

# Messenger

News to the churches • 1 January 2016 • Volume 121 • 1



Baroness Thornhill and Pastor Ian Sweeney cutting the ribbon



## Stanborough Park reopened

by June Coombs

After a 17-month-long refurbishment and extension, Stanborough Park Church members are 'home at last'.

The event began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on 6 November last year by Baroness Thornhill, the elected Mayor of Watford, and the BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney.

Richard Harrington, the local MP, and senior staff from the BUC and SEC were also in attendance and took an active part in the service. BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney, reminded everyone that this must be a 'seven-day church' that reaches out to all the local community who require a helping hand.

The following day, after a shortened Sabbath School, the worship service became a special 'Reopening Service' with former ministers of the church and TED staff playing an active part. Pastor Audrey Andersson read the Scripture and Pastor Raafat Kamal delivered a sermon entitled, 'I will build my church', emphasising that a church is not just a physical building, but one made of living stones with Christ as its foundation.

The building was crammed to capacity as members past, present and distant, along with many visitors, turned up for the event.

According to Associate Pastor Sam Neves, about 600 people, including the choir and orchestra, filled the sanctuary, with at least a further 130 viewing the service remotely from elsewhere in the building.

This reopening service lasted for two and a half hours, featuring a mixture of hymns, music and presentations!

The day was rounded off with a splendid rendition of part of Handel's 'Messiah' by the choir and augmented orchestra under the leadership of Jieun Ahn.

Despite the prospect of late lunches following this lengthy service, most seemed reluctant to leave and the organ postlude was almost drowned out by the sound of hundreds of voices as people who hadn't seen each other for months caught up with the latest news and shared their views on the changes.

Now that life at the 'Park' is back to normal, may the church and its members continue to serve the people of Watford and surrounding areas as faithfully as they did before!



## Stanborough Secondary School Scholarships & Bursaries

Once again, Stanborough Secondary School has worked hard to secure additional funding for the Scholarship and Bursary Fund to enable more pupils across the UK to benefit from a quality education.

Stanborough School's scholarship scheme aims to make Adventist education more accessible to outstanding students. Candidates must apply for entry for the following academic year and demonstrate academic potential.

Stanborough School's bursary scheme aims to support families that are currently opting out of the Adventist education system due to financial considerations. Candidates will be required to demonstrate both academic potential and financial need.

Both types of award are multiannual and will provide up to 8 places for prospective students applying for entry in Year 7 to Year 10. 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 14 January 2016 from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Registration closes on 7 January 2016. To download application forms, please visit: <http://www.spsch.org/scholarships/>.

Stanborough School would like to thank the alumni and friends of the school for making this support possible.



## Enhancing Health

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

### Going natural Part 9b – Exercise as a mood enhancer

Have you ever suffered from 'low moods', or known someone who does, and wondered whether there are any evidence-based natural interventions that might help? Well a number of research studies over the years have pointed to exercise as one method to improve mood and combat stress.

Regular exercise causes fewer stress hormones (like cortisol) to be released and stimulates the release of chemicals called endorphins (happy hormones), which are known to lift our mood.

The mechanics of how these endorphins work are outlined in a health article by *WebMD Partners in Health*<sup>1</sup> as follows:

- Endorphins trigger a positive feeling in the body. For example, the feeling following a run or workout is often described as 'euphoric' or a 'runner's high', and can be accompanied by a positive and energising outlook on life.
- Endorphins also act as an analgesic, which means they diminish the perception of pain. These endorphins, manufactured in the brain, spinal cord and other parts of the body, interact with brain receptors that can help reduce your perception of pain, helping you feel better in body and spirit. The neuron receptors endorphins bind to are the same receptors that some pain medications bind with, thereby activating their pain-relief properties.
- Endorphins also act as a sedative.

So then, can exercise be used therapeutically? Kirsten Weir, in an

article entitled 'The Exercise Effect' and published in December 2011 by the American Psychological Association,<sup>2</sup> interviewed two health professionals to ascertain their views on exercise as 'treatment'. Jennifer Carter (PhD), counselling and sport psychologist at the Centre for Balanced Living in Ohio, uses exercise as part of her therapy intervention with patients as they 'walk and talk' during counselling sessions. 'I work on a beautiful wooded campus,' she says. 'I often recommend exercise for my psychotherapy clients, particularly for those who are anxious or depressed.'

Michael Otto (PhD), a professor of psychology at Boston University (quoted in the same article), agrees. 'The link between exercise and mood is pretty strong,' Otto says. 'Usually within five minutes after moderate exercise you get a mood-enhancement effect.'

*NHS Choices – Your health, your choices*, in an article entitled 'Exercise and Depression',<sup>3</sup> suggests exercise as part of treatment for mild depression, stating:

'Ask your GP about the exercise on prescription programme. Many GP surgeries across the country prescribe exercise as a treatment for a range of conditions, including depression.'

### Good health!

<sup>1</sup><http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/exercise-depression> <sup>2</sup><http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/12/exercise.aspx> <sup>3</sup><http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/exercise-for-depression.aspx>

# editorial

If you are reading this magazine on its publication date, or thereabouts, you may well be among the estimated 63% of Britons who have just made New Year's resolutions – and if you are, then you have a 32% chance that your resolutions won't last beyond the end of this month. But please don't think I'm trying to discourage you – far from it! I'm merely quoting some 2015 *YouGov* research on resolutions.<sup>1</sup>

Such gloomy prospects notwithstanding, I honestly think that New Year's resolutions can be beneficial. Let me tell you why.

### 1. Reflection

Most of us live busy lives in which there is little time for *reflection*. Little time to thoughtfully and objectively assess whether we are now any better at living life than we were a year ago. I'm not speaking of those things that can be measured by bank statements, performance bonuses, framed certificates or new office furniture. Neither about the time we spend on the church board or elders' council; involved in community outreach projects; mentoring the Pathfinders; or even as faithful prayer warriors.

I'm thinking of those simple things that qualify us to be called the 'salt of the earth' (Matthew 5:13). 'Salt of the earth' attributes are not the result of high IQ, extensive education, special skills or workaholicism. On the contrary, they are the result of a progressive transformation of the way we think and act towards others. Paul refers to them as the 'fruit of the Spirit' – nine qualities that actually make us successful at living the abundant life!

*'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.'* (Galatians 5:22, 23, NIV-UK.)

If we use the beginning of every year as a time to *reflect* on how these nine qualities are transforming our lives, it is time well spent.

### 2. Connection

There is another reason why I believe that the formation of New Year's resolutions can be beneficial. Besides being a time for serious *reflection*, it is also an opportunity for us to invite the One who plants and nurtures those nine qualities to have renewed access to our minds and hearts. The Holy Spirit is the most potent force in the world today and He is only an invitation away!

Once He enters our lives we have our direct link to Jesus, who said, '... the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.' (John 16:15, NIV-UK.)

For many of us resolutions are about willpower. We believe that our success or failure in upholding our resolutions is dependent upon our willpower. Nothing could actually be further from the truth. It is not about our willpower – it's about our

# Resolutions



Julian Hibbert  
Editor

*connection!* Which is why Jesus made this comment in the previous chapter of John's gospel: 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.' (John 15:5, NIV-UK.)

That *connectedness* to Jesus through the Holy Spirit is the key to living the better life – the abundant life of John 10:10.

### 3. Action

The third and final reason why I see resolutions as important is that they normally lead to *action*. A resolution is a declaration of intent to do things differently.

It used to be said that if you could keep up with some positive change for 21 days it was likely to become an established habit ('pattern of behaviour'). The most recent research by Phillippa Lally and her team has extended that period to 66 days.<sup>2</sup> The fact is this, whether it is 21 days or 66 days, nothing is going to change unless *action* takes place. There is a point at which *reflection* must give way to *action*. Once we know what the nine qualities are that make for a better life, we need to implement them. I like the succinct way that James puts it:

*'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.'* (James 1:22, NIV-UK.)

In my personal *reflection*, I have become aware (painfully so, in some instances) of what attitudes I need to change and what action I need to take to achieve this. How about you? Have you done any reflecting on how to become 'the salt of the earth'?

Glen Campbell popularised Allen Toussaint's song, 'Try A Little Kindness'. It suggests a fine starting point for that *action*. These are the words:

*If you see your brother standing by the road  
With a heavy load from the seeds he's sowed  
And if you see your sister falling by the way  
Just stop and say you're going the wrong way*

*You got to try a little kindness  
Yes show a little kindness  
Just shine your light for everyone to see  
And if you try a little kindness  
Then you'll overlook the blindness  
Of narrow-minded people on the narrow-minded streets*

*Don't walk around the down and out  
Lend a helping hand instead of doubt  
And the kindness that you show every day  
Will help someone along their way*

*You got to try a little kindness  
Yes show a little kindness  
Just shine your light for everyone to see  
And if you try a little kindness  
Then you'll overlook the blindness  
Of narrow-minded people on the narrow-minded streets<sup>3</sup>*

Yes, I don't think that there is anything wrong with a few resolutions... for, as Arthur H. Sulzberger said:

*'For eleven months and maybe about twenty days each year, we concentrate upon the shortcomings of others, but for a few days at the turn of New Year we look at our own. It is a good habit.'*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/01/16/63-brits-are-planning-make-new-year-resolutions/> & <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/dec/06/new-years-resolutions-how-to-keep> <sup>2</sup><https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0908/09080401> <sup>3</sup><http://www.cowboylitics.com/lyrics/campbell-glen/try-a-little-kindness-642.html> <sup>4</sup><http://www.123newyear.com/new-year-quotes/>

## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

1. ENJOY LIFE
2. GET ORGANIZED
3. EXERCISE
4. MORE FAMILY TIME
5. HELP OTHERS





# One World Week opens hearts and minds

by Pastor Chris Peake

There is no better accolade for an Adventist Church event than for a humanist to share with a non-Adventist friend of the church that, 'I don't go to any church but if I did decide to go to a church it would be this one.'

That response was generated by the memory of an outreach 20 years previously in the St Austell church. Pastor Chris Peake recalls, 'Back in the summer a lady wandered into our church luncheon to see if we remembered helping her organisation out with a vegetarian cooking demonstration in the autumn of 1995. No, we didn't, but amazingly, she still had all the recipe sheets and the advertising for the event!'

Her organisation was the St Austell branch of the United Nations Association, and the occasion had been the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UN. She had appreciated it so much that now she wanted to

know if the church could do it again for the 70th anniversary. Of course we could!

And so it was that on the evening of Sunday, 18 October, about 30 people of all faiths and none came to the St Austell church hall to mark the beginning of *One World Week* with a world food demonstration. Members of the LIVE St Austell church plant created an amazing array of dishes and showed the crowd how to make Danish cabbage soup and Indonesian stir fry; then, before the food was served, the pastor shared a talk reviewing the state of religious persecution around the world and the work of our denomination's Public Affairs and Religious Liberty departments at local, national and international levels.

