

Horley Gatwick Pathfinders lead the way!

by Taitos Matafeni

Braving the chilly Remembrance Sunday morning, the Horley Gatwick Pathfinder Club, the Royal British Legion, local councillors and church members joined together for a solemn remembrance service at Horley Gatwick Church. The church, built in the village of Lowfield Heath, not only stands as the last remaining building in that village but also houses a war memorial, beneath which lie the remains of three veterans.

As part of its outreach in the community, Pastor Matthew Herel once again invited the local branch of the Royal British Legion to share in the service. This year the opportunity was further extended to local councillors, members of the Charlwood Historical Society, and the local community.

Under the direction of Pastor Herel, the Pathfinders led the memorial service into the grounds with three drumming pieces. Then, after two minutes of silence, they led the procession into the church building, where Pastor Herel delivered a short sermon, based on John 15:13, in which he drew links between Jesus sacrificing Himself for us and those who gave their lives for peace in the two world wars.

Following the service, the Pathfinders again drummed the procession out of the church to where the Women's Ministries team had prepared some tea and biscuits. This allowed all present to warm up, while reflecting on the message of the day. The Pathfinders took the opportunity to have a moment with Jim Huke, Lowfield Heath Royal British Legion branch president, who is now in his nineties, while he shared his first-hand experiences as a veteran of World War II.

Through our support of this event, Pastor Herel found out that the Legion no longer had a padre for their various services throughout the year. They welcomed his offer of help when they needed a minister for their different programmes. All of which will open up opportunities to reach out to the community and offer our church, and especially our young people, the chance to minister.



GAIN//Academy

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE
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GAIN Conference Newbold College 21 February – 1 March 2015

Global Adventist internet Network (GAIN) is a GC initiative, consisting of Seventh-day Adventist technologists, technicians and communicators who connect to discuss the creative use of internet technology in their work and for the church.

GAIN/Academy, organised by Pastor Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist, SEC Communication and Media director, brings these media and communication professionals together to inspire and equip and connect. It aims to serve the local church by inspiring and equipping the members and pastors who attend to understand and use media in their church settings, by providing an inspirational framework as well as ensuring practical implementations. We have seen an improvement in churches that are intentional in their application of media and communication in their outreach.

To achieve this the conference consists of a mixture of inspirational presentations and practical workshops relevant to the local members, leaders and pastors.

Speakers include: Nancy Lamoreaux (GC); John Beckett (GC); Celeste Ryan (USA); Daniel Weber (NAD/USA); James Poulter (UK); Sheridan Vosey (UK); Delwin Finch (USA); Pedro Torres (Spain); Tom de Bruin (NL); Victor Hulbert (UK); Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist (UK); Karsten Lundqvist (UK); Daryl Gungadoo (GC/UK) and Eileen Becejac (UK).

Some of the presentation titles are: • Theological Storytelling for the Contemporary World • Branding Your Story • The Power of a Story in a Digital Age • Storytelling through Photography • What Story Do We Stream? • Crisis Communication • IT Security and Legal Issues • Leading Your Tech Team • Talking in Context • E-vangelism 3.0 • How to Market Your Church Event • Engaging With Your Online Community • Managing My Digital Identity • Digital Faith Narratives • God's and Your Story in Social Media • Communicating with Colour and Creativity.

There will be workshops on: • websites • radio • camera operations • photography • using Pro-Presenter • news writing • crisis communication • church audio • net-Adventist websites.

For registration and more information please visit the website: <http://sec.adventist.org.uk/gain>.

editorial

The old idiom encourages us to 'live within our means' – something my parents reminded me of each time I caught the train to boarding school!

I have since noticed, though, that not everyone lives by that simple rule. Many prefer instead to follow Oscar Wilde's approach to personal finance: *'Anyone who lives within their means suffers from a lack of imagination.'*

Living 'within our means' is simply the challenge to not spend money we don't have. The saying that one should 'cut one's coat according to one's cloth' conveys a similar sentiment – basically that we should plan our aims and activities in accordance with our resources and circumstances. I suppose that could be viewed as unimaginative and boring, but it has a tendency to keep one out of financial trouble and the 'bad books' of others!

We are debt-driven

Estimates are that the average increase in net private lending per day in the UK is £90 million; that the average household credit card debt is £2,214; and that the annual interest generated by our private debt amounts to £1,185 per person. And if that is not sobering enough, bear in mind that 'the Citizens Advice Bureaux in England and Wales dealt with 6,405 new debt problems every working day during the year ending June 2014'.¹ This all goes to illustrate just how debt-driven our economic recovery really is.²

The pressure is on

During last December the pressure to spend was unparalleled, fuelled by such frenzied events as Black Friday, during which UK consumers spent a staggering £810 million in just twenty-four hours – £562,500 per minute – 21% more than in the previous year!³

How has it affected you? Were you pressurised to flash more plastic than you should have?

I'm sure we all felt that pressure and it set me thinking about how Christians should relate to spending. Should we also make it our objective to 'live within our means'? Is that what God expects of us?

On the surface it sounds quite noble, doesn't it? But is it? From my observation that principle works reasonably well while our 'means' are fairly limited – but when promotion deepens our pockets and pumps up our spending power, things can quickly change.

We become disenchanted with our living space and furnishings, and because we can afford it we buy a bigger house. The car doesn't 'fit' into our new neighbourhood so we upgrade – after all, we can afford it. Our wardrobes look decidedly *passé* now that we have new friends and a more vibrant social life, but luckily we have the money for a refit. Apple launched the iPhone 6s . . . it's a bit early for an upgrade . . . but we can afford it.

Is it OK to 'live within our means'?



Julian Hibbert
Editor



Living 'within our means' is simply the challenge to not spend money we don't have.

It works differently

If we think we can sanctify our spending habits by 'living within our means', we need to think again. For the simple reason that when we focus on 'living within our means' we allow our spending power to determine our needs. The formula for our stewardship is then reduced to this: ***if it's good and you can afford it, there's no harm in having it!***

By contrast the scriptural formula is radically different, which Paul makes quite clear in Hebrews 13:5 (The Message):

'Don't be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have.'

Here God is effectively saying, ***Your spending shouldn't be determined by whether you can afford something, but by whether you really need it or not.***

There is no doubt in my mind that modern consumerism has the power to captivate us, to hold us hostage to our wants, and slowly drown us in a sea of 'stuff'! In the face of which, God is saying, 'Be relaxed with what you have.' Cultivate contentness!

'When we focus on material things, our having will never catch up with our wanting.' – John F. MacArthur.

¹<http://themonetarycharity.org.uk/money-statistics/> ²For a brief and easy read on how debt-driven economies work visit <http://www.workableeconomics.com/where-does-money-come-from/> ³<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/black-friday-drives-uk-consumers-spend-record-810m-biggest-shopping-day-ever-1478624>



Enhancing Health

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

Healthy beginnings

Each New Year brings the potential for life changes as we seek to improve on the previous year.

If you are looking to improve your health in 2015 and there are several aspects of your well-being that need addressing, which area would you address first? Is it advisable to tackle one health change at a time or a few simultaneously?

Previous studies looking at the benefits of introducing more than one health change at a time have reported conflicting findings. However, researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine discovered that individuals focusing on changing both exercise and diet at the same time had better outcomes than when tackling them separately.

An online article from Stanford Medicine News Centre¹ published on 21 April, 2013, carried the headline: 'Change diet, exercise habits at same time for best results, study says'.

Lead study author, Abby King, who is their professor of health research and policy and medicine, says: 'It may be particularly useful to start both at the same time.'

The researchers found that, despite the challenge of making multiple changes, the participants who commenced changing both diet and exercises simultaneously were more likely to meet the following national guidelines:

- Exercise – 150 minutes per week
- Nutrition – 5-9 servings of fruit and vegetables daily
- Keeping calories from saturated fats

below 10 per cent of their total intake.

As part of the study the researchers decided to address those challenges people reported that kept them from making lasting health changes. These mostly centred on the demands of their schedules, which did not provide enough time to make healthy dietary and exercise choices.

