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Ilford's 'do something' church

by Serena Francis

On 22 March the Ilford Central church hosted a service to celebrate the official opening of their new church building and community facility at 14-16 Coventry Road, Ilford.

In 2013 the church purchased the former synagogue, and began to host services there in November.

According to the resident minister, Pastor Harrison Mburani: 'The mission of the church is to meet the spiritual, physical, social and emotional needs of the people in Redbridge and foster partnerships that will enhance effective delivery of these services.'

Pastor Sam Davis, South England Conference president, shared his expectations with those present in this way: 'God expects us to be integrated into the community. This church should be a "do something" church.'

Well, it seems that they are already doing quite a few 'somethings': youth programmes, music lessons, fitness classes, children's clubs and family life counselling. They also offer a Pastor's Drop-in Surgery that is open to both church and community members on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10am and 6.30pm.

The church was well-represented by Pastors Sam Davis, Paul Lockham and Terry Messenger, not to mention Earl Ramharacksingh (SEC treasurer) and Steve Okelo (BUC associate treasurer). Dignitaries from the London Borough of Redbridge included Deputy Mayor Tania Solomon, Keith Prince (leader of Redbridge Council), Mike Gapes (MP for Ilford South), local councillors, and representatives from the Redbridge Faith Forum.

Labour MP Mike Gapes even took to Twitter to share his excitement about a 'really enjoyable morning and lunch' with the Ilford Central church, and the day clearly resonated with the invited guests from the wider community. Deputy Mayor

Tania Solomon spoke during the service of her fond memories of the former synagogue where she got married over twenty years ago. She explained that 'in the Jewish tradition, women would sit upstairs during worship. Today is the first time that I have sat next to my husband in this building.' In another tribute, the leader of Redbridge Council, Keith Prince, was visibly moved when he expressed his delight that the site in Coventry Road would remain a place of worship, citing reference to the strong spiritual roots of the building in the community, comparing the 'changeover' from a synagogue to a Sabbath-keeping church as the Old Covenant passing on to the New Covenant.

On Sunday 23 March the church opened its doors again to the community for an open day, showcasing the various ministries and services that it has to offer the community. Throughout the weekend the Ilford Central members were determined to show that they were 'open for business' and ready to serve the community.

For more information about the church and updates on future events and services, visit them online at www.ilford.adventistchurch.org.uk.



This feature will appear periodically in *MESSENGER*, giving Sharon Platt-McDonald, our BUC Health director, an opportunity to converse with various health professionals on topics that will interest our readers.

Dr Eileen Baidam (MRCP, MRCGP) is a consultant paediatric rheumatologist at the Alder Hey Children's Foundation NHS Trust in Liverpool and an honorary senior lecturer at the University of Liverpool. Growing up in Africa she witnessed the ravages of untreated illness at first hand, especially when visiting friends at the various mission hospitals. Her father, who had wanted to be a doctor himself, also inspired her decision to go into medicine. According to her: 'I have always felt passionately that medicine is a ministry with the privilege of touching people's lives in an amazing way.'

SPM: Dr Baidam, in your current practice, what are some of the most common conditions that children present with?

Dr Baidam: The most common are arthritis-related, with symptoms such as joint pain, stiffness, early-morning stiffness, swelling or limping or reduction in the use of a joint or limb. Some types are associated with fever and rash as well.

Other common conditions are chronic regional pain syndromes and biomechanical problems with hypermobility. Rare inflammatory disorders such as systemic lupus erythematosus, dermatomyositis, and the various forms of vasculitis can all present with symptoms and signs affecting any of the body systems.

SPM: I recognise some of those conditions from my early years of nursing. Do these conditions appear to be on the increase or are we now better at referral and dealing more promptly with them?

Dr Baidam: No Sharon, they are not on the increase, but unfortunately there is often a delay in recognition and referral. Roughly one in 1,000 children have juvenile arthritis.

SPM: Is there any dietary advice that could assist a child's recovery, particularly in acute situations? For example, there is some research which suggests that certain foods, like dairy products, may instigate or worsen an inflammatory response in arthritic conditions. Can you comment on this?

Dr Baidam: There is really no evidence that dietary changes in childhood either cause, worsen or improve arthritis or inflammatory disorders. However, it is important to have a good, balanced diet with a good calcium intake; good sun exposure of 15-20 minutes a day to keep vitamin D levels up; and plenty of fruit and vegetables to ensure that vitamins such as vitamin C are eaten. Children need a good

calorie and protein intake – therefore any very limited exclusion diets should be avoided.

SPM: How can we best support a child in our congregation who may have a chronic debilitating health condition, and also be of help to his or her family?

Dr Baidam: I think that we need to be there for families, but primarily as friends, to help with practical things like babysitting of other children to ease hospital visits, transport to and from hospital, shopping runs, and so on. I feel strongly that we need to discourage that intrusive 'need-to-know-what's-wrong' type of interest in the details of people's health. Instead, we should simply be there to listen if people want to unburden themselves. We should never spread the news of someone's condition. We must have more of a confidential approach to health diagnoses, as these matters are really no one else's right or business to know.

SPM: I agree with that wholeheartedly. I want to look now at 'managing' an illness. In order to facilitate the best possible environment for a child to thrive and develop holistically, what advice would you give to parents?

Dr Baidam: Treat them as much like your other, healthy children as possible, with the same boundaries and attention as the others. Try to give as much attention to the 'sick' child during their times of health as during their times of illness: for children – and adults – often find that the 'sick role' becomes more rewarding, with more treats and attention, and this can help prolong the illness periods.

SPM: Good advice. In your treatment options for children with various conditions, are you ever challenged by parents who are unwilling to comply on the basis of religious faith or cultural practice?

Dr Baidam: Yes, I am, and it is always a mystery to me because God has clearly used

science in so many walks of life to enhance our lives and our health. It is interesting that many people will use antibiotics, which they know are life-saving and illness-healing, and yet may refuse immunosuppressive or anti-cancer drugs as though they were somehow in a different moral camp. In essence their effects on a cellular level may be very similar and the benefits in terms of life-saving and life enhancement are just the same.

Parents do not have the right to refuse the life-saving treatment that health care professionals recommend for their seriously ill children. In fact, the lack of collaboration with health care teams can legally be seen as neglectful and therefore causing potential harm to the child. This could lead to the requirement to consider the child in need of safeguarding procedures. In extreme cases of conflict between parents and professionals this may even require that treatments are discussed and agreed on with a judge through a court treatment order.

SPM: How would you advise parents who delay necessary and recommended treatment while waiting to 'hear from God'? Those who want to get a specific answer to their prayers before agreeing a particular treatment for their child?

Dr Baidam: This too could be considered as actually harming or potentially harming a child and could cross the threshold for harm, potentially moving the issue into the child protection arena. It is hard to understand how a loving parent would refuse a medical treatment that is known to be needed, while presuming instead that God would work a miracle on the child. This feels more like an effort to control God rather than working with Him and His servants whom He is actually using to help the child. It seems to me to be a bit like praying for food to appear on the plate, while neglecting to use what He has already stocked your cupboards with!

SPM: Finally, Dr Baidam, depending on the age of the child, how would you help to empower children in relation to their treatment compliance and future health choices?

Dr Baidam: Sharon, good clinical care should be as fully informing to both children and parents, or carers, as it is possible to be. 'Expert' patients who understand the way that science and medicine work do so much better. Little children can understand an amazing amount if told properly. They listen to the consultation anyway and are usually taking it all in, even if apparently playing. Consent to treatment through understanding is what we aim for.

SPM: Dr Baidam, on behalf of *MESSENGER*'s readers I want to thank you so much for this enlightening interview.



You have been selected . . .



Julian Hibbert
Editor

J'Jury Summons . . . You have been selected for jury service'! That's how the letter from the Jury Summoning Officer began – going on to provide a lot of other details, including a bit about being sober on the day I report for duty!

Since then I have done a bit of reading about juries and juror responsibility. Here are a few of my more interesting discoveries.