That is when the unexpected happened: a number of people asked if it would be possible to hear a bit more about the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This then led to another talk from



### What is One World Week?

One World Week is a Development Education Charity. Each year, 'The Week' is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice, locally and globally. One World Week 2016 will be from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October, but you can hold One World Week events any time it works for you! – <http://www.oneworldweek.org>

could pursue Bible studies on the Book of Daniel, and her request will be followed up by the pastor of Plymouth, where she lives.

Steven Hulbert, whose mother led the original cookery demonstration 20 years previously, reflected that the event 'brings people together. An opportunity to interact and to share our stories and our passions.'

Visiting from Plymouth, Pastor Clifford Herman especially appreciated the 'cross-faith' discussions with Bahá'ís, Muslims, fellow Christians and those of no faith at all. In a low-key way, he saw the value of doing something 'with' the community rather than 'for' the community. 'It was a brilliant opportunity for further conversations about our beliefs in a non-threatening manner. We made some important connections.'

the pastor and a long series of questions from the appreciative audience.

By the end of the evening many new friends had been made for the church, including the local county councillor, and several people expressed a desire to join us at one of our Sabbath services in the near future. One Muslim woman even asked how she



## Archaeological Diggings TOURS 2016

**TOUR 1 ANCIENT EMPIRES**  
June 12–July 8, 2016  
Iran, Jordan, Greece, Israel

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG AT LACHISH, ISRAEL**  
June 23–30

**TOUR 2 ANCIENT WONDERS**  
July 8–18, 2016  
China, Cambodia & Thailand

**TOUR 3 AMAZING DISCOVERIES**  
September 25–October 21, 2016  
Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Greece & Italy

All the tours are designed to help people realize the relevance of the Bible and its teachings. So plan to join us in 2016, and invite a non-Adventist friend to come with you.

**Go with someone who knows the way!**  
For more information & bookings contact us at:  
Post: Locked Bag 1115, Wahroonga, NSW 2076 Australia  
Email: [editor@diggings.com.au](mailto:editor@diggings.com.au)  
[www.hopechannel.com/au/events](http://www.hopechannel.com/au/events)

\* Tours subject to sufficient numbers and prevailing security conditions.



### Plumbing job leads to baptism

Gary Clarke needed a plumber to complete some work on a property being refurbished. The local plumbers' merchant suggested that he try Mr Ransford Reid, a reliable local plumber and heating engineer. After meeting on the job and agreeing on the work they discovered that they were both Christians, although of different denominations. They agreed to meet and discuss God's word with a group of Ransford's friends and a small group of men from Yardley Church. The first meeting ended up being an almost four-hour Bible study and discussion!

From then on Ransford demonstrated an almost insatiable desire to continue Bible studies whenever and wherever possible, resulting in group and individual studies between two and three days per week over an eighteen-month period.

Ransford was convicted about the Sabbath and other truths as presented during the studies, which led to his baptism on 17 October last year by Pastor Aster Bruce. The baptismal sermon was preached by Dr Lovemore Nganunu. Yardley's pastor, Pardon Chenjerai, said: 'I have never seen a man who is so passionate about Bible study. He couldn't wait any longer for this day.' Ransford's wife has since also joined the Bible study class. Let's keep praying for both of them.

YARDLEY COMMUNICATIONS

### Aberdaron Advent Campsite 2016 Summer Staff

**Volunteers required for the summer of 2016.**  
Ten maintenance team staff required for nine weeks.  
Food and board provided along with a monetary allowance.

Please post your CV to:  
Aberdaron Advent Campsite, Glan-yr-Afon, Anelog,  
Aberdaron, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 8BT  
or email it to: [enquiries@aberdaroncamp.com](mailto:enquiries@aberdaroncamp.com).

Closing date for applications is **21 February 2016**.

[www.aberdaroncamp.com](http://www.aberdaroncamp.com)

### BOOKSALES

January	30 Portsmouth	After sunset
February	7 Hull	10am–2pm
	21 Bolton	10am–2pm
	28 Greenwich	10am–2pm

**ABC Shops**  
Watford, BUC, Monday–Thursday – 12.30–5pm, Friday – 10am–2pm.  
01923 893461  
Birmingham, Aston–Newtown, Wednesday – 11am–4pm, Thursday – 4pm–8pm.  
Sunday – 11am–3pm.  
0121 3286380  
Advent Centre, Mondays & Wednesdays – 6.30pm–8.30pm.  
Sundays – 11am–3pm, Saturdays – November, December, January; After sunset.  
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# Beach lecture: 2015 Church renewal

by Helen Pearson

Church renewal is an important issue for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and was the focus of the 2015 annual Beach Lecture, which was given on 13 October by Reverend Dr Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London. Wells spoke from a background of ten years of ministry to social outsiders in London, Newcastle and elsewhere, and challenged the idea that church renewal and success are to be found in being greater, stronger and more powerful.

Wells' starting point was Psalm 118:22, quoted by Peter in Acts 4 as referring to Jesus: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner' (RSV). He began by describing the feeling of being 'the least, the last and the lost'. All of us have felt unwanted at some point in our lives. This is a particularly difficult feeling for homeless people in London, for immigrants, and for those with dementia, autism and other disabilities which make them feel like profoundly unworthy outsiders. They might feel as if others are driving the train and they are only passengers. As Christians, we can either flee from those experiences, and from the people who suffer from them, or we can assume the identity of the rejected. 'If we work constructively with feelings of rejection,' he suggested, 'we can become something rather beautiful.'

The alternative to this church 'full of waifs and strays' or this 'bunch of misfits who sometimes fit together' is a church that wants to be full of big, strong, powerful people. This is the sort of church full of those whom Wells described as 'sorted, normal, benevolent and condescending'. But 'this is not the basis on which Jesus founded the church', Wells asserted. The biblical history of Israel in wilderness and exile proclaims that 'wisdom and faith are found in places of exile and rejection. . . . The Israelites were closer to God in exile than they had ever been in the Promised Land,' he said.

To illustrate his ideas, Wells called on stories of outsiders both from his ministry and from the biblical record who had used a variety of different gifts to create a community. For example, Samson achieved more when he was weakened than he did in his days of glory. The needy migrant Moabitess, Ruth, who at first looked like a 'bundle of trouble', turned into the source of national renewal.

References to Ruth introduced the whole question of migrants. 'Jesus was a migrant,' Wells reminded his audience. On a personal note, he added, 'My own mother was a migrant, who left Berlin just in time. Migrants are a challenge and a gift to the church.' He also reminded the audience that the gospels are full of stories about Jesus restoring relationships, bringing reconciliation and creating communities from disparate groups of people – starting with the twelve apostles.

Wells closed with a serious, personal challenge to those members of the audience interested in church renewal. 'I wonder what part of yourself you have rejected. I wonder whom you have rejected and whom you could welcome in a ministry of rehabilitation? See Jesus in the face of the one you have rejected and let the Jesus in the face of the one you have rejected become your cornerstone.'



## The best things in life are free

by Pastor Ian Sweeney, British Union Conference President

Since starting my journey to better health, I have found myself posting my exercise activities on Facebook. On 1 May, I posted the following message to all my Facebook friends: *'Free gym membership! Interested? Just found out that there is a free gym membership offer, and from what I can see there is no joining fee or long-term tie-in if you decide to cancel. I am sure you can find one of these gyms near to you . . . it's called outside! You just open your door and the gym is right there!'*

Now while my post was something of a tease, on reflection it was in accord with the idiom, 'The best things in life are free.'

While news coverage over Christmas and the New Year will detail how much money has been spent, and how much debt incurred, by the British and Irish public, for me the greatest joy of the holiday season will not be in the presents that cost money, but rather in enjoying the 'free' presence of my family, friends and loved ones. The reality is that the best things in life are free – hugs, smiles,

friends, kisses, family, sleep, love, laughter and good memories.

In the Christian experience the best things for our life are free! I love the sentence of Ellen White, who wrote, 'I am so thankful that God has made a way that we may have full and free salvation.' (*Faith and Works*, p. 75.)

Now this is not to say that the 'free' things we receive from God do not come at a great price, but our reception of them comes at no cost to us, as the apostle Paul wrote: ' . . . the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' (Romans 6:23, KJV.)

A new year – this time 2016 – once again affords us the opportunity to freely share the best things in the Christian life. The BUC, in harmony with the plans of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, will be seeking to 'Reach the World' with the message that salvation, hope, joy, health and much more besides is available to all, and because of Jesus Christ, it comes free!

So let us make a commitment to share with at least one person each day some of the best things in life, because the best things in life are free . . . remember!

### A very happy New Year to you!

We stand again at the beginning of another new year, to face fresh opportunities and new challenges.

At the commencement of 2016 our world is in turmoil. The image of God is eroding around us with each passing day. The news bulletins feature the breakdown of relationships between nations, leading to war, and the increase in horrendous incidences of domestic violence behind closed doors.

There is a desperate need for hope in this world as we witness 'men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth' (Luke 21:26, KJV). We need a place of sanctuary – a place of refuge – where the care-worn can find rest and assurance. We need a people who will reflect the image of God in their communities.

Our focus in the North England Conference is to build upon the foundation that we have sought to lay for the past three years – identifying those areas that have broken down and endeavouring to restore them through God's strength and wisdom. One of those important aspects of our Christian walk is building relationships – making connections internally (among ourselves as members) as well as the equally important ministry of reaching out. There is one relationship, however, that was broken when our first parents succumbed to temptation in the Garden of Eden. That severed the relationship between us and God – and it is that relationship which must be rebuilt if we are to be that place and be that people.

Of all relationships, this one ought to be the first in importance. This is because, as we prioritise rebuilding and nurturing a one-to-one connection with God by immersing ourselves in His word and having meaningful communion through prayer, God changes us – He makes us more like Him. 'By beholding,

## Fresh opportunities and new challenges

by Pastor Lorance Johnson, NEC President



we become changed into His image.' Such an encounter will impact our interpersonal experience with our fellow members and motivate us to make genuine connections beyond the reach of our own circle.

My challenge to us all, in these final 'hours' of earth's history, is to carve out time to spend with God each day this year. I am inviting us all to engage in life-transforming Bible study and to read the writings of God's

servant, Ellen White. I invite us all to encounter God through an earnest, continual and sincere prayer life.

I am convinced that God is preparing a people to reflect His image in a world where relationships are fragile. People are searching for that place and looking for that person.

God is calling your church and mine to be that place – God is calling you and me to be that person.