However, where individuals find more than one task challenging, King has this advice: 'If you need to start with one, consider starting with physical activity first.' This conclusion, based on the study outcomes, highlighted the fact that eating was already part of an individual's routine and the only change necessary would be the type of food they ate. Therefore, when they accomplished that, they were less motivated to find time for exercise. On the other hand, although exercise required scheduling for most people, when they found the time to pencil it into their schedules they were more likely to be motivated to eat more healthily as well.

The study also included telephone counselling to help motivate the health change and make it more sustainable.

An earlier study² found similar benefits with simultaneous health changes.

Here's to a healthy dietary and exercise routine for 2015.

Next issue addresses natural health choices for well-being.

Good health!

¹<http://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2013/04/change-diet-exercise-habits-at-same-time-for-best-results-study-says.html> ²<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17563023>

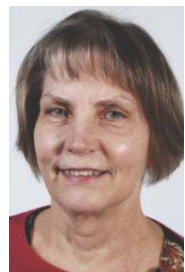
Dear Reader, this is our prayer for you this year . . .



'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face towards you and give you peace.'

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV-UK)

The MESSENGER editorial team



A novel approach to New Year resolutions

by Elize Hibbert

Let's start with a little story:

It was many years ago that villagers in Downstream recall spotting the first person struggling in the river that flowed past their village. Some old-timers still remember how limited the rescue facilities were and how inefficient they were at managing that sort of thing. Sometimes, they say, it would take hours to pull ten people from the river, and then only a few would survive.

Though the number of victims in the river has increased greatly in recent years, the good folks of Downstream have responded admirably to the challenge. Their rescue system is now clearly second to none: most people spotted in the swirling waters are reached within twenty minutes, many in less than ten. Now only a small number drown each day before help arrives – a big improvement on the way it used to be.

Talk to the people of Downstream and they'll speak with pride about the new hospital at the river's edge, the flotilla of rescue boats ready for deployment at a moment's notice, the comprehensive plans in place to co-ordinate all the manpower required, and the large number of highly trained and dedicated swimmers always ready to risk their lives to save victims from the raging currents. Sure, it costs a lot, say the Downstreamers, but what else can decent people do but provide whatever is necessary when so many lives are at stake.

Oh, a few people in Downstream have raised the question from time to time, but most folks show little interest in what's happening Upstream. It seems there's so much to do to help those in the river that nobody's got time to check how all those struggling people (and even bodies) are getting there in the first place. (Adapted from www.seekwellness.com.)

The concept of 'upstreaming' highlighted in this little story has been around a long time. Here is how Edward de Bono, a leading authority in the field of creative thinking, expressed it:

'It is well known that "problem avoidance" is an important part of problem solving. Instead of solving the problem, you go upstream and alter the system so that the problem does not occur in the first place.' (Quoted from upstreammarketing.com.)

It is an approach, I've found (after some

poking around on the internet), that is commonly used in the fields of engineering, science, finance, healthcare, diplomacy and management, among others. For example, in healthcare a good example of 'an upstream approach is the concept of preventative healthcare – or the idea that if the goal of the healthcare system is to have healthy people, it makes more sense to focus on keeping people well (through exercise and nutrition programmes, etc) than to try to cure illnesses' (strategiesforsustainability.blogspot.co.uk).

A specific example of successful upstream thinking in healthcare is the change of attitudes towards smoking and tobacco use that has come about in our lifetime. According to *ScienceDaily*: 'Since 1980, the global prevalence of daily tobacco smoking has declined by an estimated 25 percent for men and 42 percent for women, although because of population growth, the number of smokers has increased. . . .' This decline is attributable to the effects of 'upstream' interventions such as restrictions on where smoking may take place and of cigarette advertising; warnings on cigarette packaging; changes in public attitudes and perceptions due to more effective education and raising of awareness of the serious health consequences of smoking, and so on.

As Christians, I wonder what 'struggling bodies' we've seen floating by in our lives this year. There may even have been some 'dead bodies'. Make no mistake, dead bodies floating by are not a pretty sight. Neither are the matters mentioned in Matthew 15:19: 'evil thoughts – murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander' (NIV). We could use more up-to-date language: greed, lack of integrity, lies (do we call it 'spinning?'), unfaithfulness. OK, no actual murders, but hatred?

Lack of courtesy? Judging each other? Being opinionated? Each of us has seen our own set of sights, smells and sounds floating by this year.

It is the time of year that many people take stock of the old year and start thinking about the year ahead. Perhaps instead of trying to manage the 'struggling bodies floating by', we could try the concept of 'upstreaming' in the new year?

Proverbs 4:23 may be helpful here to focus our thinking. 'Guard your heart more than anything else, because the source of your life flows from it.' (God's Word translation.) The NIV translation puts it this way: 'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.'

Guard your heart! Watch over your heart! I have to conclude that 'upstreaming' in the Christian context is to 'guard the heart'. How is that done? Instead of focusing on the sins in our lives and trying to 'fix' them, we should nourish, nurture and cherish the spiritual 'heart' by drinking the Living Water, daily. In Jeremiah 2:13 God is identified as the Spring of Living Water. In John 4:14 (NLT) He is recorded as saying: 'But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.' He also claimed to be the Bread of Life.

So how do we drink the Living Water? We can do precisely what De Bono wisely said: instead of solving the problem, we can go upstream and alter the system so that the problem does not occur in the first place. In the Christian's life that means: **Bible study, every day. Prayer, every day. 'Drinking at the Spring of Living Water', every day.**

Let that be our New Year's resolution. In fact, to me, the word 'resolution' is too weak here – let us rather speak of our New Year's *commitment!*



'Since 1980, the global prevalence of daily tobacco smoking has declined by an estimated 25 percent for men and 42 percent for women . . .'



'Nice, quiet people . . . but undoubtedly cranks'

by Pastor Victor Hulbert
BUC Communication director

Have attitudes to the Seventh-day Adventist Church changed in 100 years? A historical journey into the depths of the British National Archive discovered that, in 1913, a Hertfordshire Constabulary investigation focused around the Adventists on Stanborough Park, Watford. It concluded that they are 'nice, quiet people . . . but undoubtedly cranks'.

The investigation was commissioned by the Home Office after receiving several letters from a Mr William Marris of Grimsby. He wrote to the home secretary complaining about 'these Yankee Adventist groups'. His major hurt was that his twenty-six-year-old daughter had become an Adventist after reading the magazine, *Present Truth*, that had been sold at his door. It appears that she had started attending Friday evening meetings, had eventually become an Adventist and had then chosen to go and study at Stanborough Training College.

Mr Marris stated, 'I shall be glad if you can bring the "missionary" college under supervision and I hope if the marriage laws of the country are being broken you will discover some means of bringing the managing hypocrites to justice.' Scribbled on the side of the letter he noted, 'My daughter is at the place entirely against my wishes.'

Anyone involved in witness knows that there will be the occasional complaint. It is surprising, perhaps, that there are so few complaints recorded. Elizabeth Yap, recently writing about her grandparents who joined the Church during or just after WWI, wrote, 'The Church was very small in those days and SDAs were considered to be really weird with their strange ideas about the Sabbath and food and drink. It's a wonder the Church grew at all.'

And yet, a quick browse through the *Missionary Worker* magazine of the time highlights some astonishing results. With only around 2,500 church members in the UK and Ireland at the time, the Church had not only managed to purchase Stanborough Park where it hosted a training college, a sanatorium, a printing press and a food factory, but committed members across the country regularly gave of their time to sell *Present Truth* door-to-door in astonishing

numbers. Colporteurs, many of whom had given up their former trades due to Sabbath issues, made their way across the country selling books and literature, sometimes living in one area for a few months or even longer. Their influence started many a church, such as the one in Croscombe,¹ planted in 1914.

In 1922 a Mr Barker of Brighton also wrote to the Home Office complaining about Adventists' door-to-door work and prophetic interpretation. 'In view of the fact that a member of my family has become estranged by means of their teaching, I make bold to ask you if you will use your influence, on behalf of the public health, to have this nonsense exposed and stopped.'

While the Home Office did an investigation via the Hertfordshire Constabulary in 1914, in 1922 their minute states, 'This need perhaps not be treated seriously.'

