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Messenger

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For years the Bilston congregation have been working towards having their own church building. Their dream was realised in June last year when they received the keys to their own building. One that had been owned by the Bilston New Testament Church of God, but left unoccupied for some years.

Although it looked dilapidated from the outside it showed great potential on the inside, and the members were overjoyed that finally they had a church of their very own. With great industry, many man-hours, their donations, and the much-

appreciated help of friends and members of the other Wolverhampton churches, it was made worshipful.

'We made it!' was the title of the first Adventist sermon preached in it by Richard Jackson, the previous pastor of the congregation, on 6 September last year. That day was the opening service and there wasn't an empty seat to be found.

The church had its first baptism in December, with three candidates dedicating their lives to the Lord on that occasion. Since then work has continued at a hectic pace to prepare for the official opening and dedication over the weekend of 14 and 15 February this year. And, as usual, the Bilston church family and its many supporters pulled together to get the job done.

The Sabbath Thanksgiving Service on 14 February was one of the most beautiful days in the church's history. With more than 150 people seated, the new church already felt small!

The events of the day also included the ordination of Bilston's new intern minister, Derek Simon; a sermon by Pastor Richard Jackson; and the awarding of medallions to the remaining ten members who were there when the congregation was first established 22 years ago.

After the service, Bilston did what it does best – serving the members and visitors a 'great feast' from its newly fitted kitchen.

The dedication took place the next day, 15 February, with the Mayor and Mayoress of the City of Wolverhampton in attendance. They were joined by church dignitaries from the NEC: the president, Pastor Lorraine Johnson; the executive secretary, Pastor John Ferguson; and the executive treasurer, Rejoice Kampengele. A number of Bilston's previous pastors were also present.

The programme included a review of the history of the church by Elder Scarlett, followed by special musical items.

The mayor expressed delight with the warm welcome they had received and the rich singing that greeted them as they entered the church. He went on to say that the church had exceeded his expectations and congratulated the members for acquiring their own building.

After Pastor Johnson's address, he and the mayor went on to unveil the dedication plaque at the entrance of the church.

And so ended the grandest day so far for the Adventist community of Bilston . . . and it won't be the last, by any means.

ENROY VICKER AND CLARENCE CROSDALE
(COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT)

Bilston members dedicate their church



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Enhancing Health

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

Artificial sweeteners – how healthy are they?

Having read health cautions regarding too much refined sugar in the diet, you make a decision to cut down. But what do you choose as a healthy alternative? With an array of artificial sweeteners on offer and some reports questioning their health benefits and safety, could we be trading one sweet problem for another, or are the cautions exaggerated? We begin with some health cautions.

Voicing their concerns about the safety of artificial sweeteners, the Alliance for Natural Health (ANH) has undertaken a review of scientific papers on the subject. As a result they have serious reservations about what they call non-nutritive sweeteners (NNS), such as aspartame, saccharin and sucralose.

They published a report on 8 October 2014 which carried the headline: 'New study – Artificial sweeteners promote diabetes'.¹ It highlighted the findings of a study led by Dr Eran Elinav from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel. The study results suggested that artificial sweeteners trigger glucose intolerance by disturbing the physiology of the bacteria in the gut. The conclusions were:

- Artificial sweeteners trigger glucose intolerance, which precedes metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes and obesity.
- The mechanism appears to affect gut microbial communities.
- This adds to additional evidence on the relationship between artificial sweeteners and increased weight gain and metabolic disturbances.
- Artificial sweeteners can no longer be regarded as alternatives to sugar that support or promote weight loss.

Other research published in the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* (YJBM) suggests that the use of diet drinks with artificial sweeteners (for example, aspartame in Diet Coke) increases sugar craving, with subsequent obesity. The report headline read: 'Gain weight by "going diet"? Artificial sweeteners and the neurobiology of sugar cravings'.²

Although other serious health concerns have been published, not all scientists agree that artificial sweeteners cause harm to humans. For example, Cancer Research UK has responded to concerns that artificial sweeteners are neurotoxins and can cause cancer:

'Some studies in the 80s found that it could cause bladder cancer in rats. Because of this, the Canadian government banned saccharin, and the American government warned that it could cause cancer. We now know that these effects were specific to rats and not relevant to humans.'³

Other research published by Harvard University concludes: 'The health benefits of artificial sweeteners are inconclusive, with research showing mixed findings.'⁴

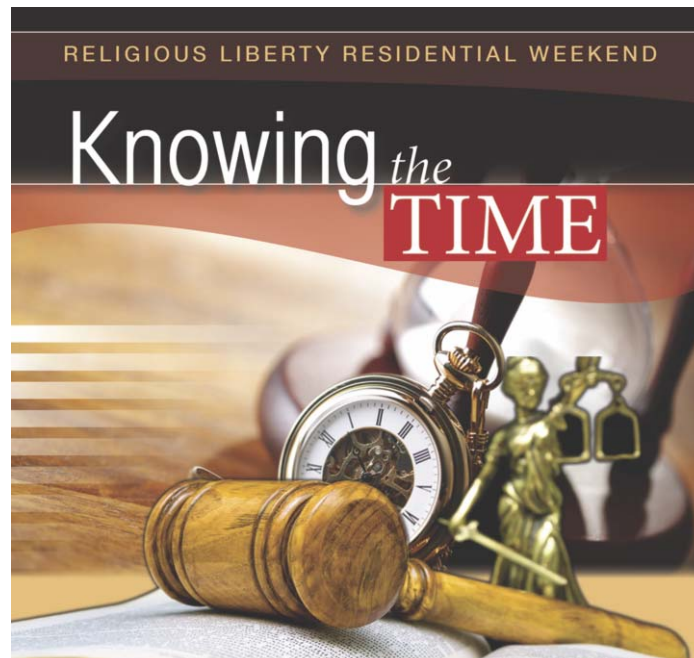
The jury is still out.

