Friday evening programme

It was a sight to behold as people entered the new Balham church building at Balham. As members from the past, present and possibly future took their seats in the auditorium, you could sense the suspense and happiness at the prospect of finally being able to worship in the recently completed church. The ‘Past, Present and Future’ programme began with a heartfelt prayer from Pastor Vaughn Thorpe. His prayer mentioned the long road that Balham members had travelled and the exciting one that they were yet to travel! He reminded us that we should always remember how far God had brought us to this wonderful place.

Past Balham member, Carmen Massiah, who returned from Barbados, conducted a rousing song service with many of the traditional hymns that Balham knew and loved. It was almost like being transported back in time.

Balham elder Joseph Clem showed a PowerPoint presentation called ‘One small step for mankind’, paralleling major historical events between 1969 and 2009 for Balham church, which was both thought provoking and insightful, especially for those who did not know the history behind the Balham building project. A time of reflection followed in which we were reminded of those who have passed away during the forty years since Balham was formed. It was a very special moment.

The Balham Senior Choir took to the platform and gave a rousing performance of ‘Beautiful’. The choir consisted of members from past and present, some such as Clinton Monfries Sr, his wife and others who had travelled from overseas in order to be there for this special occasion.

To conclude the evening Pastor Don McFarlane, BUC president, made a presentation relaying his personal appreciation of the role that many had played in completing the project.
Artificial light impact on health

Artificial light has increased societal productivity by extending the length of the productive day, offering more work and recreational time for activities that require light. However, when artificial lighting becomes excessive, ineffective and unmonitored, it is known as ‘light pollution’. Some environmentalists, naturalists and medical researchers regard light pollution as one of the fastest-growing and most pervasive forms of environmental pollution. Additionally, an increasing body of scientific research suggests that light pollution can have lasting adverse effects on both human health and wildlife.

Generally, living organisms have biological rhythms that are linked to the sequence of light and darkness. Over ten years of research has produced studies which suggest that artificial light may have a negative impact on our circadian rhythm and immune system. The reasoning is that artificial illumination is fooling the body’s biological clock into releasing key wakefulness hormones at the wrong times, which negatively impacts emotional and physical health.

Recent studies suggest that women who work nightshifts and out of sync with natural light have higher rates of breast cancer. The recent report in Health Day News (23 October) examined research which suggests that exposure to too much light at night may cause depression. Lead author Laura Fonken, a graduate student in psychology, reports on the negative impact of artificial light at night and the benefits when it was removed. She states: ‘The ability to escape light seemed to quiet the depressive effects.’

Co-author Randy Nelson, professor of Neuroscience and Psychology, added, ‘The increasing rate of depressive disorders in humans corresponds with the increasing use of light at night in modern society. Many people are now exposed to unnatural light cycles, and that may have real consequences for our health.’

He also noted that hospital intensive care units are brightly lit throughout the night, which may have a negative effect on patients. . . . This research is important for people who work nightshifts, and for children and others who watch TV late into the night, disrupting their usual light-dark cycle.

God intended a cycle of light and darkness both for ecological and health benefits. Genesis 1:5: ‘And God called the light day and the darkness he called night.’

We may not understand why those who listened to Jesus were not able to understand his words, as his meaning seems clear to us. Don’t forget that we have the explanation and the context spelled out to make it easier.

I think the truth is that many of us have spiritual misconceptions. Perhaps we have heard a snippet here, a phrase there, and we have internalised it and made it into a belief about life and God. Our understanding may be correct and spot on. On the other hand, like my perception of the postal strike, it may be a distortion of the truth. Fortunately, we have our spiritual ‘Listen Again’ facility – the Bible. Let’s use it – thoughtfully, prayerfully, frequently – to discover how things really are.

Enhancing Health

by Sharon Pratt McDonald RN, RM, RHW, MS.
Health Ministries in Action

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. . . . They have destruction power over ungodly strongholds.
2 Corinthians 10:4.

For seven or eight years for all practical purposes Anika and I had a family of four; two children, two adults, all female. To accommodate them I had to graduate from an Escort to a Cortina, then, as they grew, to a Sierra. The younger child was the more wiggly child, and the older child the more vocal. Usually, anyway.