How about 2014? Today we still get an occasional letter of concern from a parent whose child has chosen to become a Seventh-day Adventist, or from someone who has picked up, and disagrees with, Adventist literature. However, it is doubtful whether an official police report in 2014 would state 'nice, quiet people . . . but undoubtedly cranks'. Yet even if the thought should still be there, it's not one the apostle Paul would complain about. In 1 Corinthians 4:10 Paul didn't describe himself as a 'crank', but he was willing to be a 'fool for Christ'. He was willing to step outside the norms of his day to make a difference for the Christ who had changed his life around. He challenges us to step outside the mould that the world tries to force us into.

In point of fact, Paul describes this process in very simple but profound language: 'So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering.' (Romans 12:1, *Message*.) Even in 2014 you may still get called a 'crank', but hopefully also recognised as a 'nice, quiet person', sharing God and doing good in your community and sphere of influence.

Next time Pastor Hulbert will take a look at how that influence may have moved from selling *Present Truth* to other methods of sharing the love of Jesus.

¹MESSENGER 26 September 2014 – see also <http://adventist.org.uk/news/2014/2014-sec/croscombe-centenary-celebration>

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SEC School of Evangelism EBP Course
(*Evangelising High-net-worth Individuals,
Entrepreneurs, Business Owners &
Professionals*) are entitled to a discount on
these prices. Contact ASI-UK for details.

Promises, promises

by Pastor Ian Sweeney, BUC president



At the end of December 2013, according to *The Mirror* newspaper website,¹ five of the most popular New Year's resolutions being made by the UK population for 2014 were: (1) exercise more; (2) eat better; (3) cut down on alcohol; (4) stop smoking; and (5) spend less time on Facebook/Twitter.

If your experience is anything like mine, I find that resolutions made for 1 January are generally broken by 8 January and totally forgotten by 31 January!

You cannot fail to notice that of these five popular resolutions, four are health-related. In fact New Year's resolutions are important for industries that focus on health and can be extremely profitable. Across the United Kingdom and Ireland, many new gym memberships will be taken out in the month of January, but barely used beyond that. This should not be surprising, since according to Professor Richard Wiseman, a world-renowned psychologist, his research indicates that only 12% of people managed to maintain their New Year's resolutions throughout the year.²

There is no denying that making resolutions is easier than actually practising them, which makes me wonder whether it is ever worth making them in the first place!

Before making bold promises or signing up to any agreement, careful and deliberate consideration should always be exercised. In the book of Exodus we read the account of the people of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery. Some 50 days later, rejoicing in their new-found freedom, they made the following resolution (Exodus 19:8, NIV): '... "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.'

While the resolution that they made exhibited a good and noble desire, they entered into an agreement ignorant of their own inability to fulfil their promise. No wonder, then, that by chapter

32, the people who would do everything the Lord had said found themselves worshipping an idol fashioned in the shape of a calf.

Having good intentions is admirable, but actually following them through is significantly more important.

Having said all of this, I would like to invite you to join with me in making a rather specific resolution for 2015. Unlike the five resolutions above, this resolution does not focus on benefits to us, but to others. People – people we know!

Ellen White wrote, 'There is a work for every Christian to do right at his own door, in his own neighbourhood. . . . Make your own and your neighbour's eternal welfare the first and most important consideration. Your neighbours have souls to save or to lose, and God expects those to whom he has given the light, to make decided, interested efforts for others.' (*Signs of the Times*, 10 February, 1890, paragraphs 1, 2.)

I invite you to join me in a daily resolution to call the names of our neighbours in prayer, asking the Lord to use us to make Him known to them.

To make this resolution will have a transforming effect on us, in that our devotional life will have a focus that goes beyond personal and familial interests. As we intentionally pray for our neighbours the Holy Spirit will guide us in our interactions with them. Beyond our neighbours we can also pray for a work colleague or fellow student.

What have we got to lose by taking on this New Year's resolution? Actually we have everything to gain in seeing our neighbours/colleagues won to Christ through us.

¹<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/best-new-year-resolutions-top-2955595>
²http://www.quirkology.com/UK/Experiment_resolution.shtml

Knowing God's heart

by Pastor Sam Davis, SEC president



What a blessing and a privilege for us to begin 2015 together. A new year brings with it new

aspirations, dreams and problems. For me, the last few years have been challenging. I have found myself hoping that each new year will be free from such difficulties. Sadly, we live in a sin-cursed earth where bad news has become our lot. For example, who would have thought – just a year ago – that an airliner with over 230 people on board could just disappear into thin air?

None of us knows what 2015 will bring. Ebola has still not abated; the nations are angry; and natural disasters abound. Surely, all of these things, and more, point to the fact that Christ is coming soon.

For this year let us pray that we will come to know the heart of God, which is a loving, gentle, caring, sympathetic, forgiving and understanding heart. Recently we have seen ISIL trying to force people to change their religion from Christianity to Islam on pain of death. Some have resisted and paid the ultimate price. All of this is done in the name of God, but the truth is that God does not force any of us to do anything that we do not want to do.

Sadly, in some of our own churches I have seen that ISIL-like spirit of intolerance towards those who hold a different opinion. I speak, of course, of the issue of women pastors in our churches.

Within the Church there will invariably be a diversity of views, but we can still live peaceably. I may believe that vegetarianism is the best way to live; another chooses to eat meat; but we are still going to make it to the Kingdom. However, there are those who believe that all is not well with the Church unless *theirs* is the dominant view and is accepted by all.

God wants us to have another view of Him. He is kind and tolerant, and patient to a fault. He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Revelation 3:20, KJV.

God is not an enforcer, who pushes his way or his views on to us. We are left to choose. He says, 'Unless you invite Me I will not come in to your space; I will not crowd you.'

Even more amazing still, in Matthew 5:45 He says He is going to cause the sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. In essence, God is willing

to continue loving those who believe there should be women pastors and those who don't. He can be God to both sides of that debate. He will not force us to come around to His way of thinking, whatever that is. Why? Simply because the issue of whether or not to ordain female pastors is not a matter of salvation, even though some may think it is.

The vitriol and intolerance that I have seen from some quarters is shameful. How we treat our female pastors and those who think differently from us is of far more importance than the theology itself.

This year at the General Conference Session, whatever the decision that is taken, this Church will still continue to employ female pastors. We need to learn to know God's heart and to act in tandem with His heart. Knowing and emulating God's heart will enable us to live peaceably together, holding divergent views but respecting and loving one another; while affirming those who have been called to ministry even though I may not agree with it. Now, there's a challenge!

In September this year, the South England Conference will host its 62nd Conference Session. Please pray that the Lord will have His way. Pray for the leadership of the Church and its mission. Evangelism within the conference continues to be strong. Last year over 500 new souls were baptised: to God be the glory!

As we begin this new year together may the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you, may His guiding and protecting hand be with you in all that you do, and may happiness, health and success be yours by God's good grace.

To God be the glory

by Pastor Lorance Johnson, NEC president



To God be the glory – He has brought us through 2014 and into this New Year. I am sure we have many plans for our personal development as we anticipate the months ahead of us – careers, relationships, education, setting up home, travelling, retiring – so many plans as we 'occupy until He comes' (Luke 19:13). One thing rests upon my heart as I

contemplate this year – we are one year closer to the promised return of Jesus Christ to this world and I, as a Seventh-day Adventist, have been entrusted with a special and relevant message for this time. What am I doing with what God has given me? How am I making God known and how do I plan to make Him known?

As members of this Church we have been called by God to come alongside men, women, boys and girls and disciple them through word and lifestyle. We are called to reflect Christ in a country that has almost rejected God. This movement is not just 'another brick in the wall', neither is it to fall into the trap of aloofness and exclusivity. We are called as salt and light to mingle among men and make a difference – to tell those we meet of the marvellous Good News of the Scriptures.

In the North England Conference 2015 is the year of corporate evangelism – where every church, every pastor and Bible worker, every member and all at the office will focus our energies on the 'Reaching Out' aspect of our strategic plan. We are thankful that in Manchester (the focus of the NEC's Mission to the Cities) so much ground-work has been done and will continue into this year, culminating in two major outreach projects.