Be cautious!

¹http://anh-europe.org/New_study_Artificial_sweeteners_promote_diabetes+
²<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2892765/> ³<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/healthyliving/diet-healthy-eating-and-cancer/food-controversies/diet-and-cancer-acrylamide-artificial-sweeteners-green-tea-soy-tomatoes-and-vitamin-supplements#Artificial> ⁴<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-drinks/artificial-sweeteners/>

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editorial

My youngest brother is involved with the management of a prominent town centre in the London area, and during one of our recent conversations he told me about some fascinating technology that they are about to implement – 'smart' waste bins.

'What is a "smart" waste bin?' you justifiably ask. It's a large refuse bin that is able to compact the waste dumped into it, then notify the collection services when it is full. Each bin is equipped with a sensor through which it communicates its status to a central office, thereby ensuring that no money is wasted collecting partially full bins.

But there is more. These 'smart bins' are fitted with screens that allow the central office to display messages and advertising to the passers-by – information that can be varied or updated at the touch of a button.

A taste of tomorrow?

Is this a taste of tomorrow? It certainly is. These 'smart' bins are the forerunners of what is now called the 'Internet of Things', or IoT. Up till now the internet has allowed us to communicate with each other using a rapidly expanding range of devices, from desktop computers to mobile phones. The next step involves a world in which a vast, global 'network of physical objects or "things"' will be able to communicate freely with each other through their own 'embedded' miniature computing systems.¹

Those 'smart' bins are a good example of how 'things' will begin to communicate. Manufacturing equipment, household appliances, heart monitoring implants, and motor vehicles – you name it – they will all be able to send and receive data through the internet. Which, of course, will require a massive expansion in the way the internet processes information so that '50 to 100 trillion objects' can be encoded and tracked!²

Where did it start?

'The concept of a network of smart devices was discussed as early as 1982, with a modified Coke machine at Carnegie Mellon University becoming the first internet-connected appliance, able to report its inventory and whether newly loaded drinks were cold.'³

Since then, some really ambitious networking of smart devices has taken place. For instance, the network used by New York Waterway to connect and control their passenger services in the New York-New Jersey Harbour Estuary, allowing them to know exactly where every vessel is at any given moment.

We could also mention the

The 'Internet of Things'

South Korean city of Songdo, which is the first 'fully equipped and wired smart city', and is due for completion this year.

A positive impact

It is clear that the global implementation of the 'Internet of Things' could have a very positive impact in many areas of daily life. Just think of the potential to remotely monitor and regulate the many devices we use, automatically powering down those that are not required when we are away from home. (Some of this is already available on a limited basis.) Then there is the potential to remotely monitor the blood pressure, heart rate or pacemaker performance of a patient recovering at home. Not to mention this scenario, something that might make a number of us happy:

*'Intelligent shopping systems, for example, could monitor specific users' purchasing habits in a store by tracking their specific mobile phones. These users could then be provided with special offers on their favourite products, or even [the] location of items that they need, which their fridge has automatically conveyed to the phone.'*⁴

Is there a downside?

It may sound exciting, but is there a downside to all this? I think we all know that innovation has a price tag. Firstly, to design and embed this technology into 30 billion newly manufactured devices by 2020 will cost mega-money.⁵ Ultimately, our money!

Secondly, some are concerned about the environmental impact of the production and eventual disposal of so many 'semiconductor-rich devices' because they use a variety of heavy metals, rare-earth metals and toxic synthetic chemicals. All too often, 'Electronic components are often simply incinerated or dumped in regular landfills, thereby polluting soil, groundwater, surface water, and air.'⁶

Thirdly, there is the element of security. Last year alone an estimated 73 cyber attacks and significant data breaches were recorded, some of which were very costly.⁷ For instance, Target, the second largest discount retailer in the US, had the personal data of over 70 million clients stolen, including the credit card information of 40 million of them! According to Newsweek, 'The attack cost Target \$148 million, and cost financial institutions \$200 million.'⁸ This means that, in a future 'Internet of Things' environment, the effect of a cyber attack wouldn't just be limited to sensitive data; it could literally bring all those 'things' – billions of essential devices and the systems they support – to a grinding halt!

A more subtle danger

There is, however, a more subtle danger associated with the 'Internet of Things'. As Martyn Casserley of PC Advisor puts it: 'Society has never been in a position before where our thoughts and beliefs are matters of public record, easily found and collated with the most basic search tools.'⁹

Whether we like it or not, our internet presence creates a 'virtual' profile for each of us, which is then used to send us targeted information. Why? In the hope that we will **buy some product, support some cause or modify our beliefs**. A future 'Internet of Things' will simply place even more information about us at the disposal of those out to achieve these objectives.

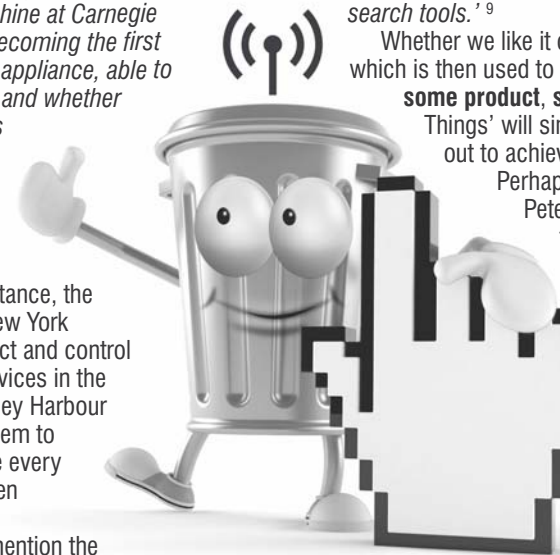
Perhaps it would be good, therefore, to heed the caution of Professor Peter-Paul Verbeek that technology should not be viewed merely as a tool, but rather as 'an active agent'.¹⁰ **We may well use it – but could it quietly be using us?**

'Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.' Romans 12:2, Phillips.

¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_of_Things ²<http://www.itgovernance.co.uk/blog/list-of-the-hacks-and-breaches-in-2014/> ³<http://www.newsweek.com/2014-year-cyber-attacks-295876> ⁴<http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/how-to/social-networks/3474750/what-does-your-internet-profile-say-about-you/> ⁵http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_of_Things



Julian Hibbert
 Editor





It doesn't need to stay dark

by Pastor James Shepley

Every single day there are those among us who face this darkness in one or another frightening form: the shocking discovery that your spouse is having an affair; news that your only sister has been diagnosed with an inoperable cancer; or that your daughter has miscarried. Sometimes the darkness and pain are known to no one but ourselves – caused by our fear of what might happen in the future, or by the gloom of depression.

Having said that, let me divert your thoughts to the Greek painter, El Greco. He was a sixteenth-century painter from the island of Crete, who moved to Spain, where he lived in the city of Toledo for forty years.

El Greco became known for his religious paintings, including pictures of Peter, James, Mary Magdalene, and Jesus Christ. In some of these you can see an amazing light in the eyes of his subjects. Their faces and hands are often elongated and they are captured looking upwards in adoration or penitence, all of which demonstrates a sense of devotion. But most striking of all, I think, is the light in their eyes. You get the sense, while looking at the portraits, that these people have looked upon God.

As you know, light has many meanings and associations. It is a symbol of understanding. Of truth. It is often seen in opposition to darkness. Remember the words of Psalm 119:105 (KJV): 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' Light is a potent image used in the Bible for God's instruction, His word and His law, but also for His actual presence.

Can you think of an occasion in the Old Testament when being in God's presence is associated with light?

In Exodus 34 Moses climbs up Mount Sinai into the presence of God, to be given again the two tablets of the law on which God had written the Ten Commandments with His own finger.

According to Exodus 34:29 (CEB), 'Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two covenant tablets in his hand, Moses didn't realize that the skin of his face shone brightly because he had been talking with God.'

Not only did his eyes shine, but his skin shone. In fact, the rest of the Israelites were so affected by what Moses looked like that they were frightened to come near him. So Moses took to wearing a veil. God's presence is associated with light. More than this, He is the Source of light.



At creation, according to Genesis 1:3, God's first words were, 'Let there be light.' God spoke 'light' into existence, just as He spoke the rest of creation into existence. 'Let there be light.' 'And there was light.' There is no light without God. Without God, we are in darkness.

When God speaks, things happen. God says, 'Let there be light', and 'there was light'. God's words are powerful. They have consequences.

This begs a question. Do we resist God's word? Do we let Him shine His light into every hidden corner of our lives? Do we let Him drive out all the darkness?

In Isaiah 9:1, 2 (NKJV), the prophet mentioned a very special light:

'By the way of the sea,
beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow
of death,
Upon them a light has shined.'

According to the prophet this light was not only for the Jewish people. It was to cast its gleam much further.

'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' Isaiah 49:6 (NKJV).
According to Isaiah, God would give

Someone as a light, not only for the chosen people, but to all people everywhere. Someone who would bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

Sadly, Isaiah didn't live to see that light. But God hadn't finished with His chosen people yet. Those promises of light to come still stood. Each year, crowds of pilgrims came to Jerusalem to worship during the three principal feasts of the Jewish year:

1. Passover; 2. Pentecost; 3. the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles was an important celebration – it was an eight-day affair. It involved lots of ritual, lots of colour, lots of water, and lots of light. The priests would march with torches blazing, flooding the night sky and Jerusalem's horizons with light. It was an amazing spectacle.

It is against this background, in John, Chapter 8, that Jesus is pictured as coming into the Temple at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles to make a quite remarkable statement: Jesus says, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.' John 8:12 (NKJV).

It is easy to overlook the impact of this passage in English, simply because the words 'I am' sound so simple. But in Greek, the term 'I am' is exactly the same as the one used by God to identify His own presence, in the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the *Septuagint*. 'Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." ' Exodus 3:13, 14 (NKJV).

I am the self-existent One. The One who was, who is and who is to come. The One who exists outside of time.

The implications of Jesus' use of the 'I am' statement are not lost on the Pharisees. It is no wonder that they picked up stones to stone Him. He is actually identifying Himself with God and they immediately saw it as blasphemy.

Here Jesus is claiming equality with God. He is not merely reflecting the light, He does not merely robe Himself in light, He is the light. And He is not a limited or local light – a candle, or a torch or a street lamp – but, like the light in Isaiah 49, He is a universal light: the light of the world. The light, dare I say it, of the cosmos. Reaching to the end of space, and the end of time. Right down to us today.

Have we seen this light? Have we caught a glimpse of it in the eyes of the ones we love, as seen in El Greco's paintings?

The world can be a dark place – increasingly dark – in Syria, and Iraq; in the stories of abuse and violence that continue to bubble up in our own society; in the darkness of anger, addictions, grief and despair. We may be in very dark places: but into this darkness, Jesus steps, and declares, 'I am the light of the world. He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.'

We may be in darkness. But we don't need to stay there.



The older I get . . .

by Pastor Ian Sweeney, BUC president

The older I get, the more I reflect on my mortality and what kind of legacy I will leave at my departure. Now, while this may seem a somewhat depressing and morbid thought pattern, it is actually my attempt to ensure that I make the most of my current life opportunities by living life to the full before the 'grim reaper' calls on me. Death has given me a greater understanding of time and the importance of it in developing relationships with other people.