Juries

The jury system is quintessentially British, and something that has been around for longer than the Magna Carta (15 June 1215).¹ By comparison, the jury system harks back to 11 June 1168, when a certain Benedict Graymond was convicted of murder by a jury.²

Interestingly, although criminal cases are tried before a jury, since 1846 our legal system has allowed civil cases to become increasingly juryless. The result? 'As of 1998 less than 1% of civil trials in England and Wales were jury trials and these were principally defamation cases.'³

The jury system has served us for a long time but is not without detractors. Two particular areas of concern are its effectiveness in protracted cases that require an enormous sacrifice of time from the jurors, and in those involving serious fraud that 'may simply be too difficult for non-specialists to understand'. A classic example of both these dangers was the UK's longest jury trial, the 2005 London Underground bribery trial, that 'collapsed after almost two years' and a cost of £60 million.⁴ The reason? 'A disgruntled juror went on strike'⁵

To illustrate the burden jurors in that trial faced, one woman 'had been forced to postpone her wedding, miss out on promotion and pay rises at work and borrow money for her mortgage due to late jury payments'.⁶ She certainly had to endure both the trial and its 'tribulations'!

Jurors

Jurors are meant to determine the 'truth or falsity' of 'factual allegations' and deliver a verdict on whether a defendant is guilty or not. In pursuit of this, they are not to discuss the case with anyone besides the judge and their fellow jurors, nor to expose themselves to the influence of the media.⁷

We have our 'jury boxes' too

Our Church requires us to slip into the 'jury box' too. For instance, there are those nominating committees where we find ourselves forced to 'evaluate' the performance, personality, character and suitability for office of our fellow members. Which begs the question: are these 'evaluations' always guided by hard fact? Or are they at times influenced by a bit of bias, innuendo or exaggeration that slips into the discussion?

Lessons

My random reading about juries and jurors

has left me with some impressions that I believe could help us when we are called to the church's 'jury box'. Firstly, there is the legal system's strict requirement that a **verdict be based only on proven facts**: something that finds strong support in the Bible too (Exodus 20:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1 and Philippians 4:8).

Then there is the matter of **confidentiality**, something our 'church family' really struggle with – from top to bottom. For the juror, however, the matter is clear: 'Don't discuss the case with anyone, except other jury members in the jury deliberation room.' This applies even when the trial is over, includes family members, and may result in a prison sentence if ignored!⁸

Reading this about jurors brought back memories of a stint I had on a very high-level nominating committee – one that influenced appointments at the highest level of our world church. Despite the fact that we were firmly reminded of our obligation to confidentiality, and asked not to text or email anything about the proceedings, some committee members still did!

What do we achieve when we repeat the confidential opinions or cautions expressed in such meetings, or the detailed voting results on each position? Perhaps God had such events in mind when He inspired these words: 'Whoever would foster love covers over an offence, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.' (Proverbs 17:9, NIV-UK.)

One brave jury

Finally, I discovered something quite fascinating called '**jury nullification**' – which happens when a jury 'nullifies a law' by 'acquitting a defendant regardless of the weight of evidence against him or her'.⁹ Among the most famous of which was the 1670 trial of the Quaker, William Penn, on the charge of preaching in the streets!

It became a legal fiasco when he was denied a copy of the charges against him and of the laws he had allegedly broken. The judge then ordered the jury to reach a verdict without hearing his defence. They responded by bringing a verdict of 'not guilty'. He then told them to elect a new foreman and reconsider the matter. They refused and he, the Lord Mayor of London, then imprisoned them for 'several nights to mull over their decision'. They remained resolute so he made his point even clearer, 'bring in another verdict, or you shall starve'¹⁰

Penn and the jury ended up in prison together for contempt of court. The jury was also 'fined the equivalent of a year's wages each'. But they fought on bravely from their cells, in what became known as Bushel's Case, and 'managed to win the right for all English juries to be free from the control of judges'.¹¹

That's where '**jury nullification**' – the acquittal of 'a defendant regardless of the weight of evidence against him or her' – really came of age.

Aren't you glad though, that we have a Judge willing to do that for us, no matter how much the evidence stacks against us? And He doesn't need the help of a jury to be gracious and forgiving. He is that by nature!

¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magna_Carta ²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juries_in_England_and_Wales ³http://www.transparency.org/news/speech/how_can_lay_juries_cope_with_serious_fraud_cases_like_that_of_anglo_irish_b ⁴www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/mar/23/transport.constitution ⁵www.transparency.org/news/speech/how_can_lay_juries_cope_with_serious_fraud_cases_like_that_of_anglo_irish_b ⁶<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jury> ⁷<https://www.gov.uk/jury-service/discussing-the-trial> ⁸<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jury> ⁹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Penn ¹⁰http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Penn ¹¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Penn



Jurors are meant to determine the 'truth or falsity' of 'factual allegations' and deliver a verdict on whether a defendant is guilty or not.



Our nearest and dearest

by Pastor Ian Sweeney, BUC president

We may speak of our 'nearest and dearest', but it doesn't always follow that our 'nearest' are also our 'dearest'. I would submit that we are more likely to enter into conflict with our 'nearest' than with anyone else.

When they're up to it, my two boys can fight with one another like they are the bitterest of enemies, and yet they couldn't really be nearer could they! They have the same mum and dad, the same blood and heritage, but far from this uniting them as the nearest, at times they fight like sworn enemies.

Our spouses may be the nearest, but divorce rates would indicate that they are not always our dearest.

Our neighbours may be our nearest, but TV programmes such as *Neighbours from Hell* clearly show that they are definitely not always our dearest. In fact, not only do we enter into conflict with our nearest but we also find it easier to mock and ridicule them. I mean the English have jokes focusing on stereotypes of the Welsh, Scotch, Irish, French and German . . . but when have you last heard the one about the Zambian who went into a pub? Zambia isn't near enough. Having lived in Sheffield, I know that to mention to a Blades or Wednesday fan that what Sheffield needs is one amalgamated football club, will quickly drive home the fact that our nearest are not always our dearest.

Indeed, as far as Europe is concerned, I was taught at school that, at the outset of World War I, most of the European monarchies were linked by marriage. Yet World Wars I and II bitterly reveal that our nearest do not always find affection as our dearest.

Nothing new

This is not new, however. Luke records an incident that highlights this very point:

'And [Jesus] sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' Luke 9:52-56, KJV.

The Samaritans were a mixed people, partly of Hebrew stock, partly of foreign blood, formed after the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians (c. 722 BC). They worshipped Yahweh and revered the Pentateuch. Yet despite the closeness of the Israelites and Samaritans by way of heritage and religion, the two peoples who were nearest most certainly did not regard one another as their dearest. They avoided each other like the proverbial plague.

The Samaritans of this unnamed village were hostile towards Jesus because He was on His way to Jerusalem – the symbol of all that is Jewish. James and John were very angry at the treatment the Saviour was given and



proposed that fire fall upon them.

Pertinent lessons

This story has a number of pertinent lessons for us today. Jesus and the disciples were travelling from Galilee to Judea. The shortest route for such a journey would have been through the hills of Samaria. Jews, however, preferred to take the longer route through the Jordan valley to avoid contact with Samaritans. This was understandable, for it was not uncommon for them to attack Jews passing through their territory.

While our Lord had a prophetic appointment in Jerusalem, I believe that it was not just for the sake of time that He passed through Samaria. He was trying to teach us something important.

Go out of your way

The first lesson is that we must go out of our way to extend the hand of friendship to those people who are our 'nearest'. For if there is to be any hope of our nearest

ever becoming our dearest we must venture into *their* 'village' to extend the hand of friendship. When Jesus entered that Samaritan village, He was trying to make friends with a people who were Israel's sworn enemies. His was a work of reconciliation.

For Jesus Christ people mattered – even Samaritans! Those who were nearest He sought to make His dearest. As a congregation we may not be able to change the course of relations between the many peoples and races in this world, but we can make a decided effort to reach out to the

nearest in our own communities.

Instead of generalising about people we don't understand, and using unkind stereotypes, we can take a bold step like Jesus and enter into *their* 'village' with the offer of friendship and understanding.