As we endeavour to rebuild the spirit of corporate outreach among us, as we rally in preparation to proclaim the everlasting Gospel in the context of the three angels' messages, I am reminded of the vital part that prayer plays in the success of any spiritual endeavour. I would urge us all to unite in earnest prayer – to pray like we have never prayed before. To gather together as families, groups, churches and organisations and take time to pray for the outpouring of God's Spirit upon us.

I am thankful that our General Conference leaders have called for Seventh-day Adventist communities throughout the world to start the year with 10 Days of Prayer. Since it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can experience Pentecost again, we want to saturate every plan of action and every initiative with prayer.

As we welcome this New Year, and as we seek to fulfil our plans and dreams, may we be reminded of our principal mission – to go and be active agents –

rebuilding God's Kingdom where we are.

Theology or sociology

by Pastor John Surridge, WM president



Over the years I've seen many people join the Church – through baptism, transfer and profession of faith. It's a joy to see such growth, and the positive figures in the quarterly reports give a boost to the existing members and a real sense of fulfilment to the leaders and ministers.

Sadly, though, I've also seen a lot of people leave the church. I read an article recently which put the attrition rate at around 40%, which is like the church taking five steps forwards and two steps back. This is the information that we are not so keen on sharing. Church clerks and ministers alike seem to get writer's block when it comes to filling in reports with negative figures on them, so we end up with lots of members who are 'on the books' but not 'in the pews'.

Pretending that things are better than they are, however, doesn't help anyone – least of all the members who have gone AWOL. We need to keep a close eye on what's going on and respond quickly when we see that someone is missing.

One way that we try to do this in the Welsh Mission is by sending the *MESSENGER* magazine, by post, to every member in our territory. Not only that; we put people on the mailing list when they first show up. If they are members elsewhere we don't wait for them to transfer their membership. If they're not members then we tell them that we already count them as part of the family and we put them on the list as well.

Now I know what you're thinking: that's got to be expensive. Well, yes it is. But how much value do you put on a person? It's no good bellyaching about the number of people leaving our churches if we're not prepared to put our money where our mouths are. Finding a lost sheep takes a disproportionate amount of effort, but Jesus thought it was worth it.

Looking for those who have gone missing is all well and good of course, but common sense tells us that it would be far better if they didn't go missing in the

first place. This is where we come on to the 'theology or sociology' bit. As a rule, I would say that only a very small percentage of people leave the Church because they disagree with our theology. We can be smug about this and put it down to the fact that we've already got 'the truth' and it can't be improved upon. Or, we can admit that for most members, 'theology' is far less important than 'sociology'.

For me, as a fourth-generation dyed-in-the-wool Seventh-day Adventist, the distinction between 'theology' and 'sociology' is blurred. My ancestors became Adventists because they were convinced by the theology and they joined a hard core of like-minded people who quickly developed a shared sense of identity. I now feel part of that movement, caught up in the current of history. I will always be an Adventist because it's in my blood. I'm happy with the theology of course, but even if (or when) the Church makes some minor changes to some of its views, I'll still be a member.

But what about someone who has joined the Church in the last few years? Possibly attracted by the theology presented during a series of public meetings, or, increasingly, by a television or internet video presentation. They typically find the nearest Adventist church and are immediately thrust into a baffling melee of competing cultures, world views, and, yes, even theologies. For some it's just too much, and no matter how devoutly they hold to the beliefs that brought them in, they eventually leave.

There is one thing that can make a huge difference though: friends. If someone turns up at your church and makes a friend on the first Sabbath they are far more likely to come again. If the existing members make a conscious effort to sit with and befriend new people during evangelistic meetings, the result will be more members. It's not rocket science; it's common sense. You don't have to have a degree in theology or sociology; you just have to be there. Every one of us can be – must be – involved, because everyone needs friends who are like them. And guess what – there are people out there, waiting to join our churches, who are just like you.

Gratitude

by Pastor David Neal, IM president



Over the past year you will have read extensive reports about the Dublin City of Hope project. My purpose here is not to give a further report, but to express heartfelt gratitude and recognition to those who have made this continuing project work. I present to you the strongest and most dedicated team of people I could ever have had the privilege of working with. It is time to say 'thank you', and if the following looks like a roll call at the Oscars, it is exactly that, without apology. So thank you to:

- The 150 Dublin members who pray for friends, invite friends, and attend the public outreach and evangelism meetings with friends.
- Those Dublin members involved with leaflet and magazine distribution, the 'free hugs' project, face painting on the streets (adults, youth, teens and children), all aimed at promoting the public meetings.
- The health expo team and the supper club team, for providing felt-need entry points for Dubliners.
- The 215 Dublin members who have faithfully attended meeting after meeting – with their children.
- The 500 Dubliners who walked through our doors this past year.
- The 50-strong Dublin logistical team who helped run meetings: the stewards, the multi-media, bookstore and health expo teams; those who packed and unpacked the storage van, led the children's programme and conducted their prayer ministry in a corner of the hotel concourse.
- The Irish Mission member who personally sponsored the 'Breathe Free' programme.
- The Dublin young adult whose warm smile and engaging personality made guests at the 'Ancient Discoveries' meetings feel so at ease and welcome.
- The Dublin pastoral team and the wider Irish Mission pastoral team for working sacrificially to make the project succeed. To spouses and children who have your ministry, their ministry.
- The British Union Conference and Trans-European Division

administrators and directors for their attendance, counsel, and the provision of funds for Dublin.

- The Irish Mission Executive Committee for your counsel and stewardship of Irish Mission resources, particularly in relation to this project.
- Mark and Teenie Finley and their team of helpers (Bible workers, health instructors, singing evangelist and computer programmer) – not to mention General Conference and ASI support.
- The Emerald Foundation (USA), which continues to support the Irish Mission financially, and specifically contributed funds and people to support the Dublin project this year.
- The Stanborough Press management, editorial and design team, for their work on a special Irish Mission edition of *FOCUS* magazine (40,000 copies), and advertising (175,000 brochures), and for getting them to Dublin on time.
- All 762 Irish Mission members, old and new. This is *your* project, a new dawn for Dublin, a new day for the Irish Mission. Your enduring faithfulness to the Lord is making the Dublin City of Hope project possible.
- The Dublin Adventist diaspora – and friends – who have had their passion for the work of God in Dublin re-ignited this year.
- The ‘encourager’, the caller or emailer who simply says, ‘We’re praying for the Irish Mission, for Dublin and the work going on there.’
- The Holy Spirit – for hovering over Dublin and going before us.

The Holy Spirit continues to do this, because while the major public meetings are over, His quiet, gentle work continues – unseen, He still stirs our new Dublin friends and interests. The work, the project, is far from over. May 2015 continue to see Dublin grow.

‘I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut.’ Revelation 3:8, ESV.

Joy to the world

by Pastor Bernie Holford, SM president



2014 has been a momentous year

for the Scottish nation and for the UK as a whole. The Scottish independence referendum was a powerful reminder that UK politics is not predictable. The positive message of the ‘Yes’ campaign appealed to many people. Some commentators suggested that the ‘Yes’ campaign capitalised on a deep longing for something better. It seems that looking forward to something positive builds the human spirit.

Despite many good things happening, 2014 probably brought most of us some disappointments, losses, or even tragedies. The advent of the New Year brings a great opportunity to look forward with hope to something better.

Many Christians see our society’s celebration of Christmas as an opportunity to think about the time when Jesus first came into the world. Isaac Watts’ reflection on Psalm 98 led him to write the poem that has become known as the hymn ‘Joy to the World’. Christ’s birth in Bethlehem is the reason for great joy not only for believers, but also for everyone in the world! In Christ our greatest problem has been solved, and He soon will return to end the suffering that saddens both us and God.

Recently I visited a prisoner who became a Seventh-day Adventist while serving his sentence. He had experienced the incredible transformation that came when the joy of knowing Christ replaced the hatred in his heart. Accepting Christ into his life has changed the way he treats others, but he is still a prisoner awaiting physical release. That does not make him miserable, because he has been told he will be released soon. His joy comes from the experience of Christ in his life and his hope is sure, he has paid his dues to society, he has been transformed, and his release date will come. His smile is contagious.

