She looked into my eyes begging that the church would do something to help girls like her daughter. This mother yearned to have others in the church aware that what happened in her family could happen to them too. A happy home with a carefree teen, but all that changed with the arrival of the 'Christian' lodger. 'My daughter,' she explained, 'went from an outgoing girl doing well at school to a morose and aggressive person.' Things went from bad to worse, her argumentative and abusive behaviour at home and school eventually resulted in a once loving teenager dropping out of school and living on the streets. 'She rarely contacted us at home. It is only recently, at the age of 30, that my daughter has told of the horrendous ordeal she had kept to herself for half of her lifetime. The "wonderful" lodger had secretly abused her. Controlling her through his threats of further violence.'

Looking into the mother's eyes I listened to this distraught parent whose home had become a place where her beloved child was not safe from harm.

Today these events still happen, although statistically it is the 16-year-old male who is most at risk. Statistics reveal how many people we know at church are at risk. In a study conducted in one union in North America with over 500 randomly selected Adventist church members responding, 56% said that physical abuse had been directed toward them or their siblings in the homes in which they grew up. Significant levels of physical, emotional and sexual abuse were reported by the nearly 8,000 randomly selected respondents to the Adventist Family Study initiated by the General Conference Department of Family Ministries in 1994. A range of 8-18% of female respondents reported being sexually abused. (The range indicates the highest and the lowest percentages). The percentages of women reporting physical (15-43%) and emotional abuse (27-69%) were considerably higher than those reporting sexual abuse. On average, women reported greater levels of abuse than men. A range of 4-12% of males reported sexual abuse, 15-55% physical abuse, and 6-37% emotional abuse. As with women, reports of sexual abuse among men were lower than other forms of abuse. These are not merely numbers on a page. Translate them directly to the faces in your congregation.

People who are abusive reflect the nature of Satan. They want power and control over others. While God gives freedom of will Satan’s followers seek control through coercion and threats, intimidation that causes self doubts and blame, physical and sexual abuse, economic dependency and neglect. Usually this is done in an atmosphere of secrecy making a person feel isolated and alone. We see some of these things used effectively by Satan upon Jesus when the Son of God went to the desert after his baptism. Matthew 4:1-11.

If you are the Son of God…
- intimidation and self-doubt.
- throw yourself down…
- if you don’t, you deny God’s promise and if you do get hurt – you are the one to blame.
- bow down and worship…
- absolute control to be given.
- all this will be yours…
- economic power exhibited.

This took place when Jesus was alone and isolated. It must have been a great relief to Jesus to have the angels come and attend him. Likewise, those who are being abused are looking for a ministry of compassion and care within the church.
Is there anything about these figures you find remarkable?

Twenty years ago I was reviewing surveys of church attendance in the British Isles – and they were much lower! I suspect that the 18.9% ‘a month’ church attendance for Britain has been artificially inflated by the fact that those in the ‘Third Wave Survey’ were surveying religion, not specifically Christianity. Hence their findings reflect Islamic immigration into European countries (there are apparently 37 million Muslims in Europe) and the mosque-attending habits of Muslims, as well as the presence of Christianity and the church-attending habits of Christians. Given that in multi-faith Britain, for example, only 2.5% of the population are said to be adherents of religions other than Christianity that cannot be the whole explanation by any means. The TIME magazine team used their access to an advanced copy of the religious survey to do their own survey of Christians in Europe. While highlighting the fact that Christianity is a minority faith and that church attendance is falling, almost despite themselves they reviewed the state of Christianity in Europe in a way that was (almost) upbeat.

Both at national and individual levels, religion is going private,’ says the TIME team. Grace Davie, an Exeter University sociology lecturer, is quoted as sensing a clear and widespread ‘spearheading for something beyond’ in British society.

A loss of the tradition and knowledge base, but a continued religious sensitivity. The conclusion of the TIME team? ‘Your faith may not be like your grandmother’s. But this is not the end of Christianity at all.’ Yes-s-s-s!

It would appear that, whereas in the sixties and seventies, the scientific-secular (modern) spirit made a Christian profession in schools and workplaces a steep, uphill experience, the current postmodern spirit is more accepting of professing Christians. Hence the Zeitgeist that has made space for the ecletic New Age movement has also made space for Christianity in its various forms. ‘Christians,’ says the TIME team, ‘remains Europe’s main religion, with about 550 million professing Christians. Hence the Zeitgeist that has made space for the ecletic New Age movement has also made space for Christianity in its various forms.’