Unfortunately, His offer of friendship was spurned. However, from this we learn that we must continually strive for friendship and reconciliation, irrespective of the anticipated results. We must strive for friendship and understanding against the backdrop of historical hostilities, racial, cultural and religious differences and the like. We may not be successful at the first attempt, or ever in our lifetimes, but the goal of seeing our nearest become our dearest is surely worth the effort.

The actual cause of the hostility may become vague, lost in the misty past, but inexplicably we fight on. There must come a time, however, when we put aside whatever arguments for hostility we may have in order to pursue

the greater goal of peace.

When you think about it, conflict can seem so irrational and nonsensical. We are often caught up in it simply through the accident of birth. A child born in one part of Belfast is seen as an enemy to another child, conceived a few miles across the city . . . yet neither child chose where or to whom to be born!

Like Christ we must seek to break the circle of conflict and hostility, and to establish a greater understanding of those who are our nearest. We should be like Jesus, who, unlike James and John, was more interested in saving His historical enemies than obliterating them.

Conclusion

The task of Christians today is to show, by our example, that what

unites us in Christ Jesus is greater than that which divides, whether it be language, geography, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, wealth, education, background or anything else.

Many years ago I read on the internet that the European Union had this as its ultimate goal: *'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen'*. It would seem to me, being rather pessimistic, that the tide of history and experience militates against *'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'*.

In this world it is quite possible that our hand of friendship, extended to those who are nearest to us, will be spurned. Even so, *do it anyway*, as this poem attributed to Mother Teresa suggests:

Do it anyway

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centred;
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
It was never between you and them anyway.

'The world is not ready for the impacts of climate change, including more extreme weather and the likelihood that populated parts of the planet could be rendered uninhabitable, says the planet's leading body of climate scientists in a major new UN report.'

This is how *National Geographic Daily News* led with its coverage of the UN's *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) report released on 31 March.

As more and more of our family, friends and neighbours are concerned about our world's worsening weather prospects, now's the time to give them the latest copy of *FOCUS*. In this issue we cover this important theme and related issues . . . including a bit of hope for the future!

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*<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/03/140331-ippc-report-global-warming-climate-change-science/>

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Ever had questions about our faith, doctrines or practice that you want to see resolved? Each issue I'll be hosting Q&A in an effort to answer them.

Andrew Puckering

'Ellen White uses the term "helpmeet" in *The Adventist Home* (page 99), but my dictionaries note that the word was "formed by a misunderstanding of Genesis 2:18, 20". The NKJV renders the expression, "helper comparable to him", and Matthew Henry's commentary suggests "help-meet". Was Ellen White aware of the dictionary explanation, or was she inspired to coin a new word?'

Pastor Derek C. Clothier (Rtd)

Thank you Pastor! I suspect that we're into 'jots and tittles' territory here, but it might prove illuminating to examine how inspiration works sometimes. Ellen White relied heavily on her team of literary assistants. According to the Ellen G. White Estate: 'Ellen White did not always use perfect grammar, spelling, punctuation, or sentence or paragraph construction in her writing. She freely acknowledged her lack of such technical skills. In 1873 she lamented, "I am not a scholar. I cannot prepare my own writings for the press. . . . I am not a grammarian" (*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 90).

'She felt the need of help from others in the preparation of her manuscripts for publication. W. C. White describes the boundaries that his mother set for her workers: "Mother's copyists are entrusted with the work of correcting grammatical errors, of eliminating unnecessary repetitions, and of grouping paragraphs and sections in their best order." ' Thus, the exact phraseology that appeared in the published form of *The Adventist Home* was the result of editing by 'Mother's workers of experience, such as Sisters Davis, Burnham, Bolton, Peck, and Hare, who are very familiar with her writings'. They had authority even 'to take a sentence, paragraph, or section from one manuscript and incorporate it with another manuscript where the same thought was expressed but not so clearly'.² It's ironic that the word 'helpmeet' may have been printed due to her 'helpmeets'!

In the Scriptures, 'holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV), such that divine, infallible truths were penned by thoroughly human writers. While in Europe Ellen White wrote, 'The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. . . . God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.'³ Therefore any 'non-standard' style, mode or spelling, either in the Bible or in Ellen White's works, cannot be blamed on the Holy Spirit!⁴

As it turns out, though, Ellen White was not the first to use 'helpmeet'. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, John Dryden used 'the phrase "help-meet for man", with a hyphen between *help* and *meet*' in 1673⁵ – this actually preceded and probably influenced the creation of 'helpmate', which first appeared in 1715.⁶ 'Helpmeet' then appears without the hyphen in literature of the eighteenth century.⁷

¹www.whiteestate.org/issues/faq-egw.html#faq-section-b3 ²W. C. White to G. A. Irwin, 7 May, 1900, quoted online at www.whiteestate.org/issues/faq-egw.html#faq-section-b3 ³*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 21 'Having said that, while the literary servants of God recognise that we are fallible and do make mistakes, we still implore His Spirit to guide us for His glory!' ⁴*Marriage à la Mode*, act IV, scene I, facsimile of text available online at <https://archive.org/details/marriagealmodec00dryd> ⁵*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, fourth edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000 (updated 2009) – see also *King James's Bible*, second edition, W. H. Stevenson (ed.), 2013, Routledge, p. 63 ⁶*The Critical Review: Or, Annals of Literature*, vol. 52, 1781, Tobias George Smollett (ed.), p. 367; *A History of the People Called Quakers*, John Gough, vol. 3, 1789, p. 304

Do you have a question you'd like to see answered in Q & A? Why not send it in to us at: editor@stanboroughpress.org.uk? If your question doesn't appear in the next issue, don't despair – we will deal with it in due course.



Lift up Jesus

by David Marshall

In our secular world there are still millions who attend church. But how many of them actually know God?

Church is not just for learning about God, or being indoctrinated into the distinctives of our particular Christian franchise. It's about *knowing* God, making a *living* connection. Only as we know Him can we truly worship Him. Only as we know Him can we really *experience* Him and allow Him to make a difference in our lives.

In Jesus God came a) to rescue us and b) to show us what He is really like. Jesus is the supreme revelation of God. All other revelations are by comparison limited and indistinct. There is nothing unJesus-like about God. Never has been. Never will be.

We don't have to know a lot of theology. We *do* have to know God. And we see Him most clearly in Jesus. The whole point of everything is knowing God through knowing Jesus. Relating to Him as a Person. Scripture says that 'to know Him is life eternal'. That is important. That is Christianity's bottom line.

On the one hand there is *Christianity*. On the other is *religion*. They are very far from being the same thing.

Religion has produced man-made structures and built them over the revelation of God in Christ. C. S. Lewis called those power structures 'churchianity'. Do those structures – not dissimilar from international companies – focus attention on the revelation of God in Christ, or do they serve as distractions? Do the agendas of churchianity's structures tend to prioritise the distinctive tenets of their particular franchise? Do those distinctives come from the outer edge of the Christian revelation? By contrast, at the core of that revelation is the Person of Jesus, the God-man who came to rescue us and reveal what God is really like. Could the power franchises sideline that revelation?

The asset that sets Christianity apart from religion, surely, is the Person of Jesus. That being the case, the revelation of God in Christ must take priority over everything. And the clearest, most accessible picture of the

Person of Jesus is in the four Gospels. You might say that they represent a fast track to the bottom line about God. But how much emphasis do mainstream churches place on the Person of Jesus, God-made-flesh, as revealed in the Gospels?

While editor of *MESSENGER*, I was once sent to cover a Conference Session. One of its highlights was an 'evangelistic symposium', in the course of which a number of pastors reported on the soul-winning 'efforts' in their districts. The first pastor had enjoyed significant success with an evangelistic series based on the Gospel of John. The second pastor began by saying, 'Next time my colleague attempts soul-winning he should try to be a bit more macho in his approach. *Do Revelation!*' It was said with good humour and was by way of a link with his own report, which would feature the Book of Revelation. Sadly, the assembled delegates interpreted it as a sort of doctrinal pronouncement and received it with an affirming rumble of 'Amen.'

Puzzled, I later asked around as to why John's Book of Revelation was perceived by the delegation as a more appropriate basis for

soul-winning than John's Gospel.