Before they all fled the couple – and I downsized an Astra – they had taught me many things. I remember one of those things this morning. We were all on a journey to Torbay but before we reached the Leicester ringroad somebody had asked, ‘Are we there yet?’ So we were playing, ‘What if? To be precise, what if you could be anyone, who would you be?’

‘I’d like to be me,’ she said in a way that implied that that should have been obvious even to me. ‘I like me,’ she affirmed.

From that moment I felt good about that child’s process. So, has she gone on to make a fortune? No. That has been her more vocal sibling. The wiggly one is using her 2:1 in Psychology to run a number of women’s refuges (temporary homes for abused women). Currently she is based nearby. She lives alone in a little terraced house, which is her own. More importantly, she is her own person. The person she is happy to be. Herself.

It makes a refreshing change in a world in which it is said, ‘We are not what we are. We are not even what others think we are. We are what we think others think we are.’

All of which conveniently brings up the subject of low self-esteem.

‘My name is Martha Bowers Taft,’ said the young celebrity. ‘My great-grandfather was president of these United States. My grandfather was a United States senator. My daddy is the US ambassador to the Irish Republic. And I am a Brownie.’

We’re apt to think in grand terms, titles, ranks, offices, strata of importance. It isn’t surprising. At age 11 I went to a school which, on the basis of an examination we took on the morning of our arrival, allocated us to one of six streams graded A to F in descending order of perceived giftedness. We are a part of a highly stratified Church based on the idea of election by a number of different constituencies, but even the majority of us do not appear to be enfranchised. Of course, when we are enfranchised – to vote in the officers of our local congregation – we make the most of it. But are we right to take the whole ladder of stratification as seriously as we do? People ring in and say, ‘I am an elder/deacon/PM leader/whatever of such-and-such a congregation’ as if it is their only source of significance. It isn’t. It doesn’t affect worth one way or the other. Your value is intrinsic. In yourself.

Then there are the destructive value systems of our society that dictate that you must be beautiful or highly intelligent. James Dobson writes, ‘If you’re pretty or handsome or if you’re highly intelligent, you’ve got it made in our society. God help you if you’re dumb and ugly.’

Instead we use God’s mighty weapons, not merely worldly weapons, to knock down the devil’s strongholds. . . . ‘Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears; the holy sacrifice in my name wrought for thee. Before the throne of my Saviour stands my name written on his hands.’
Empowering women is crucial
by Don McFarlane and Ian Sleeman

Receiving immigrants with love and equality, including youth in elected church leadership and empowering women were among the issues in a keynote sermon delivered by the Adventist World Church president on Sabbath 10 October. Addressing an audience of world church leadership, he stressed the need for reconciliation and an ambassadorship in service.

The 2009 Autumn Council is the last gathering of church leaders from around the world before the GC Session in Atlanta next year. Consequently, the focus of the agenda was preparation for the GC Session. A revamping of the Church Manual, with a view to making it more mission centred, more user-friendly and a shorter document, occupied a considerable amount of time.

During the attendant discussion delegates kept returning to a key issue — the role of women in the life of the Church. Many church leaders, including the BUC president, were of the view that the time is long past for women to be excluded from any leadership position in the Church. The fact that current church policy prevents the ordination of women as pastors was considered by many to be out of line with the new humanity instituted by Jesus, in which there is no Jew or Gentile, bond nor free, male or female. Many delegates asked for the material of the ordination of women as pastors to be placed back on the agenda for discussion. Two developments regarding the role of women in the Church that encouraged the hearts of many delegates were: 1. A recommendation that deaconesses be ordained, as deacons are, in Divisions where this is approved, and 2. An action that consideration be given to removing the restrictions, from policy which prevent anyone who is not an ordained pastor from serving as president at the various levels of the organisation. What led to this particular action was a desire by many of the delegates that the Church does not exclude women from the most senior position of leadership in their respective fields. It is important to emphasise that this, unlike the action regarding deaconesses, is not a recommendation to the Session but a request that consideration be given to removing the current restrictions that exclude women and other unordained individuals from certain positions. Our Church should be setting an example in demonstrating the all-inclusive nature of the body of Christ.