It is my prayer for all who read this message that the joy of Christ will shine out of our lives during these dark winter months. My wish for you is that the hope of His return will fill you with the same joy that my prisoner friend is experiencing. We have already been spiritually released from captivity, we are excited, and we now anticipate the physical release that will come soon when Christ returns to take us home.



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

Andrew Puckering

‘Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart?’

A One might think that the Bible gives a very simple answer to this question – God said to Moses, ‘I will harden Pharaoh’s heart’ (Exodus 7:3).¹ Exodus 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; and 14:4, 8 say much the same thing. However, Exodus 8:15, 32 paints a different picture: ‘But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart. . . . But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also’ – and then 9:34 says that ‘Pharaoh . . . sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants’. What’s going on here? Is it God or Pharaoh hardening Pharaoh’s heart? Can we get a clue from the rest of the Bible?

Well, Paul mentions Pharaoh in Romans 9:17, and continues, ‘Therefore [God] has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?”’ (Vs. 18, 19.) This passage – reminiscent of Isaiah 45:4-10 – seems, to some Christians, to suggest that God irresistibly ‘wills’ to harden the hearts of some, including Pharaoh. The reformer John Calvin certainly thought so, and St Augustine – even, at one point, Martin Luther, in his zeal to prove that salvation is wholly of God.²

Such a proposition, however, runs counter to the tenor of the entire Bible, which constantly exhorts all humanity to repent and be saved (Ezekiel 33:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Why would God plead continually for us to repent if He alone ordains who may do so? Ellen White writes, ‘It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors . . . it is by rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened.’³ Specifically regarding Pharaoh, the *Bible Commentary* says, ‘Even the heathen recognised the fact that it was Pharaoh and the Egyptians themselves who hardened their hearts, and not God (1 Samuel 6:6).’⁴ God specifically asks us not to harden our hearts (Psalm 95:8). Clearly, it was not God’s will that Pharaoh’s heart be hardened!

Why then does Scripture describe God as hardening it? White makes one suggestion: ‘Every display of infinite power rejected by him, rendered him the more determined in his rebellion.’⁵ In other words, the very signs from God, designed to make him acquiesce to God’s instruction, had the opposite effect, contrary to God’s will. In this sense only did God harden Pharaoh’s heart. As Pharaoh rejected the ever-more severe judgements from the Lord, he would instead become what the Lord always knew he would be – a vessel of wrath, ‘prepared for destruction . . . that [God] might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy’ (Romans 9:22, 23). God wanted to make him better, not bitter. ‘But each successive manifestation of divine power left him more determined to do as he pleased. . . . It was thus his own resistance to the light that hardened his heart.’⁶

¹Scripture quotations in this article are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV)

²Encyclopaedia Britannica online, article: ‘Predestination’, last updated 8 August 2014, accessed 2 December 2014: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/474519/predestination>

³The Desire of Ages, p. 322 ⁴Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 516 ⁵Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 268 ⁶Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 516

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.

news

Gloucester members honoured

During October Black History Month celebrations were held in the Gloucester Guildhall Arts Centre with around 400 in attendance. During the Service of Praise and Thanksgiving two members of the Gloucester church were recognised for their work in the community and contributions to the county at large.

Audrey James received the Award for Services to the Economy and Business. She is a psychodynamic counsellor who provides both short-term and open-ended counselling to individuals and couples. Her aim, as she puts it, is to ‘help clients to understand and restore their lives’.

Audrey works in partnership with Ebony Community Carers, offering counselling support to carers in Gloucestershire; serves as parent counsellor at two inner-city schools in Bristol; and works with Teens In Crisis Plus, a Christian organisation providing counselling services for young people and their families.

In 2010 and 2011, she hosted a number of radio programmes on Gloucester FM 96.6 which addressed complex social issues in the community. More recently, Audrey hosted *Black Men on the Couch*, an event designed to encourage African-Caribbean men to consider counselling and psychotherapy services, either for themselves or as a profession.

Albert Gardiner received the Award for Promoting Community Cohesion and Making a Difference in the Community. He has been a driving force, working tirelessly over many years to bring different communities, churches and groups together. Albert has used his skills in, and passion for, volunteering to mentor, encourage and empower others to do the same. He has helped many groups to obtain funding for community activities and regularly volunteers for projects within both church and community.

In presenting the award to Albert, the Member of Parliament for Gloucester, Mr Richard Graham, said: ‘Albert is clearly not afraid of hard work as all this is done in a voluntary capacity. Albert consistently makes a difference to the area. He is renowned for willingly going the extra mile and doing everything with excellence. He is continually putting himself forward to help those in need.’

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



Stanborough Secondary School Scholarships and Bursaries

Stanborough School’s scholarship scheme aims to make Adventist education more accessible to outstanding students with both academic potential and financial need. Candidates must apply for entry for the following academic year.

The scheme aims to support families that are currently opting out of the Adventist education system due to financial considerations.

Both types of award are multiannual and will provide up to 8 places for prospective students applying for entry in Year 7 or Year 8. The scholarships awarded range from 25% to 50% of tuition fees, while students awarded bursaries receive £1,000-£2,500 per year.

Candidates must register and pay an administrative fee of £10. The examination will be held on 29 January 2015 from 10am to 1pm. Registration closes **22 January 2015**. To find out about the eligibility criteria visit us on www.spsch.org/scholarships/.

FOCUS
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All photos by Mgcini Mkwanzani

Pathfinders make a mark in Derby

As the sun rose over Pride Park in Derby on Sabbath 6 September 2014, the Pathfinder clubs of Areas 4 and 7 descended on the Riverside Centre – 500 of them in immaculate full dress uniform from Nottingham Bulwell, Rugby, Derby Bethel, Coventry Central, Leicester Central, Nottingham Central and Northampton.

Inside the hall, the audience enjoyed their marching entrance, presentations about club activities and news of their community outreach.

Club officers received their basic staff training awards and Rugby Pathfinder Club claimed the crown as Area 4 and Area 7's very first Camporee winners against the stiff opposition of Derby Bethel and Nottingham Central.

There were cheers as Aaron Stewart and Anton Stewart were invested with Pathfinder Leadership Awards, simultaneously taking

the title of Area co-ordinator.

The theme of the day was 'Tug of War' and a brilliantly written and delivered sermon on the subject came from 17-year-old Wesley Bishop.

The Rally Day was graced by dignitaries: Derbyshire Constabulary's police divisional commander Jack Atwal, who inspired the young people to give their best to their communities, and NEC Pathfinder director, Pastor Alan Hush, who also played an integral part in the day's proceedings.

The highlight of the day, however, was the club parade as 500 Pathfinders, Master Guides, Adventurers, Eager Beavers and Little Lambs with three drum corps, six drill instructors, 19 marshals and a police escort marched 3km to the centre of Derby. The parade was one of the most extraordinary sights Derby had seen for a while.

All this impressed the Deputy Mayor,

Councillor Paul Pegg. Like Commander Atwal, he was utterly impressed by the order, the commitment, the drums, the fancy drilling from Coventry Eagles and, more than anything, the positive witness of the young people.

Back at Riverside Centre he invited Derby Pathfinders to join the military and other uniformed services at this year's Remembrance Day Parade. He invited the Pathfinder leaders to visit the council chambers at his request. He gave the name of our club to the Lord Lieutenant of Derby to include as part of the youth organisations with which the council wanted to be associated, and, finally, he asked the club to come back to Derby again. This was a mighty witness and a wonderful day. All glory goes to God.

AREA 4 AND AREA 7 CO-ORDINATORS (PAULINE MATTURI, LEVON JOHNS, IRIS JOHNS, DANIEL FLEMMINGS-DANQUAH, RUTH RICHARDS, NIGEL MANUNERE)



Bournemouth international evening

The Bournemouth church recently hosted an international evening of food and song in which eleven countries and four continents were represented. The evening was hosted by Pastor Daniel Thompson and his American wife, and it marked my first visit to an Adventist church.

The culinary delights were lovingly prepared and served on tables with flags by the folks from those countries, including Brazil, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Poland and the United Kingdom, specifically England.

I was already familiar with the Czech and Slovak dishes, having

visited there before, but some of the African staple food was really new to me. There were also some interesting Brazilian dishes full of unique Latin flavours, including passion fruit mousse, Brigadeiro (Brazilian chocolate bonbons) and deep-fried cassava, their substitute for French fries.