## 'All change!'

by Pastor David Neal, Irish Mission President

**A**LL CHANGE – a message I most definitely did not want to hear. It was a freezing cold, wet and windy January Saturday night outside, a stark contrast to my warm and cosy railway carriage. As my train sped with considerable ease through the Thames Valley towards Reading, I began to think that it doesn't get much better than this, relaxed in my comfortable seat, a hot cuppa in one hand, and a good book in the other. But I was not planning to get off at Reading – this train was

advertised as direct to London Paddington, my destination.

As the train arrived at the platform, I reluctantly disembarked with all the other passengers, unsettled and disorientated. This is Reading station, really? It was strange, different – now much larger. The old familiar 'Great Western Railway' station I knew in my youth, transformed into something akin to an airport terminal. In years past, I'd stood as a trainspotter on platform 4, taking down the numbers of the locomotives. But platform 4 was now platform 7. My replacement train to



## From my desk

by Dr Richard de Lisser, SEC President

I send you best wishes from my desk here at the South England Conference as we begin yet another new year. It is my sincere hope and desire that this new year, 2016, will bring with it all the things that you aspire to in order to make your life fruitful. This may be varied and could be a resolve for a healthier

lifestyle, success with your education, a better relationship with your spouse, your family and your friends – the list may be endless.

However, my sincere wish and prayer is that 2016 will also provide an opportunity of new beginnings for each and every one in our territories; a year of commitment in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ; and a

The decision to build the brand-new Swansea church on the site of the old demolished one was controversial. On the one hand we had a great location, right in the heart of Sketty, and people knew us because we'd been there for over seventy-five years; on the other there wasn't a great deal of room, even after we'd bought the plot of land next door. Our requirements for the building were such that we knew we would have to build on every inch of the land that we owned, and there wouldn't be any space left for a car park.

The environmental argument came to our rescue with the planners. In their long-term view, the future for cities is public transport rather than private cars. So, as long as we had a couple of spaces for the integral flats, they were happy. Less so the members. Like many Adventist churches which have evolved over several generations, most of our members come from some distance away. Therefore they use cars.

The issue was hotly debated on the Welsh Mission Executive Committee. After all, Wales has a surplus of old church buildings and we probably could have bought two of them, complete with car parks, in some remote, rural setting for the same price as the proposed new building. But after a time we began to consider more carefully the issue of who and what we are supposed to be as a church. What really is our mission, our purpose?

Paddington was a cold, all-stations-stopping train, litter strewn across the carriage floor, harsh fluorescent lighting, with sit-up-and-beg seats. This was not how I had hoped the journey would be.

During 2015 some hoped for a change of UK government – they were disappointed. In the church others hoped for the ordination of women to be permitted – they too were disappointed. The Vatican is changing – causing Adventists to wonder. Climate change is of great concern – can it be stopped? In the Neal home, pure joy as our eldest son, Tom, no longer 'cleaved unto his parents, but unto his new wife', Cathy.

But a sudden change in our family life a few years back was described by an encouraging friend as 'an unwelcome interruption'. We don't go looking for such things; they just happen. It may be through a bereavement, a

## What? No car park!

by Pastor John Surridge, Welsh Mission President

With hindsight I think that the discussion could have been reduced to three short words: 'to', 'in', and 'of'. Many people believe that our mission as Seventh-day Adventists is to proclaim a message (or perhaps more specifically, three messages) to the world in which we live. We're good at this. In the early years we did it through vast printing presses; now we use a much wider range of communication technologies. The great advantage is that we can do it remotely! We don't need to get our hands dirty, so to speak. The message(s) can literally be beamed down out of the sky.

This worries some people, however. A remote and isolated church is not what we see modelled in the New Testament. So perhaps our churches need to be *in* the communities that we are trying to reach. Now this is much better, and I think that the majority of our churches at least strive to achieve this. We see it reflected in the names: Aberdeen, Balham, Cambridge, all the way down to Ystrad Mynach.

But churches which are located in communities can still end up being isolated

time of reflection on the need for further progress in your spiritual journey and your effectiveness in winning souls for Christ.

The events of the world currently unfolding before us indicate that, as disciples of Christ, we must seize every opportunity not only to affirm our commitment to Christ, but also to be fully engaged in service for Jesus. Evangelism as never before, Everyone, Everywhere.

As you make your plans for this year, remember to put Christ at the centre of them all. May He grant you hope and peace, and may you flourish in Him who is the Author and Finisher of your faith.

and distant from those communities. You can see it in the heavy front doors, the mean and narrow windows, the weed-infested paving and the minimalist, out-of-date noticeboards. They might be physically 'there', but, like some alien spaceship recently arrived from another planet, they have no relevance to the people around.

The Swansea members and the Welsh Mission Executive Committee eventually came to the conclusion that what we're looking for is a church that is a part of the community: one which is loved and even 'owned' by the people who run the takeaway next door, the medical centre down the road, and the petrol station around the corner. We want a church where the neighbours are our best friends. There are many ways to achieve this, including careful architectural design, making sure the building is kept open as often and for as long as possible, and by offering its facilities to local interest groups. Oh, and also by parking in the public car park 70 metres away and actually meeting local people as we walk to church.



sudden illness, unemployment, even a long-hoped-for dream growing dimmer by the day. The journey of life, it seems, doesn't travel in one consistent, perfect, onward and upward journey. Sometimes we have no choice but to change trains. . . .

In my earlier years of ministry I remember being a cheerleader for change in the church. We needed to change worship to connect with youth. We needed more youth involved in leadership. We needed some Adventists to change from their well-intentioned, but misguided, legalistic leanings, to a full understanding and practice of the Gospel. All worthy aims then, and still worthy today. But I think I now begin to understand how difficult, how embedded in our lives, the fear of change can be.

2016 will be a significant year of change for the Irish Mission. We are beginning a

fund-raising campaign for a very-much-needed second Dublin church building. Some of the ministerial team are to be redeployed. In early January, Stephen and Lindita Wilson move to Christchurch, New Zealand, where Stephen takes up a new role as senior pastor of the Papanui church.

As our 2016 journey begins, what strength it is to know that with us, on our journey – both personally and in church life – travels a wise Guide and Friend. As Jan Paulsen recently reminded us during a meeting, 'Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Word. The Holy Spirit is the unlimited resource of the church.' I trust we will listen and use that resource.

'Haven't I commanded you? Strength! Courage! Don't be timid; don't get discouraged. God, your God, is with you every step you take.' Joshua 1:9 (The Message).

Continued on page 8



## Our response should be different

by Pastor Bernie Holford, Scottish Mission President

On 2 December the House of Commons voted to extend the bombing campaign to include Syria. After a failed vote in 2013 to permit such action, it took a tragic massacre in Paris to change the mood in Westminster in favour of launching this offensive.

The natural, human reaction to violence is to 'hit back', but Jesus came to show us a different way. Governments will do what they do, but there must be a better way. Of all the responses to the Paris shootings, I was deeply moved by that of Antoine Leiris, whose wife was killed. He was left with a 17-month-old baby. He wrote to the terrorists, 'I will not grant you the gift of my hatred.' Despite his terrible grief, his hope for a better future transformed the way he responded to such a barbarous act. The natural 'fear response' is to hate our enemies at times like this, but Jesus invited us to be peacemakers.

Sanctification is about implementing God's values in every aspect of our lives. At the Scottish Mission session in October we voted the three most important values, defined by the apostle Paul, as a guide for our mission for the next triennium. They are:

**Steadfast faith** – celebrating the truth of God's love. First of all we develop our faith-relationship with Jesus that leads us into the Bible as the source of practical truth for our time. And then we choose to worship our Creator every day, especially on the Sabbath.

**Unswerving hope** – this hope in the second coming of Christ motivates our witness about Jesus. 'But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the *hope* that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15, NIV, emphasis supplied). We pray that every member of our church will prepare themselves to be appropriate and sensitive witnesses. We need to understand how to reach different people in different ways, saving them and not condemning them (John 3:17).

**Extravagant love** – this will be the deepest value that undergirds all our decisions. It compels us to serve those in need in our communities, rather than just looking to our own needs. It will show us how to respond to the migrant crisis in Europe. Will we let fear control us, or will God's extravagant love for us translate into selfless acts of kindness and generosity? Recent stories of how Adventist doctors have been saving lives on the Greek island of Lesbos describe how we can use whatever gifts God has given us to share His love.<sup>1</sup> ADRA Macedonia is giving warm clothing to women and children as they pass through their country. We can help right now by donating money to [www.ADRA.org.uk](http://www.ADRA.org.uk) to help these people on the front line.

My prayer for 2016 is that God will help each one of us to bring His faith, hope and love into a broken and fearful world.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story3402-adventist-doctor-describes-tears-and-hope-at-epicenter-of-europe%E2%80%99s-migrant-crisis>

### Ostrich attends Newbold Church

It happened at Newbold Church, when Sasha Becejac stood up to make a short announcement from the pulpit but forgot what he was supposed to say! Fortunately, he was quickly assisted by 'Holly, the blue-headed ostrich', who reminded him of the special Harvest Festival service scheduled for 24 October, during which Newbold School were to play such a special part. Pastor Paul Lockham, BUC Executive Secretary, was the preacher for the day and spoke of how God treats His harvest workers with surprising justice, with all receiving the same reward (Matthew 20:1-16).

PASTOR BRIAN PILMOOR



# across the desk



## SEC president shares big plans for 2016

South England Conference President, Dr Richard de Lisser, talks to Pastor Sam Davies (SEC Communication and PR Director) about strategy implementation and the big 3ABN/SEC evangelism partnership for London in September 2016.

**Pastor Davies:** Pastor de Lisser, upon your election as President last September, you swiftly spelt out your vision for the term – 'Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere'. What does that mean for the 25,000 members of your conference?

**Pastor de Lisser:** 'Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere', was my call to rally our members to get involved in outreach and mission in the local community. I would love to see our churches open 6 or 7 days a week offering things like cooking classes, counselling services and computer classes to the community as well as Sunday, Wednesday and Friday night evangelistic meetings. Further to this, we need to be scratching where the community is itching, providing needs-based ministry that will bring the lost to Christ in all that we do.

**Pastor Davies:** Well, how do we begin?

**Pastor de Lisser:** The local church is supposed to be a lighthouse for the community, and so we must begin with this question: 'What are we doing for our local church area?' Do people find our churches to be places of refuge, sanctuary, solace, peace? Can people walk off the street into our churches and feel at home? Do they know that your church really makes a difference in their area? Is your church relevant to its

community? So, in terms of where the church begins, we have to ask ourselves what the needs of the community are. For example, in the Watford area right now, the community needs support for its homeless people.

**Pastor Davies:** Is there a strategy in place to accomplish this vision?

**Pastor de Lisser:** Yes, there is. Our directors have met on a number of occasions and we have a four-year strategy in place, and its strapline is, 'Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere'. There are also four particular areas we are looking at: *Revival, Restoration, Reclamation and Retention*.