Still on the theme of equality for women, delegates voted unan-iomously to embark on a campaign, ‘End It Now’, to highlight the need to end violence against women and girls. A recent report by the United Nations in an effort to urge this influential organisation to use its good offices to bring to an end what one could describe as institutional violence against women and girls. The approximately 300 attendees were the first to register the signatures. The Adventist Church is saying clearly that it does not accept culture as an excuse for the mutilation of girls, the sexual exploitation of women and girls, the denial of education to girls based on their gender, domestic violence which is directed against women, and so forth. Delegates were told that one in three women around the world is a victim of physical or psychological violence.

More than 135 million girls and women have been forced to have genital mutilation. An additional two million are at risk each year. In the United States one woman is battered every fifteen seconds by her husband/boyfriend. One in five women around the world will be the victim of rape in her lifetime. Adventists say no to violence against women and girls.

Other news from the Autumn Council: on Wednesday, the Indian Church was finally given a government licence to broadcast the Hope Channel over that vast populous country. This was after a five-year wait.

The Church is growing fast. Over one million people have been added each year for the last six years. The new theme song for the GC Session next June was distributed on Wednesday and practised by the executive. Pastor Ian Sleeman states, ‘I think it is a fantastic song and I will bring it back to my church and hope we can learn it before the Session begins. Miss Guntrip was also thrilled by a report of Pauline’s recent visit to China. He says, ‘It brought tears to my eyes. The Adventist message is growing there in leaps and bounds.’

Is this a valuable time? Sleeman responds as a local church pastor involved in the leadership of a world Church. Loads of church policy items were voted and some minor points laboured at times. Hey-ho! That is a small price we pay for being a representative democratic Church. Yes, it is expensive. Yes, it is time consuming, but… I am very proud of my Church and the way it operates to spread the Good News to every tribe on Earth. For more on the Autumn Council visit http://news.adventist.org.uk/2009-annual-council.

Kingdom dress code
Dear Editor,
Every Adventist should read this article [Missionvision 29 September] and allow the Holy Spirit to penetrate our hardened hearts and convect us of the sin of legalistic judgementalism that is growing, not diminishing, among us.

SARAH GOUDA-MAKA, Ontario

Empowering women is crucial

Feedback

Ruth Dorland Hulbert, Stanborough Park

The silence of God
Dear Editor,
You correctly stated [17 July], ‘The greatest test of the Christian life is to live with the silence of God.’ I hold on to that belief and, at times, even want an instant solution to my problem and, if not instant, I want him to tell me what the problem will be solved. Your words were precisely what I needed.

DEB, Selby

BUC ‘moving home’

Victor Hulbert, Communication director, BUC

Just twelve months after the fire that devastated the Headquarters office of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, staff are delighted to be ‘moving home’. Builders are on target to have completed stage two of the rebuilding programme by the end of November. The current plan is for staff to move from their temporary premises in Frongare to Stanborough Park, Watford, in the week starting Monday 14 December.

During the relocation process the office will be busy packing, moving equipment and restocking the new building. IT and phone systems will also be moved between premises. As a result the office will be closed to the public from noon on Friday 12 December, reopening at 8.15am on Monday 21 December. There will be no phone or email service for part of the week.

The completion of phase two means that staff will once again be working in the same building.

Adventist Discovery Centre and Media Centre staff had working conditions be better than in the temporary offices where staff have been working since January.

Builders will shortly start work on the boardroom end of the building. Planning permission for this section was granted by Watford Borough Council on Thursday 8 October. ‘There is a very evident boost to staff spirits,’ notes Victor Hulbert, BUC Communication director, who witnessed the broad smiles on faces when the announcement was made in a Monday morning worship. More importantly, moving back into permanent premises and work starting on the final section of the building will significantly help the Church to move forward in providing better resources and training for our members across the UK and Ireland. BUC president, Don McFarlane, is excited about the new building. ‘Every crisis presents an opportunity. We will have a better facility than previously. So out of the ashes will come beauty, and as a result we will have a better building that will serve the mission of the Church more effectively.’

The boardroom end of the building was the section most seriously damaged by the fire. A new design for this end of the building increases the number of meeting rooms, adds a more appropriate reception area and provides much needed office space. It is anticipated that this third phase of the programme will be completed by next summer.