The teams voted that the Czech/Slovak group and the South African tables jointly had the best food, while the Brazilians were the best dressed.

I left the evening with warm and positive impressions and the clear sense that there is definitely more to unite cultures than to divide them.

BY A FIRST-TIME VISITOR TO THE CHURCH



Combined investiture is 'twice as nice'

Area 4 and Area 7 (NEC) enjoyed a Sabbath together in November as two clubs presented their candidates for investiture.

Derby Bethel Pathfinders, fresh from their memorable inclusion in the city's Remembrance Day parade, were led by director Nobani Sihlola and introduced proudly by their counsellors. Their Companions, Explorers, Rangers and Guides all received their insignia along with the richly deserved admiration of the church.

Every person in the room was moved by the preacher, young Ms Beke Kheswa, who delivered an outstanding sermon entitled 'Stand Up! Stand Out!' Her message to 'be a winner, not a quitter, with the grace of God' brought young people forward to the pulpit with her appeal.

In the afternoon, the spotlight fell on Nottingham Central. Their huge investiture saw every class from Little Lambs to Guides step forward. Apart from the smartly dressed and sharply drilled club members receiving their hard-won awards, honours and pins, directors Devon Elliott and Patricia Thompson also acknowledged the excellence and selflessness of many club members throughout the previous year.

We thank all the directors, staff and club members for working so hard to make this possible.

PAULINE MATTURI (ON BEHALF OF AREA 4 AND AREA 7 CO-ORDINATORS)



Couples' retreat at Windsor

This year, Rekindle The Spark Ministries hosted their second successful couples' retreat at the Beaumont Estate in Old Windsor.

This ministry is proving to be more than just an in-reach exercise. We were joined by about fifteen non-member couples, as well as a few Adventists with their non-member partners. It was a blessing to hear testimonies from the non-members who felt comfortable

enough to share their personal experiences and marital journeys and express how relevant the event was for them. Some of them are also planning to come back to the next retreat with their friends, as this is something that they do not have in their own churches. One Pentecostal couple

was actually there because another non-member couple had paid for them to come and experience what they had been privileged to experience the previous year.

There were a variety of age groups represented at this retreat, from couples who had been married for not even a year, to a veteran couple who had been married for over 50 years! One young couple, Mr and Mrs Hove (NEC), described the retreat as a 'much-needed, reviving and refreshing weekend, practical and authentic, based on spiritual principles. We have been equipped

with the right tools. Now it is up to us to use these valuable tools wisely.' Another couple, the Gwebus from Manchester, described the weekend as 'Holy Spirit-filled fun and it doesn't get better than that!'

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Nembhards from South Africa for their powerful ministry during the retreat.

Rekindle The Spark Ministries was established in 2013 by three couples who accepted God's call to strengthen family units. Its aim is to reach as many couples as possible. If you would like to be a part of this ministry please contact Linda Mukwada at mukwadalinda@yahoo.co.uk.

N. CONNOR



Holland Camporee 2014

The Pathfinders of Manor Church in Sheffield had an unforgettable time at the 2014 camporee in Holland. The activities, making new friends, worshipping with thousands of other youth, the baptisms and the laughter made this an incredible week for each of them.

LARISSA ANDREWS



DOF, ordination and baptism

The Bournville, Halesowen and Northfield district of churches spent Saturday 8 November together in a day of fellowship. 'Rebuilding the Walls of Discipleship' was the day's theme and Pastor Lorance Johnson, president of the North England Conference, delivered an inspiring message called 'Follow Me', focusing on what it takes to be true followers of Jesus. During this morning service John Bishop from Bournville Church was ordained as an elder.

The district's three churches also reported on the ministries each had focused on over the year. These included Bournville's 'Lawns to People' project; Halesowen's singing ministry in care homes and at the

Celebration in Chelmsford

On 8 November 2014, Chelmsford Church witnessed six baptisms involving those in the accompanying photograph. They are: Essa Kumar, who bravely gave up her traditional jewellery from the time she started her Bible studies; Lorraine Fuller, who has found peace since she began coming to church; Mulungu Lwindi, Martha Nalli and Max Nalli, whose baptism was a blessed event for their mother; and Saela Mulenga, an active youth who also decided to commit her life to the Lord. It was a blessed day for our church family and a celebration in Heaven as these candidates were baptised by Pastor John Melki.

JOYCE SWAMY



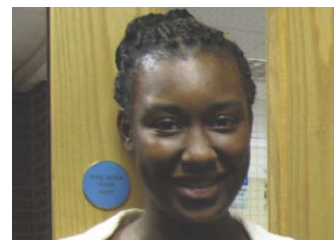
local town centre; and Northfield's 'Walk Right' and sports day programmes.

The day culminated in a baptismal service involving 13 young people aged from 8 to 20. Those baptised were: Aleisha Barrett, Emma Bhebhe, Jaysonya Furber, Joel Manilal, Siphon Ndhlovu, Aleisha Simon, Lincon Tighter, Catherine Tighter, David Tighter, Jonathan Tighter, Constance Tighter, Charles Tighter and Courtney Timire. The ministers that officiated in the baptism were Pastors Lorance Johnson, Peter Sayers and the district pastor, Obinnaya Iheoma.

OBINNAYA IHEOMA (DISTRICT MINISTER)



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Stanborough Park baptism

A-level student Giovanna Gayle fulfilled a long-held wish when she was baptised on 8 November at Stanborough Park Church, where she has worshipped for the past seven years.

With the sanctuary under redevelopment and the old baptistry no longer available, the well-attended afternoon service took place in the church hall using a portable baptismal pool.

Another of our third-generation Adventists and a keen Pathfinder, 'Giovanna has long been keen to commit her life through baptism to the Lord,' says her mother, Doreen. According to Giovanna there was 'a series of events' that led to her decision to be baptised, but 'I have always wanted to.' She studied with her parents and Pastor Mary Barrett and was baptised by Dr Steve Thomas, SEC Youth director, who has known her for many years.

A past student of Stanborough Primary School, Giovanna hopes to go to university to study law when she has completed her studies 'unless the Lord has another plan for me', she says. According to her mother Giovanna is 'praying earnestly that God will show her where He would have her use her talents and knowledge to His purpose', but in the meantime she 'delights in using her violin and piano-playing abilities to God's glory'.

JUNE COOMBS



Ready, willing and able

On 22 November last year, a Sabbath, Camp Hill Church (Birmingham) ordained ten deacons in a moving ceremony under the supervision of Dr

Patrick A. Herbert. The deacons were Errol Coulson, Harris Phillips, Kebson Maphosa, Scott Hosten, Garnett Palmer, Joel Pryce, Harvey Harmitt, Mical Humes, Delroy McCreath and Jonathan Harris.

NATERLIE SUTHERLAND



Baptisms at Luton and Stevenage

Church members, and family and friends from Stevenage and Luton, were witnesses to a beautiful afternoon baptism at Luton Central Church on Sabbath 8 November 2014, jointly administered by Pastors Barrett and Chackochen.

Lucy Sesay was introduced to Stevenage Church by her friend Sherwin. She was raised in a Christian home and accepted Jesus into her life when she was young, but she started to discover more Bible truths during her studies with Pastor Barrett and remains eager to learn more. She likes the fact that the Adventist Church is 'one church for everyone'. Her two children could barely contain their excitement as they watched their mum being baptised.

Melu Nyathi is a seventeen-year-old from Stevenage who used to be hesitant about getting baptised because he felt that he was not ready. However, after attending the Pathfinder and Extreme Teens Camps, the essence of baptism became clear to him. The pastors at the camp explained that, when you get baptised, God's not saying it will be easy, but that all things work for good. This encouragement made him realise that there was nothing for him to fear.

Nigel Zizhou, a sixteen-year-old from Stevenage, also found Pathfinder and Extreme Teens Camps to be instrumental in helping him decide to follow God. At these camps he was impressed by the close relationship other young people had with God and desired the same.

Sibongile Matumbu Dube, from Luton Central, desired to make a fresh connection with the Lord and beamed with joy as she was baptised with the congregation singing 'On Jordan's Stormy Banks'.