For 2016 our emphasis is 'Revival', and we are dealing with evangelism. The church is to be evangelistic, because whatever you do, souls must be won to the Kingdom through baptism. With revival there comes 'Reformation'; not only should the church revive, but it needs to be reformed. We need to stop doing those things we know are wrong. For the church to be positively viewed in the community, there must be trust. They must trust the church, and so not only should the church be revived, but it should also be reformed.

In 2017 we will emphasise

'Restoration'. We will be looking at restoring our families, our marriages, our broken homes and our health: 'Restoration' in the complete sense of the word. In 2018 we will emphasise 'Reclamation'. We have lost a number of our members over the years. According to the General Conference, over the past 50 years our net loss rate has been 40% – we lose 4 out of every 10 people we baptise!\*

And so we really need to reclaim those individuals who used to be on our books. Every family has a story of individuals who used to be in church but are no longer. As in Acts 1:8 we need to start with our families and then work outwards. We just want to encourage our members to work with those who used to be in church; let them know that things are different now, that it's not the same old church anymore; that we are reaching out to the community now; that we are becoming an outward-looking church. For the fourth year, we will emphasise 'Retention'. We are going to baptise thousands of

people – which is my hope – and we set a goal of



a minimum of five thousand. I believe we can do far more than that. Not only should we be baptising people, but we should also be retaining them. Sometimes those we baptise come in through the baptismal pool and soon leave through the back door. We want to ensure that we retain those members and our target in the first year is a 90 percent retention rate. But along with our growth director, Simon Martin, we said we want a 100 percent retention rate. We are hoping that we can retain as many as possible by putting them on the discipleship track. Make sure that they have a Bible; that they attend Sabbath School and the worship service. So we engage them in witnessing to help them maintain their relationship with the church and help others do the same.

**Pastor Davies:** Money is going to be crucial to achieve this vision. How are you planning to fund this project?

**Pastor de Lisser:** You know, money follows mission, and I believe that once people see the things that are going to happen they will be glad to give money towards the mission of the church. I have asked our treasurer, Earl Ramharacksingh, if we can put aside a million pounds for evangelism next year and he is going to try. Probably at the back of his mind he has £590,000, in addition to which the churches also have local funds that they can use for evangelism. So we will probably be spending more than a million pounds for evangelism.

Now, that also leads me on to say that we have been contacted by 3ABN, who would like to join us for a big evangelistic programme from 2 to 17 September this year. And they will no doubt bring in at least a couple of million dollars for this evangelistic project in London. The conference is also going to put aside a certain amount of money for that project. Because we believe in evangelism, the

members will begin to give more when they see that something is happening and that the church is highlighted in the press for what we are doing in the community. We are going to have health expos, community services and lots of other programmes associated with the 3ABN project.

**Pastor Davies:** Can you elaborate on this partnership between 3ABN and the SEC?

**Pastor de Lisser:** Sam, it is definitely a partnership, and 3ABN is part of our whole evangelistic strategy. We are still sorting out all the details with them, and will meet again when they attend our evangelism expo at Newbold on 10 January. They intend to bring across some evangelists and singers to train our members in evangelism and how to reach out into the community.

There is a lot of preparatory work to be done before September. They have also sent over some resource books that will be given out at the evangelism expo free of charge to our members and they will be coming in with all sorts of technical equipment to pick up 3ABN programming here in the UK because, as you know, they are no longer on the Hotbird satellite. It's a partnership; they are bringing in a lot of money and we are also investing a lot of money. But we expect good results. We've not had a large-scale evangelistic series in the capital since 1987 when Pastor C. Perry led Harvest London. Before then it was the George Vanderman programme in 1952, which also had wide press coverage, and we want to do something bigger than that. We want to make sure that folks know about the Adventist Church in the London area and our message of hope.

**Pastor Davies:** Why did 3ABN choose London for this project?

**Pastor de Lisser:** Well,

Danny Shelton has apparently been praying about where their next evangelistic series should be, and as he was praying the Lord directed him to London. Then he said that if the guys in London wanted them to come he would take it as a sign from the Lord. So when he met with me and my fellow officers to explain how the Lord had led him here, we believed that the hand of God was guiding the project. What an opportunity – 3ABN bringing their own speakers, singers and money to ensure that it's going to be the greatest evangelism outreach in London ever. But it is not an American product that we are just going to take on board. We are going to have our own local speakers, musicians, and singers as part of the whole programme, so it's definitely a partnership – an equal partnership. It's not just going to be a London event, for they will be streaming and uploading it right across the world, so London will be the focal point of evangelism in the entire world in September 2016.

**Pastor Davies:** Before we conclude, what should we expect from the SEC Evangelism Expo?

**Pastor de Lisser:** We expect numbers; we expect our members to be there in their numbers. We have free resources for you to take away. We will have trainers from 3ABN as well as our own directors here from the South England Conference who will be doing training on the day. We expect at least between 1,500 and 2,000 people to attend. We just want you to come and be part of this great event and, hopefully, when you get there you'll learn something new, and take away something to do 'Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere'.

**Pastor Davies:** Thank you, Pastor de Lisser.

\*According to <https://www.adventistarchives.org/2015-general-conference-session-report-membership-audits-and-losses.pdf>



## TED affirmation of women in church leadership

During their recent year-end (2015) executive committee the Trans-European Division (TED) took the following action to support and affirm all women, whether working as volunteers in local church leadership positions, employed as pastors or Bible workers, or serving in any departmental or administrative capacity within the denominational structure.

The October 2015 Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists recorded the following statement on behalf of its Administration:

'The vote taken in San Antonio does not change the Church's understanding of the role of women in the life, mission and practice of the Church as supported by the *Church Manual* and outlined in General Conference and Division working policies.'

This statement gave assurance to women – in particular ministers and elders – who are called, gifted and committed to the service of our Church. It was also intended to discourage those who exploit the vote to hurt people and polarise the Church.

### Leaders of the Trans-European Division affirm that:

We celebrate the tapestry of people in our territory, whose customs, culture and understanding, though diverse, have been woven throughout the Bible and Christian history, towards an appreciation of God's inclusive grace.

We acknowledge that God appoints women and men to minister according to their spiritual gifts and education. He does this to fulfil His mission to share the 'Good News' to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

We encourage women to prepare for Church leadership and pastoral ministry. We will create openings and opportunities, where women's giftedness is valued, to the benefit of the whole Church.

We applaud the courage and dignity which women display in fulfilling their calling despite those who undermine them.

Furthermore, personal abuse and disruptive behaviour are un-Christian, and unacceptable, and will not be tolerated by Church leaders, who owe a duty of care to those who have been appointed to serve.

### To this end:

Leaders of the Trans-European Division are committed to resolving differences through mutual respect, dialogue, thoughtful listening, heartfelt understanding, and submission to the guidance of the Holy Spirit who unites us. We pray that we will be humbled to hear God's voice in those through whom He speaks. 'Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.' 2 Corinthians 2:14-15, NKJV.

### A biblical template:

'We urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to **esteem them very highly in love** for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, **warn those who are unruly**, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. **See that no one renders evil** for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. **Rejoice** always, **pray** without ceasing, in everything **give thanks**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.'

1 Thessalonians 5:12-18, NKJV, emphasis supplied.

# innovation

## Holloway's SSS

How do you get to know the prophets? This was the question raised at Holloway's Super Sabbath School (SSS), 10 October 2015: an event Holloway Church holds at the beginning of each quarter to better understand the context of that quarter's lessons. Pastor Laurence Turner, Newbold's Principal Lecturer Emeritus in the Old Testament and the guest speaker, indicated that if you understand the different types of prophets and their themes, you begin to understand Jeremiah.

It was a fascinating study. Pastor Turner used Jeremiah's sermons to reveal his personality, mission and relationship with God, and the study contained many powerful biblical truths.

Pastor Turner also preached, and his sermon, based on Joseph, showed the awful public criticism he suffered when he defended Mary by marrying her and adopting Jesus. His reputation as a highly respected Sadiq Jew was decimated. Maybe, Pastor Turner suggested, this was why Jesus was so

comfortable with 'sinners', as His home life was considered sinful and shameful by His community.

The music, by guest artists Ecclesia Chamber Choir, Janine Thorpe, Resurrection and Holloway's praise team, brought beauty and serenity to the day.

Super Sabbath School adopts the Action Unit model – mini church groups of 12 members that focus on relationships and personal ministry projects. Carlos Thorpe, Overseas Sales Director at the Stanborough Press, presented his 'personal Jonah' and hoped we'd give more time to mission work, as there is 'real demand for the Word'.

The Action Unit model, which is in its second year at Holloway, has increased Sabbath School attendance and forged stronger relationships. This Super Sabbath School gave us more tools to study Jeremiah – to really get to know him.

EMEKA NWOKOYE



# news



## Plymouth Church investiture

On Sabbath 7 November last year Plymouth Church held its first Pathfinder investiture in many years. Eleven pupils from Fletwood Primary School and one member of Plymouth Church received their sashes with up to four honour badges attached for their hard work throughout the year.

Led by Ophelia Herman, the church ran a Messy Church last year, and this year decided to introduce Adventurer honours to the programme. The children were very enthusiastic and once a month they and the staff worked to complete the Flower, Bead and Artist honours. Through the year they also completed the Fruits of the Spirit honour, focusing on a different virtue every month. Not only did the children get to enjoy an hour of fun and crafting each session, but they also had a time of worship with an inspirational story followed by a healthy tea.



The visiting speaker for the day was Vernon Noel, who, in the morning, spoke about 'The Promise of the Seed': an inspirational message on how we all develop at different rates, and under different conditions, into mature Christians.

In the afternoon parents, teachers, Messy Honours staff and Plymouth Church members all watched as the children beamingly went to the front to receive their sashes.

After the programme everyone gathered to eat and socialise. The group has found that the Messy Honours/Church programme has been a great method of outreach and hopes it will inspire those that attend to learn more about Jesus Christ.

The programme in Plymouth will be expanding into two groups: Messy Honours for the Adventurer honours and a Pathfinder club to focus on Pathfinder honours. Working with churches in Area 1, the group hopes to grow and become part of the wider Pathfinder community.

More photographs of this event and others can be found on the Plymouth Church website: [plymouth.adventistchurch.org.uk](http://plymouth.adventistchurch.org.uk).

JENNIE HALL

## Splash of Black

The Edmonton Drama Group was in action again on the evening of 31 October at the Intimate Theatre in Palmers Green, North London.

The playwright, Fifi McKenzie-Cook, focused her work on the lives of Ben Carson and Paul Rusesabagina, as well as on the *Windrush*, while her husband, Terence McKenzie-Cook, ably directed it for her.

The audience were captivated by the superb acting and the humour, and were thrilled with the sweet harmony from the Liberty Gospel Ensemble, the duet from Sophie Hutchinson and Leah Onyeanus, and the solo from Cerise Johnson. The guest actors ignited the flame that gave spark to the *Windrush* experience.