For continued updates and news on the building programme visit www.adventistinfo.org.uk/build.
Mental Wellness Strategy

Launched by BUC Health Ministries department by Sharon Platt-McDonald

The BUC Health Ministries director and Special Needs co-ordinator launched a Mental Wellness Strategy in March. A key part of the strategy is the production of a handbook which is now available titled: Mental Wellness Handbook – Supporting Churches in Raising Mental Health Awareness and Encouraging Emotional Healing and Wellbeing. The handbook is divided into three sections: Part 1 deals with mental health and illness, part 2 concentrates on emotional healing and part 3 addresses achieving emotional wellbeing. 

This comprehensive manual aims to deliver the following:
- To provide insight into how improved mental health awareness can enhance Paul’s understanding and support for individuals with mental health challenges.
- To assist churches to encourage individuals with mental health challenges and to support them in their journey.
- To highlight some key aspects of mental health and the factors that impact it.
- To provide a foundation on which to undertake future workshops to learn about the mind/body/spirit connection and how it relates to general wellbeing.
- To encourage the Church to be more sensitive in their outreach and impact it.
- To assist churches to embrace individuals with mental health challenges (and their families) and to support and encourage individuals going through challenging life experiences.

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The handbook is divided into three sections: Part 1 deals with mental health and illness, part 2 concentrates on emotional healing and part 3 addresses achieving emotional wellbeing. Please come together as a people and a community and help me or someone like me and let us build the strongest donor register ever.
Southampton high day
Saaboth 10 October proved to be a particularly high day for Southampton church as three candidates publicly demonstrated their desire to follow Christ by being baptised. The event, which was Pastor Douglas McCormick’s first baptism since taking over in Southampton, was witnessed by a packed church.

Sonia’s story
On 5 September John Horton Rojas-Francis was dedicated at St Austell church. This event was completely unforeseen by his parents two years ago.

A last word from Paul: ‘You need an invitation. I would never have thought of just going into an “odd” (Saturday not Sunday) church with... an invitation. “So, invite, invite, invite.”'
outgoing ended with a game of bowling, which encouraged team working, and was the beginning of friendships we see blossoming today.

Another memorable Wednesday involved a lot of falling over during roller-skating at the 02 arena. This activity proved very popular with the young people, despite the fact that it was the first time most of them had attempted it. Great effort and determination was demonstrated by all in what was an exhilarating two-hour session!

In the following week, the tables were turned as the teens volunteered their time by hosting a lunch for the over 55s of the church and the local community. This was the most meaningful day. We were reminded that God is always in control and that he may have a plan we might not be aware of. We were certain that we had promoted the event sufficiently - bulletin board notices, use of church email system and visiting local residential homes with invitations. Lunch was to be served at midday. We were confident that the seats would be filled. However, at 12.45pm, this was not the case. It was then that one of the leaders suggested we go into the streets and personally invite people to a delicious roast lunch at their local Adventist church. We prayed. Then the teens organised themselves into pairs and fed the word to Wimbeldon Broadway. One by one, people tripped in and, an hour later, every seat was filled! We were, and still are humbled and amazed by God’s plan for that afternoon. The young people demonstrated zeal and pulled together whenever they were needed, whether it was in the kitchen, the dining hall or in the streets. In particular, two teens were so committed to the street ministry that they spent over two hours out and about, inviting people to the dinner, before being called back to the church! This day was an opportunity for the young people to form bonds with older members of the church they rarely spoke to.

Other events included a drums talk presented by the local police, playing social, board and video games, as well as watching a film and discussing its relevance to our calling to live in the way of Jesus. A black and white themed barny party saw the summer youth club as a whole. As well as enjoying a mouth-watering three-course meal, the young people were presented with awards in recognition of their contribution to an amazing summer, including ‘best game-player’, ‘worst roller skater’ (for which I was a runner-up), and ‘happiest person’. As we reminded ourselves about the journey God had started us on, we couldn’t help but think that this was a big part of ministry, getting to know people in social settings and finding out where they are at. If not, how are we going to help them get to where God wants them to be? This was the core message of the ‘Come As You Are’ teens ministry fundraising concert held on 5 September. We praised our living God for accepting us for who we are and loving us too much to leave us that way. Acts on the night included drama by the WISADAC teens, a powerful testimony by a teens ministry leader, and music from Dedicated, Gugu Nywena, Faith Vocal, Lauren Ackie, and Rachel Rose, to name but a few. WISADAC youth club runs during term time. Please check the church’s website for dates and other details: www.mywimbledon.org.

