nonsense about the Holocaust! You should know better – those things never happened. That's just a lot of Jewish propaganda!'

He was reacting to an article I had published in the *Signs of the Times*, and went on to demand that I print a retraction and 'set the record straight'. We argued at length but neither of us gave an inch of ground, and after the call I was left with this question: 'No Holocaust. No Auschwitz. How *real* was Karl's reality?'

It wasn't! Any reasonable person who makes the effort to Google 'Holocaust' or 'Auschwitz' will soon be convinced that Karl is wrong – but he lives on in his world of fake 'reality'!

Then there was Tim

Tim was a very proper fellow. He was a senior elder. A serious man, who had not trained his face to smile. Then one Sabbath he made a stunning declaration in his sermon. The words just popped out, leaving the congregation stunned: 'I am not a sinner!' he said.

He made no attempt to soften his remarks

How 'real' is your reality?



Julian Hibbert
Editor

with a bit of humility, for example: 'Well, Saints, I praise the Lord that I have not cursed or had a wayward thought for many years. You know, it feels so good not to sin!' No, none of that farcical finesse, just 'I am not a sinner!'

And once again I was left with this question: 'No sin. Not a sinner. Not even guilty of the faintest fragrance of pride. How *real* was Tim's reality?'

It wasn't, and it took just a week to be found out. For on the next Sabbath, one of the deacons reported overhearing a conversation at the petrol station in which Tim used some choice words to describe what he thought was poor service! We were convinced that Tim was wrong – but he lived on in his world of fake 'reality'!

How 'real' is our reality?

Karl and Tim have made me think about myself. How authentic is my Christianity? How genuine is my character? How 'real' is the image that I project in the church or the workplace?

Let's look at some interesting biblical examples of questionable realities. How about Judas in John 12:1-12, where he mounts the moral high ground over Mary's extravagance: 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' (NIV.)

There is a cold logic behind these words. Good-thinking Judas – thirty thousand pounds can buy a lot of bread! But scripture brackets his comments with two startling observations. Firstly, he is labelled as the traitor who would soon betray Jesus. Then he is fingered as 'a thief' who as 'keeper of the money bag, . . . used to help himself to what was put into it.'

How 'real' was the reality of Judas Iscariot's concern for the poor?

After God's own heart

David is described in glowing terms as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), and yet his life reveals the danger of questionable realities. Remember the poignant meeting of king and prophet in 2 Samuel 12, when Nathan's story of injustice drives David to this indignant outburst: 'David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die!"' (Verse 5, NIV.)

Living under the illusion that he is a just and righteous ruler, David is suddenly confronted with reality: 'Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"'

Suddenly he realizes that he is a delusional fake. 'Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."' (Verse 13, NIV.)

Unlike Karl, Tim or Judas, we at last find someone willing to repudiate his questionable reality. And for this painful honesty David hears some wonderful news: 'Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin."' (Verse 13, NIV.)

Did you hear that?

'The Lord has taken away your sin.' This adulterous, scheming murderer, pretending to be what he wasn't, receives the bargain of a lifetime. In exchange for his shabby, fake 'reality', he is forgiven! What a deal!

Maybe this is what God is trying to tell us in his message to Laodicea: 'You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.' (Revelation 3:17, NIV.)

Here he urges us to see reality. To give up our fake and questionable 'realities', and accept this simple deal in return – grace, mercy and forgiveness – the only basis for authentic living.

Enhancing Health

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

Golden eight – part 1 Air

'Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power – these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them.' – Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, page 127.

We commence a new series with an analysis of eight natural health laws described above as 'true remedies'. In this issue we examine air as a natural healer.

Marge's testimonial

An asthmatic for several years, Marge was maintained on daily medication to assist her breathing. When she joined the CHIP programme in 2008, she was introduced to

a healthy lifestyle, which made a positive impact on her wellbeing. Adjusting her diet, introducing exercise and getting more rest reduced her symptoms significantly.

However, the major impact was on her respiratory health. She states: 'I began outdoor walks early in the morning and found that my breathing was easier throughout the day. Then, when I commenced deep breathing exercises – usually outdoors, when the air was fresh, or while standing by an open window – several times a day, the change was dramatic. When I went back to the asthma clinic, my peak flow readings (measurement of lung capacity) had improved. I also found that I was using my relief inhaler much less, as my asthmatic attacks had reduced. I can certainly say that good quality air and breathing exercises helped me tremendously'.

Facts

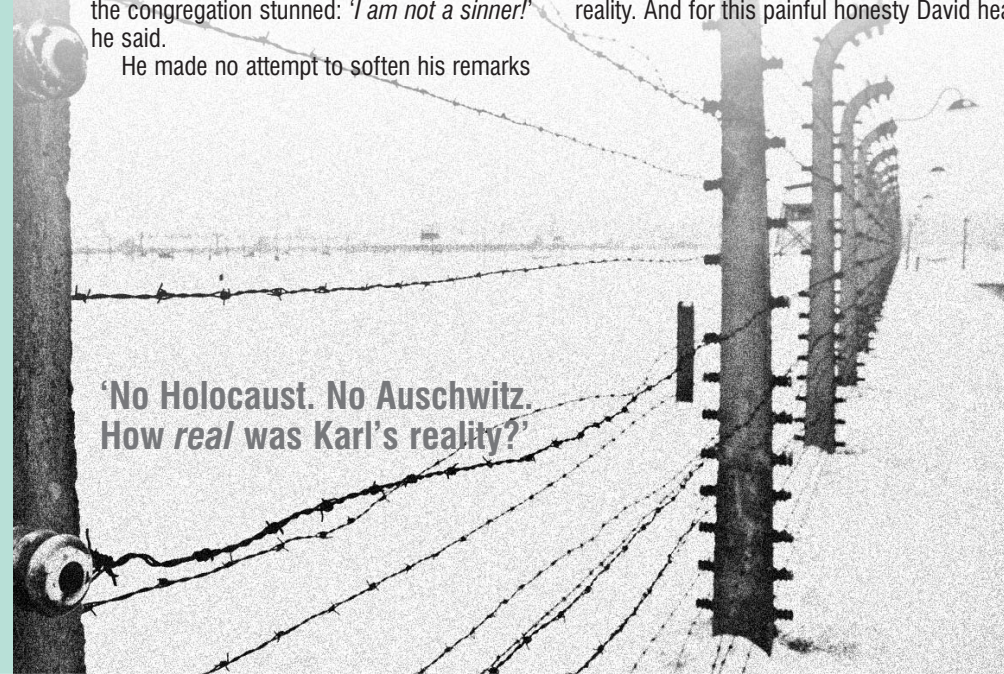
- We take in air through our lungs, and our red blood cells pick up the oxygen from the air, and transport it to the cells in our body.
- Our cells then use this continuous supply of oxygen to produce energy through a process called metabolism.
- Adequate oxygen is necessary to sustain health.
- Cells require adequate oxygen for them to be healthy, and healthy cells make a healthy body.
- Constantly breathing in stale air deprives our cells of what they need to enhance well-being, and for our bodies to function optimally.

In the book *Ministry of Healing*, in the chapter titled 'In Contact With Nature', E. G. White writes: 'Physicians and nurses should encourage their patients to be much in the open air. Outdoor life is the only remedy that many individuals need. It has a wonderful power to heal diseases . . .'

Today, scientific studies demonstrate the health benefits of fresh air and the adverse health effects we suffer when surrounded by polluted air. In the next issue we will explore these findings.

Good health!

'No Holocaust. No Auschwitz.
How real was Karl's reality?'