Importance was attached by delegates to the menagerie of Revelation's 'beasts'. No one seemed to know that the book called 'Revelation' was meant as a 'Revelation of Jesus Christ'. The idea had not dawned that John might have revealed Jesus more clearly in his Gospel, written 'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name' (John 20:31, NIV 1984). No one knew the potential for church growth and church health contained in the words of Jesus: 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself' (John 12:32, NRSV). Paul's words to the Corinthians – 'I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (1 Cor. 2:2, NRSV) – were, as far as my interviewees were concerned, not relevant to a twenty-first-century audience. 'The beast', 'the image to the beast', 'the mark of the beast', 'the beast from the land', 'the beast from the sea': these were the stuff of outreach. I wondered, did they know a whole different population from the one in which I lived?

When John wrote his first letter, his subject matter had him in such a state of excitement

that he omitted all greetings or preliminaries – and hit the ground running! (1 John 1:1-4.) Running so fast, in fact, that his grammar was jumbled and his words poured out headlong! 'What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands . . .' (vs. 1, NASB). How's that for an opener? We feel like saying, 'Slow down, John! Let us get on board!' But John is not about to hit the brake: *We heard it, we saw it, we gazed on it, we verified it with our own hands. . . .*

'What have you witnessed with all your senses, John?' we might ask. 'The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us,' John would respond. 'We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us. . . . We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!' (1 John 1:2-4, MGE.)

John, decades after the resurrection, was still impassioned about the wonder of it all: God in human form, the Word made flesh-and-blood and right there in front of him. He was still roused and stirred when, some years later, he wrote his Gospel, adding, ' . . . we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14, NRSV).

John's passion was a million miles away from the institutionalised churchianity – *religion* if you like – that exposes just enough of a stylised, stained-glass Jesus to inoculate you against experiencing the real Person. And then directs your attention to the outer regions of the Christian revelation, rather than its heart.

Have we shrouded Jesus in too much impenetrable fog and antique language? In God there is nothing that is unlike Jesus. If we think there is, is it because we have misunderstood something? Isn't Jesus the supreme Revelation of God?

In Istanbul is the Hagia Sophia, originally built as a Christian church on the orders of Justinian. For a thousand years it was the most important building in Christendom. For centuries after that it was used as a mosque. These days it is a most imposing museum. Surviving in it is a mosaic believed to be the oldest picture of Jesus in the world. It is not in the least surprising, but may well have influenced many

subsequent paintings. Whoever created the mosaic did so some four centuries after the resurrection and had not, of course, seen Jesus.

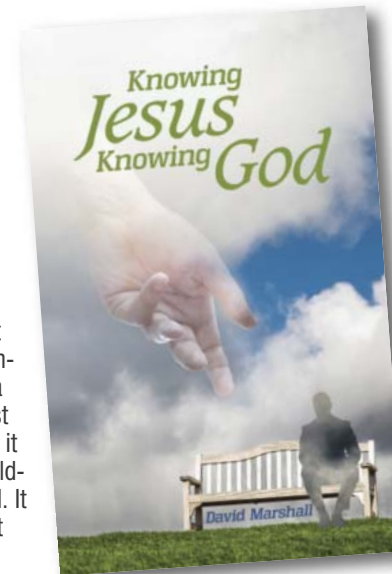
Four pictures survive which are based on the testimonies of those who did experience Jesus first-hand. They are not in ceramics, watercolours or oils. They are in words. They carry the names of their authors: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. One picture of Jesus in Revelation (19:11, KJV) calls Him 'Faithful and True'. Is it possible that souls are won – not by stressing the distinctives of one particular franchise – but by showcasing the Saviour? 'I, when I am lifted up . . .' (John 12:32, NIV). Remember?

For the thirty-two years in which I served the Adventist Church as an editor, these words were stuck to my desk by industrial-strength Sellotape. Read the full quote on page 160 of *Gospel Workers*. Here is a fragment of it:

'Lift up Jesus, you that teach the people. . . . Let all your powers be directed to pointing souls, confused, bewildered, lost, to "the Lamb of God." . . . Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ. . . .'

Over the decades many schemes have been employed to market 'the message'. Is it time – ignoring all distractions – to lift up Jesus? Every revival and reformation in Christian history began with Christ and the Cross. Is it time to give the everlasting Gospel one final airing? Go for the core of it. Not the cladding.

Dr David Marshall's latest book, *Knowing Jesus, Knowing God*, is now available from the Stanborough Press, either through phoning 01476 591700 or through your local PM secretary.



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AFM uses 'card' evangelism

On 25 October 2013, we published the story of Abdullah, a devout Muslim, and his encounter with Jesus Christ. This follow-up interview with Pastor Conrad Vine (AFM director) takes the story a bit further.

Editor: Conrad, please update our readers on Abdullah's story.

Pastor Vine: Julian, much has happened! Firstly, by God's grace we have raised the funds to recruit a local lay-pastor who is now involved in active ministry among those Muslims who are secretly exploring what it means to follow Jesus Christ. Let us call him 'Yussuf'. He has gone through a local missionary orientation and is already reaching out to these secret believers. Yussuf's ministry is a dangerous one but he brings many years of fruitful experience to this new role.

Secondly, we also raised funds, and obtained permission, to print French-language editions of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Ministry of Healing*, *Christ's Object Lessons* and the *Desire of Ages* in a format that looks like a holy book within the Muslim context. We have begun printing and distributing these books to Muslim contacts in countries across West Africa.

Editor: How does Yussuf share the Gospel?

Pastor Vine: A great question! You can't hold open evangelistic meetings in his country and many of the secret believers are women, who would face terrible social consequences if their husbands knew what was going on. So, seeing that it is almost impossible to bring Bibles into the country, Yussuf gives out micro-SD cards to people who are interested. These cards weigh less than half a gram and can be inserted into most mobile phones. Then, with the card inserted, nobody knows what you are listening to. Yussuf pre-loads an Arabic audio-version of the Bible onto these

memory cards, together with all the available French translations from the Spirit of Prophecy, including books like *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages* and *Patriarchs and Prophets*. He then gives these micro-SD cards out to those who are interested, and people listen either to the Bible or to the Spirit of Prophecy in complete anonymity on their mobile phones, or they gather in secret and listen to the Arabic audio-Bible.

Editor: But Conrad, what about Abdullah? What has happened to him?

Pastor Vine: Yussuf recently visited Abdullah. Abdullah burst into tears as Yussuf gave him some of the printed materials and a pre-loaded micro-SD card for his mobile phone!

He also shared with Yussuf that he now worships God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He cannot explain in words how God is three-in-One, but this is the conviction the Holy Spirit has brought upon him and his wife as they continue reading their New Testament in the early morning gloom, when nobody is around. Please ask your readers to continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as Abdullah leads his clan to Jesus Christ.

Editor: How can our readers get involved in this type of ministry?

Pastor Vine: In AFM we have launched a new prayer initiative called 'Friday Prayers for Muslims'. I would like to invite all of your readers to check this out at www.afmonline.org/get-involved/Friday-prayers. The website mentions unreached Muslim people groups

every week for whom they can pray. There are also many practical tips for sharing Jesus among their Muslim neighbours and friends, and Bible promises to pray over. Every day in their prayers, Muslims say the same phrase many times over, 'Show us the correct path', and we can ask God to answer that prayer. My dream is for a network of Adventist prayer warriors across the UK who are interceding on behalf of Muslims that they may accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and enter the Body of Christ.

Editor: And what about those micro-SD cards?

Pastor Vine: We can buy those micro-cards locally, load them with audio materials and then distribute them, for £15 per card. Yes, just £15! This gives an Arab Muslim contact the full Word of God in Arabic audio-format, and many of the most precious writings of Ellen G. White. The micro-SD cards plant the seed, and then we pray for the Holy Spirit to bring a harvest. Here in the UK, we all have easy access to the Word of God, but people throughout history have died for the right to read the Word of God for themselves. By donating just £15 here in the wet and waterlogged UK, we can plant the Word of God into the hearts of Muslims among the desert sands of North and West Africa.

Isaiah 35:1, 10 says, 'The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; . . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away' (NRSV). I would like to invite your readers to partner with AFM and claim this beautiful promise of God – that where there is a spiritual desert today, God might bring forth a wondrous harvest for eternity.