Since childhood I have observed/kept the Sabbath, but with age I have come to a greater understanding of 'Sabbath' time and its importance to my relationship with God as well as to other people.

In the New Testament Jesus received criticism from the contemporary religious leaders about the way He and His disciples were observing the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28). In response to which He tells them (CEV), 'People were not made for the good of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for the good of people. So the Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath.' Jesus explained that the Sabbath is a gift of time from God to us, and that Jesus is Lord of this time. In the next chapter of Mark, we find that those leaders who were keen to observe the Sabbath did not understand the importance of that time for developing their relationship with God. This is illustrated by the fact that after another Sabbath incident involving a man with a crippled hand, the religious leaders 'started making plans with Herod's followers to kill Jesus'. (Mark 3:6, CEV)

The Sabbath gift of time is a weekly appointment in which I consciously come aside from the hustle and bustle of life to spend time with the most important Person in my life – God! I recognise that Sabbath time is precious because it is quality time spent with God in moments of reflection, worship and rest. Sabbath time is precious time because I can spend it in the company of a God whom I have grown to love dearly, receiving His undivided attention.

The importance of time to relationships is unquantifiable and exceptionally precious. The importance of taking time to hug and kiss my elderly mother, and tell her that I love her, is something that cannot be quantified, but it does reveal the importance of seeing time as an opportunity to grow relationships.

I suspect that there are very few people who on their deathbed will regret not spending more time in the office. The usual regret is not spending more time with family and loved ones. The Sabbath is my safeguard against such regret, as it reminds me that time is precious and best invested by spending it in the presence of the ones I love, my God and my family!



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

'Democracy: is it of God or a concoction of man?'
Mr A. Trenear

The question of democracy – 'literally, rule by the people'¹ – was discussed 360 years ago at the Putney debates in the context of the Civil War, where 'rank and file soldiers of the Roundhead New Model Army' based 'their case for democracy on religious principles. For them, God was a democrat: the spiritual equality promised by the Bible should clearly be transposed into the political realm.'² Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English had not only 'put before all manner of classes the founding documents of society and encourage[d] them to read and discuss them, but it simultaneously removed the influence of the safe, guiding hand of the learned and ordained. . . . This "spiritual democracy" inherent in Reformation Protestantism prepared the ground from which ideas of political democracy would one day grow . . . early nineteenth-century Christian radicals repeatedly drew on the idea of a spiritual democracy to advocate a political one.'³ Even 'as early as the tenth century, the Anglo-Saxon monk Aelfric could write, "No man can make himself king but the people has [sic] the choice to choose a king whom they please."⁴ But is this correct? Do the people choose the ruler, or does God?

Tellingly, Deuteronomy 17:15 predicts that the Israelite people themselves 'shall surely set a king over you . . . one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you', but that it would be one 'whom the LORD your God chooses' (NKJV). Judges 21:25 notes, with apparent disapproval, that when there was no king, everyone did what was right in his own eyes. It was then the people who chose what form their governance would take, and God, while warning them about its dangers, acquiesced (1 Samuel 8). God then chose the man by whom they would be governed, but brought him before the people for their ratification (1 Samuel 10:1, 17-24). Then, when he rebelled against God, it was God who chose his replacement (1 Samuel 13:14), David, who was also approved by the people (2 Samuel 2:1-4).

In this nuanced picture, God works closely with the people to select a ruler. However, God is very firmly in control of who gets to govern (Daniel 2:21), and Romans 13:1-7 explicitly states that 'there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God' (NJKV). According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, this means that 'no human authority exists except by God's permission and under his control'⁵ – even, by extension, in democracies. Although we may balk at this, it is God's choice of government, as with Jeroboam, that has historically been expressed by the will of the people (1 Kings 11:26-12:20), even when such governments fail to live up to their potential (1 Kings 12:26-33). Democracy may be no more God's preferred will than was monarchy; but, even through our failures, He is working throughout history.

¹As defined by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/157129/democracy ²Tristram Hunt, writing in *The Observer*, 'Is God democratic?' Sunday 30 September 2007 ³Nick Spencer, writing for the Jubilee Centre – www.jubilee-centre.org/the-bible-and-politics-by-nick-spencer ⁴Ibid. ⁵*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 626

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.



A caring church

by Avery Davis

Five years ago when my mother was in the final stages of a terminal illness, my sisters and I devised a rota so that one of us was always with her. There were nights when, instead of reading to my mother, all I wanted to do was lie down and sleep. My husband and children made allowances for my absences – for undone laundry and spoilt dinners. During church services my mind often strayed from what the speaker was saying, while fielding the well-meaning enquiries of the members became more and more difficult. Physically and emotionally, church became a challenge, and at one point my church attendance was almost non-existent.

Within the British Union Conference there are around 400 Seventh-day Adventist congregations, totalling some 34,000 members.¹ In a great number of those congregations there are those who don't attend church because of poor health or the limitations of old age. That means that there could be almost as many in those congregations who don't attend church, or attend very rarely, because they are the primary caregivers for elderly, disabled, chronically ill or recovering family members. Statistics show that 36% of these carers also hold down full-time jobs, not to mention that almost one in four of those caring for spouses today are themselves of retirement age.²

The courtesy of promptness
I know of one elderly sister who is the primary carer of both her mentally disabled son and a husband in very poor health. She doesn't drive and relies on her other children, who are not church members, to take her to church and collect her at the end of the service. It's difficult for her

to attend every week. On one particular Sabbath her daughter returned for her at 12.15pm, only to be told that the sermon hadn't yet begun, and that she would either have to come back or wait around for another forty-five minutes or so. Her daughter waited. Didn't anyone care enough to offer to take that sister home instead?