Playing with the big boys now

An edited version of Dr Jeff Brown's opening address at the sixty-first SEC session

I first heard this song on the *Prince of Egypt* video:

'You're playing with the big boys now
You're playing with the big boys now
Stop this foolish mission
Watch a true magician
Give an exhibition how
Pick up your silly twig, boy
You're playing with the big boys now!'

'Playing with the big boys' implies that someone is skeptical of you, snickering at you, sorry for you. 'Playing with the big boys' infers that you have overestimated your *position* and underestimated your *opposition*.

In other words, the odds are stacked against you; it's David versus Goliath; the challenges are too big and you're too small; give it up; throw in the towel; failure is inevitable. But we need to know that we can be victorious, and that God has a great future in store for us. Our young people need to know that this is a church worth living for; this is a mission worth fighting for; this is a cause worth dying for. Even if the odds are stacked against us. We need to remember Caleb and Joshua . . .

God had just finished telling Moses about Canaan, the land He had prepared for them. He says to Moses, 'Why don't you go and check it out? Why don't you choose one person from each tribe to go?'

'Spies' seems such a negative word, especially when used in reference to the people of God. I believe that, if they were around today, they would not be known as spies, they would be called delegates. So they went – twelve persons from the South England Conference, seven from the counties, four from London, and one from John Loughborough. And after an absence of forty days, they returned.

People swarmed around them.

'Tell us what you saw; is this the land of our future?' They were told that it was a land flowing with milk and honey. They saw huge clusters of grapes that had to be carried by two men. They rejoiced that they were about to inhabit such a rich territory where all their plans could be realized, all their dreams fulfilled.

But in the midst of their euphoria came a devastating word: *nevertheless*. Ten spies talked about the difficulties, the fenced cities, and giant inhabitants that would wreck any hope of mission success.

There are some realities, South England Conference, that we need to face as we focus on our future in the land of the giants.

1. The land of the giants (Numbers 13:32,33, KJV)

'And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants.'

The first reality is, *don't deny the difficulty*. Genesis 6:4 tells us that giants really did stalk the land back then, but guess what, they are still around today. When I was a young boy, there was a television programme called 'Land of the Giants', and the

format was always the same. The heroes found themselves in hostile territory, escaping and hiding from their giant enemies. At the end of each episode, the giants would capture 'the little people' and I had to wait until the next installment to find out how they escaped. But no matter how many times they escaped, the giants were always back the next week.

So instead of praying, 'Lord, deliver me from the giants,' I started to pray, 'Lord, teach me how to live among the giants'.

Friends, don't deny the difficulty, the giants will be back next week!

You've got some real giants to wrestle with over the next few days: complex issues, policies and possibilities. We've got some real giants in our community: government cuts, unemployment, family breakdown, absentee fathers. Before you can experience deliverance, *you must acknowledge your difficulty* – so you won't lose heart if the deliverance tarries.

2. The mind of the grasshopper (Numbers 13:33, KJV)

'And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.'

And the second reality is, *don't defeat the possibility*. Of all the insects mentioned in Scripture, grasshoppers are mentioned the most. There are nine or ten different Hebrew words used to describe the grasshopper. Sometimes you see the word translated 'caterpillar', sometimes 'locust'. But why – when the maximum size of an adult male grasshopper is two inches long – is grasshopper mentality so destructive? Because it refuses to believe that you can grow beyond two inches long. It refuses to believe that

problems can become promises, barriers can become blessings, obstacles can be overcome, setbacks can be surmounted – that every setback is just a setup for a comeback. Grasshopper mentality majors in minors and focuses not on the future but on the futile.

I was so pleased to read the public responses of Pastor Sam Davis and other church leaders in the South England Conference and the British Union to the recent riots throughout England. You see, we're 'playing with the big boys' now. In Bermuda when they're thinking of bringing in one or two casinos to help out the tourism industry, the newspaper calls me to find out the Seventh-day Adventist position on gambling. The government called me when they were in the process of revising our Human Rights Bill. They want to know the Seventh-day Adventist position on homosexuality. We can stand up; we can speak up; we do have something to say; we can make a difference; *don't defeat the possibility*.

South England Conference, you are not grasshoppers, you are not minnows, you are not step-children, you are 21,000 strong, one of the largest and richest conferences in the Trans European Division. Hold your head up, take your rightful seat at the table, you're playing with the big boys now!

3. The joy of the Lord (Numbers 14:8, KJV)

'If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.'

And the third reality is, *don't doubt the victory*. Don't give up, don't throw in the towel, don't doubt the victory. 'If the Lord delights in us' his joy will be ours! If the conditions are achievable, then the conclusions are inevitable and his joy will be ours! I heard Donald Lawrence say, 'Giants do die – the bigger they are, the harder they fall.' I heard Mahalia Jackson say, 'Who made the mountains, Who made the trees, Who made the rivers that flow out to the seas? And who hung the moon in the starry sky? Somebody bigger than you and I.' Don't doubt the victory. 'If the Lord delights in us' his joy will be ours. The Lord *does* delight in us!

Don't deny the difficulty, don't defeat the possibility, and don't doubt the victory.

Clippings . . .

The editor found these 'clippings' from the SEC president's report particularly interesting and inspiring. For the full session report (*Focus on the Future*), go to the 'What's new!' menu on the BUC website homepage www.adventist.org.uk.

During the 2009 'Year of evangelism' initiative, SEC baptized more than 780 new members – the best result of the term.

Membership growth for the term (four years) was sixteen percent.

'Within our borders are congregations with as many as fifty different nationalities . . .'

'As part of the challenge of welcoming new people groups and understanding the complexity of diversity, we have conducted a series of diversity workshops with our pastors and members, that was rolled out across the SEC. In addition to this, we established a committee to address diversity issues, in particular the decreasing number of indigenous Adventists.'

'During the four years, the SEC Administration introduced the "Get PREPARED" course for all our ministers. The course has provided training in dealing with domestic violence and sexual abuse, as well as sound ethical behaviour and conduct in ministry.'

'Despite the financial downturn in the economy, tithe has remained buoyant and

for the first time in history, we reached just over £10 million in tithe at the end of 2007. And at the end of 2008 we broke through the £11 million ceiling. Even in 2009, at the height of the recession, our tithe base continued to rise.'

'The recession did have a positive impact on the church in some ways. During the "boom years" we were not able to adequately compete with developers and other groups for the acquisition of church buildings. But with the downturn in the economy it was possible for us to purchase much-needed church buildings: Beckenham; High Wycombe Sands; Edmonton; New Life; Welling West; Twyford; Maidenhead; Bath; Horley Gatwick (long term lease); and Blessed Hope (Dartford).'

'The SEC has also been able to provide required extra space in its own offices by purchasing the building next door, at 23 St John's Road. Most of the finance for this purchase came from a bequest.'

'Special mention must also be made of the contribution of our distinguished ministers who retired over this period: Pastors Roy Chisholm, Ellis Guthrie, Andrew Leonce, Brian



Martin, Cecil Perry, Ebenezer Sackey, Carl Thorpe, Michael Walker and Mrs May Wedderburn (Bible instructor).'

'Some of our churches have become temporary shelters for the homeless during very poor weather.'

'Our churches have begun to use programmes like "Messy Church" to engage non-Adventist children, but it's also getting their parents in through the doors of the church.'

'Everyone will agree that some of the saddest occurrences in the past few years have been the murders of young people on the streets of our cities. Our Youth, Teens and Pathfinder leaders responded by working in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police, and with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary (Bristol), and have organized three high-profile marches under the banner of LIVE – Living Intentionally Versus Existing. These marches, led by our Pathfinders, have captured the imagination of the public and have also brought to the fore the role of the Church in a very public way. The challenge to those who use guns and knives was to "Put it Down!"'