S E I S A R W. C O M P A R T H A N O

Family and friends joined the con-gregations of North Wales churches at Rhyl on a beautiful Sabbath morning, 10 October, to witness and celebrate the baptism of Mrs Eloba Phetchanka. Ela, as she is known to her friends, has been working in the lab-oratory of the local hospital in Llandudno for the past three years and was introduced to the Adventist faith by her husband Piotr. Pastor Foster discovered that she was a most intelligent and faithful student, who always came up with new searching questions during her baptismal Bible studies. Originally from the city of Zabrze, South Poland, and from the Catholic tradition, Ela was happy to be joining the Llandudno Junction company as part of the Welsh Mission Church. She was welcomed into membership by Welsh Mission executive minister Malcolm Turner, and into the Llandudno company by Pastor Foster. Ela is already proving to be a tremendous asset to the church as God continues to build up his people in North Wales.

What’s the connection between Scotland’s largest town, which brought the world the famous Paisley pattern, and Iso Kirja in Finland? It was an objective that concentrated the minds of Paisley’s Pathfinders when, last Sunday, they packed groceries at one of the town’s busiest supermarkets. They were raising funds towards the cost of attending the 10th International Camporee next year.

The uniformed youth manned bright orange buckets displaying the Pathfinder logo and the strap lines ‘Community Service + Camping + Crafts = Character Building’. Their smiles and eager attention brought forth an unexpected response from the busy shoppers, many of whom enquired about the club’s activities.

The happiest present was 4-year-old Eager Beaver, Tamara Masaya, who accompanied her mother, Virginia. A few hours later the group emerged full of gratitude for what was to far exceed their earlier expectations. When the counting was completed the club had raised more than £700 towards the journey to Finland. Pathfinder director, Jennifer Orsako, said, ‘We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the customers and the help and kindness of the checkout staff. Customers were keen to know who we were and what motivated our young people to be out and about so early on a Sunday morning. What else but “the love of Christ that constrains us”?’

S C O T S O N T H E R O A D T O F I N L A N D

A black and white themed banquet included the ‘Amazing Race’ where byteams had to navigate their way to Kingston by bus, having taken pictures of specific landmarks in surrounding boroughs. This particular outing was a tremendous asset to the church as God continues to build up his people in North Wales.

Although Gemma does not normally enjoy standing up at the front, Gemma was eloquent in telling the congregation of how she had found the Lord and how she had come to Wales, around twenty years ago. That she began to think about the Seventh-day Adventist Church back in Trinidad, and Gemma now determined that she, too, would try to find her nearest Adventist church.

Although her initial contact was with Pastor Clyde Moore, then serving as the minister of the Cardiff Central church. He came to see her at work and actually took her to see where the church was. Since then Gemma has been a faithful attendee at services only at the Sabbath morning services, but also at the mid-week prayer meetings virtually all of the evangelistic services that have been run at the church this year. In fact, following the ‘New Beginnings’ campaign that ran for twenty-six evenings over the summer, Gemma was awarded a prize for attending every night.

At the baptismal service Pastor Moore spoke of how God had started attending church and he conducted an interview with her on the platform. Although she does not normally enjoy standing up at the front, Gemma was eloquent in telling the congregation of how she had found the Lord and how she had now pledged her life to serving him. Pastor Jeremy Yeates, the current Cardiff Central pastor, took her through the baptismal vows, and Pastor John Surridge, Welsh Mission president, performed the baptism itself.

This was a day of joy and celebration for all who attended, but mostly for Gemma herself. ‘Where I belong’, she said.

One for many of the young people. Having graduated from university, a group of friends devoted their time to serving their God through teens ministry!’

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If Jesus is the answer, then what is the question?

Tottenham and Edmonton Central churches baptise five in youth-led evangelism

D uring August and September Tottenham and Edmonton Central churches baptised five individuals in a pre- and post-baptism to their evangelistic programme.

Just prior to the September campaign entitled ‘If Jesus is the answer, then what is the question?’ three individuals were baptised and affirmed in both churches. An afternoon full of celebration took place downstairs at the Tottenham church where the pool was disturbed for the fourth time this year.

Taking their stand for Jesus on the afternoon of Sabbath 16 August were Alifie Ahmed Jaward, Shanyse Johnson and Megan Cimock. The event set the pace for the beginning of the campaign due to start early in September.

