Have you noticed that the annual Ingathering campaign seems to come round more frequently than annual holidays? Maybe that’s because the Ingathering period is longer than the holiday period. We have only two or three weeks for collecting, but it’s already been Missions headlines for several weeks, and for me certain butterflies (the stomach variety) arrived earlier this year than usual: the daffodils I associate with the start of Ingathering started blooming in February instead of March.

Why am I saying this? Because I know I’m not the only one who has to take a deep breath and pray for strength when I knock on my first door. For most of us it doesn’t come naturally. But is that sufficient reason for not doing our part? I don’t think so. Join me in taking courage from a few reflections.

God moments
I usually feel closer to God when I pray than when I’m reading the newspaper. And I have to lean more on God when I’m asking people to give to ADRA than when I’m paying my bill at the supermarket check-out. Going door to door, I meet a surprising number of truly good people, and occasionally have the opportunity to talk heart to heart. God draws near.

It’s not about me
At the end of the day ADRA Ingathering isn’t about me and my pathetic butterflies. It’s about others and their desperate needs. Others I’ve never met to be sure, except via the TV, perhaps, or more importantly via Jesus, and he’s Someone most of us have met. Remember that he did say something to the effect that we meet him in the person of the poor?

But it IS about me
I stand corrected. ADRA Ingathering is about me. Whether I like it or not (and I can’t say that I do) we grow through doing the difficult things. We don’t grow spiritually or otherwise, by doing only the things we find easy. This has to be one of the main reasons why God has invited us to partner with him in the building of his kingdom, even though he could do it all by himself.

What Jesus did with the loaves and fishes he could do with coins and bank notes. But he doesn’t because he wants us to grow. One Bible translation says, ‘Grow up!’ (The Message on Matthew 5:48.)

Feel-good factor
There is a sense of satisfaction that is gained through doing something worthwhile, that is gained in no other way. With ADRA Ingathering, I find this comes after I’ve knocked on the last door for the day; at the end of the collection period; and at any time I think forward and remember what my small contribution will accomplish. I see the smiles on the faces of the street children who have been given their first real home with ADRA; I hear the laughter from a group of women who no longer have to carry water every day for two miles, because the village now has its own clean water well. And I feel good.

More ways than one
So far I’ve only reflected on the discipline of knocking on doors to solicit donations. But what about the discipline of walking or running 13 miles in the ADRA half marathon planned for 20 March in Hyde Park? Or the discipline of preparing food for a fund-raising meal at home for friends and neighbours? Or the discipline of a sponsored silence (Holloway youth have done this)? Or the discipline of washing cars, digging gardens, organising a concert or a boot or garage sale, or a hundred other creative ways of raising money? We must by all means send help to those who need it.

More not less
All of the above begs the question of why ADRA Ingathering lasts for only 2½ weeks. Shouldn’t it be an all-year-round thing? Well, in the early days, Ingathering did last all year. And the work of ADRA is 24/7/12 – it never stops. Let’s not think our work is finished once the daffodils have gone. The needs remain. So why shouldn’t a local church adopt an ADRA project long-term? Why not do the hands-on thing and join a short-term mission team abroad? And why not get involved locally in serving the people of your town and your street, all year round? I can’t think of any good reason. Can you?

Let’s just do it. By all means!

ADRA Annual Ingathering Appeal?
By all means!

by David Cox
Personal Ministries director, BUC

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Annual Collection: 26 March - 10 April (extends to 17 April in Greater London)
The strongest argument for Christianity is not something that you say but something that you are

The strongest argument

David Marshall

The strongest argument for Christianity is not something that you say but something that you are.
Kidderminster

BUC workers’ meetings in Kidderminster

Nearly two hundred ministers and other workers from the two Conferences and three Missions of the Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland came together on 21-24 February at the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster for four days of study, worship and fellowship. In his keynote address, Pastor C. R. Perry expanded on the theme of the meetings – “United in Witness of Truth” – and said that as ministers for God we all need to ask a crucial question: ‘Am I true to myself?’

The event was organised by BUC Ministerial Association director Pastor Alan Hodges, who had invited three special guest speakers: Dr Alden Thompson, Dr Roy Adams, and Mr Ian Hamilton. Dr Thompson’s lectures followed the theme of “Pictures to Help Your Church Study the Bible and Stay Together”. Dr Thompson demonstrated Ellen G. White’s spiritual journey. “She matured and developed,” he said.

Ian Hamilton, from Church Resource Ministries, gave a series of presentations entitled “Finishing Well”. He challenged his audience to redefine what they considered to be success and suggested his own definition: “Success is finding out what God wants you to do and then doing it.” He illustrated this principle by studying a number of Bible characters.