My vision statement

by Pastor Terry Messenger, executive secretary

It is a great honour and a privilege to be elected to this position. I do not consider myself worthy, but will do my best to serve the South England Conference. I long to see the Church working

together in unity to accomplish the task of broadcasting the message of the three angels to every man, woman and child in our territory. We need to present our message in such a way that the different ethnicities, as well as the host population, can receive it in harmony with their cultural bias. This means we will need to be innovative. The message remains the same but methods need to adapt to each situation. I believe that exciting and challenging times are ahead. Many of us don't attempt great things for God because we are paralysed by fear – but my challenge to all of us is to feel the fear and do it anyway! We need not fear, as Jesus has promised to be with his people always – even until the end of the world (Matt 28:20). 7 is a glorious future ahead – may we all be part of it.

Editors note: Earl Ramharacksingh – much loved and respected SEC Treasurer – was not able to provide us with a formal message for placement here, because of post-session committees and activities.

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A message from the re-appointed SEC president

diverse community, and as such we need to emphasise the things that bind us together more than those things that separate. We are one in Christ. If we are not

careful we run the risk of allowing ethnicity to divide us.

God has blessed us in the area of media and we have come a long way, but there is still a

great deal to be done. We will work to raise the quality of programmings on the Sky platform, and at the same time continue to grow and build our media department as funds and resources allow.

I wish to thank our outgoing directors, Pastors Paul Lockham,

Colin Stewart, Eddie Hypolite, and Nathan Stickland, for the contribution that they have made, and welcome the newly appointed directors. We solicit the continued prayers of our members and pledge ourselves to God's leading over the next four years.

SAM DAVIS



Courage, humour and high drama at SEC session

by Victor Hulbert, BUC Communication director

Courage, humour and high drama all found their place at the sixty-first session of the South England Conference, 1-4 September, at Warwick University. For some it was courage just to find their way across the enormous but well laid-out campus; for others it was the courage to deal with difficult issues head-on, in an open and transparent way. That was clearly seen on the first night when, following his report as president, Pastor Sam Davis opened the floor for discussion on the 'hot potato' issues of 'mono-ethnic' churches, as well as the proposal of the conference that each church should donate a proportion of its Gift Aid return to assist in the purchase of a nursing home for the elderly. Both subjects provoked hot debate – which led to many delegates wondering if it would be a 'hot session'. That apprehension was reinforced when the motions on both issues were rejected by the delegation. (See the article on mono-ethnic churches at: www.adventistnews.org.uk.)

However, the courage to deal with difficult issues was balanced throughout the session by a warm Christian humour that pervaded the worship periods, the debates, and the atmosphere outside the hall. It was the first time that the recently appointed BUC president, Pastor Ian Sweeney, has had to oversee a conference session, but he told the delegates, *'This is where your Christianity is really seen. It is easy to be a Christian at 11am on Sabbath morning, but your true character is seen in the way you act in a business meeting!'*

By Sabbath morning he was calling it 'The love session', so impressed was he by the considerate yet perceptive debates. He told delegates, *'You are the cream of the crop in the South England Conference'*, while clearly reminding them that *'This Church is not about us. It is about reaching a lost world.'*

The humour was added to by Dr Jeff Brown, president of the Bermuda Conference and devotional speaker for the session. He told delegates that they had many great speakers in their own conference, yet it was somehow strange that you had to leave your own country and serve abroad before you came to be recognised as a 'great speaker'! Nevertheless, he preached with humility, weaving anecdotes together with Biblical values to inspire delegates to service. On Thursday he talked about the 'twelve delegates' led by Caleb and Joshua spying out the Promised Land, and stated, *'If the conditions are achievable then the conclusions are inevitable.'* His subsequent

messages then built on the theme and led to recommitment prayers at the end of both the Friday night and Sabbath morning services.

Humour came too, and courage, from the two ordinands on Sabbath afternoon, who broke from tradition in their joint response. Pastors Sam Neves and Dusan Uzelac, their faces beaming, both reflected on their call to service and noted that a Serb and a Brazilian had both managed to marry 'blue-eyed English beauties' who had added so much to their ministry. Pastor Sweeney turned his back on the congregation and faced the ordinands as he emphasised the need for these pastors to 'feed my sheep'. Nevertheless, his words brought loud 'amens' and rounds of applause from the congregation as he talked about pastoral visitation, quality sermons and a life of commitment.



Pastor Cecil Perry makes his point from the floor



Pastor Ian Sweeney addressed the session with humour



Pastor Jeff Brown with his wife Pattiejean



High drama was there in a number of the debates – and particularly on Saturday night and again on Sunday morning when the nominating committee report was twice referred back. While this is the recognised democratic process, it was, nevertheless, an anxious period for those who had been nominated – and for the committee itself, which had worked hard in a very gracious and prayerful manner. They took quality time to listen and work through every single suggestion, ultimately revising their nominations for directors. The result was eventually voted on in an extended business session on Sunday afternoon.

But the high drama came at its best, and was most memorable, as a result of the courageous decision the SEC team took to replace the traditional Sabbath School lesson study and missions appeal with a 90-minute drama based around the life of William Tyndale and the development of the English Bible. The fast-paced mixture of music, contemporary and historical drama, historical insights and their twenty-first century implications had the congregation on the edge of their seats.

While the SEC session may be remembered as 'The love session' by some, it will almost certainly be remembered best for that unique morning of dramatic worship and the importance of the Bible in Adventist lives as we share its message of Good News in our communities.



The two ordinands, Pastors Sam Neves and Dusan Uzelac



Nominating Committee final report as voted:

Officers:

President: Pastor Sam Davis. (Re-elected)
Executive Secretary: Pastor Terry Messenger (Formerly Personal Ministries and Sabbath School director).
Treasurer: Earl Ramharacksingh (Re-elected)

Directors:

Adventist Muslim Relations: Petras Bahadur (0.5 budget) (Re-elected)
Children's & Women's Ministries: Mekika Bediako (Re-elected)
Church Growth: Aris Vontzalidis (Re-elected)
Communication: Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist (0.5 budget) (Formerly associate pastor, Newbold Church)
Community & Health Ministries: Elsie Staple (Re-elected)
Education: Opel Johnson-Christie (Re-elected)
Family Ministries: Pastor Leslie Ackie (Re-elected)
Ministerial Association: Pastor Emmanuel Osei (Re-elected)
Personal Ministries, Sabbath School: Pastor Kirk Thomas (Formerly Willesden Church)
Stewardship: Dr Richard de Lisser (0.5 budget) (Re-elected)
Youth Ministries Director: Dr Steve Thomas (Formerly Reading Churches)
Associate Youth (teens): Dejan Stojkavic (Formerly Youth pastor, Stanborough Park Church)
Associate Youth (Pathfinders): Kevin Johns (Formerly Plumstead & Welling Churches, Prison Ministries coordinator)

NOTE: those with 0.5 budgets will have other functions added to their role. Functions that will be appointed by the new Executive Committee will be: Music coordinator, Prison Ministries, Property Developments coordinator & Diversity coordinator.

Executive Committee:

Sam Davis – President, **Terry Messenger** – Executive Secretary, **Earl Ramharacksingh** – Treasurer, **Steve Thomas** – Youth Director, **Emmanuel Osei** – Ministerial Association, **Ian Lorek** – Area 1, **Ray Morris** – Area 2, **Judith Redman** – Area 3, **Pam Millington** – Area 4, **Victor Barendse** – Area 5, **Dave St Marie** – Area 6A, **Ava Walters** – Area 6A, **Nathaniel Zaka** – Area 6B, **Keith Boldeau** – Area 6B, **Suzanne Kirlaw** – Area 6C, **Beatrice, Chilomo** – Area 6D, **Audrey Balderstone** – Area 7, **Michael Walker** – Retired pastor, Area 8, **Edwena McFarquhar** – Headteacher, John Loughborough School.