This was just a prelude to the upcoming campaign where the question ‘If Jesus is the answer, what is the question?’ was answered.

The speakers for the campaign were all hand-picked by a committee set up months previously. All came from the youth departments of both churches. They were Adrian Lee, Maha McKenzie-Coox, Acher McKenzie, Eugene James, Christopher Campbell, Damaris Maturi (dynamic female speaker) and of course our pastor, David Burnett.

Subjects to answer the title ‘What is the answer, what is the question?’ included. What caused this mess? How do I know Jesus existed? What makes Jesus so special? Why do people love money? Who moved the stone? Why did we kill him? Is he the answer to Muslims, Jews, Hindus and atheists as well? And many, many more were all answered with clarity and integrity.

There was excitement throughout and many felt the presence of the Holy Spirit as they were moved by the enthusiasm and the way the Word was presented by all the speakers.

Throughout the month, in addition to evangelistic presentations, there were health promotions with back massageing and haircuts on the Sunday afternoons as well as plenty of health tips and advice. There were also testimonies and moving stories of encouragement presented nightly before the spoken Word. Music was provided by members from both churches.

When Tottenham and Edmonton Central churches pull together there are always surprises. This year there were two weddings and a birth.

Ali Ahmed Jaward (after over three years attending Edmonton Central church) was wedded to Yvette James on Sunday 30 August in Oxford.

Time was also set aside for the wedding of John and Aterah Robertson on Wednesday 9 September. It was a beautiful ceremony at the church. The couple came baby Alexia Annakay Lee on Friday 18 September, the evening when daddy Adrian Lee was due to preach on the Word! Thankfully, baby Alexia arrived, not disturbing the Sabbath, truly giving mum that well-earned Sabbath rest.

Programme manager and co-ordinator Patrice Gordon said, ‘The campaign and baptism came as a real blessing to me. I really enjoyed all of it.’

On the evening of Sabbath 26 September, after a moving final sermonette by Chris Campbell, two further souls were baptised.

That evening marked the joyful baptism of beautiful 6-year-old Delhiya Bugaras and three-eyed Kelsa Golding. Yes, I said 6. Flanked by her family and friends, little Delhiya was full of praise and excitement as the vows were being read out by church elder Ben McKenzie-Coox, Kelsa Golding, surrounded by her family, went down in the water with tears in her eyes and came up with more tears of joy.

If you missed the campaign and want to find out the answer to the question ‘If Jesus is the answer, what is the question?’ you can still get the DVD which is available by contacting the Tottenham church’s 24-hour telephone service on 020 8802 1447, leaving your name and contact details.

A better hope

A report on a day of fellowship by Dr E. O. Sackey and Pastor K. Kwarteng-Amponsa

The South East London Ghana church, Elephant and Castle church, All Nations church and Milton Keynes Ghanaian Fellowship organised a day of fellowship at Milton Keynes on 1 August prior to a four-week campaign aimed at evangelising the city. (This campaign titled ‘The wonderful words of life and health series’ was held from 21 August to 12 September.)

Pastor McFarlane concluded the proceedings by praying that the new fellowship in Milton Keynes, pastored by Dr E. O. Sackey and Pastor K. Kwarteng-Amponsa, would cling to the better hope in Jesus Christ.

Avery: Filipino Choir

Sabbath 12 September saw a beautiful morning. Soon all the seats were filled, and more were added as our Filipino brothers and sisters joined us with their families.

On Sabbath 29 August Pastor Tarlev of Gloucester church dedicated Hannah and Emily Stroud. Hannah and Emily were born on 23 April to Timothy and Tricia Stroud.

The twins’ dedication was witnessed by their brother Dylan, family members and Gloucester church members who all accepted the responsibility of taking part in the Christian nurturing of the two little ones.

Pastor McFarlane concluded the service with prayers that the new fellowship in Milton Keynes, pastored by Dr E. O. Sackey and Pastor K. Kwarteng-Amponsa, would cling to the better hope in Jesus Christ.

Banquet for ADC

On Sunday 20 September the Great Brickkiln Street Personal Ministries team organised a banquet at the Britannia Hotel for the ADC students in the West Midlands. It was aimed at people doing the ADC courses and for those who have completed them.