Dr Roy Adams spoke on “Issues Facing the Church”. Of his contribution one pastor wrote, “If ever there is someone who exudes authority it is Roy Adams. I cannot think of anyone sitting inside the GC building who is trusted over here more than Roy Adams. He is one of the finest Christian gentlemen one could wish to meet. His preaching is authoritative but humble. A regular visitor to Britain and known well through the pages of the Adventist Review, he seems to have his finger on the pulse about where Adventism is at.”

During Wednesday and Thursday we explored the theme, “United in Witness of Truth”. Alan Hush woke us up gently from our slumber on Wednesday morning with a time of prayer and reflection. Although the Pioneer Centre caters for a younger client, it did remarkably well in catering for us older pastors and, of course, the ones not so old. Each morning we were delivered a feast of a breakfast and the cane-teen buzzed with the sound of friends and colleagues catching up on old times and sharing experiences.

On Wednesday morning Roy Adams spoke on a topic he admitted not dealing with much: spiritual warfare. Ian Hamilton then continued the morning session by asking the question, “What does it take to plant a church?” Ian has been a regular face at conference meetings, talking on the need for a structured church planting strategy within Christian churches. He also spent time with the pastors, speaking on what it means to be a leader and how to overcome some of the burnout by getting our priorities right and concentrating on what God has called us to do.

Wednesday was also the day we let down our hair and tried some physical activity. The Pioneer Centre offered archery, table tennis, soccer, climbing, abseiling and there was even a high-wire activity. Freezing temperatures and blizzards prevented many from opting for outdoor activities, but a small number did wrap up warm and brave the elements.

After all the physical activity it was time for Newbold’s D Daniel Duda to bring us down to earth and back to the Bible. Time was also spent in the afternoon discussing various issues that affected the Church and we were also given an opportunity to ask questions of the BUC officers.

Pastor Eorgeton Francis closed the official proceedings for the day by looking at John 17 and Christ’s prayer for unity. But that was not the end, and Eddie Hypolite and Lee Gallacher entertained us with some very frightening images of people without their makeup and some very special inventions that came all the way from Japan to make a pastor’s life a bit easier.

Thursday’s activities, unfortunately, were cut short by the bad weather and many found themselves leaving early.

Each day was so packed with meetings and workshops we were left with little time to wonder about what was happening back home and, before we knew it, it was time to go. As they say in Ireland, ‘the craic was great’, and most of all, the time spent and shared with peers, friends, and colleagues, although filled with meetings, was restful and refreshing.
John Kirk’s gift

John Kirk has an inspirational story and an amazing gift that he’s using to help God’s glory.

After a miraculous conversion he came back to church. While visiting his daughter, he suffered a severe stroke which left him paralysed on his left side. He was unable to stand, walk or sit up easily. His speech was impaired and I could not swallow. My left arm and hand were useless and my leg dragged. God did not leave me there. I gave him the determination to get up and go to church, to be reabsorbed and this time surrender him to my life for my Saviour for real.

According to my physical condition it was not easy. Trying to do things with one hand took a lot of time and strength. I finally built one so extensive that it said I took over my bedroom and three of my time. I made a deal with God, I said, ‘Lord if you were important that I exercise my hand to get my hand and brain to co-ordinate. I took up building models – boats and cars for the church at 9.30 a.m. meeting up at six. I just try to fasten the top button on my shirt twice as long as 20 minutes; but it

The Voice He gave me

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Out of Africa.

Baptism and wedding anniversary

Mona has visited Wood Green church on rare occasions, but this visit was different. After attending Wood Green church, Theresa expressed her wish to be baptised. She affirmed her stand for Christ, supported by family, friends and church members on 2 August 2003. It was at this helpful baptism that Mona was also helped by Pastor Keith Boldeau, minister of Wood Green and Palmers Green churches. Mona began attending church regularly with her husband and requested Bible study classes, which were conducted by Pastor Boldeau in their home, and on 19 June 2004 Mona publicly made his declaration to follow Christ. Again family members and friends were made very happy.

When asked what led him to make his decision for Christ, he replied, ‘I acknowledge that as a sinner I need Christ in my life. It is also my hope to be ready for the Second Coming of Christ.’

To add to their happiness Mona and Theresa celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary on 4 July 2004. She was asked by Mona what advice he would give to younger married couples and those contemplating marriage. ‘Never be afraid to say I am sorry,’ was his reply. Family, friends, and well-wishers shared their happiness.

John felt it was time to do my part for God. I finally built one so extensive that it said I took over my bedroom and three of my time. I made a deal with God, I said, ‘Lord if you will help me to sell this layout for £500 I will give all the money to ADRA.’

‘It put up for auction on e-bay. The bidding was open for a week and right up to the last hour we had only one bid of £250. Then a rush of bids, until the hour ended with the final bid – £500 exactly. I kept my part of the bargain and ADRA received my cheque for £500.

ADRA would like to thank John for sharing his life story with us and for his three-year fundraising effort!’

Baptist church

It was August last year that the Hackney church held its first every-street fair. Members of the Regentstoners, who were where the church is based, came out and took part in the activities that members had to offer. The fair proved something for everyone. Children took part in a sack race, bounced on the bouncy castle and demonstrated their ball skills in the football competition.