Our Church's UK website states that we are 'A Caring Church'. But how do we translate that sentiment into actions?

Consider the length of our morning services. My father used a wheelchair for the last ten years or so of his life. At that time we had no disabled toilet facilities at our church, so he had to wait until he got back home. Nowadays, many of our churches have facilities for the disabled, but these are not always very 'disabled friendly'. If your church services are meant to adhere to fixed times, then stick to them. It could help avoid an embarrassing and unnecessary toilet accident for someone!

Let members know in advance if a special day means that services will run late. An extra half hour added to the service could mean an even longer delay for a carer who must wait for the next bus home. Then what if they've got someone to stand in for them while they go to church? How will that person be inconvenienced by waiting for them to get back late? What impression will that create?

Some congregations deliver services through live streaming over the internet, but it's not the same as being among the worshippers. A computer screen can't hug you or shake your hand; it doesn't smile and is incapable of handing you a tissue when you are overwhelmed. Hebrews 10:25 advises us not to forsake 'the assembling of

ourselves together'. So, for those members who can't make it to church, we must take church to them.

Don't just turn up

Find out the best time to visit; don't assume that because it's Sabbath you can turn up anytime. Make home services uplifting; remember, you're supposed to be a 'Sunshine Band'. While you are there, take a look around – without being intrusive or patronising – and see what needs to be done. Does the grass need cutting; is the gate hanging by its hinges? Plan a time when you can go back and fix things, or get the Pathfinder club involved.

Let your visits be short, but effective. Don't expect the carer to sit with you and give you a blow-by-blow account of the condition of the person they are caring for. Remember, every minute the carer spends with you reduces the valuable time they have to do the laundry, essential shopping and much-needed household chores, so when you visit, try to be considerate. Let the carer know that it's okay for them

to do something else while you are there, even if that something involves a much-needed nap.

Some tips

Return any laundry ironed and neatly folded. Drop off a meal that can easily be reheated. Taking along a dog or a toddler can bring a smile to the face of someone who is housebound, but be careful not to overtire or stress the person you are visiting through the presence of an excitable animal or fractious child. If you can't go in person, send a card, some flowers or a basket of fruit, something that says: 'I haven't forgotten you.' Most importantly, if you promise that you will visit, do it.

In one family, the father had died unexpectedly and the task of looking after a chronically ill mother had fallen to her adult children, all of whom lived a great distance away, with work commitments and families of their own to take care of. One of the siblings remarked: 'Look how nobody bothered to come and visit Mum while Dad was alive; see how they're going to flock

here now that he's gone.'

Sure enough, over the days following his death, a steady flow of church members visited the home to pay their respects and offer their condolences. Sadly, had those visits taken place prior to his death they could have eased his burden and shown him that they really did care. We often talk about 'practical' Christianity as if there is more than one kind. But there is only one kind of Christianity. Just as tears are the evidence of great emotion, so our acts should be the evidence of our Christian love.

Our aged and ageing population increases at an unprecedented rate. Our future will be one in which more of us will have to look after ageing relatives. It may even mean giving up a well-paid job to provide full-time care, or having Mum or Dad move in with you.

Sandra's dilemma

Sandra, a single parent with teenage children, made the difficult decision to give up work and stay home to look after her mother, whose health issues meant it was no longer safe for her to be alone. Her children's initial reaction was: 'But Mum, we won't be able to afford the nice things we want. Don't give

up your job. We could put her in a home!' As it so happened, her daughter visited a home for the elderly and was so affected by the conditions she found there that she called her mother right away and said: 'Mum, it's okay. Stay home and look after Grandma.'

New Care Act

The new Care Act 2014, which comes into force in April 2015, means that people like Sandra will be more likely to get the financial support that they need, and access to better resources.³ But there will still be many others whose situations do not improve. Galatians 6:2 tells us to 'carry each other's burdens' and in doing so we will fulfil the law of Christ. Caring for an aged or chronically ill parent, spouse or child is a burden. Whatever the motivation – be it love or duty – sleepless nights and medical and financial concerns will eventually drain the carer's reserves. With this in mind, we need to do all that we can to lessen that negative impact. Let us show that we really are a caring Church.

¹<http://adventist.org.uk/who-we-are/current-status> ²http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_259965.pdf ³<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/carers-rights-care-act-2014.aspx>



People From A Caring Church ...

- Make a regular commitment to transport senior members to and from church
- Set times for church services to start/end and stick to them
- Organise Sunshine Band visits to the shut-ins
- Keep home/hospital visits short
- Offer to bring groceries, do laundry and mow the lawn
- Send cards or flowers so shut-ins know you haven't forgotten them
- Provide respite support so the carer can have a few hours or days away from his or her responsibilities
- Ask 'How can I help?' and then do it!



Enis Gibson turns 95!

Ilford Central Church's oldest member, Sister Enis Gibson, celebrated her ninety-fifth birthday with family and friends at her home on Monday, 5 January. Several church members called to wish her a happy birthday, while there were those who sent gifts, cards and flowers. According to Alan Rodney, a local elder, 'her strong faith and commitment to her church family is an inspiration to us all. We look forward to celebrating many more birthdays with her.'

Although Enis is no longer able to attend church, she is still very much a part of Ilford Central's family. Pastor Harrison Mburani added that he 'was glad to spend some time with Sister Gibson as she narrated some childhood memories', but most of all to hear her say 'she is ready for the soon-coming Saviour'.

This is what the birthday girl had to say: 'I am looking forward to the coming of the Lord, when we shall spend eternity in His presence.'

ILFORD CENTRAL CHURCH

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SAT 23 MAY 2015

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Starts 10am (doors open 9.30am)

Afternoon concert starts at 3pm! Be there to be blessed!