Editor: How can our readers support this initiative?

Pastor Vine: They can mail a cheque to Pastor Graham Allcock at 599 St Albans Road, Watford, WD25 9JL, made payable to 'AFM' and write 'Susu Micro-SD Cards' in the subject line. Alternatively, they can go to www.afmonline.org/missionaries/ and click on the 'give' button by Fred & Isatta Coker. Make out your donation online, writing 'Susu Micro-SD Cards' in the comments section. Only use this online option if your credit card works internationally, and remember that the donations are all listed in US\$. A £15 micro-SD card would be \$24. Finally, they can also make a transfer to the following Lloyds account: AFM, Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-99-21, account number 55208360. Once having made your generous donation please email John Simon (jsimon@afmonline.org) confirming the deposit (donor's name, amount, date and project to be benefited).

Editor: Conrad, thank you once again for keeping us at the cutting edge of world mission. God bless!

God uses technology too!

The micro-SD card is the 'secure digital' card such as those we use in our mobile phones. They weigh a mere 0.25g and are about the same size as a fingernail, but have been hailed as 'one of the great icons of current technological achievement'.* Why? Simply because a 32GB card such as AFM use can hold 'about 545 hours of audio recordings'!

*www.pcpro.co.uk/realworld/373498/the-tiny-miracle-of-microsd-cards



Stanborough's India project

by Kish Poddar

Five Stanborough School pupils have just returned from a mission trip to India that involved them in teaching for two weeks at the BESSO Nursery and Primary School, which caters for 62 orphan pupils.

The five Year 10 pupils, together with their teachers, had been planning and preparing for this trip since the previous September, with much fundraising, shopping for the orphans and preparation of their lessons. The group, including some teachers and parents, were at Heathrow, ready to depart, when they realised that one of the team did not have her passport or boarding pass. There was a frenzy of unsuccessful searching before they turned to the only One who could help at such short notice. After praying they retraced the steps she remembered taking and they led to a dustbin. She had already looked there twice without success but they emptied it for a third time with passengers moving all around them! There was nothing – but next to it was a second dustbin for recycled plastic, but she was sure that she had not put it in there. They started emptying this bin too and within seconds there was the passport, waiting to be rescued at the bottom – with the boarding pass next to it! To say that there was elation and relief would be an understatement. There were hugs and tears of joy and gratitude to the One who delivered again as He had promised so many times before. As soon as the team were seated on the plane they huddled

together and thanked God for confirming at the start of their adventure that they were safely in His hands.

The Stanborough pupils each chose the year group they wished to teach: Nathan, Year 1; Eve, Year 2; Paul, Year 3; Christopher, Year 4; and Aswin, Year 5. They had taken resources from England, prepared in the evenings and, like seasoned teachers, delivered a whole day's lessons to the orphans. Each day began at 9am with worship with the children; then followed nine periods of 40 minutes each with breaks for lunch and play. This went on for two weeks, with the visiting teachers becoming more innovative and creative each day.

What was so encouraging to watch was the bond they formed

with the orphan children. On the first day they made name tags, which speeded up the bonding, and within two days they were scooping up the children in their arms and playing with them during any break in teaching. As the days passed the visiting teachers became more and more involved in the teaching and in the welfare of the orphans.

The team were also involved in a picnic at the zoo for all the children – generously financed by one of the volunteers from England. On the final day the school organised the annual sports day, in which the visitors from Stanborough School served as judges, timekeepers and track officials. After the prizes were awarded, they threw a party for all the children and staff, with food ordered from a local restaurant and served by the Stanborough team. What impressed the visitors was that the children sat down and waited for everyone to be served before singing grace, and only then did they tuck in.

The trip has had a profound effect on the Stanborough team. Paul 'gained a better appreciation of basic things like clean water,

food, a roof over my head' and 'how much God has blessed me'. Eva said, 'This trip to the beautiful country of India has been the most life-changing experience I have ever had. I gained a pure joy which only God can give through the cheerful eyes of the young orphans.'

Christopher said, 'I have gained an appreciation for teachers, a new viewpoint on life and some great new friends. I have gained a better appetite and I am now less picky with what I eat.' Aswin said, 'I have recognised how lucky I am. As friends we've all grown closer and learned a little more about each other. I learnt a lot about myself. I gained an appreciation for teachers.' Nathan learned how to deal with spicy food, how to be organised and how to be a teacher. He also said he gained weight.

The team's adults were changed too. Vanesa said, 'I fell in love with their bright eyes and their smiles and with how open their hearts are. This trip taught me a lot. But mostly how simple the Gospel really is. How powerful love is.' Zenny said, 'I thank Jesus for all the blessings I have in life. I truly learned to be happy and content with what I have.' Mira said, 'I gained a lot of things but probably the most was realising how blessed I am. I am really thankful that I have Jesus in my life and this trip really opened my eyes, that if I want to be a follower of Jesus I should change some things.'

By God's grace they all arrived safely back.



GAIN Conference report

by Pastor Gavin Anthony

The South England Conference Communication department have just hosted the first regional GAIN conference in Europe (Global Adventist Internet Network) at Newbold College, 27 February – 2 March.

While introducing GAIN to delegates from across Europe, Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist, SEC Communications director, described our incredibly fast transformation into an online culture where 'online living' has become synonymous with normal living. Consequently, the GAIN was focused on understanding the principles behind the exponential growth of technology, and on learning how we can use technology to enhance the mission of the church. This was

described as critical for churches to grasp because such digital changes are re-forming what we understand as reality. All of which is made more challenging by the fact that we have evolved into 'digital nomads', with everyone being mobile and with access to all the knowledge there is at the tips of their fingers. Consequently, as Øster-Lundqvist put it, 'If we don't have a presence online we basically do not exist.'

One presenter quoted George Barna's challenge to churches to think differently in such an 'always-on' culture: 'The church must choose between defending the traditional structure, which impedes effective ministry, or embarking on a new path that allows it to conform to its biblical



Media directors/presenters relaxing after four days of hard work.



The SEC Media team who made it possible for GAIN to be viewed online worldwide.

mandate and still respond to the practical needs of its members.' Øster-Lundqvist also pointed to change management guru Peter Drucker's insights to help delegates think about how to address this new reality: 'The greatest danger in times of

turbulence is not the turbulence; it's to act with yesterday's logic.'

So how are we to share the Gospel in these turbulent times in fresh ways that will be meaningful to the growing numbers of digital nomads? How can we reach people with the good news about Jesus, where they are right now, in the middle of this digital world? As an example, Øster-Lundqvist noted how young people are becoming more inclined to open up to a pastor through Facebook rather than want the pastor to talk to them in the church foyer or appear at their house for a visit.

Ray Dabrowski, former Communication director for the Trans-European Division and the General Conference, asked delegates to consider carefully to whom we are actually communicating. According to him, while we are supposed to be a missionary community, we often spend most of our time talking to ourselves about how good we are. He observed that 'it often seems we want to talk but not communicate'.

Continuing somewhat provocatively, he suggested that the 'good news needs to be proclaimed from the rooftops and not from our badly lit churches'. He pointed to Jesus as a Master of creativity who calls us to partner with Him in teaching others in diverse ways. Dabrowski noted that God did not

stop creating after the six days of creation but is continually creating, while calling on us to continue creating with Him as we reach out to teach others the good news – just as long as we can do it in a language that makes sense within a multimedia culture, for 'truth cannot penetrate the heart if it is not presented in an understandable language'.

Dabrowski proposed four principles for success in communications – imagination, boldness, risk, and creativity – noting Ellen White's observation that 'The Bible does not condemn genius or art; for these come of the wisdom which God gives. We cannot make the heart purer or holier by clothing the body in sackcloth, or depriving the home of all that ministers to comfort, taste, or convenience.' – (*Review and Herald*, 16 May, 1882.)

He also challenged the church to consider whether the message we present is actually attractive to those listening. To present something attractively does not happen by chance but takes time and effort, as Ellen White noted: 'The character and importance of our work are judged by the efforts made to bring it before the public. When these efforts are so limited, the impression is given that the message we present is not worthy of notice.' (*Evangelism*, page 422.)