Members of the voted team



'Fired Up'

by Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist, SEC Communication director

The drama 'Fired Up' told the story of William Tyndale, who is widely regarded as the greatest of all English translators, in an intriguing mix of contemporary and period drama, interspersed with soul-stirring singing.

Pastor Sam Davis (president of the South England Conference), who had commissioned the piece, expressed afterwards that 'Our hearts burned within us', and Pastor Emmanuel Ossei found the piece to be simply 'excellent'.

This masterful blend of historical period drama in full costume, augmented by some excellent 'rap-style' contemporary poetry, was written and directed by Mervyn Weir. The gospel group 'By Faith' sang the songs a cappella – some being their own special arrangements, including some variations of 'Give me the Bible'.

The drama took an educational approach as it brought forth historical information that was unknown for many. Deyonne Rodney from Holloway Church described it as 'a great religious education'. Lorna Douglas from King's Cross said 'It was a fantastic use of poetry; it was very understandable and provided lots of information I didn't know before.' Pastor Patrick Johnson from Newbold, who had seen the piece the previous week, claimed he was still on the edge of his seat the second time; while Pastor Ian Sweeney said 'it was pulling at my heartstrings'.

'Fired up' clearly highlighted the passion Tyndale had for translating the Bible into the English language so that it could be accessible to all. It also highlighted the fact that many people in the UK have access to a Bible but hardly open it, in stark contrast to Tyndale, who laid down his life to have it translated into English, and available to everyone!

Pastor Ian Sweeney mentioned in his sermon that the drama had an evangelistic focus with the music taking us from 'Give me the Bible' to 'Give them the Bible'.

'Fired Up' closed to a standing ovation and will be viewed as one of the unforgettable highlights of the session.



We got these comments . . .

As the session drew to a close the *MESSENGER* editor handed out comment slips to some of the delegates. Here are the edited contributions he received. . . .

'Exhilarating and very interesting! I have enjoyed this session immensely.'

DORIS CHARLES (THE CORNERSTONE, HOUNSLOW CHURCH)

'A well-organised session with dynamic preaching, superb drama performance, very good facilities and healthy food . . . would have appreciated a wider range of instrumental music (piano and strings) . . . the singing evangelist was not my style . . . any possibility of including more youth delegates from the indigenous population at the next session?'

JAMES SHEPLEY (STANBOROUGH PARK CHURCH)

'Dr Jeff Brown inspired us not to have a "grasshopper" mentality that doubts what God can achieve through us and for us. I was also proud to see delegates acting in a Christ-like manner, as if conscious that this SEC session could be the last before Jesus comes.'

JOSEPH CLEM (BALHAM CHURCH)

'This was my first session . . . as a younger person . . . I have been blessed to be part of something so special – not only a practical set of meetings but spiritual too!'

JANA HANCHARD (WOOD GREEN CHURCH)

'As a delegate under the age of thirty, I expected a long, drawn-out process of "politics" and "politricks"! I was pleasantly surprised by the succinctness of the process, the spiritual atmosphere, and the willingness of departmental leaders to give answers and be held accountable for their actions. I believe a great effort should be made to bring more senior youth to SEC and BUC sessions, so they can understand how their church functions, and how they can get involved to effect change.'

JEREMIE TOUSSAINT BOURNE (CROYDON/WALLINGTON CHURCH)

'What went down well? I think the feeling of family that was created; the inspiring sermons; the "Fired up" music and drama; the signs of progress and growth; the presidential humour and insight; the food and accommodation; meeting old friends and making new ones; the presentation on Muslim relations – which was the best of all the reports! And the session would

have been better if: officers had a better grasp of [parliamentary] procedure; . . . all speakers acknowledged that the audience included the indigenous population; and an alternative method of lay preacher approval can be found.'

DAVID WRIGHT (WINCHESTER CHURCH)

'For me, Dr Jeff Brown's Sabbath message was the session highlight, and it has really ignited a keen desire in my heart to become more dedicated, devoted and diligent in the work of the Lord. Dr Brown's words still echo loudly in my ears: "Sing the Lord's song anyway, even if you are in Babylon!"'

MOSES ARENDSE (JOHN LOUGHBOROUGH SCHOOL)

'I enjoyed being part of the session, especially to worship with a large group of Seventh-day Adventists. There has been a good spirit here, and I have appreciated the inspirational messages, the humour, the opportunity to meet with friends from across the conference, and the chance to play a small part in this great work!'

STELLA JEFFERY (EXETER CHURCH)

'We came to the SEC session expecting to help with the process of selecting the Church leaders for the new term, but ended up being edified ourselves. The whole experience was uplifting, and I can see why some called it "the session of love". Something that I think would improve the process is if each ministry or department made regular partial reports throughout the term, rather than only at the end.'

PEDRO GRECO FERLIZI (WIMBLEDON INTERNATIONAL CHURCH)

'I went to the session aware of many of the issues that this administration have faced in the past term, some of which are still unresolved. But I was glad to see that the delegates concentrated on the spiritual work of the Church, rather than getting bogged down in these issues. Their questions and comments reflected that they had come to work with the administration to see improvements. I was very pleased that, even though some think that mistakes were made in the past, Sam Davis and the majority of his team have been re-elected. This is not with a mandate



to do more of the same, but to develop a stronger, more Spirit-filled team, especially in the area of youth and teen ministry, about which many are so concerned. The plans committee recommendation to form a panel to deal with disputes rather than letting them go straight to litigation is also highly commendable.'

DR CLINTON MONFRIES (BALHAM CHURCH)

'It was overwhelming! I used to feel that I only "belonged" to Norwich Church, but now the family circle is so much bigger. Words can't really express how wonderfully blessed I felt after listening to Dr Brown's sermons, watching the 'Fired up' drama, and everything else that took place. Finally, one of the restaurant staff approached me and asked: "So you go to church on Saturday instead of Sunday?" She then went on to say that they [the staff] were discussing the fact that we were [positively] different from all other conference groups they had served. She wanted to know if we sang hymns and if there was a church nearby. She said she would have attended the Sabbath service if she had not been on duty. We didn't need to preach to them – just to be who we are. They "read" the message in our lives!'

JEMIMA SENTINA (NORWICH CHURCH)



Observations from the 'press gallery' . . .

The discussions that took place around the reports of the various departments and ministries formed a very interesting and vibrant part of the SEC session. Here are some of the highlights as recorded from the 'press gallery'. We trust they will give our readers a sense of what transpired.

*Editor's note: Some reports were voted after little or no comment from the floor, and that is why they may not appear below. The full reports may be read online at the BUC website www.adventist.org.uk under the title **South England Conference Session Report book** in the 'What's New!' box.*

Youth department

It was suggested by one speaker that the youth and teens be encouraged to conduct more evangelistic meetings in their home churches, so that they can be 'the leaders of today – not only of tomorrow!'

A subsequent speaker spoke briefly on the importance of Pathfinders – testifying that, in his home church, all the youth who were in the Pathfinder club with him are still faithful members today.

There was strong support from the delegates for a more vigorous work among university students, many of whom find their faith threatened by campus life and learning. Another speaker, who received a chorus of support, felt that the Church was 'not preparing our youth to intelligently defend their faith when they reach university'. One speaker suggested that an Adventist Students' Association should be established in support of our youth, with branches wherever feasible.

There was a strong murmur of solidarity for one speaker who expressed very positive support for the LIVE project, and suggested that it be extended beyond London to some of the other centres around the country – with themes relevant to the issues in those areas.