The play was sponsored by the SEC and is an annual event for Black History Month in aid of the charity CMFL, Curative Music Foundation Ltd. The charity was founded by Fifi and Terence in Kenya, in May, 2012, and aims to build a music centre for underprivileged children which will give them an opportunity to better their talent and prospects.

MERLE ALEXIS

PHOTOS: ASHLEY BLOOM





## Learn all about ASC

In 2015 the NEC Youth Department launched ASC (Adventist Students on Campus), the new name for all the student societies within NEC territory. Despite this new branding, however, a concerted effort has been made to minister to the students on university campuses in our area for over 10 years. In the last year there has been an intentional effort to network the various campus societies and provide concrete support from the conference. We have reorganised each society so that they all share the same name, vision and branding.

Campus ministries is vitally important here in the UK to retain our youth as they move away to live on their own, and help them as they go through the transition from 'borrowed faith' to their own 'personal faith'. Campus ministries is also an excellent opportunity for outreach and witnessing. One of the benefits of having a campus society that is officially registered with the university is that the use of the university facilities is often free or at a very small cost, thus enabling Bible studies or seminars to be held on campus.

When we send our youth to places of higher learning, where Christianity is not the dominant worldview, we know that their faith will be severely challenged. It is a time when too many slip away from church and from an active relationship with God. Some say as many as 70% of our youth are lost during this period of transition.

In the North England Conference territory there are 44 institutions of higher learning, with Adventist students at roughly 22 of them. There are currently ASC societies at 11 of these: the University of Manchester, Coventry University, Leicester DMU, UCLAN, Bradford University, the University of Leeds, Sheffield Hallam University, the University of Hull, Derby University, Wolverhampton University, and the University of Birmingham.

One of the primary ways that these societies advertise is at the beginning of the academic year during Freshers' Fair. This is an annual event at which they can let the student body know what they are all about, promote their activities, survey the students and invite people to upcoming events such as Bible studies and cooking classes. This year all our societies had the new branded pull-up banners, flyers and polo T-shirts on display so that we had a stronger visible influence. Each society had a generic flyer that advertised ASC as a network of student societies around the north of England, but there was space for each society to print or put a sticker for their local information and contact details. At the University of Manchester they signed up a total of 130 students – 57 for Bible study, 77 for cooking classes, 37 for health expo, 36 for a monthly discussion forum and 52 for social events. At Coventry University they handed out 125 cupcakes with Bible promises on them, made 34 new contacts, met 10 new Seventh-day Adventists, signed up 6 new people as members, and after Freshers' Fair they had 20 people at their first Bible study.

Kallie Wheeler, President of ASC at Leicester DMU, says that they have about 10 new Adventist students this year, at least 5 of whom they met during the Freshers' Fair – one of whom commented that 'what I like most about ASC is the social aspect. It can be difficult sometimes to socialise at uni without doing things you wouldn't really do if you had the choice.'

When asked about the impact of having a society at the university where she studies, Abigail Hazel from Coventry University said, 'It gives me a support system so that when I may not be having the best of

days with God, I have a group of people who I know will be there to encourage and support me. Because of that, it has strengthened my spiritual walk because having a society at uni means I never have to walk it alone.'

For more information on the ASC societies, where they are, who the president is and what times they meet, please visit: [www.necadventist.org/youth/asc-societies-2](http://www.necadventist.org/youth/asc-societies-2) and [www.facebook.com/adventiststudentsoncampus](https://www.facebook.com/adventiststudentsoncampus).

Let's keep our students in prayer while we provide the support, mentorship and guidance that they need during this pivotal time in their lives.

PASTOR ADAM RAMDIN (PEACE AND NEC YOUTH DIRECTOR)



Image quality as supplied

## Sutton supports PIN

On Sabbath 24 October last year, Sutton Church received feedback from Danny Thompson and Joe Walker, who run PIN (People In Need). PIN have been doing uplift work in Romania, travelling mostly at their own expense. They approach various manufacturers and other companies for contributions to their work.

Sutton Church has been helping PIN with knitted garments, blankets and certain medical supplies too.

During 2015 Rotherham's Rotary International also offered them financial assistance, which has helped them refurbish a centre for autistic and disabled children. In the photo above we see some of the Sutton ladies and their knitted goods.

MORAY STEWART (COMMUNICATIONS)



## Retreat to enrichment

From 23 to 25 October 2015, the Family Ministries Department of Halesowen Church sponsored 11 couples to attend a retreat held at Peck Wood Centre, Worcestershire, by Pastor Obinnaya Iheoma and his wife, Elizabeth.

The event was well run and full of practical training and personal growth opportunities for the couples attending. Among the main areas covered were interpersonal communication, conflict-solving skills and intimacy. A lot was also learned from the video presentations by Mark Gungo.

One couple, who had been on the verge of separating, were so glad they attended the retreat, saying: 'We wish we'd known about this earlier.' They both went home very happy with what they had learnt.

There was laughter and tears: laughter for new discoveries, tears over the mistakes of the past, and more tears for the joy of knowing that they could still press the reset button! By putting God first in everything there isn't a problem so big that it cannot be solved.

VIVIANNE EMPAWI



## Remembrance Sunday in Bartley Green

The rain failed to deter remembrance as the Pathfinder drum corps from Bournville and Halesowen responded to an invitation from the councillors in Bartley Green to help set the mood at the Bartley Green Remembrance Day service. The Bartley Green councillors invited the Bournville and Halesowen district Pathfinder clubs to take part in the



annual Remembrance Sunday celebrations in Bartley Green. After the laying of wreaths, the drum corps led the procession from the memorial to Bartley Green Social Club, where all those in attendance mingled and got to know each other. It was the first time that the community had had a drum corps included in the service, and they appreciated the contribution of the Pathfinders. They are looking forward to hearing them at future events.

ELIZABETH WALSH-IHEOMA



## A Remembrance Day service

Pastor Kumi and deaconess Bernadette Aldred of Leicester Central Church spent Remembrance Sunday ministering to the residents of Birch Court Extra Care Retirement Home. They watched the BBC memorial service broadcast, after which Pastor Kumi conducted a communion service for all who were able to participate. During his sermonette the pastor reflected on his family's experience of the war, something that many of those present had personal experience of, especially one lady who was over a hundred years old.

After the service the two visitors were treated to a lovely three-course meal with all the residents, none of whom are Seventh-day Adventists. The residents keep an ADRA collecting tin all year round, and have contributed several hundred pounds to this worthy cause to date.

Picture above with Pastor Kumi is 93-year-old Mona Walken, who was proudly wearing her original RAF uniform, which she first wore at the age of 21!

BERNADETTE ALDRED

## Don't count me out!

'Don't Count Me Out', an original play by Parabole Productions and commissioned by the Adventist Special Needs Association (ASNA), attracted a packed audience to the Park United Reformed Church, Reading, on 24 October 2015.

Hopefully, the play inspired the audience to rethink their attitudes towards disability and become more sympathetic towards those who suffer this way. The play also helped raise funds for various projects and activities.

The audience, comprising large numbers of youth and families from the community, were moved by the performance. Emmanuel Daddy from Reading said, 'It was educational and inspiring as well, helping us to look at things from a different perspective and see how other people are affected and sometimes how our lack of consideration can affect their lives in quite a big way: not just those who have special needs, but also the families who have to support them. It was a good insight into the everyday life of people who have to deal with disability.'

The play highlighted the stresses that families face when dealing with disability and centred around Mike, a young man whose world is violently turned upside down when he is involved in a near-fatal road traffic accident. 'Don't Count Me Out' follows the journey of his family and friends as they and he cope with the aftermath of the accident.

The play also highlighted how religion can make one subtly insensitive to families struggling with a member who has disabilities, stigmatising them as lacking the faith to see their loved one healed.

Sophia Nicholls (SEC Disability and Diversity Ministry Director/ASNA trustee) had commissioned the play on behalf of ASNA and felt that it 'harnessed the essence of the message' that needed to be conveyed about living with disability.

BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney, said it meant



a lot to him to be present because he had a brother with a disability. Former SEC president, Pastor Sam Davis, a self-confessed arts lover, expressed appreciation for the talents within the church.

TED Community Services Director and Newbold College Chaplain, Alastair Agbaje, was impressed with the number of young people involved in the play and expressed his desire to work with them to impact the community.

Speaking about the production, Derek Lindo says, 'We hope to raise awareness of issues around disability, confront and challenge some commonly held misconceptions and show that we are all special and valued in God's eyes.'

Nigel Nicholls (Chair of ASNA UK) thanked the special guests and audience for supporting ASNA and reminded them that the organisation had been started from the experience of having Matthew Nicholls, his son, who was born with congenital blindness and severe learning difficulties.

ASNA UK was established to support the spiritual, social, emotional and physical development of people living with special needs and disabilities. It also aims to support their families/carers and professionals working within the field of special needs by providing them with resources, training and awareness programmes, family weekend breaks and special needs focus days.

ASNA would like to thank Parabole Productions and those who supported the evening, which raised over £500 towards their work.

PASTOR SAM O. DAVIES (SEC COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR)