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It’s been a long day. The journey from our home to the Pontins, Prestatyn Sands took four hours, 25 minutes and three seconds and, believe me, I was counting. By the time I arrived I was hot, sweaty and exhausted and simply wanted to ‘crash’. Unfortunately, it was not possible as I needed to register, pick up my keys, clean the chalet and unpack my luggage – and all this before cooking an evening meal, having a shower and rushing over to the 7.45 evening service. I literally slumped into a chair in the auditorium, and waited for sleep to hit me. However, something else hit me, much harder than sleep. It also roused me from my drowsy, indifferent attitude. My soul was stirred and my senses awakened as over 2,000 people joined in singing praises to God. It was great to see our music co-ordinator, Pastor Ron Edwards, lead the congregation to the throne of God with Adventist classics. It was good to see Pastor Don McFarlane, president of the South England Conference, after his planned absence last year. He enthusiastically and warmly welcomed the members to Camp Meeting 2003. He also introduced the main speaker for the event, Pastor Ezra Mendinghall, director of the Regional Department of the Pacific Union Conference. In this, his first sermon, he chose as his subjects Esau and Jacob, and the family situation surrounding these brothers. His narrative was expected to look after it as if it were a real-life baby, and the dolls did all the interesting things that babies do! I spoke to a young lady who was holding her ‘baby’. I asked her if, after having the ‘doll-baby’ for a few hours, she would willingly go and have a real baby of her own at her age. She emphatically told me, ‘No way, man!’. Evidently the programme worked for at least one teen!

I woke late this morning, after a rather late night. Family and friends visited after the meeting, so we stayed up chatting till ‘the wee small hours’. I was bleary-eyed and missed the prayer session. I didn’t feel ready to leave my marquee, so I hurried over at 8:15 to the Lunar Bar and struggled my way to the main hall listening to Pastor Juneroy Nugent, who used to minister in the main speaker for the contemporary and laid-back style of worship. His attire of jeans and T-shirt reflected his modern attitude. At the end of the service I spent a few moments of silence in the prayer chapel inside the marquee. On my way back this evening I met Pastor Jansen and Mrs Gloria Trotman, from Caribbean Union Conference. They expanded on the value of romance and encouraged me to buy one of their books. Unfortunately, I didn’t have any money on me at the time, but what I learned from them in those few short minutes will last me a life-time.

I went to bed with a lot on my mind. Are Adventists superstitious? Of course not! This was a question discussed on CMTV this morning. No conclusions were drawn.

I attended some of the workshops today. Some had really interesting titles, such as: Singleness, with Val Bernhard, Doing Church in a secular society, with Bobby Bovell; a young intern, Permission to Worship, Permission to Change, with David Neal and David Foster.

This evening, nearly 3,000 campers took part in a sacred Communion service. Despite unforeseen hiccups, I was blessed by the
New for 2003: Special Seminars

Family Life
Jeffrey & Pattijean Brown

Health
Dr Clemency Mitchell

How to be rich - God’s way
Deborah Harris

Also:
Special guest speaker
Dr Jeffrey Brown

The London Adventist Chorale

Come and join them to Celebrate their 21st birthday with a day of praise and worship!
An outstanding Church Communicator