When another speaker raised her

concern for the quality and spirituality of some of the conference youth programmes, she received a loud chorus of 'amen's. Mention was also made about a lack of spirituality in the content of some of this year's camp meeting youth programme.

Sadly, there were two important questions that went unanswered during the discussion of the youth report: 'Do you have any idea of how many youth are leaving our church?' and 'How many of those baptised in the SEC are youth?'

It was admitted by a spokesperson of the Youth department that the follow-up of youth baptismal candidates was a major weakness in the youth programme across the conference.

The matter of Pathfinder uniforms was raised by some speakers, who pointed out the need for them to meet the following criteria: they needed to be suitable; uniform throughout the BUC/SEC; not changed every so often; and as inexpensive as possible to meet the financial challenges faced by struggling parents today.

The Pathfinder director assured the delegates that all the information they needed about the uniforms was on the BUC website.

One item that was strongly stressed by the Youth department spokesperson was the need for all churches to ensure that the vehicles they use to transport their youth on official outings have current MOTs and insurance cover, and that those who drive them have valid licenses.

The Youth department also emphasised that members could not expect the Youth department and the Youth leaders to take full responsibility for the development of an Adventist heritage among the young people of the church. Youth leaders are 'not parents' – and parents needed to play their role in developing spirituality among their own children.

They were also of the opinion that congregations should make more funding available to foster youth activities in their own churches and areas.

Children's ministries

The first major contribution from the floor was the suggestion that congregations be encouraged to 'include our children more



intentionally in the worship service' by running a children's church or giving them their own segment during the adult service.

Another well-received suggestion was that the traditional week-long Vacation Bible School be extended to cover as many weeks of the summer holiday as possible. This would be a great attraction for the parents because of the soaring costs of child-minding, and would allow the children to be exposed to the VBS benefits for that much longer. The burden of running these longer VBS programmes could be shared on a rotational basis by all the Adventist churches in the area.

Sabbath School and Personal Ministries

There was a suggestion that the Personal Ministries department should become more involved in promoting 'felt-need evangelism': programmes and events that aim at meeting the perceived needs of the local community (for example, parenting seminars, health courses, anger management programmes, and so on). It was felt that these would bring the members into a closer and more meaningful relationship with the community, while building bridges for biblical programmes that would follow.

During the dialogue, both podium and pew acknowledged the fact that we are 'good at outreach and evangelism' (in some communities) but not nearly as good at retaining the evangelised in the Church! It was made clear that we need to invest more effort in the discipling and nurturing of new members.

Then came a really challenging question, as a member from one of the non-indigenous communities asked: 'Do you have an outreach strategy or programme to target and reach the vast host population of the UK?' The answer from the podium was far from convincing. It was suggested that we 'should go door-to-door to reach them' – something about which the murmured comments of the delegates showed they were not convinced!

Regarding the Sabbath School lesson study time, it was suggested that more teachers should be trained to teach 'interactively', promoting dialogue and robust discussion – and that 'God's people be spared the "burden" of two sermons on a Sabbath morning!'

Community services

Here the main topic of concern was our response in the aftermath of the recent Tottenham riots. Some felt it could have been better co-ordinated and that we should be in a higher state of readiness for such emergencies. There was also criticism about the poor communication that went out to the churches, but the director explained that it was because the Salvation Army co-ordinated the initiative, and it was slow in getting its information out to the participating organizations.

Church growth

The church growth discussion was brief and

centred largely around the definition, merits and challenges of the 'simple church', as promoted and run by the SEC. There seemed to be wide support for these lay-driven projects, which are proving successful in a variety of locations.

Health ministries

There was one suggestion that was made during the brief discussion of this ministry – namely, that the department should work closely with the Education department of the Church in developing a course for those wishing to study health education in the UK. This would hopefully enable ministers and others to acquire these basic skills during their training at Newbold College.

Family ministries

Discussion of this ministry was very brief as well, but the spokesperson made a strong appeal for all the churches of the conference to appoint people to care for this special area of ministry. Apparently there are as many as eighty SEC churches without anyone appointed to head this ministry!

Education department

There was some very vigorous discussion about the GCSE results received by the pupils at the John Loughborough secondary school. The main area of concern was mathematics, and the delegates were assured that the administration was already dealing with matter.

One delegate asked, 'Who runs the John Loughborough school?' The answer was crisp and clear: it is our school; run by Adventist governors; plus the required number of external governors.

Communication/Media

Concern was expressed that the Skydream format was not yet quite suitable as a medium to reach the host population of the UK – for which it was apparently intended. The spokesperson responded that they were 'moving in that direction' and requested that the members 'please be patient' with the process.

Another speaker felt that there might be some unnecessary 'overlapping of resources' between the BUC and the SEC with respect to TV production and broadcasting. Assurances were given from the podium, however, that this would soon come under review and that changes would be made if necessary.

The final concern raised was that the proposed distribution of *The Great Controversy*, and the associated reading programme in which members are meant to engage, were not being promoted sufficiently – especially in the *MESSENGER*.

Men's ministries

This is clearly an appreciated ministry, and its report was well received by the audience. One delegate felt that more could be done to mentor and nurture the young boys and male teenagers of the Church to grow up into a full, positive Adventist manhood.

Another delegate was quick to thank the leaders of this ministry for the very positive



support they have given to the boys and the male staff at John Loughborough Secondary School – especially seeing that it was done on a voluntary basis. A recommendation then came from the floor that this ministry be funded by the SEC in future.

Prison ministries

From the comments made by a variety of speakers it soon became clear that many of the SEC churches, and a number of individuals, are active in prison ministries.

One delegate suggested that the ministry be expanded to include the families of offenders, because they have their own unique set of challenges to face.

Adventist-Muslim relations

The spokesman's lively interaction with the audience was highly entertaining – and appreciated! Among the things he shared were the following: a) at least 12 UK Adventists joined Islam last year; b) recently he was able to reclaim two former Adventist families who had been under Muslim influence for a number of years; c) that Isaiah 60:6-7 is a prophecy about Islam.

Technology boosts session audience

The tireless work of the various 'technical' support teams and individuals, including photographers and TV camera operators, often goes unnoticed at large events like these. Here is a comment that really showcases their valuable contribution in taking this session beyond the boundaries of the Warwick University campus:

'I was impressed by the use of Facebook, Twitter and live streaming to keep the whole UK membership up-to-date with our discussions. In fact, from the text messages and emails I received, it was obvious that many were following the live feeds. This shows that many individuals really care about the work of this administration and its effect on the spreading of the Gospel throughout the UK.'

DR CLINTON MONFRIES (BALHAM CHURCH)



news

Twenty-three souls for Christ!

The first half of 2011 has been a great year for enlarging God's Kingdom at the Windsor Street South and Aston-Newtown churches in Birmingham. On 12 March, **three** persons were baptised – Javaughn Blyde, Sean Hines and Kavon James.

Then in May, a Spirit-filled three-week 'Victory in Jesus' evangelistic campaign, led by Pastor Richard Jackson, and a health presentation from Dr Patrick Lowe, blessed visitors and members alike. Another **eleven** souls gave their lives to Christ: Angelica Harris, Michael Worrell, Joan Wint, Lindiwe Muzila, Reward Muzila, Kimberly Newsome, Larissa Forde, Lorna Forde, Christopher Clarke and Toluwanmi Samuel Ajayi.

On 16 July a further **nine** souls (six of whom were Pathfinders and Adventurers) gave their lives to Christ: Lavina Coy, Marian Morgan, Willow Byron, Rachelle Elliott, Cerise Byron, Nathan Richards, Anna Harris, Joshua Evans and David Reid. Candidates felt especially blessed to receive the message of 'The Open Door' by our new BUC president, Pastor Ian Sweeney.