Within this context of intentional, imaginative, bold, risky and creative communication to share the Gospel through the internet, a variety of international speakers presented seminars that included e-learning, maximising our evangelistic influence through social media, news writing, multi-camera production for churches, video streaming, film trends, ministry photography and media design.

Reflecting on the benefits of GAIN, Stephen Wilson, who brought a team from Dublin that are planning for the BUC City of Hope project there, noted, 'This conference has encouraged us to be more creative and to work more strategically to see how media can help provide an integrated ministry.'

While GAIN focused on many of the technical challenges facing the spreading of the Gospel in a digital age, Ray Dabrowski perhaps best summarised the starting point for all of us as we move forwards: 'Communication starts when we begin first by listening to Jesus.'

Thank you for the big help!

by Heather Keough

The Belfast church recently received a creative and unexpected email from a sister congregation on the other side of the world: one that warmed the hearts of its members. It arrived on Thursday, 6 March, from the Jayobo Seventh-day Adventist church in the Philippines, in response to the actions of our congregation a few months earlier.

On Friday, 8 November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines, devastated portions of Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines. A number of members in Belfast Seventh-day Adventist Church are from the Philippines and every one of them knew someone who had been affected by this destructive tropical cyclone.

One member, Emerald, knew that the village her parents lived in had been destroyed, and for a number of days she had no contact with them. She did not know whether they had survived the cyclone or not. Prayers were said for her family and for all those affected by this devastating

cyclone, and they were answered when Emerald heard that her family were safe despite their home being destroyed.

Our Filipino members, along with others from their community, organised two containers to go from Belfast containing essential supplies for the Philippines, while the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, offered to pay for the expenses!

Having made these arrangements, the Filipino members spoke with Pastor Adam Keough about the matter, and an appeal for help was made during our worship service. Belfast Church responded with clothes and other essential items as well as financial assistance. Family, friends and work colleagues also generously responded to the appeal.

Three months later we received a *Thank You* from the Jayobo church, which came in the form of photographs of church members with posters, thanking the Belfast members for their help. This all acted as a reminder that we have a responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in need, and what may seem as a small donation can go a very long way.



GAIN nuggets

By Pastor Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist

- Delwin Finch shared how 'streaming allows for a safe way for people to attend – "try before you buy" – and took the delegates through the reasons for streaming and why some churches shouldn't stream, as not all church services are ready or suitable for streaming.
- Dr Karsten Øster-Lundqvist of Reading University challenged the attendees to look at how e-learning is a method that can be embraced in the church's teaching ministry.
- Welsh Mission president Pastor John Surrige presented the FreeBible project, showing how much various methods of leaflet dropping and digital advertising cost the church. According to his data there was little doubt that a digital approach led to a more efficient use of our money.
- Dr Tom De Bruin of the Dutch Union debunked the theory of Postmodernism and demonstrated why he thinks we are not living in a postmodern society – a useful glimpse into the complexity of today's society where no one label can be applied to all.
- Anglican media professional, James Poulter, challenged the delegates to take time out from being connected, and spoke about our addiction to checking our phones unnecessarily.
- Attendees were impressed by the quality of the presentations and the professionalism of the presenters, expressing their surprise that the presenters were also pastors.
- The youngest attendee was 12-year-old Kwadjo, who runs his church's ProPresenter software, among other things, and he was looking forward to attending Pastor Douglas McCormac's workshop on ProPresenter.
- Blogging about his experience as one of the 100 who attended, Daniel J. Blyden from Birmingham wrote: 'This is the first time I have been among such a community within my church and so I was very excited and proud to talk ideas and strategies with like-minded people. It turns out that we have some brilliant minds in our global community and I was able to [get some] information not only for use in my church life but also in my professional working life too. I left the conference thinking to myself – who knew there were so many pastors with up-to-date marketing and communications expertise in my church?'
- 'It was an excellent programme,' expressed SEC president Pastor Sam Davis, 'with those I have spoken to being impressed with the quality and feeling that they have received training relevant to their professional and church life. Many of our pastors would have done well to attend.'
- Having implemented media in his local church over many years, Mr Coutier from Croydon was there with a team and expressed his enthusiasm for the weekend like this: 'I've learnt so much, and it's been fantastic.'

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CCS is launched

Stanborough Park members enjoyed a fund-raising evening with an Indian theme at the beginning of March, marking the launch of the Community Chaplaincy Service. It was attended by 90-odd people who enjoyed a three-course vegetarian meal, many of them in Indian costume, which added to the atmosphere. This was augmented by a performance by five traditional dancers from Southall-based 'Anita's Dance Factory'.

Their Community Chaplaincy Service is a replacement for traditional door-to-door witnessing approaches. As Richard Poulton explained, 'It is hard to get people to come to us so we need to go to them and interact with them, to befriend them and show them love by meeting their needs . . . the "Jesus model", which is what Community Chaplaincy is all about. . . .'

The Community Chaplaincy Service has been trialled in the South London and Surrey areas by Dusan Uzelac, where it has proved to be very successful. It aims to provide volunteers from the church to help to meet the actual needs of those living in the local community in a practical way. Soon members of Stanborough Park Church will be visiting homes in Garston armed with a questionnaire seeking out those in need of such practical help.

Currently a team of volunteers is being put in place to meet their needs once they have been identified. Help could include CV writing, gardening, ironing, shopping for the housebound, handyman tasks and adult literacy. Plans are also afoot to extend the church's existing food bank, currently operating on a small scale through the Welfare department.

The evening was a fund-raising success and the proceeds will help provide the materials necessary to support the CCS programme.

JUNE COOMBS



Aberdeen youth baptised

On 25 January the Aberdeen congregation watched as four of their youths were baptised by Pastor Victor Harewood, assisted by Pastor Njabulo King Ndlovu, the resident intern. The four are seen in the front row of the photograph between Pastors Njabulo King Ndlovu and Victor Harewood. From left to right, Catriona, Thana, Inga and Tahira.

JANICE SAVIZON



Pathfinders baptised

On 23 November 2013, Bristol Central Church baptised five members of their Pathfinder club: Okay Dowe, Micah Brown, Joseph Henderson, Daina Lawrence and Jose Griffiths. These young people had made their decisions for Christ during the 2012 and 2013 Pathfinder camporees and were prepared for this important step by Hugh Turner. Pastor Johns, the SEC Pathfinder director, took the opportunity to join Bristol Central for the special event.

CLAUDETTE BROWN

Tamworth baptism

On Sabbath, 14 December last year, Tamworth Church witnessed the baptism of Nobesuthu Dube, better known as Sue.

Her uncle, Pastor N. K. Ndlovu from Scotland, assisted the local minister, Pastor Milan, during the baptism while H. McIntyre (an elder) read Sue's testimony to the congregation – a true story of 'once was lost' but 'now am found' – including her recovery from serious illness. The beautiful event was rounded off by the cutting of a special celebration cake made for her by Jenny Brooks and inscribed with 'Let go and let God'.

PAULINE NEWTON



Sutton-in-Ashfield receives Mercy!

On 8 March Sutton-in-Ashfield members received Mercy Amon into their fellowship by baptism. She arrived in the UK from Zimbabwe in 2003 from a largely Dutch Reformed background – with occasional visits to an Adventist church by invitation of her neighbour.

Initially she settled in Bedford, where her work required her to work on Sundays but left her free to attend church on Saturdays, which she did. There she met Louise, who was wheelchair-bound but a wonderful witness and friend.

Later, when she moved to Sutton-in-Ashfield, she received studies from Pastor Paul Haworth which led directly to her joyous baptism.

MORAY STEWART,
COMMUNICATION SECRETARY



Aberdeen prayer weekend

The presence of the Lord was felt in Aberdeen Church from Friday evening to the close of the Sabbath afternoon service. The two days were set aside by the Women's Ministries team for prayer for the church. Frederica Reid, an elder from the Erdington church, was invited to facilitate the prayer sessions and to preach. On the theme of 'He Lifts Up My Head' Frederica spoke about the experience of Hannah, and how through her patience and trust in the Lord she was blessed. Earlier in the service there were five prayers, each on a different theme: adoration, confession, supplication, consecration and gratitude.