Bring packed lunch!

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The Master Guides – father and son

Last year the North England Conference president, Pastor Lorance Johnson, and his son, Daniel, were both invested as Master Guides. Amanda Gardiner conducted an interview with them after the event.

Amanda: Pastor Lorance, what was your motivation for becoming a Master Guide?

Pastor Johnson: I always wanted to learn how to survive in nature, which can be very important if you have an outdoor lifestyle. God is a god of nature, and He wants us to spend time enjoying it. Growing up in a city surrounded by buildings, you don't get to appreciate nature as you should, but the Master Guide course gives you that opportunity.

I missed doing the course when I went to West Indies College, Jamaica, to train for the ministry. It had been a requirement for graduation that you be a Master Guide, but they dropped it just before I arrived.

So, when I came into office and realised that there was an opportunity for me to get onto the Master Guide programme, I grabbed it with both hands!

Amanda: Did you have any expectations before you came on the course?

Pastor Johnson: Expectations? I suppose my basic expectation was that I would be equipped for Pathfinder leadership and that I would be taught many things. Actually, to be honest, all the expectations that I had for the course have been met.

Amanda: Would you recommend the course?

Pastor Johnson: Without reservation.

Amanda: Well, thank you, Pastor Johnson. Now let's get Daniel's view of things. Daniel, did you have any expectations for the Master Guide course?

Daniel: Well, I'd heard rumours that it was hard, and I was worried about being able to fit it all in. But it didn't seem as tough as I thought it would be.

Amanda: Now that you have completed all four weekends, do you have any suggestions for improvements, or comments on what was good?

Daniel: Yeah, if I had a lot more time it would have been better. There's a lot of stuff that I haven't done as well as I could have, like marching – I didn't have enough time for that. If we were in the same church every weekend, then I would have been able to join a club and get the marching done that way.

Amanda: How has it been to do this with your dad?

Daniel: I don't know – it's normal, I guess. I did



have to prompt Dad when we were saying the pledge and law. Fortunately, I was part of a club while in the United States, so I already knew them. But then he helped me out with an app that I used to prepare for the Church Heritage exam. We really didn't sit down to work much, because most of the time we were working in different teams.

Amanda: Would you recommend the Master Guide course?

Daniel: Yeah, it's good. I think it's good for people who want to know more about the church . . . but also, if you want to get involved in work in the church, especially if you're comfortable working with kids. It's a good thing to do.

Amanda: How are you going to put your Master Guide training to use?

Daniel: When eventually I settle down in one church, I'll use it then.

Anastasia's perspective on Newbold College

Judith Makaniakhondo chats with Anastasia Morais, a current Newbold business student, about her journey through Christian education into the business world. This is what she had to say.

Judith: Anastasia, how did you hear about Newbold College of Higher Education?

Anastasia: At my home church in Sweden. Our pastor is a Newbold alumnus and she recommended that I look into it as an option.

Judith: But you wanted to study business – wouldn't a state university have been a better choice?

Anastasia: Judith, I really wanted to try Adventist education, and Newbold seemed to offer everything I needed. After my first visit to Newbold in 2011, I decided to start my studies in September 2012, and I have loved it! The teachers and the students come from different backgrounds and this gives the learning process an international perspective. So each time we have discussions or

assignments we talk about applications to both European and international business, and I feel very prepared if I ever want to work outside the UK.

Judith: What has been your best experience at Newbold so far?

Anastasia: The best thing has been learning about the Christian perspective on business, and how one can work in the business world without losing one's identity or changing one's values. . . . At Newbold, when it matters the most the lecturers take a great deal of time to mentor us. They are also interested in our personal development. We don't just talk about the course; they ask about my plans, what I want to achieve, and how we can work towards it. In the Business programme at Newbold, I feel like I am a person and an individual, not just a student

or a number. This support has actually been a real strength to me in my work as an intern at HP.

Judith: Congratulations, Anastasia. How long will you be an intern at HP and how does that relate to your being a student at Newbold?

Anastasia: Thanks. I will be at HP for 13 months. My lecturers have really been helpful and flexible by allowing me to take non-lecture modules while I am working, so I don't have to stop studying.

Judith: Now that you are in the 'real world' – a working environment – do you feel that coming from a Christian educational institution is an advantage?

Anastasia: Definitely! I work with 80 to 90 other interns at my HP branch, and when we compare our degrees I feel that they have missed



out on something that I have had – the privilege of learning to make Christian principles part of everything we do as business students. I apply these principles to my daily work, and they work very well. This is exactly what I was hoping to get when I came to Newbold.

If you are interested in studying a Business degree that enhances your Christian beliefs, consider Newbold. Make use of the *Visit Us* programme that allows you to visit the campus for up to two nights and three days – where you will get a chance to attend classes, stay in the Halls of Residence, speak to current students, and eat up to nine meals for free. To ensure that you have a complete experience of campus life, you will also be involved in our student-led worship programmes, as well as our social and sports activities. To book your visit, contact info@newbold.ac.uk.

Her ADRA
Your ADRA
Our ADRA

Laos



Annual Appeal 'Adult Literacy Project':

Laos

Living in this particular area is very difficult, especially for people who do not know how to read or write. Read Syha's story.

"We don't know how to do anything except work on the farm. I did not have a chance to attend school at all, and so life as an illiterate person is really hard, especially when it comes to trading and remembering the date or time. I do not even know what day or time it is today. ***I don't remember my birthday or my children's because I did not know how to write or record the date when they were born and over time I forgot everything.***"

As Syha does not know how to read or write, she rarely attends any activities in the village. Syha: "All of my learning is through listening or seeing things and trying to remember as much as I can..."

"Learning how to read and write will change my life. Everything will be better..."