Pastor Jackson was very pleased with the outcome of the evangelistic thrust. He gave thanks to God and made it clear that these **twenty-three** souls came as a result of members going out in the community, sowing seed for the year preceding the campaign. He stated that if we are going to succeed, we must make proper planning and preparation.

The newly baptised members are currently engaged in a nurturing programme which is conducted by the district Bible instructor, Sandra Dawes.

JUNE RICHARDS



(Back row, left to right) Elder S Burgher (First Elder, Aston-Newtown), Pastor Ian Sweeney, Elder W Bryan, Pastor R Jackson, Elder E Blake (First Elder, Windsor Street South), S Dawes (District Bible Instructor). (Front row left to right) Lavina Coy, Marian Morgan, Willow Byron, Rachelle Elliott, Cerise Byron, Nathan Richards, Anna Harris, Joshua Evans, David Reid.



Baptism in Colchester

On 23 July, Elder Moyo's studies paid off when his students – Trevor Harris, Sibongile Hatch and Alex Asante – were baptised into the Colchester church, which was very happy to welcome them into the church family.

E. MARSHALL



'Inreach' retreat

An 'Inreach Retreat' has been planned from 24 to 30 October 2011 (half-term week) in the peaceful countryside of Wales at Cefn Lea Holiday Park in Powys. Three powerful Adventist preachers will help us to wake up, learn the Word and teach our communities:

Elder Moses Mason, Elder Dwayne Lemon, and Pastor Anthony Chornes. Two types of self-catering chalets are on offer (see the accommodation plans at www.cefnlea.co.uk for the full week). Guests are required to bring their own towels and bed linen (not duvets), or hire them for an additional charge. Please call or email to make a booking. Don't delay and you won't be disappointed! A full schedule of the week's events is available on enquiry. For further information, please phone: 0161 9692058 or 07866 532060.

Grantham Church and Dudley House School rejoice

On Sabbath 16 July, Esther and Gordon Egwuatu and Samantha Sellars were baptised at the Grantham church. Five years ago, Esther and Gordon brought their first child, Somi, to the Grantham church to dedicate her to the Lord. Then Esther had a vivid, disturbing dream that told her to recommit her life to Christ. Esther and Gordon began attending church regularly, and in January started Bible studies to prepare for baptism. Their son, Kene, became a pupil of Dudley House Primary School (the Adventist school attached to the church at Grantham).

Samantha Sellars has been a

valued member of staff at Dudley House School for nearly eight years. Sam began attending church with her family five years ago, and helped with Children's Sabbath School and social events. This year, during a funeral service, Sam found her questions answered. Immediately she asked for baptism.

Pastor John Ferguson declared, 'Accepting Jesus as your Saviour is the most wonderful, mind-freeing, guilt-lifting, direction-giving thing a person can do.'

ELISABETH CARNELL
COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY



Baptism in Burngreave

Pastor Patrick Herbert, resident pastor of the Stoke district, baptised husband and wife, Shepherd and Mercy Ndlovu and a youth named Fadzai Chitunhu-Muguza, from the ranks of the Pathfinders, at the district day of fellowship in the Sheffield, Burngreave church on Sabbath 14 May. Fadzai chose to be baptised in her Pathfinder uniform, and the candidates were welcomed into fellowship by the Burngreave church.

Pastor Victor Marshall, resident Burngreave pastor, also welcomed visitors from the Doncaster and Rotherham churches.

ROSEMARY BLENHAM

Singing in the rain!

On Saturday 27 August, the Holloway Youth department hosted an outdoor community concert in the church courtyard with the sole purpose of providing an opportunity for the young people to witness to their local community.

The concert kicked off with the Holloway drum corps; rain ensued, but the concert went on! The crowd returned with chairs and umbrellas. The praise team followed the drum corps and during it all the witnessing team were hard at work, advertising the live streaming service and distributing leaflets and 'Final events' DVDs. The team were sporting 'Speak to me' badges, and Jane Merchant tirelessly gave out drinks to members of the public. 100 DVDs were given out and the witnessing team kept asking for more!

Pastor Andrew Davis presented a short, thought-provoking talk, asking: 'What if God really does exist?' Andrew was joined by a drunk man on stage, but he put his arm around him and reassured him of the Father's love!

When Brother Bonner prayed for the community, those affected by the recent riots and our political leaders, people across the road bowed their heads as they joined the church in prayer.

Here are some thoughts from the witnessing team:

'It was my first time doing street witnessing so I was slightly



nervous – however, the concert definitely helped. People were willing to stop and talk with me, to take the DVDs. Another Christian was with a group of teenagers who were all ex drug addicts who found Christ. That in itself was motivation for me to throw more energy into witnessing! Street witnessing was an amazing experience and something I would definitely do again.'

Hayley McKenzie-Sealy

'Although it was my first time witnessing I was prepared. We need to do another outreach programme as soon as possible!

Anesha West

'My witnessing experience was one that I really enjoyed. I look forward to the next opportunity!

Alec Gage

'I found it exciting; people were generally receptive. I was really encouraged by a young man who came from a life of drugs to Christ after experiencing a similar event. God uses our efforts, and the more we give, the more opportunity God has to act through us.'

Michael Edwards

TRACY CASTOR



Tsunami triggers baptism

The 11 March tsunami in Japan triggered a decision for baptism in Jeannie Cort, and she was baptised at Lough Ree on 11 August. Jeannie had started attending church again after the wedding of Pastor Adam Keough, who also baptised her – his wedding also introduced her to Ian Cort, whom Jeannie O'Brien, as she then was, married on 6 September 2010, almost a year before her baptism.

IAN CORT



Showers of blessings

Cynthia Young and Pam Ingram led the Norbury Church health expo on Sunday morning, 5 June. At 10am a throng of people from the community were waiting for them to start! Church helpers, together with the Pathfinder club, manned the stations, and approximately 200 free health checks and items of literature were given out. An enthusiastic group took part in the aerobics class (taken by Alvin McQueen) and enjoyed the bouncy castle and delicious healthy refreshments. There was a constant flow of people and the event was followed up on a later date with a vegetarian cookery school and marriage enrichment seminars are to follow!

NOMVI NDIWENI

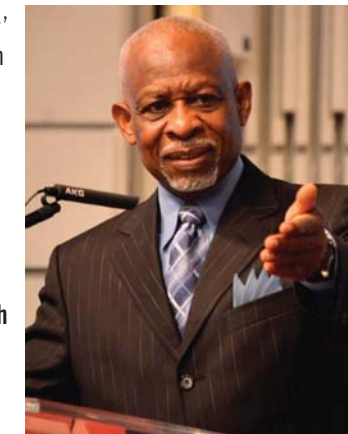


Parenting: in a contemporary society

Dr Kennedy – a highly qualified and experienced pastor, speaker, educator, writer of eight books and a newspaper columnist – will be presenting several seminars on 'Parenting in a contemporary society' at the Leicester Central church, from 2-8 October. All are welcome.

2-8 October
7pm – 9pm

Leicester Central Adventist Church
London/University Roads,
Leicester LE2 1EF
0116 2758556



Scottish youth in Romania

by Audrey Mutongi and Bernie Holford

Adventist youth from Scotland volunteered to build a house in Romania during two weeks of their summer holiday, despite having no previous experience.

Two of the youth went a full forty-eight hours without sleep. After landing at Glasgow airport from a holiday at 11pm, they were back at the same airport four hours later to catch a flight to Bucharest!

The youth organised and held a dinner, placed collecting tins at various stations and climbed Ben Lomond to help raise £3000 for the building material.