Obituaries

JOAN REID

STANBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The post of Key Stage 1 Teacher will also be available from September. If you would like to be considered, please send in your application with a letter of application outlining your suitability and commitment to quality learning, experience in teaching early years, with a qualified nursery nurse or playgroup worker, or with a relevant and accredited training, Please send all applications by 7 September to Miss T. Beakes, Headteacher, Stanborough Primary School, St Albans Road, Hertford, Herts, SG18 0DS.

BRIXTON PARK ESTATE

JOAN REID

JOAN REID

Hi, my name is Ruth and I am 11 years old. I raised money for ADRA by making cakes to sell at Nottingham Central church. It was really fun making the cakes, and I enjoyed it. I learned that doing something small can help support and conserve the environment.

Hi, my name is Emory Andrews. I am 12 years old, and go to Nottingham Central church. The thing that I did was baking cakes and selling them to people for the money. I wanted to do this because I felt it was time to do my part for those less fortunate and to use my talent for others. KIDS SATURDAY SCHOOL FARNSWORTH

It’s a true story that has brought joy to many people around the world.

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It’s a true story that has brought joy to many people around the world.
James Carlisle started his working life as ‘a humble dentist’ (his words). Then the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda asked James to take over the chair of the National Parks Authority. At the time it was half a million in the red. By the time he left, it was more than $800,000 in the black! Highly impressed by his achievements and honesty, the prime minister asked to see him again.

This time he asked James, a Seventh-day Adventist, to take the post of Governor-general of Antigua and Barbuda, in which role he would be responsible, among other things, for dissolving Parliament, appointing the new prime minister following each election, reading the speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament, and presiding at all state functions. He has now held this position, an appointment made directly by the Queen herself, for eleven years.

In a recent interview he was asked why he thought he had been chosen.

‘I was told it was because I was known to be honest, and though from a poor background had made something of myself. It was felt that my example might inspire youngsters to aim for the skies!’

Sir James added: ‘I consider being a representative of Her Majesty the Queen a tremendous privilege and honour.’

Since his appointment, this champion linguist can no longer go from house to house, but in 2004 he still managed to raise $38,000 towards the Englishing tuition for his local church. And he does take advantage of his position, a little, by giving foreign diplomats gifts of Adventist literature. ‘It would go against protocol for them to refuse something of myself. It was felt that from a poor background had made me known to be honest, and though the time he left, it was more than $800,000 in the black! Highly impressed by his achievements and honesty, the prime minister asked to see him again.

In his early 20s James headed for London where, after a stint in the Royal Air Force, he began the education which led to his receiving a BDS degree at the University of Dundee. After practising as a dentist in Scotland, Wales and England, he returned to his native Antigua. It was while serving there that he was asked to take the post of governor-general.

Sir James and Lady Carlisle have five children, and Lady Carlisle works for the mentally and physically challenged.

So how did Sir James come to say no to Her Majesty? The Accolade (length of ceremony when the Queen places the sword on the knight’s shoulder), was set for a Friday evening, so Sir James respectfully requested that Her Majesty suggest another date, explaining the situation regarding the Sabbath. Far from being affronted by this bold request, as many people thought she would be, the Queen wrote a very understanding letter, setting another date! However, on that date Sir James had to dissolve Parliament, so for the second time he had to ask Her Majesty’s pardon and crave her indulgence! Enough to make any royal personage say they were not amused, but Her Majesty simply said, ‘Well, come to Buckingham Palace, which is where the Accolade eventually took place!’ Since his appointment, among other achievements Sir James has been able to bring about a change in the Public Holidays Act, which now states, ‘when the first day of November (National Day) falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday shall be a public holiday’ (instead), thus helping to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath in the Islands he serves with humility and love.

Christianity ‘stamped out’?

Evangelist Mark Finley is ready for a month-long ‘It Is Written’ public campaign that will broadcast from Kiev, Ukraine, globally via satellite.

The Kiev broadcast, dubbed ‘ACTS 2005’, will be held in the Ukrainian capital’s international Centre of Culture and Arts, and will help bring down the curtain on one of the more audacious claims of former Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev.

Friday will speak from the same stage where, in 1960, Khrushchev gave one of the most widely-reported speeches of his political career, in which he declared that within 25 years religion would be ‘stamped out’ in the nation. Instead of seeing religion eliminated, however, the former Soviet Union opened its doors to people of faith not long after the supposed deadline. Today thousands anticipate the start of the ACTS 2005 event.

More than 65,000 people across the former Soviet Union are engaged in Bible studies in advance of the meetings, and between 1,500 and 2,000 people are expected to sit in the start of the ACTS 2005 event.

Along with the local audience, more than 1,200 locations around the Euro-Asia church region will receive the nightly meetings via satellite or videotape.