A season of singing began the afternoon service with Frederica playing her guitar. Interspersed with prayer sessions, a talk was given on some of the things that block our prayers. Towards the end of the programme Bible promises were distributed, many of which were answers to the prayers of those present. It was a wonderful experience of how God works in our lives and confirmation that He hears our prayers. The service ended with the congregation's recital of the twenty-third Psalm in affirmation of our trust in God.

JANICE SAVIZON



Frederica Reid



Holloway learns BSL

Members of the Holloway church received training in BSL (British Sign Language) and general deaf awareness from Penny Beschezza from Signs of God on 8 March.

There were more than eighty members in attendance and many of them learnt to sign (say) their names in BSL, swap greetings with the deaf, ask some personal questions and 'sing' some songs through signing.

The local Disability Ministry team are working hard to make sure that the Gospel is accessible to all at the Holloway church, and they are well-supported by all the other departments.

J. K. UGBOMAH (DISABILITY MINISTRY CO-ORDINATOR)

News from the BUC Executive . . .

The British Union Conference Executive Committee recently took these decisions:

- Pastor Cyril Sweeney is the union's new Family and Children's Ministry director.
- Pastors Bernie Holford (Scottish Mission), David Neal (Irish Mission) and John SurrIDGE (Welsh Mission) were voted to continue in their posts until the next union session.
- Pastor Paul Lockham and Victor Pilmoor were also voted to continue with their respective functions as Missions secretary and treasurer.



A trip to Tenerife

In February, eighteen of the Church's retired employees flew to Tenerife and stayed at the beautiful four-star Hotel Guayrmina in Costa Adeje, facing the sea.

Buffet-style breakfasts and dinners were part of the package and with a choice to suit all tastes.

The retirees were free to spend their time as they wished, except for the two group outings arranged for them. One was a visit to El Teide, the island's 6,000ft volcano, which, in quite a contrast to the sunny coast, is snow-covered. The other trip was to Loro Parque, a zoo, which boasts an orca display.

Besides the many shops and cafes all along the seafront, there was the Sunday market, whale watching and sunbathing or swimming in the hotel pool or the sea.

For Friday night, Sabbath and Sabbath evening they used the TV room in a sister hotel for their services. However, on the Sabbath evening they were shifted into the games room because of a football match in the TV room. Alan Hodges, who led the vespers, had to compete with the broadcast but did a sterling job.

Sadly, all too soon it was time for them to pack their bags and head home to a cold and wet UK!

JOHN BUTTERS

Erdington Youth Day

On Sabbath 23 November 2013 a young ministerial student from Newbold College, Joseph Philpott, was the guest speaker at Erdington.



Left to right: Kelita Melbourne, Joseph Philpott and James Sewell

His sermon was devoted to the life of Peter, contrasting how it was before and after he had met Jesus, and he encouraged the youth gently to make a firm decision to follow Christ just as the apostle did.

His interesting message closed with this story about Ronald Reagan, fortieth president of the United States. When Reagan was young, his aunt took him to a cobbler to have a pair of shoes made for him. The shoemaker asked the young Reagan, 'Do you want a square toe or a round toe?' but he was unable to make up his mind. A few days later when they met again in town the young Reagan was still not able to give him an answer.

Some time later when the shoes were delivered he was shocked to see that one shoe had a square toe and the other had a round toe. Years later Reagan commented on the incident like this: 'Looking at those shoes every day taught me a lesson. If you do not make your own decisions, somebody will make them for you!'

Joe Philpott's message was well-received by old and young alike and he turned out to be a fitting speaker for the Youth Day, well able to connect and identify with all.

JOHN OSEI-BEMPONG

The MOHAP experience

Fourteen pastors, including Pastor Greg Davis (South Ghana Conference Universities chaplain), attended the MOHAP (Ministry of Healing and Prayer) day retreat on Sunday 23 March 2014. Pastor Davis is in the UK to conduct evangelistic campaigns in the South England Conference. Having never attended a MOHAP retreat, he was keen to gain the experience and join in with the other attendees of all ages – from teenagers to retirees – thrilled, as someone said, ‘to see so many young people interested in prayer and healing!’

Pastor Paul Lockham’s (BUC executive secretary) poignant devotional ‘Faith and Follow Up’ was intertwined with a testimony of God’s miraculous intervention in the life of his baby daughter. An initial life-changing prognosis did not come to fruition and she now has four children of her own.

Pastor Richard de Lisser’s (SEC Stewardship director) presentation on emotional healing, entitled ‘Decisions Determine Destiny’, outlined how the decisions we make, and how we choose to view the world, will determine our destiny. His presentation was punctuated with a moving testimony regarding his chronic illness and resolute decision to put his unflinching trust in God. The attendees deeply appreciated the openness and candour with which these pastors shared their personal experiences.

Sharon Platt-McDonald’s enthusiastic and informative presentation on physical healing, entitled ‘Pain and How to Handle It’, provided attendees with a number of natural remedies for pain management, which may reduce the reliance on conventional pain medication.

Angela McFarlane, who had battled a chronic illness for years, shared how God had restored her and increased her determination and prayer to Him. There were also special quiet times for various forms of meditation. Praise and worship were led by Susan Watt and Fen Braithwaite, while Pastors Cecil Perry and Humphrey Walters led a service during which attendees could experience the pastoral services of prayer, brief counselling and anointing.



As far as Pastor Greg Davis was concerned: ‘This is wonderful! I have been truly blessed. I will definitely be introducing the concept of MOHAP to the South Ghana Conference, to enable them to have this experience too.’

The next MOHAP retreat is on Sunday 25 May 2014. Please go to www.mohap.org for details on how to book.

JANET HAMILTON

BOOKSALES

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May	11 Balham	10am-2pm
	11 Newcastle	10am-2pm
	18 Wimbledon	10am-2pm

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 Friday - 9am-1pm, Sunday - 11am-3pm.
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Advent Centre, Mondays & Wednesdays - 6.30pm-8.30pm,
 Sundays - 11am-3pm, Saturdays - November, December, January: After sunset.
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MOHAP

Ministry of Healing and Prayer
‘Ministering to those in need of spiritual, social, physical and emotional healing’

Day Retreat

Sunday 25th May 2014

Prayer, Testimonies, Health Presentations, Discussion, Time for reflection, Praise and Worship, Pastoral Prayer & Counselling and Prayer & Anointing

Devotional Speaker
 Pastor Emmanuel Osei
SEC Prayer Ministries Director

Health Presentation Speaker
 Dr Nyjon Eccles
Harley St Physician & Lifestyle Doctor - Physical healing

Health Presentation Speaker
 Leslene Peat-Brown
Psychologist - Emotional Healing

The Advent Centre, 12 Crawford Place, London, W1H 5HD
Registration: 930am – Close 5pm

Book or download booking form at www.mohap.org
 Closing Date 15th May 2014
 For queries email info@mohap.org or phone 07407 692 256
 No payment required. Freewill offering collected on the day

MOHAP

Ministry of Healing and Prayer
‘Ministering to those in need of spiritual, social, physical and emotional healing’

Annual Retreat 2014

Friday 29th August – Monday 1st September 2014
De Vere venues, Horsley Park, East Horsley, Surrey, KT24 6DU

The MOHAP annual retreat is an inspiring and relaxing retreat experience. The retreat will focus on spiritual, emotional and physical healing. The London Adventist Chorale, directed by Ken Burton, will provide a special musical presentation to inspire healing to the soul.

The speakers are:

Pastor Randy Maxwell

Author ‘If My People Pray’ (USA)
 Spiritual

Pastor Lex van Dijk

Clinical Psychologist (Netherlands)
 Emotional

Dr Zeno Charles-Marcel

Physician, Wildwood SDA Hospital & Lifestyle Centre (USA)
 Physical

Cost £226 per person

Book online or download booking form at www.mohap.org
For queries contact Janet Hamilton:
 email: info@mohap.org or phone: 07407 692 256

obituaries

Eric Williams (1930-2014) d. 25 February. Eric Williams was a faithful member of the Ipswich church, the father of Cheryl and Michael, and the grandfather of Jamie, Le-Jhel and Alexander.