These leaders of the future gave a family of eight (who had been living in a single-room mud hut, and one of whom had Downs syndrome) a spacious brick and mortar home.

Pastor Bernie Holford commended the hospitality and hard



Stuart's challenge

In May, Stuart Gordon, a member of the Hemel Hempstead church, took on the Princes Trust challenge to raise funds for the charity, which has helped more than 650,000 young people since 1976 and supports 100 more each day. More than three in four young people helped by The Prince's Trust move into work, training or education.

This challenge meant that Stuart had to hike, bike and white-water raft 286 kilometres in seven days through the Himalayas. He did this in order to change the lives of the UK's most disadvantaged young people, and completed the hardest possible Princes Trust challenge – raising a staggering £84,000, and changing eighty-four young people's lives!

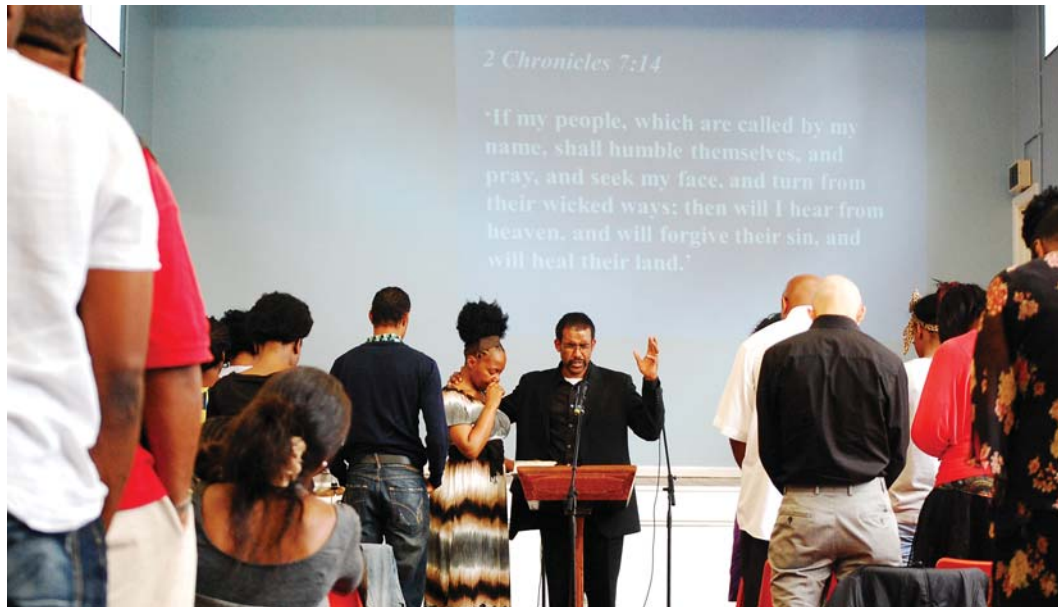
Stuart took advantage of the trip to witness for his faith. JOHN BUTTERS



Breaking the hurt

The KCF Family Life day on Saturday 13 August dealt with the issue of pain. Shirley Grant preached at Kennington, using 2 Chronicles 7:14.

For pictures of the event and details of upcoming events, go to: www.kcflife.com.



work of the Romanian Adventist volunteers and workers, as well as the Scottish volunteers.

Pastor Daniel's last Sabbath

On 13 August, Pastor Daniel Thompson preached his last sermon at the Hemel Hempstead church before moving to minister to the Bournemouth and Weymouth churches. He has been with Hemel Hempstead church as an intern under the guidance of Pastor Jacques Venter. He also assisted Pastor Jacques in the Welwyn and St Albans churches. He and his wife Hilary have been 'an asset to the churches', and members have been impressed with his commitment, enthusiasm, and thoughtful sermons.

JOHN BUTTERS



Pastor Vlado Godina retires

The Oxford and Aylesbury churches came together on 27 August to celebrate the service of Pastor Vlado Godina and Dr Lidja Godina. Pastor Godina, who has served in this district for a number of years, will eventually return to his 'beautiful country of Croatia'. Dr Lidja Godina, who has blessed both churches with her preaching, teaching and IT skills, continues her higher education teaching career in Luton. We pray that the Lord will continue to lead them.

SOPHIA NICHOLLS



obituaries

Vera Tokely (née Smith) (1921-2011) d. 15 April. Vera was born in Norwich, England, on 22 June 1921. She was the loving and devoted wife of Reginald (from Dandenong, Victoria, Australia) for seventy years, and was baptised with her husband on her birthday in 1963, by Pastor Alwen Cowley, after attending the 'I Beheld His Glory' seminar.

Vera was a member of Cranbourne Adventist Fellowship, and supported many mission projects with her knitting and prayers. Latterly she was unable to fellowship at Cranbourne due to failing health, but she never complained, and rested peacefully with Jesus at the Cardinal Knox Nursing Home, Victoria, in April.

Vera is survived by her son Stuart, and his wife Maureen, her daughter Diane, and Andrew (to whom she was a nanny) and his son Christopher. She was known as Nanny Vera to many children world wide, and died as she lived, trusting Jesus and everyone's friend.

DIANE TOKELY

Gwen Mason (1924-2011) d. 8 June.

All the members of the Carmarthen church loved Gwen Mason – for her quiet manner, her knitting, the jigsaws mounted on her walls, and the constant stream of poetry she wrote. They loved her for the way that she and her husband Harold used their own home as the Carmarthen church, until a dedicated building could be purchased. Her death on Wednesday evening left more than a vacant seat in that building.

Gwen Yeates, or 'Our little Gwennie' as her older siblings referred to her, was born on 25 November 1924 in St Luke's Road, Bristol – the sixth of seven children born to Florence and Joseph Yeates. Her warm and comfortable childhood was interrupted by the second World War, which brought many hardships and forced Gwen to grow up quickly.

Packing cigarettes in a factory at the age of 15 was not the career that Gwen had hoped for, but it helped to pay the family bills when times were hard. During the later war years she progressed to work as a shop assistant and then a hospital domestic, and after the war ended she went to secretarial college and learnt shorthand and typing, finally qualifying as a stenographer.

Gwen first attended Seventh-day Adventist meetings after being encouraged to do so by her father. Already a devout Christian himself,

he wanted the same experience for his family, though in the end Gwen was the only one to be baptised as an Adventist. Gwen went on to study Theology at Newbold College, a task which she took very seriously.

It was through the Adventist church that Gwen met her husband-to-be, Harold Mason, another studious and very devout Adventist. They were married in 1954, and ran a health food shop together for a couple of years.

Harold and Gwen came to Wales in 1965, along with their two daughters, and it was in 1979 that they moved to the house in Carmarthen which would become the first home of Carmarthen Seventh-day Adventist Church. They dreamt of a 'proper' church, and that dream came true when the Bethel Vestry in Cwmffrwd was purchased and renovated in the 1980s. Thanks, in large part, to the pioneering work of Harold and Gwen Mason, the church is still thriving today.

Despite their devotion to the church, Harold and Gwen were even more deeply committed to their family. Every new addition brought joy to their faces and saw Gwen's knitting needles producing ever more creative and colourful garments. It is to the family that we now turn our thoughts and prayers – the two daughters, Muriel and Paula, as well as the six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, who will miss Gwen even more than we do.

JOHN SURRIDGE

David Alexander Porter (1920-2011) d. 14 July.

David Porter was the youngest of five children, whose family was first contacted with the Advent message some ninety years ago when a tract was delivered to their home. Thus began an association with the church in Cambridge, which lasted until he passed peacefully away aged 91 on 14 July. He served as elder for some years and as treasurer for much of his working life, during which time church members raise funds to help him build the Cambridge church, about fifty years ago. Substantial funds were also raised under his stewardship to extend the church in more recent years. The counsel he gave to the church and successive pastors over many years, both as elder and treasurer, was given quietly, thoughtfully and wisely.