Racha says: "I believe my life will become better if I could only read and write. I can teach my children. My husband could make a shop for me to sell our produce in the village and earn some money for the family."

With **YOUR** help in this year's **Annual Appeal**, ADRA-UK will equip local schools with solar power and conduct evening classes to teach women like Syha and Racha to read and write. ADRA-UK will also improve the sanitation facilities at the schools.

Read the rest of this story online at adra.uk.org/projects to see how our 'Adult Literacy and Solar Power Project' will help change Syha's life and many others in Laos.

Support ADRA-UK's Annual Appeal Adult Literacy and Solar Power Project at adra.uk.org/donate

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Registered charity 1074937 (SCO37726 - IOM1101)



Far left: David Trim, Director, Office of Archives and Statistics, General Conference.
Left: Alexandra Browne, Office Secretary, Trans-European Division.
Above: Raafat Kamal, President, Trans-European Division.



The TED Strategic Priority Consultation

Europe is now a mission field – the ‘post-Christian triangle’ – the primary area of the world where Christianity is in retreat and secularism is the order of the day. Such were the thoughts of Dr David Trim, Director of Archives, Statistics, and Research at our World Church headquarters, during his keynote address at the Trans-European Division (TED) ‘think tank’ that was held in St Albans over the period of 9-13 February.

The TED officers gathered 79 ‘front strikers’ from around the Division to discuss the key issues and challenges that will face the TED over the next five years.

The event was called ‘The TED Strategic Priority Consultation’, and those involved comprised an eclectic mix of lay workers, pastors, administrators and professionals from across the TED, with support from the General Conference (GC) and sister divisions, and with a substantial number of ministers, laity and students from the UK. The five main areas addressed were: General existential considerations, Mission, Youth, Media and Family. Many of the participants were people who are practically involved in mission, ‘where the rubber meets the road’. No topic was off limits. A spirit of trust pervaded the meetings, along with an implicit permission to consider change and to think outside the box. This resulted in an environment that both challenged and energised the participants.

After four intense days of discussion, GC vice-president, Delbert Baker, stated on Thursday afternoon, ‘I’ve never seen a group of people energised like this. Where’s your energy coming from?’

That energy led to the first draft of a Strategic Framework – completed in the small hours of Friday morning. This is the initial phase in producing a Strategic Plan to help guide the TED’s activities over the next five years. Numerically, it consisted of 107 observations on the nature of the Church and the TED and 123 specific recommendations on how the Adventist Church in the TED can improve its ministry, mission and administration. However, not all the recommendations will or can be implemented as some are mutually incompatible, but they provide a basis for going forwards.

It was not all talk, however! Midway through the week, the group took to the streets of St Albans to distribute roses and a card affirming the love that Jesus has for all. This very practical Valentine’s initiative gave a chance for the group to put mission into practice.

Alexandra Browne, a youth representative from the St Albans church, was so excited after the event because there were at least two reports from the group of being able to connect with people who ‘had Adventist backgrounds but hadn’t been to church for a while’.

Sometimes, a week-long meeting can be a soul-sapping venture. However, during these meetings the most often used word was ‘excited’. As Sophia Peart, a UK post-graduate student at Newbold, put it, ‘the synergy during this think tank has been inspirational.’

Further development of the draft document is still underway, but it is expected to be ready for presentation this summer.

ADRIAN PECK/TEDNEWS/BCNEWS – EDITED VERSION
PHOTOS: VICTOR HULBERT/TOR TJERANSEN/DRAGANA S. D. G.



Sheffield district DOF

On Saturday 31 January, the Sheffield Burngreave, Carter Knowle and Manor churches held a day of fellowship at the Sheffield Burngreave church.

The theme for the day was ‘United in Christ’, and it was an opportunity to be reminded of the importance of working together.

After Pastor Victor Marshall had led an interactive Sabbath School class in a discussion on what that unity means for the Sheffield district, Pastor Ian Sweeney (BUC president) spoke on the topic, ‘Time for something new’. That ‘something new’ is God’s New Covenant, which needs to be written on our hearts. One of the powerful points that Pastor Sweeney made was: ‘If Manor is shooting at Carter Knowle and Carter Knowle shooting at Burngreave, then God’s law isn’t written in our hearts. . . . We need to experience the New Covenant experience of forgiveness. . . .’

In the afternoon, the district’s members enjoyed a great fellowship lunch, followed by a wonderful music programme that featured contributions from as far afield as Holloway Church in London.

VERONICA EDWARDS AND GRACE PALMER

‘Seventh-day Adventist Church in Devon and Cornwall’

This was the heading over our stand at the Christian Resources Exhibition at Westpoint, Exeter, on 10 and 11 February. Did you miss the mistake? We did, too, but a visitor to the stand pointed it out! The organisers had inadvertently printed ‘Adventist’, but our witness was distinctly Adventist!

Pastor Ian Lorek had organised the stand and was particularly grateful to Pastor Des Rafferty for providing resources for the event. The pastoral team in Area 1 supported our outreach, as did some members from the Exeter and Torquay churches. We had some interesting discussions with people, some of whom admitted that they had had misconceptions about our faith. One lady at first walked by, declaring that she did not agree with us. However, she later returned to the stand and apologised for appearing to be rude. We were then able to



Wolverhampton Central baptises seven

The Wolverhampton Central church closed 2014 on a very high note with the baptism of seven new members. They were Delston, Sibongile, Ketty, Kresta and Kimberley (mother and daughter), and Sheila and Frank (mother and son). Pastor Samuel Appiah baptised the candidates after challenging them ‘to look to Jesus as their role model and not to man’. He also urged the members to support and nurture their new family members.

One candidate had this to say about the day: ‘It was a wonderful day that has brought bubbly joy in my heart.’ What a way to end the year!