Did Programme 3 at this year’s SEC camp meeting make a difference? its purpose was to demonstrate a holistic experience of worship. The informal but developed an understanding of the Christian virtues. The morning workshops of Drama 101 and ‘Permission to worship, Permission to Change’ were well attended. Pastor Aris Vontzalidis, the programme leader, added a refreshing yet relaxed side to the programme. ‘Did Programme 3 at this year’s SEC camp meeting make a difference? its purpose was to demonstrate a holistic experience of worship. The informal but developed an understanding of the Christian virtues. The morning workshops of Drama 101 and ‘Permission to worship, Permission to Change’ were well attended. Pastor Aris Vontzalidis, the programme leader, added a refreshing yet relaxed side to the programme. ‘One of the most profound ways that God spoke to me during this week in this new environment he met Rhona Howell, who subsequently became his wife for more than fifty-six years. Following his graduation in 1942, Victor entered the ministry in North England, and it was there that he married Rhona. When Pastor George Vandeman came to London to conduct hugely successful evangelistic campaigns in the late 1930s, he was called to be a team member. Several hundred people joined the church as a result of the Vandeman campaigns, and the New Gallery chapel in the prestigious Regent Street, was acquired to serve as a permanent evangelistic centre and meeting place for the newly formed church, with Victor serving as the director/pastor. In 1954 Pastor Cooper became the speaker for the Voice of Prophecy broadcasts which were transmitted every Friday evening from the powerful Radio Luxembourg station. This was the first introduction to Pastor Cooper, as the voice ministry was the instrument whereby a Merseyside teenager and his mother developed an understanding of the Christian faith, and subsequently joined the church. During this time the Cooper family lived on Stanborough Park, and their home was an ever open door to young people in the area. As Audrey Baidleston reflects, ‘Victor and Rhona were two special people who became part of my life in the early sixties. Thiers was the first home I stayed in when I came to England, and their friendship, kindness and encouragement meant a great deal to me. David had been a frequent visitor in their home while he was growing up, and we were always welcomed warmly whenever we dropped in. In Victor’s passing I feel I have lost a father-figure and a mentor. He was always so interested in what I was doing, and offered season advice, direction and encouragement. Above all, he was a Christian gentleman who exuded a joy of life which was infectious.’ During his term as Executive secretary and Communication director of the British Union, Victor pioneered the ‘Dial-a-Prayer’ service which greatly enhanced the image of the church throughout the UK. He initiated a church display unit which was transported to the Royal Carnival and Welch Shows, and a national Church and School Exhibition at Earl Court. He liaised with Associated Television in the production of Britain’s first documentary on Adventists – a thirty minute programme called ‘The Saturday People’. The writer also worked with Victor at that time in connection with a ‘Britain on the Move’ campaign. Pastor Cooper then survived a couple of bomb scares during his term as president of the Irish Mission from 1971-73, when there was much political unrest in the northern region where the family was based. The final fifteen years of Victor’s full-time service were spent happily at the Church’s world headquarters. This assignment took him to many countries as a consultant and lecturer. Jean Sequina remembers one particular visit by Victor together with Jack Mahon, who was then the Communication director for the Afro-Mid-east Division. ‘Our family was located in an isolated mission station somewhere in East Africa, and a visit by these two stately gentlemen graced our dwelling-place with a touch of refinement and eloquence – with some fine Cadbury’s chocolate thrown in! It was their genuine interest in our welfare which meant so much to my husband Jack and me in our loneliness.’ One of his colleagues, James Chase, comments, ‘He excelled as a writer, as a speaker, and as a winner of souls. Also, he was ever on the alert for new and more effective ways to spread the Gospel. He and Rhona endeared themselves to a notable number of people in many countries, languages, and races.’ Among Pastor Cooper’s wide range of responsibilities at the General Conference was board membership of several national and international TV organisations. Whether Victor was serving as the compiler for a General Conference mission pageant with an audience of 40,000, communicating the Gospel through the air waves of Radio Luxembourg, leading youth camps for hundreds of young people, serving as a church administrator, or being a husband, a father, a counsellor, or a friend, one characteristic was particularly noticeable – Victor Cooper was truly a man of God. One of daughter Helen’s friends reinforced this point so well when she wrote, ‘Your dad was so special – a true Christian gentleman, whose insight, humility, and sensitivity endeared him to us, and greatly enriched our lives. He will miss his engaging smile, and the warmth of his personality.’ Another contemporary from the GC Communication department, Robert Nixon, pays the following tribute: ‘Most important of all, Victor was a master communicator for our Lord when he was off the job too – when he was dealing with family, friends, and neighbours. What a radiant and joyful Christian he was. He integrated the best of Christianity into his daily life. The mere mention of his name, Victor Cooper, gives me a good and happy feeling. What more can we say of a person, than that he made a positive contribution for his Lord in all that he did? I am tempted to be sad, but I cannot be, because I know that if Victor were here today, he would give me a grand smile and say, ‘Cheer up, Bob. The best is yet to be!’ The farewell service for Pastor Cooper, led by Pastors Ian Sleeman and Henrik Jorgensen, was attended by relatives and several hundred friends and associates. At a time of great loss, sympathy is expressed to daughter Helen and son Richard, to Victor’s five grandchildren, Emma, Martin, Todd, Ross and Joelle, and to his sisters Joy Roe and Myrtle Cooper. In the course of his life Victor moved home on at least twenty occasions. After a temporary rest in the grave, both he and wife Rhona will surely make their final move to a mansion in the heavenly kingdom. Victor’s family wish to thank everyone for their cards and messages of support during Victor’s illness and since his death.'
Abuse Emphasis Day • YOU Can Make A Difference

church and society, like the heavenly courts, also have individuals who want to exercise power and control. Those in a position of trust must speak up and respond by making the church and home safer places. How can we help to make our church and homes safe places – especially for our young people to grow into well balanced, happy Christians?