The atmosphere at the gathering was pleasant and relaxing as Pastor Des Rafferty, the ADC principal, demonstrated to the group ways and examples of how to become successful soul winners.

Utilising visual aids, he gave a brief history of the ADC, the challenges encountered and remarkable progress in providing a service to thousands of students. The occasion was an enjoyable experience, with diverse workshop material and posters displaying information on healthy living. Students and accompanied attendees were updated about current events at the ADC.

Gloucester twins

On Sabbath 29 August Pastor Tarlev of Gloucester church dedicated Hannah and Emily Stroud. Hannah and Emily were born on 23 April to Timothy and Tricia Stroud.

Pastor Tarlev expressed the hope that whilst on this occasion the children were all hand-picked by a committee set up months previously. All came from the youth departments of both churches. They were Adrian Lee, Maha McKenzie-Coox, Acher McKenzie, Eugene James, Christopher Campbell, Damaris Maturi (a dynamic female speaker) and of course our pastor, David Burnett.

In her address, Deputy Mayor Mrs Brook recognised the fact that things may often seem hopeless, but pointed out that there were still things to be hopeful about if we look for them. She encouraged us to look for and seize opportunities to do all we could to support our city. ‘We must not wait for what the city can do for us,’ she urged, ‘but rather what we can do for the city.’

Pastor McFarlane concluded the proceedings by praying that the new fellowship in Milton Keynes, pastored by Dr E. O. Sackey and Pastor K. Kwarteng-Amponsa, would cling to the better hope in Jesus Christ.

Everyone enjoyed the potluck meal and the chats we were able to have before our afternoon service of song. The little children showed us how talented they were, too, and got us all signing in their action songs.

The adult choir sang several lovely songs.

Angela Connick

The prophet Jeremiah reminds of this hope in Lamentations 3:22-26: ‘The LORD is just and merciful and compassionate, no matter what we have done. He offers us the hope of forgiveness and a new start. The second hope is found in John 14:1-3 – the hope of a better place in store, far surpassing anything the world can offer, when he returns. I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.’ While the world at large sees a bleak future ahead, we see a bright and glorious one in Jesus Christ.

In her address, Deputy Mayor Mrs Brook recognised the fact that things may often seem hopeless, but pointed out that there were still things to be hopeful about if we look for them. She encouraged us to look for and seize opportunities to do all we could to support our city. ‘We must not wait for what the city can do for us,’ she urged, ‘but rather what we can do for the city.’

Pastor McFarlane concluded the service by praying that the new fellowship in Milton Keynes, pastored by Dr E. O. Sackey and Pastor K. Kwarteng-Amponsa, would cling to the better hope in Jesus Christ.

Everyone enjoyed the potluck meal and the chats we were able to have before our afternoon service of song. The little children showed us how talented they were, too, and got us all signing in their action songs.

The adult choir sang several lovely songs.

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Sabbath programme

Eight hundred or more came to witness the occasion of the grand opening of the new church building at Balham.

The Sabbath School was conducted by Pastor Arthur Campbell of the Mitcham and Kingston churches. As a prelude to the divine serv-ice, Pastor Theodore McPherson read the verses to the six baptismal candidates. The Senior Choir began the divine service by singing "Magnify", which warmed the hearts of the congregation. Pastor Bolbeau then welcomed the congregation to the new church, mentioning the special visitors, including our design team from Ireland – David and Siobhan Brown (ARC Design), Paul Hill and John Conlin Building Service Design). Pat McInerney (Anderson Williamson) and Tony McCotter and his wife (Caldwells). Pastor Sam Davis (Bishop Church), Pastor and Sister McPherson, Pastor Des Bolbeau (BCU), Sister Verna McPherson (Health director of the South Caribbean Conference), Dr Emanuell Ovo (SEC), Pastor Ceci Perry and Sister Perry, Dr Don King (president of the Atlanta Union) and Dr Louis King (professor at Atlantic College) were present at the occasion.

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Sunday – Youth club with dominos.

Tuesday – Autumn Rose club and dominos;

Wednesday – Prayer meeting;

Thursday – Church cleaning;

Saturday – Sabbath School, Divine service and ATS;

Outreach – Door-to-door witnessing, Street witnessing. The Lift pro-
gramme – a special outreach programme once every quarter on Friday evenings.