Uncle Eric, as he was fondly known by many members of the local church, thoroughly enjoyed Ingathering in all weather conditions. He also served as a deacon for many years. He was the sort of person who would notice what needed doing and just get on to it without murmuring.

According to his son, Michael, who presented the eulogy, Eric was a positive role model in the family. His calm nature influenced them all and his love of the Lord was evident in the countless times you would find him reading his Bible. Eric had a passion for gardening and cricket. He was known for his quiet nature and his laughter.

The last eighteen months of Eric’s life were spent in a home while he battled to regain his speech following a stroke, but the church family would take church to him, which was a blessing to the residents too. Besides this, his friends and family were there regularly to encourage him.

Uncle Eric was a fighter and knew from where his strength came. He trusted in the Lord and throughout his illness he was still able to sing hymns when he was reminded how they began. He also loved to be read to; was able to pray; and would even testify as best he could to the other residents about his Jesus.

His former wife, Deloreta, stood by him throughout his illness. They were good friends and became a witness to others about forgiveness and what can be achieved through God’s love and mercy.

Yes, Uncle Eric, or ‘E’ to his friends, will be missed, but we look forward to seeing him on that resurrection morning.
IPSWICH CHURCH CLERK (TRICIA)

Wilfred Ledford (1926-2014) d. 26 February.

Mr Wilfred Ledford attended Manchester South Church and was fondly known as Brother Fred.

He was born in Jamaica on 29 April 1926, and, although raised as a Presbyterian, he never felt committed to the Christian faith until he discovered the Adventist Church. It was then that he gave

his life to God (in the 1980s) and was baptised. Since then he has been a faithful member and a fine witness outside the church.

Wilfred was known for his powerful singing voice, and he would joyfully ‘outing’ the whole congregation. He sang with so much passion for his Maker that the words of each hymn spoke of his own personal conviction and his deep understanding. His voice and conviction while singing must surely have made the angels fold their wings. When asked what his favourite song was, he replied, ‘There is sunshine in my soul today.’

He also loved children and seemed a pleasant, kind man, whose heart was filled with happiness.

Money and the heart are closely linked, and this was evident when Manchester South members were set a challenge to donate a month’s wages to help renovate the church. Many were unhappy with this arrangement and it caused division among the members. However, on the date set aside for the offering, Mr Ledford turned up at the church, early as usual, and donated a year’s worth of money in a brown envelope, without complaint or discussion. He gave it with a joyful heart, because he was on fire for God and would do

anything to build up His temple.

He gave his life to charity work, and was involved in many church projects, always ready to devote time to God’s work. He always collected the most for ADRA and was very thorough and dependable. Even in adverse weather conditions Mr Ledford would still open up the church for mid-week prayer meeting. He was always extra early and would never miss a day.

Brother Fred was quite a character, even in the nursing home in which he resided in his last days. He would often complain about the vegetables they cooked for him there, claiming, ‘They mess up good vegetables.’ He was a typical Jamaican man, through and through, and there are many comical stories of things dear Fred would say that will long be remembered by those who knew him.

He was given a surprise day trip out to see the church for the last time in his final days, and the result so impressed him that he was moved to tears. In his last days in the hospital he was still singing the Lord’s praises and enjoying his hymn singing. He got to the stage where he was barely audible, but even then, while visitors from the church came to see him for the last time, he could still mutter the words ‘Happy Sabbath.’ He died peacefully, knowing that the next time he opens his eyes, he will see our Maker.

SARA FRANCIS



The UK-Zambian Adventist Fellowship (UKZAF)

presents a weekend retreat with:

Dr Pardon Mwansa (USA)
 General Vice President, General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists

Special music and Sabbath concert by:
Shiloh Quartet (Zambia)

18-20 July
 Newland Park, Chalfont, St Giles, HP8 4AD, Buckinghamshire

Register now!

Only 150 Weekend Tickets & 150 Sabbath Tickets available

Book your place at:

<http://ukzambianfellowship.adventistchurch.org.uk/>

Weekend Tickets: £65 per person (all-inclusive); Deposit: £15
Sabbath Tickets: £15 per person (all-inclusive); Deposit: £10

For more information, contact Oster (07825270057) or Vivien (07984310924)

Corrigendum: in *MESSENGER* 7 March, p. 15, the obituary for Sheila Daniels should have recorded that she was baptised by Pastor Uffindell. *MESSENGER* staff would like to thank Beryl Hall from Plymouth for recognising this.

The Originals – John Loughborough Class of 1983 Reunion

Sunday 25 May 2014 – 3pm

John Loughborough School, Holcombe Road N17

It’s time to look back, celebrate and reminisce. All are welcome, especially families, friends, teachers, administrators, and pupils from 1980 to 1983. There will be food, entertainment, fun and lots of memories. For information about the ticket costs and other questions you may have, contact: smassiah67@gmail.com or sharnayr3@hotmail.co.uk.



back page



New work in Lancaster

On Sabbath, 18 January, a new mission was started in Lancaster with the commissioning of a branch Sabbath School at St Paul's Hala Worship and Community Centre (Lancaster, LA1 4RW). This project has been undertaken with strong support from all the Adventist churches in the district under the leadership of Pastor Jeff Couzins.

He and his elders expressed their support by signing a commission pledge as part of the day's events.

Lancaster has a population of around 46,000 and is the county town of Lancashire. Together with Morecombe and Heysham it was merged into the District of Lancaster in 1974 and this single conurbation has city status in the UK (pop. 134,000).¹ This means there is much to be done and those involved in the project solicit your prayers for its success. They also invite anyone from the area who would like to join their group to meet with them on Sabbaths at the above address.

WILSON MAZAIWANA

¹en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lancaster,_Lancashire

Gift Aid leaders

For the last three consecutive years (2011-2013) London Ghana members have led the British Union Conference in their Gift Aid returns. Last year they passed the £110,000 mark in their returns – the highest so far!

Commemorative 50-year Celebration

Aberdaron Advent Campsite

Fundraiser Weekend, Advent Youth Camp 1964-2014

Friday 16 May 2014

8.30pm: supper and vespers with Pastor A. Hush, song service round camp fire – Pastor G. Smith.

Sabbath 17 May 2014

8.30am: breakfast. 10am: Sabbath School – mission spotlights with Mrs J. Bussey, Pastor P. Clew, Pastor J. Huzzey, Pastor P. Sayers and Mr C. Bramble. 11.15am: main service – Pastor A. R. Rodd. 1pm: lunch. 2.30pm: optional walks (weather permitting) with Mr P. and Mrs B. Emm and Mr S. Bull. 6pm: Aberdaron timeline and reminiscing. 8.30pm: banquet & vespers with Mr P. Emm, camp concert, Aberdaron artefacts auction.

Sunday 18 May 2014

10.30am: brunch & morning watch with Pastor A. Ramdin. **Future plans for camps** – Mrs J. Bussey, Pastor A. Hush, Pastor P. Liburd and Pastor A. Ramdin, **future plans for campsite** – Mr L. Simpson, **fundraising appeal** – Pastor N. Stickland, **logo winners & farewell**.

Free entry – no site fees for caravans and tents. For local accommodation visit www.aberdaronlink.co.uk. Meals provided – Meal Ticket required (1 per person for weekend); contact us to receive your meal tickets. Camp concert – acts required; please contact us if you have an act. Contact us: enquiries@aberdaroncamp.com or telephone 01758 760281.



The congregation received an award plaque from the South England Conference in recognition of their achievement in 'these very difficult financial times. Now other congregations have shown an interest in their methods too. This year the congregation has set itself the target of raising £90,000 through voluntary giving – over and beyond tithes and offerings.

NANA SIFA TWUM (ELDER)

Messenger

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Sunset

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

	London	Card	Nottingham	Edinburgh	Belfast
Apr 18	8.02	8.14	8.10	8.25	8.33
25	8.14	8.26	8.22	8.40	8.46
2	8.25	8.38	8.34	8.54	8.59
9	8.37	8.49	8.46	9.08	9.12

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