KELLY AH CHIN KOW AND KELVIN JARRETT

Grantham's helping hands

On 23 November, the big winter aid collection by 'Hand in Hand for Syria' started on its journey from a Nottingham warehouse. The consignment included nine boxes of lovingly hand-knitted and crocheted baby clothes and blankets, plus duvets and quilts from the Grantham church.

Helping closer to home, the annual Community Services concert raised over £200 for Newark MIND, which also incorporates the Grantham and Lincoln groups of MIND. We learnt about the work of MIND in our district, supporting those with long-term mental health concerns, as well as those at the point of crisis.

Our annual toy service at the beginning of December is our special 'giving' service, when MIND will be presented with the cheque for the amount raised by the concert and Grantham Home Start will receive gifts of toys. Through December we will also place gifts on our Christmas tree in aid of the Open Doors charity, which will use the funds to help care for children in Iraqi refugee camps.

ELISABETH CARNELL



Community Cooking Hubs report

Thirteen members from the Dundee, Glasgow and Faifley churches attended the Dundee-hosted Community Cooking Hubs – that is about 2% of the total Scottish Mission membership of 615. Quite impressive for a first run.

One of the inspirational stories from Glasgow Church is about their active health club, where members and people from the community come to exercise and learn more about healthy eating. This training has allowed them to build on their current knowledge and better educate people in cooking and nutrition.

Another impressive story is from Dundee with the success of 'messy church'. One hundred and forty people attended their last session. Pastor Marcel Ghioalda has come up with the exciting idea of building on this to deliver a family-based cooking programme that he calls 'messy kitchen'. We hope that the Dundee members who took the community cooking hubs training will be able to help him with this.

The final food demonstration on the actual day was a Scottish garden salad. Most of the ingredients for the salad were grown on the allotment of Beavon, a member of the Glasgow church. She currently grows a whole spectrum of vegetables including land cress (a variation of watercress), chervil (a tasty herb), parsnips, radishes, at least four types of kale, onions, beetroot and much more. The great thing about her story is that she reaches out to her fellow allotment owners, helping water their gardens as well as their souls.

We pray that all this inspiration for ministry will continue. David Hatch, Scottish Mission Health Ministry director, said, 'I came here to

What on Earth are you doing for Heaven's sake?

Just over three years ago one of the Crieff members (Ruth) received an SOS from a Romanian care home for some knee rugs. (Yes, the Crieff church has become known in Romania as the Nursing Home Angels as they have already helped five care homes, four of which are owned by Adventists.)

Ruth spoke with her sister, Dorothy, and they decided to make more of the patchwork bed covers that they had made in previous years for the other care homes in Romania. The sisters called the women of the church together, and after just two Sundays of work by a dozen or so volunteers a large number of knee rugs and patchwork quilts had been made and were duly dispatched. However, the happy atmosphere in the church hall on these days led someone to ask if they could do it on a regular basis – and that is the shortened version of how Hearts and Hands was born.

They meet regularly on the first Sunday of each month. One person cuts out the squares of fabric to make the patchwork covers; someone else designs the covers; others machine; someone else irons; another puts a label on the finished product to say it has been 'Lovingly made for you. . .'. The fabrics used are out-of-date curtain samples that are donated to them. The voile curtain samples are made into toiletry bags and prettied up with lace trims and coloured ribbon. The curtain linings are made into pillow cases. Fabric too thick for the bedcovers makes excellent shopping bags and cushion covers. Nothing – absolutely nothing – is wasted. Even the samples that are too small to use are sent to an Adventist school in Romania where the art teacher uses them to teach the children about different textures and designs. A large basket is situated at the back of the sanctuary of the church and people put all kinds of toiletries in it. No one ever seems to see anyone doing this, but the basket fills up very quickly!

But, you ask, who receives all these goodies? No, they do not go to Romania (unless asked for). They go to women who have had to leave their homes because of abuse. The Perthshire Women's Aid staff are delighted to give these goods to the women they are helping, who really appreciate them. As one lady said, 'Do you really mean that this was made for me, for me?' You see, these ladies have been made to feel that they are rubbish, no use to anyone, and so they find it difficult to believe that someone, somewhere does care for them. The Hearts and Hands volunteers are not allowed to know who these ladies are, but they put a label on every item to show that members of the Adventist Church have made it. They cannot include an address or telephone number in case an abusive partner uses it to cause problems. There have been 'thank



learn, but I found that I enjoyed myself too.' And as he said, 'If we don't make a difference now, when will we make a difference?'

The next cooking hub will be run from Bristol Central Church and we welcome those in the Midlands, the West Country and Wales to attend.

We also invite churches from the South and East of England, and the Irish Mission, to apply to host community cooking hubs for 2015. We will also be delivering specialist modules on 'running a cooking school' as well as 'transition nutrition – transitioning the diet to a healthy total plant-based diet' in the North and South of England, as well as in the Scottish Mission.

ANGELETTE MULLER



you' cards from some of them, and one lady phoned the Scottish Mission office to say thank you. If a new baby is on the way the ladies buy a basket and fill it with baby goodies.

It is not only sewing that is done. Two sisters, Isobel and Margaret, are kept busy making up books for the Adventist schools in Romania, using mount board, attractive cord and old greetings cards. Some help them to count, while others help them to learn the different colours, shapes, and so on. All the books are skilfully done – both beautiful and educational. Isobel is a retired primary school headmistress so she knows exactly what things to make up for kindergarten children. In addition to all this, some ladies spend time at home knitting scarves, hats and gloves for the homeless in the nearby city of Perth. There is also a cupboard in the kitchen where non-perishable food is put for Harry Wilby to take, along with the scarves, and so on, to CATH – Churches. Action for the Homeless.

So, a big venture has come from a simple request from Romania for help. On Hearts and Hands' third birthday they celebrated by having a small party – while they continued to work! There were hot and cold drinks and special cakes – and the rest of the members were invited too. There was also another celebration that day because a 'baby' was born. The ladies had been teasing the men for many months that it was time they got a working group together, and eventually they did just that. On this third birthday the menfolk worked on their first project. They tidied up a piece of ground at a house for an abused woman, and laid it under gravel, then joined the celebrations. May we have many more such birthdays! And may our experience encourage others to do something similar. All of which raises this question: 'What on Earth are you doing for Heaven's sake?'

PS: Since writing this article a lady found our website and sent us a lovely 'thank you' message. We have her email address so can now make discreet contact with her.

RUTH E. FARRER

obituaries

Margaret Rita Ponder (1920-2014) d. 14 July. It is with a sense of sadness that we report the death of the oldest member of the Dublin church. Rita Ponder was one of God's outstanding saints. Baptised as a young girl, she faithfully followed her Lord and Saviour all the days of her life.

The Scriptures tell us no one is perfect and Rita would have agreed with that conclusion. What we can say about her, though, is that she was completely committed to the Lord Jesus. Her life had its ups and downs. There was no easy way to be a Sabbath-keeper during her early and middle life. In order to be faithful Rita took employment at low rates of pay, which made life economically difficult for her, but she would not compromise her commitment to the will of God as expressed in His law. Salvation is by faith alone but that does not absolve the Christian from obedience to God's will, and she was an outstanding witness to that fact.

In an age when it was difficult to preach the Gospel Rita was indefatigable in visitation of any person interested in the truth of the Bible. Even in her later years she was still involved in visiting and helping elderly people – some who were at least ten years her junior. Many people remember her kindness and interest in them, not least the writers of this obituary.

She adorned her faith in many ways: Sabbath School teacher, pianist, organist, youth leader and church clerk. In Sabbath School and youth meetings she astounded with the depth of her biblical knowledge, and even the most obscure Bible quizzes never defeated her.

The local Ranelagh Dublin church had two services for her. An evening memorial service and, the next day, a funeral service in the church. The former to allow for the many people, members and non-members, to pay their tributes to this lovely woman. It is worth noting that Rita's service was held in the newly refurbished Ranelagh church of which she was so much a part. She rarely missed a service, be it Sabbath School, the worship service, youth meetings or the mid-week prayer meeting. Cold, rain and snow were no deterrent to her being present to worship God. Even old age didn't reduce her attendance and participation in church life. Her life was embedded in the life of the church. She is missed for her

witness and her living testimony to the enduring power of the Gospel of salvation.