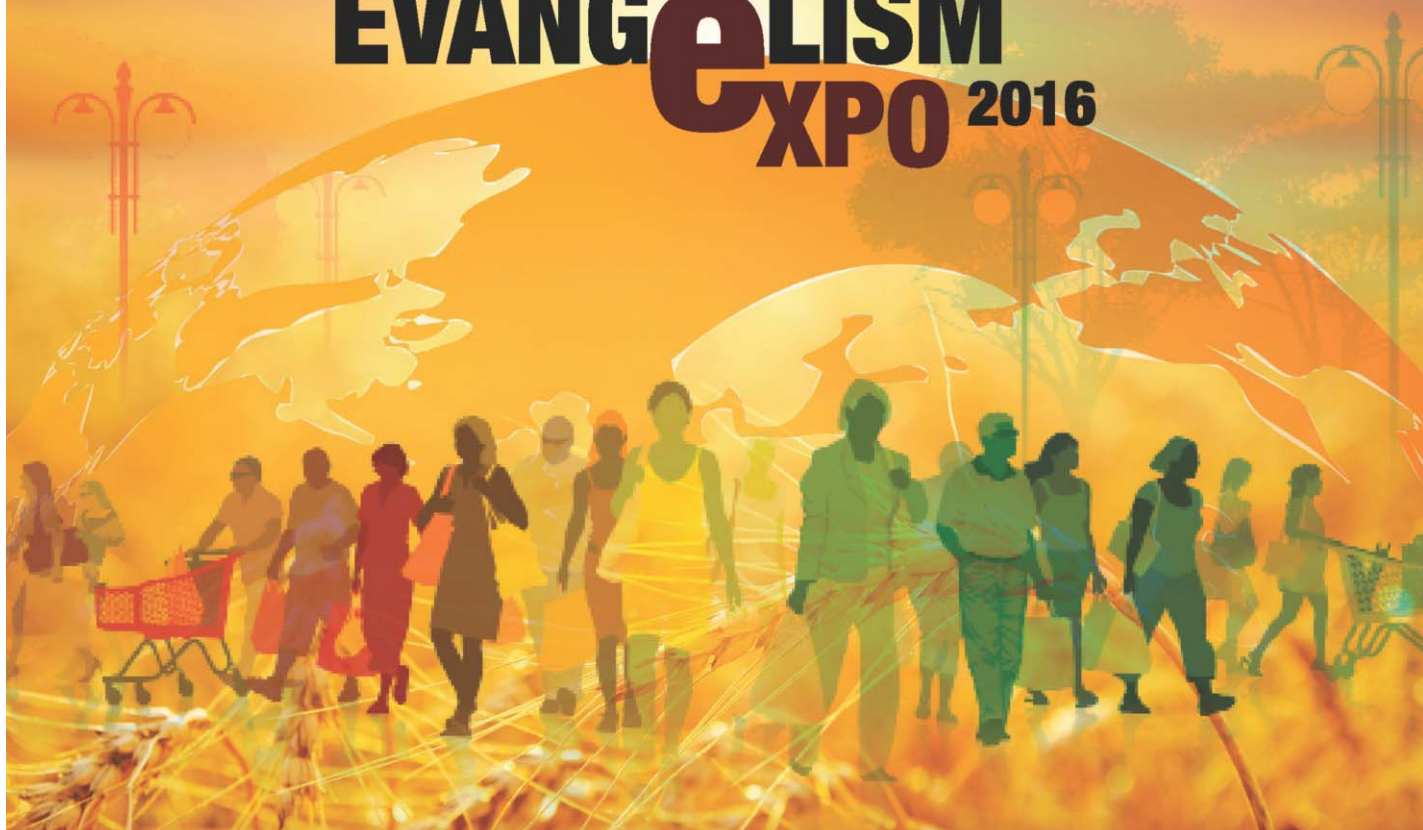
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## Norwich and Cambridge students meet for FUSION worship

On Friday the students of Cambridge Church hit the road to begin what would be a beautiful friendship with the students from Norwich. Together, they participated in the FUSION worship service, organised by Adrian Peck and the Norwich University team on the campus of their university, and spent the evening fellowshiping and praising God.

This trip was one of the many events organised by campus ministries, in order to facilitate the meeting of Adventist student groups across the South England Conference. It was so fantastic to see so many youth share their passion for Jesus (as well as for food) in a new, friendly environment, away from the distractions of the usual Friday night scene at their respective universities.

FUSION Friday night worship service is like so many worship services across the Adventist world, yet what made it distinctive and special was the outreach towards members of its own community. There were not only students, but participants who were young and old from all walks of life, totally immersed in welcoming the Sabbath.

Hopefully, many other small groups across the South England Conference will be encouraged to visit their neighbouring universities and to form closer ties with Adventist students from across the country,



in an attempt to strengthen their faith and to make new friends.

If you would like to learn more about how you, or someone you know, can be further involved in campus ministries, contact your local youth leader/pastor or directly contact Pastor Dejan Stojkovic of the South England Conference (email: [dstojkovic@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:dstojkovic@secadventist.org.uk) or tel: 07919172176) for more details.

AMANDA BROWN



## 90 years on

Daphne Lombart (née Adeline) was born in the Seychelles on 9 October, 1925, ninety years ago, as a second-generation Adventist. She married a missionary from Mauritius in her teens, the late Pastor Rene Lombart. Now Daphne is the much-loved head of a 40-strong 'tribe': seven adult children, twenty-one grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren. Of

those, three are pastors, one is a young pilot who plans to serve as a missionary, and several others occupy leading positions in their local churches. Daphne is now disabled, and uses a wheelchair to get about, but her faith is as strong as ever. She continues to attract the love and respect not just of her family, but of all who know her. Last year family members travelled all the way from Australia, the Seychelles, Austria, France, the USA and across England to give praise to God for such an inspiring life. They all enjoyed a time of thanksgiving and reminiscing at the Newbold church. What a special occasion it was to showcase the difference one life has made to so many other lives over the years. They came to shower on her a little of the love, care and compassion she dispensed unreservedly, unconditionally and generously to them over the decades.

PASTOR CLAUDE LOMBART

## Modern Manna comes to Gloucester

During the week of 8-15 August Danny and Charmaine Vierra of Modern Manna Ministries presented 'Lifestyle for Excellent Health', a series of health seminars and gourmet vegan cooking demonstrations, at Gloucester Church. They showed how to implement healthy lifestyle practices and prepare healthy vegan meals that had the attendees returning for more each night. The week's presentations compared the impact on our health of the standard Western diet versus a plant-based whole food one.

Among the highlights of the week were two cooking demonstrations by Charmaine Vierra, who is a nutritionist and vegan chef/cooking instructor. These were very popular, with over 90 attending each evening. After sampling the recipes, some commented that they had never known that eating healthily could taste so good!

Sabbath was an action-packed day that included a healthy fellowship lunch, and there wasn't an empty seat in the church. The children also enjoyed the various activities because of the interesting manner of presentation.

Since the health seminar, participants have testified of the changes that they have made and the improvements they have noted in their health. Praise God for this!

JOAN MITCHELL



## Community outreach in Great Yarmouth

As part of our ongoing health evangelism, we held another successful health screening in Market Gates Shopping Mall. By courtesy of the mall's management, on Sunday 27 September we performed 130 blood sugar tests, took the blood pressures of 139 people, measured and weighed 97 individuals for their Body Mass Index, and tested the respiration of 38 smokers. Out of the 13 people who sought medical advice, three were referred to their GPs.

Several items of health-related literature and religious literature were also taken from the 'help yourself' table. We were very encouraged by the turnout and had a chance to chat to several people about our other health promotional events. A number of visitors registered their interest in attending our vegetarian cookery classes and the health promotional



A visitor choosing some of the free literature



Taking blood pressure

meetings scheduled for 1 November. We are excited about the positive progress of our health ministry and pray that God will continue to bless our outreach in His name.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER

## Together since primary school

Congratulations to lifelong members of Stanborough Park Church, Llew and Margaret Meredith, who celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary on 28 October last year.

As children, Watford-born Llew and Margaret were neighbours in Sheepcot Lane, were students at Stanborough Park School and attended Stanborough Park Church. Not surprisingly they established a close friendship, with one contemporary describing them as 'inseparable'. Over the years their friendship turned to love and they were married in Stanborough Park Church on 28 October, 1955.

Following their marriage they continued to live in the Watford area, where they brought up their two daughters, Corinne and Sharon. They are now proud grandparents of four grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren, soon to be twelve.

The couple completed 62 years of denominational service between them before retiring.

JUNE COOMBS



## Pastor S. M. Gill honoured

On 31 October last year, Langley Church expressed its deep appreciation for the services of its pastoral couple, Pastor and Mrs S. M. Gill. The couple were traditionally honoured: Pastor Gill with a garland of flowers, and his wife with a bouquet. The pastor also received a gift in appreciation for his years of faithful ministry – all funded by the members.

The congregation also showed typical Indian respect for Pastor John Ferguson, NEC Executive Secretary, who was there to represent the conference administration. He was also given a garland of flowers by Stephen Joseph, the choir leader. After the service the event was celebrated with a good church lunch.



ROHET SUBRAI

## NEC Sabbath School Congress 2015

'The Sabbath School is under attack, with poor attendance and fewer people studying the Bible: this means the very fabric of our faith is being damaged.' These were among the strong words that came out of the discussion around the question, 'What is happening in your Sabbath School?'

'We need to fight back!' was the response that arose at the NEC Sabbath School Congress held over the weekend of 16-18 October 2015.

Friday evening started with the clarion call, 'We cannot let Sabbath School die in the Remnant Church!' The whole room agreed that we must stand together and deal with this situation. For too long now our Sabbath Schools have become like 'waiting rooms for Divine Service'. This is particularly sad because we have the best-written and most well-established daily Bible study guides worldwide.

On the Sabbath morning the NEC President, Pastor Lorraine Johnson, challenged the audience to 'Rebuild the walls of Sabbath School', and like Ezra to study the Word, live it, and teach it. This message was uplifting and a positive atmosphere filled the place. The teams were then taught by Beulah Plunkett, NEC Sabbath School Director, to 'prioritise' and create their ideal Sabbath School. This resulted in suggestions such as arranging for more time to study the lesson; helping members grow spiritually; teaching the classes in an interactive way; focusing on the Bible being studied in small groups; encouraging one class per week to go out witnessing and to report back . . . the ideas flowed and members agreed to go back to their churches with renewed zeal.

Other workshops included making a promotional video for Sabbath School, and identifying what we as Adventist Christians should know, understand and be able to do, and how Sabbath School could support this process of Christian education. 'The Sabbath School is the primary religious education system of the Adventist Church.' (*Church Manual*, p. 103, 2005.) As such it needs to provide teaching and learning for all age groups and this includes children, youth and adults. Sabbath School has an 'in-reach' and 'out-reach' mandate, and we need to adapt to the changing times and ensure that our new members are taught the word of God and fitted to reach others for Christ.

On Sunday morning Pastor Alan Hush, NEC Pathfinder Director, gave our teams a devotional message to send them on their way.

All who attended were encouraged by the messages and the training, to step out in faith and achieve our plans and ideas for Sabbath School.