Until his 90th year he tended his garden, maintained his involvement in his life-long work with the literary world of the university city of

Cambridge, and faithfully distributed the Advent message through the post and from door to door, supported by his wife Vera, to whom he had been married for sixty-nine years.

The private funeral in his home village of Exning, near Cambridge, was sympathetically led by Pastor John Ferguson on 28 July before some twenty-five members of David's immediate family, including his wife Vera, his daughter Janet Overy and her husband John, their children Lloyd and Sharon, and Sharon's two children. David's faith never wavered, and he died in the sure knowledge of the soon return of the Saviour he loved. JANET OVERY



Francis Robertson (1935-2011) d. 22 July.

Francis Robertson was one of the most outstanding lay leaders of his generation. His

contribution was principally in the field of health outreach, notably the five-day plan. However, he was also a co-founder of the annual special needs camp at Aberdaron, and, with his wife Margaret, managed the camp – with the help of many skilled assistants – for the first ten years of its thirty-year history. Francis was a founder member and the treasurer of the British Adventist Nurses Association (BANA), and served for long periods as senior elder of both the Hull and Reading Central churches.

Francis was born at Shilton, Warwickshire, on 29 October 1935, when his father George Robertson was training at nearby Newbold Revel. He was the third of four children of whom only Pastor Neil Robertson, the youngest, now survives. He was raised on farms in Lincolnshire and Warwickshire, and educated at Brinklow School. When, in 1952, he left home to train for the ministry at Newbold College, his family had returned to their native Scotland. When Francis completed his ministerial training in 1956 he was told that, given the supply and demand situation for ministry at that time, there was no immediate vacancy for him. Since the Newbold degree only qualified its holders for ministry, Francis declined to graduate.

Francis married Margaret, whom he had met at Newbold, at Hull in 1957. The couple subsequently moved to Hull, where Francis trained and qualified, in turn, in psychiatric and general nursing. Francis was an outstanding elder of the Hull church, where his exceptional skills as a teacher/communicator were apparent. They

were apparent to his employers in the NHS, too, and he was encouraged to study for a Certificate in Education at Wolverhampton Teacher Training College. Following his graduation, he became principal tutor at one of the larger hospitals in Hull. He retained that position until 1979, when he was appointed as director of nurse education at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading. By the time the Robertsons moved south in 1979, Francis had already assisted many pastors, notably Alan Conroy and Lionel Hubbard, in many five-day plans, and worked with Pastor Martin Anthony on the first special needs camp.

When Margaret worked as Community Services director of the South England Conference, 1986-96, Francis became an agency nurse in order to have the hours of flexibility to assist her. At Francis's funeral, Pastor Sam Davis stated, 'We had two for the price of one.' Francis was a close friend of Pastor R. J. B. Willis and assisted his outreach endeavours too.

To see Francis at his best was to see him at home. He and Margaret were generous hosts to generations of young people, for whom their homes were 'open house'. He was an outstanding father to Ian, who was born in January 1966. At his funeral Ian delivered a warm and articulate appreciation of his father, stating, 'The love Dad gave me was unconditional.' To the joys of parenthood were added the joys of grandparenthood when Ian and Nicki produced, in turn, Jasmine, Amelia and Sophie.

Even when faced with the most challenging of situations, Francis invariably remained balanced and calm. It was, therefore, particularly sad that in his final decade he became the victim of severe depression. Margaret required all the aspects of her strong personality to nurse him. This she did faithfully and well until Francis died unexpectedly on 22 July of an ischemic heart attack.

The Robertson family and a great many friends from all parts of the UK were present for the funeral on 11 August at the Newbold church. It was conducted by Pastors Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist, Donald Lowe and David Marshall. Margaret wishes to thank her neighbours and church friends for their support during Francis's illness and subsequent to his death. Many friends, including the undersigned, wish to thank both Margaret and Francis for the warmth and generosity of their hospitality over half a century.

Francis's sleep will one day be interrupted by his returning Saviour. Then the family will be unbroken.

DAVID MARSHALL

A weekend of celebrations

'Unity in Diversity' and 'Oneness in Christ' were the themes on Sabbath 30 and Sunday 31 July, at Tottenham's International and Fellowship weekend celebrations.

This weekend, organised by Hannah Obeng-Badu and Pastor David Burnett, was attended by the SEC president, Pastor Sam Davis, who introduced Dr Delbert W. Baker, World Church vice president, as the guest speaker.

The church was bedecked with flags, and the multilingual welcome preceded Dr Baker's challenging sermon. Dr Baker spoke on World Church projects and issues in the afternoon, including Project Hope – the aim of which is to distribute Adventist literature 'like leaves of autumn'.

DOREEN I. FRAY



A joyful noise to the Lord

The Oxford church held its first summer music school 17-19 August, fulfilling the dream of Sophia Nicholls. Twenty-four children (aged 6-16) from the Oxford church and the local community came together to learn music and worship the Lord. Many of the children who attended the school had never played an instrument before.

The summer school

culminated in a wonderful mini concert on 20 August.

Children in the church and surrounding community will be



School GCSE results

GCSE results released this year show that 86% of Stanborough Secondary School students achieved five or more A* to C grades this year. John Loughborough School has made a slight gain on last year's results, with an overall improvement to 70% of pupils achieving A* to C grades, although improvements are needed in Maths.

Congratulations to both our Adventist secondary schools!

BUC

Congratulations

to Nicole and Christopher Chambers, who were married at the Huddersfield church on Sunday 8 May. Nicole, daughter of ADC director Des Rafferty (former minister of Huddersfield) met Christopher as they studied for Biochemistry doctorates together at Huddersfield University.

Presenting the Good News to prisoners

Members from Bristol Central Church have been ministering once a quarter at Eastwood Park Women's Prison for almost 8 years now. Angela says, 'I wish it could be more frequent than this, as some of the women are desperately seeking answers and wanting Gods intervention in their lives.' Recently, the singing group Kindred sang 'He is a Healer' and the presentation was given. The inmates, including young mothers with their babies, and prison wardens received the Good News that Jesus is coming again and wants all his children to live with him for eternity. Chipo from Kindred said, 'It was an amazing experience.' All were touched by the hope of a second chance.

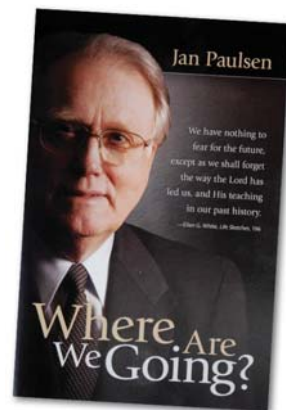
Be inspired and get involved in this worthwhile ministry.

ANGELA VICTOR

encouraged to sign up for future lessons, to the glory of God.

For more information, please contact Sophia Nicholls on 07768 298 297.

SOPHIA NICHOLLS



Where Are We Going?

Elder Jan Paulsen

What direction is our Church taking? What issues lie ahead? Elder Jan Paulsen, GC president from 1999 to 2010, reflects on how to lead, retain and unite Seventh-day Adventists in the present and the future.

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9am-1pm, Friday
11am-3pm, Sunday

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Messenger

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Sunset

Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by HM Nautical Almanac Office.

	Lond	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Sept 16	7.14	7.26	7.19	7.29	7.39
23	6.58	7.10	7.02	7.10	7.21
30	6.42	6.54	6.45	6.52	7.03
Oct 7	6.26	6.38	6.28	6.34	6.46

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