At the funeral service the local pastors, Anthony, Pontanar and Wilson, all participated along with David Neal, the Mission president. A beautiful musical tribute was rendered on the violin by Mircea Petcu. The hymns appropriately summed up her faith and hope: 'The Old Rugged Cross' and 'When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder'.

She is mourned by her sister Betty, brother Jimmy, brother-in-law Pastor Arthur Cooper, her nephews James and John Cooper, her niece Sharon Riley and a host of friends within and without the church. Her interment was at Mount Jerome Cemetery, Harold's Cross, Dublin, where she rests with her parents until her Saviour calls her forth to life everlasting when He comes again.

GEORGE SISSON AND PATRICK BOYLE

Harry Dornan (1935-2014) d. 4 September. Henry Dornan, known as Harry, was born on 5 March 1935.

Harry, along with his two sisters, Rae and Ruby, and younger brother, David, were brought up in Rutherglen and attended the Glasgow church in Renfrew Street, where their parents were members. On 21 February 1953, Harry was baptised by the late Pastor 'Jock' McGougan.

When Pastor T. H. Fielding and his family moved to Glasgow to become the pastor there, the two families found a strong connection in sharing music. The archived copies of the *MESSENGER* are speckled with their names as they sang and played at Days of Fellowship, weddings, evangelistic programmes and other events.

Harry and June Fielding became engaged in 1939 and Pastor Fielding officiated at their wedding on 19 June 1961 at the church, which was then in Queens Drive, Glasgow. In 2011 the couple celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with their three children, Stuart, Kirstie and Kevin; four grandchildren; and their extended family.

Harry played an active role in the Glasgow church over the years, holding a number of offices including head deacon, tithe treasurer, Sabbath School superintendent and young people's leader.



Harry was cremated at South Lanarkshire Crematorium on Thursday, 11 September 2014. The service was conducted by the three Area ministers – Pastor Victor Harewood and the husband and wife team, Rory and Ivana Mendez. He is survived by his wife June, their children and grandchildren, and his two sisters.

The family would like to express their thanks to all those who

attended the funeral and the countless offerings of comfort and support received. Their actions are a tribute to Harry's life and a symbol of his friendship to them all.

A favourite hymn of Harry's was 'In Times Like These', which Pastor Harewood sang at his funeral, and we are sure, very sure, that Harry's anchor gripped the Solid Rock of Jesus.

KEVIN DORNAN

Glasgow's Week of Prayer Xtra!

Glasgow Church followed their annual Week of Prayer with a 'Week of Prayer Xtra' series from 9 to 15 November, which included programmes on both Sabbaths. The programme emphasised the need for personal evangelism in the Glasgow church and stressed the need for the members to personally accept the Bible; Jesus Christ as Saviour from sin; the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs of our Church; baptism as a member of the Church; and discipleship.

It turned out to be a week of wonderful testimonies, answered prayers, and thanksgiving – a great blessing to all who attended. Speakers for the event were Beavon Sanderson (first elder) and local pastor, Victor Harewood.

BEVERLEY MAKWAKWA



'Show' success

Every year there is an Industrial & Animal Show in Tullamore (Republic of Ireland) with approximately 65,000 in attendance. On 10 August my niece Josephine Vine, on holiday from England, joined me in a car full of books, tables and display panels on our way to the show. We set up the stand and prayed, 'God, make this a day when people visit our stand.' They did, and, with every book taken, we would give a bag with a gift. We gave away 130 bags and had many interesting chats on various spiritual and religious topics. We gave away 12 copies of *The Great Controversy*, 15 copies of *Bible Readings for the Home*, some copies of *Christ's Object Lessons* and *Steps to Christ*, and many health books. It was a long day but our assessment was, 'Let's do it again next year.' Please pray that those books will lead people to Christ.

EVELYN WILSON

The Adventist Discovery Centre acknowledges, with grateful thanks, an anonymous donation of £5.00 received in the month of October 2014.

KIT magazine

If you would like to receive your copy of *KIT (Keeping in Touch)* electronic magazine, please contact Bronwen (editor) at kit@stanboroughchurch.org. *KIT* is produced by the Stanborough Park church and is an opportunity for you to share in their local programme.

Photos by Arianne and Catherine Boldeau



Mothers' prayer conference

'It was such a mountaintop experience!' This was the sentiment of an attendee at 'Gathered Together', the mothers' prayer conference held on 1 November 2014 at the Parliament Hill School, Highgate, in North London.

Organised by Mums in Action, a supporting ministry, the 270 people made history at this ground-breaking event, believed to be the UK church's first prayer conference for mothers run by mothers.

Laura Osei, head teacher of the Eden High School, was the main speaker for the day. Her intriguing presentation, 'When Mothers Cry!', definitely resonated with the feelings and thoughts of those present. It was based on Jeremiah 31:16, 17 (TLB), where God urges Israel: 'Don't cry any longer, for I have heard your prayers and you will see them again; they will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy. . . .'

Her second presentation was interactive, during which she spoke about the 'seven great prayers' and invited the audience to participate in them.

Forgiveness was the topic of Dr Gloria Mushe's seminar. A member of the Milton Keynes church and an experienced GP, she spoke of how a lack of forgiveness can hinder our prayers.

A powerful personal narrative was delivered by Donna Fletcher-Bryan, an educator from the Stanborough Park church. 'Despite your pain, you should praise anyhow' was her closing remark to an audience whose eyes were awash with tears after listening to her moving story of faith.

The resident prayer warriors, Toyin Aworinde and Tola Afe, prayed powerful prayers for the children of those present to be 'delivered from the hands of the enemy'.

The day's last presentation, 'Down from the Mountaintop', was the summary of the thoughts and prayers of the day and an encouragement to every mother to look to the Father for strength even when things seem overwhelming.

One of the highlights of the day was the meaningful praise and worship that enhanced the seminars and set an appropriate mood of prayer.

In her opening remarks Barbara Lawrence, one of the organisers, stated 'that we are looking for a breakthrough', and said in her closing thoughts, 'I believe that the Father was here and has already answered our prayers.'

CATHERINE ANTHONY BOLDEAU



Unique prayer festival

Community prayer can be different. That was certainly the case at Newbold College on Friday, 17 October 2014, as staff, students and community members followed a 'wilderness map' across campus, stopping at prayer points to reflect on elements of the Israelites' forty-year wilderness journey, and the implications for their own lives.

Organised by Prayer Force – a part of the Newbold Campus Ministries – the congregation was split into twelve groups, each representing an Israelite tribe. They then visited six stations where Scripture and reflective accounts were shared, and songs sung. Most importantly, heartfelt prayers were said.

Prayer Force leader, Theology student Sophia Peart, explained that the motivation behind the festival was, 'I pray, you pray, we pray', and the event was 'a good opportunity to express this motto'.

Domingos Javela, a new Business student from Angola, summed up the experience: 'I was excited to participate by being a leader of the tribe of Issachar. It is also good to know that I am studying at an institution that is praying for everyone; even my own challenges!'

JUDITH MAKANIANKHONDO

Camp Hill health booster

James Sewell attended Camp Hill Church on 22 November 2014 to present an evening seminar. He is the founder of GHET (©2014 GHET Ministry. All Rights Reserved), which stands for 'Gospel and Health Evangelism Team', a ministry that aims to educate members on the relationship between health reform and the third angel's message, thereby enabling them to share the Good News of Christ's love with others. His ministry stems from the PEACE programme in 2012 when he joined the Adventist faith.

Close to 40 people of all ages attended the presentation and heard about the important rules of nutrition that will keep us healthy longer, enable effective weight control and clarity of mind, and not only help us to engage in day-to-day tasks more effectively, but also allow our communication with God to improve.

James also emphasised that trust in God is an important aspect of keeping healthy and he emphasised that our Adventist health message could be used more dynamically to share the Gospel with others.

He was able to answer a range of questions from the audience and many attendees benefited from his seminar.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL



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Sunset

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16	4.22	4.34	4.20	4.13	4.31
23	4.34	4.46	4.32	4.26	4.44

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