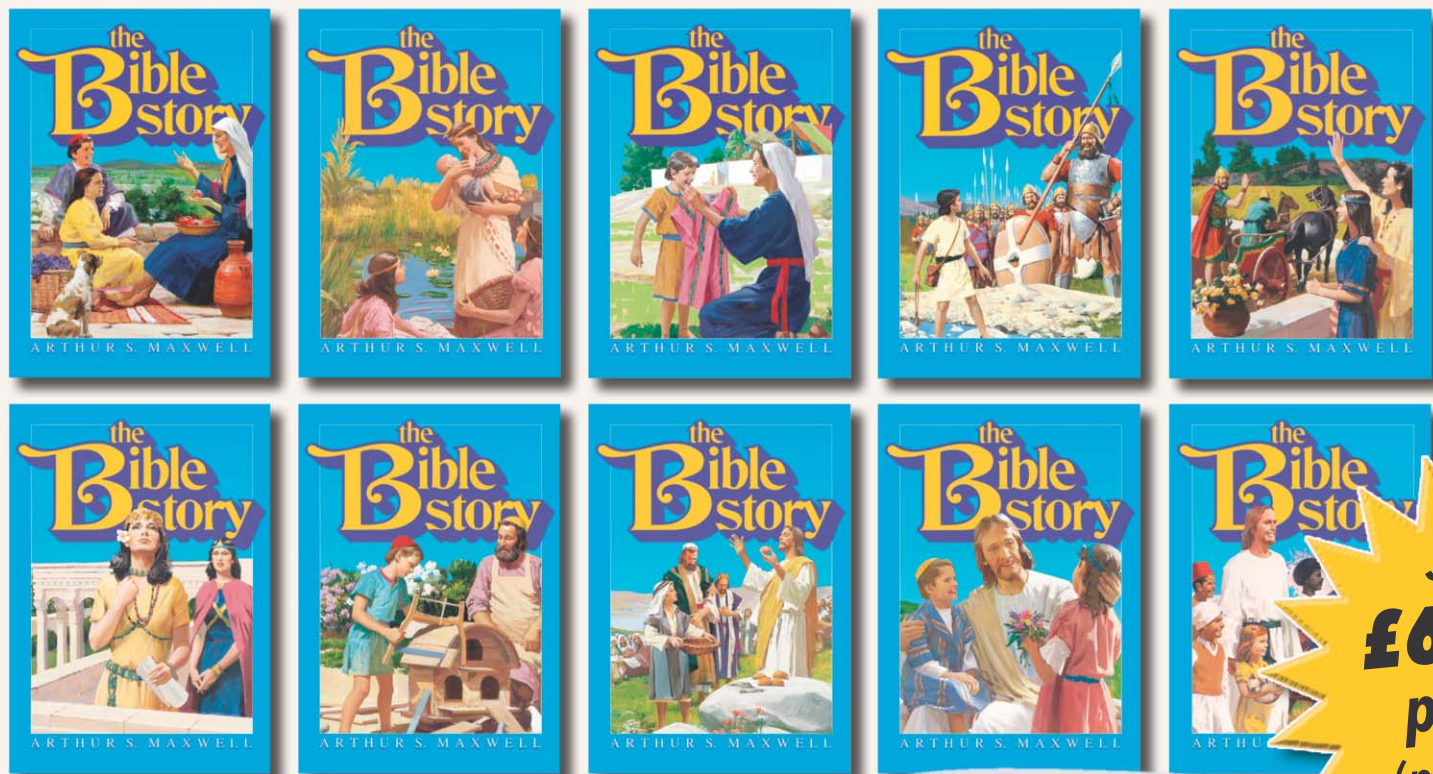


BEULAH PLUNKETT



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### Good memories

Sometimes when we look back across our childhood years we remember only the not-so-nice things. For me, however, the one thing that sticks out in my mind is my father reading us stories from Uncle Arthur's Bible

Story books.

Book after book full of lovely stories that would lead us into prayer time and then into a deep and peaceful sleep. This is why I bought a set for my own children when they were young. Although I was not always the person who would read to them, regular reading took place, and they went to bed with happy feelings and a sense of being special.

Just to illustrate the impact of Uncle Arthur's work, one of my daughters came home one day looking for our old set of his *Bedtime Stories* that I had given to another family. She had wanted to use the set for her children. So before my grandson was born I bought her a set for him, and she was delighted with it!

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MALIKA BEDIAKO (SEC. FAMILY MINISTRIES ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR)



### What an amazing offer!

As a child Arthur S. Maxwell's *Bible Story* set had pride of place on our bookshelf, and I have fond memories of the family gathering together for worship as Mum read us these wonderful stories. We could picture each scene, made even more intense by our vivid imaginations. These books opened up the Bible in a tangible way to our young enquiring minds.

We live in a world where gadgets hold sway. As for books, there are so many popular adventure stories like those about Alex Rider and Wimpy Kid, far too many to mention. But how do these books impact our children? How do they assist in their character formation? How do they affect their relationship with God? In Deuteronomy 6:7 God directs us to disciple our children, to teach them about Him, His love and His faithfulness, His statutes and the marvellous plan of salvation.

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PASTOR PATRICIA DOUGLAS (NEC FAMILY MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR)

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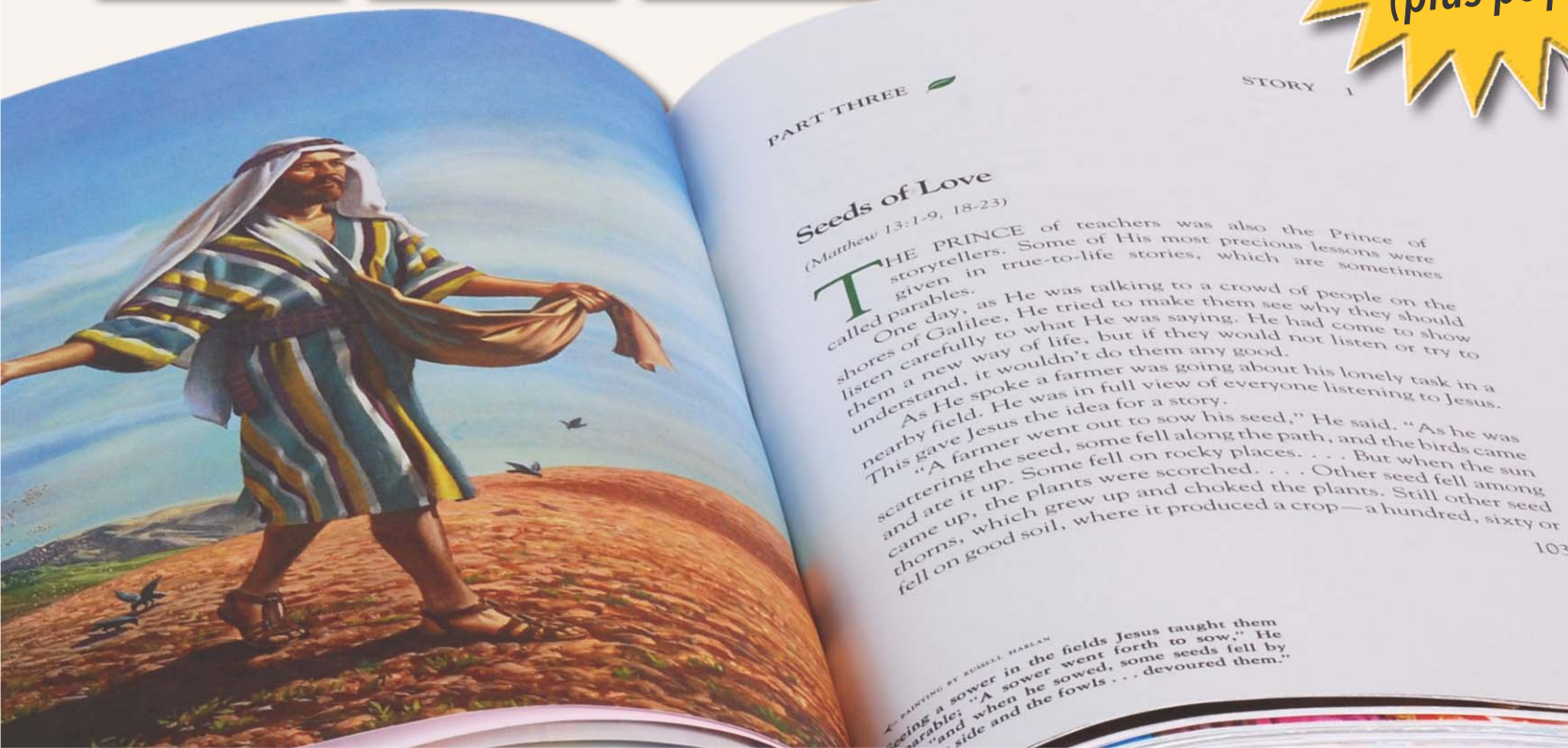
And what's more, there is an additional discount of £5 per set to anyone ordering at least five sets for delivery to a single address! This is a great opportunity for our churches to acquire sets for their local congregational library.

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What a lovely way to introduce the gospel to your family and close friends, especially during this advent season.

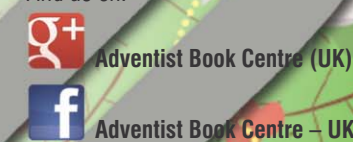
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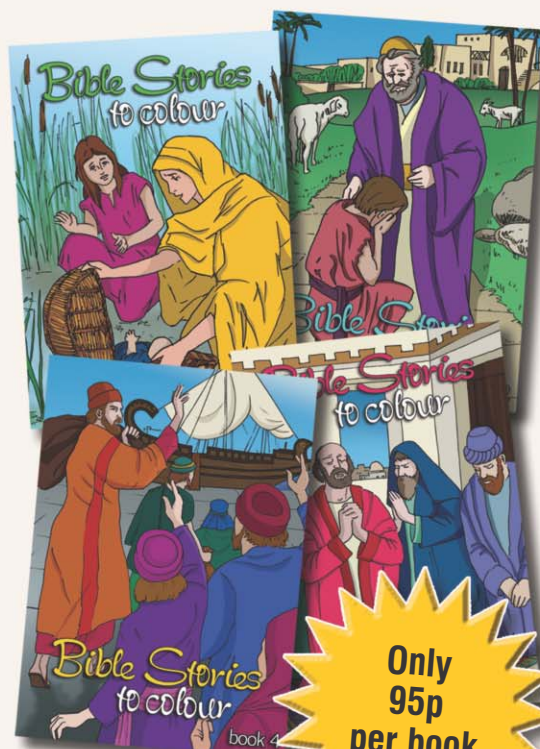
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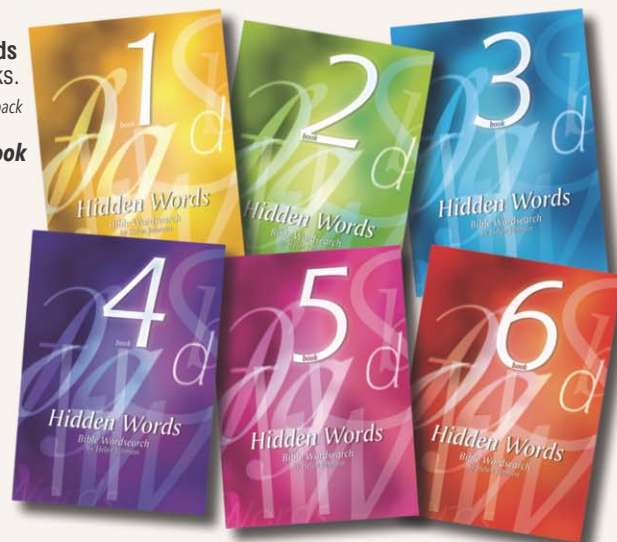