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



talk to her and she was thankful that she had been enlightened about our belief in Jesus as God. As a result, she was happy to take one of the bags of literature we were handing out.

Another man saw our poster and cards about the free Bible and told us that he had done the studies online and had received the Bible. He had been very impressed and said that he was now more aware of the need to study his Bible more.

We pray that our presence at the Christian Resources Exhibition helped to break down barriers and that the books people received will provide them with greater insight into the saving love of Jesus.

STELLA JEFFERY



Stanborough Senior Members Club

Stanborough Park Church is undergoing a major redevelopment, with the congregation meeting weekly in the comfort of a marquee on Stanborough Park grounds – despite all that our winter weather can shower upon it.

However, for the large group that attend the Senior Members Club which meets fortnightly, the comfort of the Stanborough Centre's Cedar/Sycamore room is still there for them to enjoy. What's more, as the photograph clearly shows, they look very happy about it! Under the former leadership of Mrs Rosemary Barham and her team, the club has continued to go from strength to strength in its determination to reach out to non-members in the local community.

When this photograph was taken in February, members had enjoyed a talk by Andrew Taylor, leader of the Watford Waterways Chaplaincy. Andrew told us about the history of the waterways that cross England and Wales, and about how volunteer chaplains are bringing support to those who live in narrow boats on the canal network. The Chaplaincy Service, which operates across the town of Watford, not only serves those who live and work on the canal but also provides a vital service of support to those who work and socialise in the town centre.

Andrew's talk was followed by another lively and amusing talk presented by a former narrow boat dweller: our very own Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, who, in his inimitable way, regaled members with tales from the towpath and canal side. It is thanks to him that we have our photograph.

PAUL BELLAMY



Valentine's meal for charity!

On Saturday, 14 February, the children at Grantham Church put on a Valentine's meal to raise money for the Ebola crisis in Africa. It was a romantic evening with a three-course, candlelit dinner and music that was enjoyed by all. But most important of all – it raised £135 towards this worthy cause.

SHEBA M. HUGHES (COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY)

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obituary

Doris Lillian Hardy (1915-2014) d. 2 December.

Doris Lillian Hardy was born in the quiet village of Croscombe in Somerset on 9 February 1915, and died in the nearby city of Wells on 2 December 2014, just a few weeks short of what would have been her 100th birthday.

Aunty Doris, Dor or Dinah – you may take your choice – was known affectionately by any one of these names.

Aunty Dor (as she was known by the writer) was to spend part of her life in Croscombe, where at the age of 18, and on Boxing Day, 1933, she married her first cousin, Jim Hardy. They had grown up together and been childhood sweethearts in the same village.

Doris and Jim were lifelong, sincere and faithful members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and, in a practical way, they followed a healthy lifestyle.

Their son, Phil, was born in 1934, and in 1953 the family emigrated to Canada, sailing on the Queen Mary. During their stay abroad, Jim initially found work as a lumberjack in an Adventist logging camp and later Doris nursed in Loma Linda Hospital.

Phil studied dentistry from 1976 and subsequently moved to

California.

In the same year his parents returned to their homeland and settled in the City of Wells, quite close to Croscombe, where they became regular, loved and respected members at the Croscombe Adventist church, always occupying the same seats each Sabbath. The writer can clearly remember that in many conversations he had with Aunty Dor she would frequently say, 'God is good.'

The memorial service for Doris was held where she had worshipped for so many years and was conducted by local pastor, Rudi Puskas. At the request of the family, musical items were performed by the Opus 3 Trio, while two of her grandsons paid affectionate tribute to their grandmother.

Following the service, Doris was laid to rest close to her lifetime companion, Jim, in the little cemetery overlooking the village where they were both born, courted and married, and where they will both await the 'Great Resurrection Day'!

Those wishing to do so were invited to make their donations to the Adventist Disaster and Relief Agency (ADRA).

B. BAXTER

NEWBOLD COLLEGE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**Newbold College
DIVERSITY LECTURES 2015**

Tuesday 14 April –
God, Language, Mind and Men
Lecturer: Ms Mervi Kalmus
Mervi Kalmus is an intern pastor in Tallinn, in the Estonian Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Lecturer in Homiletics at the Tartu Theological Seminary of the Estonian Baptist Church.

Tuesday 8 or 15 September –
A Diverse Future for a Diverse Church
Lecturer: Pastor Raafat Kamal
Raafat Kamal is the president of the Trans-European Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

Tuesday 13 October –
Title to be confirmed
The 2015 Beach Lecturer: Revd Dr Sam Wells
Sam Wells is the vicar of St Martin in the Fields, London and Visiting Professor in the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at King's College, London.

Tuesday 10 November –
Counter Terrorism and Cross-Cultural Bridgebuilding
Lecturer: Ms Holly Hughson
Holly Hughson is a humanitarian aid worker who works as an adviser and trainer to the US military. She has an extensive background in the management and monitoring of operations in complex humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict settings, including Kosovo, Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

When and where?
7.30pm, Salisbury Hall (Smith Centre)

Contact: Helen Pearson, email: hpearson@newbold.ac.uk,
Tel: 07775612610

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For further information, contact:

South England Conference – 01923 232728
 Family Ministries (Leslie Ackie),
 Children's Ministries (Malika Bediako)

North England Conference – 01159 606312
 Family Ministries (Paul Liburd),
 Children's Ministries (Patricia Douglas)

British Union Conference – 01923 672251
 Family/Children's Ministries (Cyril Sweeney)



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Sunset

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

	London	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Mar 13	6.01	6.13	6.05	6.11	6.23
20	6.13	6.25	6.17	6.26	6.37
27	6.25	6.37	6.30	6.40	6.50
Apr 3	7.37	7.49	7.42	7.54	8.03

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