Firstly, by facing up to the statistics that dramatically show that all types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect are reflected in our congregations too. We must take steps to increase the understanding of the factors that contribute to abuse and develop ways to prevent its cycle from recurring within families.

Secondly, the church leadership is to ensure there are guidelines, not only on paper, but actively in place. In the British Union such guidelines are in policy document, ‘Keeping the Church Family Safe’. A training programme based on the policy is being run for all those involved in organising and running children’s events that are church sponsored. Appropriate forms are to be signed, not only as before like Pathfinder leaders, but by all those involved with children.

Thirdly, the church is to be broken on the topic of abuse, whether it be against children or adults. A Sabbath each year is now allocated to helping each member to be aware of how to prevent or deal effectively with all types of abuse. Material for this day, 5 July, will come through the Women’s and Family Ministries department but it is prepared by the General Conference Abuse Prevention Emphasis Day Committee made up of representatives from the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, Adventist Review, Children’s, Family, Health, Women’s and Youth Ministries. Education department and Ministerial association. This joint department initiative recognises that we are living in the ‘sabbath day’. In 2 Timothy 1:1-4, listed with signs of other last day events is abusive behaviour. Recognising that this world-wide problem needs addressing, you as an individual can help to make your home and church safer, caring places by:

• Listening to and accepting those suffering from abuse; and loving and affirming them as people of value and worth.
• Seeking to provide both the victims and perpetrators with access to the full network of the professional resources available.
• Offering a ministry of reconciliation when the perpetrator’s repentance means they accept full responsibility for the wrongs committed, and a willingness to make restitution and change behaviour to eliminate abuse.
• Focusing on the Gospel message that enables husband-wife, parent-child and other close relationships to grow towards God’s ideal for their lives.
• Do not ostracise either the victim or the perpetrator, but do not sanction what has happened by ignoring it. Remember: God expects us to call sin by its right name.
• Educating our children to know that God created them special and that no one has the right to act towards them in an abusive manner. The new Family Ministries’ ‘sexuality and curriculum’ and Women’s Ministries 2004 Mentoring programme will highlight this topic.
• Displaying on the church notice boards helpful tips for both children and adults needing professional counselling. Contacting the conference Family Ministries department. Executive secretary or Mission president for details about ‘Keeping the Church Family Safe’ training programme.
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Keeping the Church Family Safe • You Can Make a Difference

upcoming

EVENT WHEN WHERE WHO HOW
Disability Ministry Training Awareness Days 12 July Oxford Church, Oxford Dublin Church, Ireland Adventist Special Needs Association
Creative Ministries Launch – Get Connected! A New Beginning 3 August Advent Centre, London London Youth Federation Contact: Mansa Maringo
ASNA Family Fun Day 10 August Cathedral MINI site, Parks and Gardens, Harford, Seventon, cathedralminster@ncl.com
ASNA ASNA, ASNA members £5 ASNA members, £6 AS NA leaders, £8

key stage 1 teacher to cover maternity leave
Harper Boll Adventist School is seeking for a highly motivated, caring and enthusiastic colleague with drive and commitment to join our dedicated team for one year while a member of staff is on maternity leave.
The Board of Governors invites applications from teachers who are sympathetic to the ethos of our Seventh-day Adventist school and who have the ability to contribute actively to the full life of our school. The successful candidature will demonstrate sound understanding of the Nation’s Curriculum and an understanding of high standard of teaching. Those positions will provide excellent opportunities for enthusiastic teachers to play leading roles in the school.
Please send current CV with supportive statement to Mr. C. Stewart, Headteacher, Harper Boll School, 29 Ravenstreet, Birmingham B12 9JJ. Tel: 0121 608 7742. Fax: 0121 608 6752. E-mail: Asna.teachmar@7dayadaptiveschool.co.uk. Closing date – Thursday 31 July 2003.

key stage 2 teacher

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