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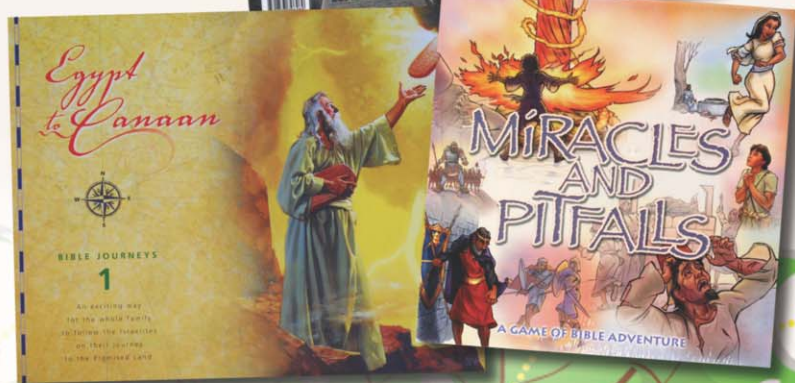
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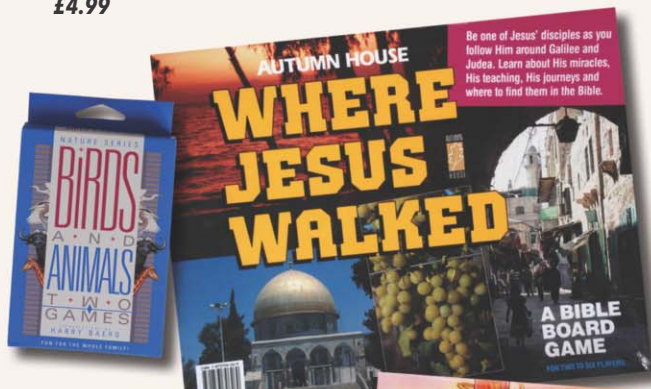
'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'  
Jeremiah 29:11

Don't worry about anything but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart.  
Philippians 4:6

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.  
Isaiah 41:10



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## 'Boosted for another year'

This phrase reflected the feelings of the delegates who attended the tenth annual ASNA carers' weekend, which took place at the Hellidon Lakes Golf and Spa Hotel during the weekend of 30 October to 1 November 2015. Set in the glorious Northamptonshire countryside, delegates enjoyed inspirational praise and worship led by Chris Rogers, a professional musician, who based his ministry on the theme, 'Trust God's Heart'. Chris also blessed the delegates with his skilful violin playing during worship and the carers' banquet.

Pastors Maureen Rock and Maslin Holness (SEC Women's Ministries Director) encouraged the carers with their presentations. Pastor Rock illuminated the essence of God's will in our lives and that we need to trust Him no matter what challenges or unexpected circumstances may come our way. Pastor Holness reminded us of the story of Nicodemus, and how Jesus saw his heartfelt need and encouraged him to stop running from his challenging situation and follow Him.

A morning devotional by Lydia Ackah was said to be 'life changing'. Her encouraging words and admonition to think positively and 'leave your burdens at the foot of the cross' left delegates saying that the words 'impacted my thoughts and have made me want to change my way of thinking'.

Delegates who attended the weekend expressed how relaxing, inspiring and educational they found it. First-time guest, Heather, who travelled all the way from Ireland, had seen the advert in the *Messenger*. She expressed that she no longer felt alone in her work. 'There are others who are facing the same things and there are people in the church who are actively trying to help us.'



The Sunday morning 'Looking after your health' session, led by Joni Blackwood, provided excellent insight and practical ideas for making intentional changes towards a stress-free life.

One member expressed how she 'enjoyed the fellowship' and that the 'banquet was absolutely amazing'. The event, ably compered by Jacqui Bingham, brought out the actors, poets and singers lying dormant among the carers and supporters. It was also encouraging to hear delegates say that they were looking forward to next year and that they would tell their friends to attend to receive the blessing too.

We thank the team for their support in making the weekend a success. ASNA was launched in 2001 and became a charity in 2003. The ASNA carers' weekend was introduced in 2005. We would like to express thanks to all the ASNA volunteer carers who have worked tirelessly to make ASNA the charity it is today.

ASNA has produced various carers' resources and launched the Living to Care project (2013). This project, supported by ADRA-UK, produces a training DVD and Carers' Manual and has run over 100 workshops designed to support and educate carers in their challenging circumstances.

We thank God for His continued mercies and look forward to the next ASNA Respite and Training Weekend, scheduled for the Sunningdale Hotel near Virginia Waters from 8 to 11 April 2016.

SOPHIA NICHOLLS (ASNA TRUSTEE/SEC DISABILITY AND DIVERSITY DIRECTOR)



## Camp Hill's Adventist Heritage Month

As part of Camp Hill Church's strategic plan it set aside October to host 'Adventist Heritage Month', during which the Sabbath morning's sermons focused on distinct Adventist themes. Pastor Herbert led the way by preaching on the 'Three Angels' Messages', the 'Blessed Hope', and what happened 'After the Disappointment'. The elders also supported, giving presentations on the '2,300-day Prophecy' and 'Modern-day Happenings' in relation to our church.

All the hymns we sang were written by pioneer song writers and we learned that Franklin Edson Belden provided much input into the writing of many of our hymns. Hymns by Annie Smith, Uriah Smith, and Wayne Hooper were also sung. One of the favourite songs used during the month was F. E. Belden's 'Look for the Waymarks', a hymn portraying the themes of Daniel 2.

The month climaxed with guest speaker, Dr R. Antic of the Ellen G. White Estate, Newbold, preaching on 'The Relevance of Ellen G. White in the Twenty-first Century'. He also gave a presentation on the 'Hermeneutical Issues Related to the Bible and Ellen White's Writings', and answered the audience's many questions.

NATAILE SUTHERLAND-WHITEHOUSE



## The 'Ringing Richards' ring on!

On Friday, 2 October 2015, Charles and Daphne Richards of the Bournemouth church celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary with their family and friends at the Cottonwood Hotel, Bournemouth.

They first met when Charles, from Stourbridge, was studying Glass Design at the Royal College of Art in London and Daphne (née Gelleff) was an accounts clerk at Sperry Gyroscope in West London. Daphne was brought up in the Seventh Day Baptist Church, Argyll Hall, Holloway. They married at St John's Church, Isleworth, and worshipped at Chiswick Seventh-day Adventist Church.

During the years, together with their two children, Deidre and Mark, they rang hand-bells for many occasions in Britain, South Africa, Australia and North America. They played for Pastor John F. Coltheart's evangelistic meetings in Holland. They have become known as the 'Ringing Richards' and still play in church and at local care homes. Christchurch Priory, where Charles used to ring the bells in the church tower, played a quarter peal to mark their diamond wedding anniversary. Queen Elizabeth II sent them a beautiful card with her congratulations and photograph.

They agreed that the secret of such a long and happy marriage has been their faithfulness to their wedding vows made on 2 October 1955, and the blessing of God our Heavenly Father.

PASTOR RICHARD VINE



## AMEN UK Conference

The 140 attendees of the annual Adventist Medical Evangelism Network (AMEN) UK Conference were surprised by a weekend of tasty vegan meals by Ben Asamani, head chef in a London vegan restaurant and member of the Croydon church. The conference was held at Newbold on 3-4 October.

AMEN is an international organisation with the aim of motivating, training, and equipping Seventh-day Adventist medical professionals to team up with pastors and members in health evangelism. AMEN UK's president, Dr Christopher Levy, said that it wanted to follow the 'example of Christ, where He fed the hungry, healed the sick and then bade them to follow Him'.

The main Sabbath speaker was Dr Clarence Ing, MD, former medical director of the Weimar Centre of Health and Education's NEWSTART Lifestyle Programme, who spoke on the effectiveness of health evangelism, especially when we practise what we preach. He shared his life journey of moving to a plant-based diet and raising his children on it. Throughout the weekend Dr Ing shared a wealth of knowledge from his many years of experience in the management of chronic diseases, cancer and various food-borne diseases.

The weekend included inspiring mission stories from three AMEN members. Dr Peter Yesudian, an oral surgeon in Swindon, testified of his experience in Kenya. 'It was moving to see how people were receptive to the word of God after we treated their teeth,' Dr Yesudian said. He added, 'I know for sure that I have no skills to preach, but I am convinced that I can use my dentistry to evangelise.'

Dr Adam Ibrahim, who trained as a GP before moving to psychiatry, is the AMEN UK secretary and an elder in Wimbledon Church. He shared his church's successful health ministry programme in Latvia, a programme that led to baptisms. Dr Ibrahim stressed that health evangelism is not about discouraging people from seeking medical help, but to reach people at their point of need. 'We live in a broken world; our bodies are broken too; some people are born feeling pain, they need to seek medical attention and receive treatment,' he said.

Dr Judith Antwi, a paediatric registrar and AMEN UK's treasurer, inspired everyone through her experience in training at PEACE and at the Weimar Institute in California. She said, 'Start wherever you are, be it in your community or local church; use the skills and expertise you have and surely God will help you.'

Chef Ben's good food led him into sharing tips on vegan eating and why it is vital to be active in the health message. 'People are searching for the truth, and I have found food to be a common ground of communicating our gospel,' he said.

Mrs May Ing, a registered dietician and former NEWSTART ambassador, presented talks on the benefits that a plant-based diet has for maintaining optimum weight.

For more information on AMEN UK and future events, contact us on [info@amenuk.org](mailto:info@amenuk.org). Follow us on Twitter (@AMEN\_UK), or Facebook (AMEN).

JUDITH MAKANIANKHONDO



## Fletewood Harvest Festival

The school celebrated its Harvest Festival on Friday 2 October last year. Each year we support the Shekinah Mission with the donations of food our parents give. This is a local charity that helps homeless people with food, clothing, and a shower and supports them in re-training programmes with a view to their re-employment.

In addition to this, each year we set a target to raise money for some deserving charity, either at home or abroad. This year we discovered that CLIC Sargent was celebrating its tenth birthday. This is a charity that supports children with cancer and their families, and we thought it would be a good choice.

Just over two weeks before the Harvest programme we set what seemed to be an impossible target of £1,000 – for a school of just 66 pupils! But we were proved wrong. Classes Three and Four held sales of homemade cakes, sweets, books and clothing. Two parents organised a school lunch for the children; Class One pupils baked cakes and they held a parents' coffee afternoon; and Class Two filled 'Smarties' tubes with pound coins, along with a borrowed ADRA tin that was filled to the brim.

We also produced a DVD of the Harvest programme that was sent out to all of our families with the option for them to make donations. During our programme short videos were shown highlighting the devastating effect that childhood cancer has on families. Quite a few of the audience were in need of a tissue as the tears rolled down their cheeks. One of the members of staff also purchased a gold ribbon badge from CLIC for each of the children to wear during the performance. Before we knew it our thermometer chart was almost at the £1,000 mark. With a last few sales and donations the goal was achieved. Well done Fletewood! I'm sure that the money we raised will help lots of very sick children and bring a smile to their faces.

JULIA HALL



## Messenger

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