As well as learning about the different departments, Sammy and Stephanie also told the congregation about the different demographics of Balham church. There are an esti-
mated 434 amazing friends at Balham church from many different countries, including Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Guyana, Martinique, France, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Poland, St Lucia and Grenada.

The divine service continued with a praise session. The sermon by Pastor Sam Davis, SEC president, was entitled "Heaven Rocks, Dog Pits, Joyful Endings". He spoke about the importance of yesterdays as they determine our present. He also added that, while yesterdays are important, we have only today. The scripture was taken from Isaiah 5:21

His sermon included the history of Balham church, speaking of the people of God, and faith in God. Every time we meet we pray for, ask for and expect miracles, and God is always faithful. We walk the streets at night looking for the vulnerable, disoriented, lonely, dehydrated and abandoned people who need to be looked after. When God enters our lives, faith combined with his power makes things happen.

The candidate, Jonathan Breedon, came to us after contacting the pastor about four years ago by phoning him to ask if he could come to the church. That doesn't happen very often, especially with a young person, and we accepted him with open arms. We quickly made friends with him and invited him to our prayer meetings and all our other activities, including some of the hands-on practical maintenance work that the church often needs to have done. He soon to get to know all of us. About a year after we met him he went to Canada as he wanted to learn to fly and it was too far expensive in the UK. He wanted to qualify as a commercial pilot. We in Canada he didn't forget about God and visited one or two of our churches, but was not enthused with the 'welcome' he received. Meanwhile some of the other members kept in contact by email to continue to encourage him. They even sent one or two parcels so he wouldn't feel too much out on a limb. Two years later he qualified as a com-
mercial pilot trainer. He returned to England because he had to get a new visa in order to continue to work over there. He was also a little uncertain about this if the type of flying he wanted to do. While he there he kept to keep up his flying hours each month to keep his pilot's licence. He also lost little time in getting back into fellowship with us, and we all glad to see him.

Eventually he made the decision to apply for his visa so he could go back to Canada and, as you can appreciate, these things take time. Jonathan continued to come to our meetings and about three weeks before the date he was to leave we decided to ask Pastor for baptism. He had also been enquiring of the church if there were any vacancies for a pilot overseas in the mission fields as he would have liked to work for them even on a very low salary. A crash series of Bible studies was undertaken, and eventually preparations to incorporate a small portable baptismal into our youth hall were made. The wedding was done on the Wednesday night before the baptism on the Sabbath afternoon. Everyone helped in the preparation for the day and we had a very enjoyable fellowship lunch and an enjoyable baptismal. With no flying job available at the moment with the church, Jonathan went back to Canada and now has a job as a flying instructor on Prince Edward Island where he is also enjoying fellowship in a local church. He also has Sabbaths free for church attendance. May God bless you, Jonathan, and may he guide in everything you do.

A couple of years ago, I was introduced to a group of people with powerful vision and faith in God. Every time we meet we pray for, ask for and expect miracles, and God is always faithful. We walk the streets at night looking for the vulnerable, disoriented, lonely, dehydrated and abandoned people who need to be looked after. When God enters our lives, faith combined with his power makes things happen.

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leading his own churches at Kings Cross and Haringsey. Pastor Bobbeau, the elders and all the members at Balham wish him and all his family every success in his new role.

Sunday – community outreach fun day

The Balham Community Fair was the final instalment of the 40th anniversary and opening weekend. Although it is an annual event in which the church opens its doors to the Balham community, it was quite different this year. Finally Balham had entered a new chapter in its history in a new church complex! As well as the church completion, the Resource Centre was also up and running, many of the rooms finally able to be used for their original purpose.

The day started at 12pm, and the community and Balham members and visitors were treated to various stalls – exercise, face-painting (for the children and/or adults); bouncy castle, massage (to relieve the day-to-day stresses in life); First Aid/health fair; art and design, computer corner, as well as our wonderful food, lovingly prepared by the Balham social team.

The later part of the event consisted of a special concert in which Balham members and our invited guests took part. The MC on the night was Sam Gungaloo.

The Mayor of Wandsworth, Councillor Professor Brian Pritchard CBE, spoke at the beginning of the programme. He was followed by Lewisham Pathfinder’s Drum Corps who played two pieces that proved very popular; singing teenage group called Young Voices and our own Balhams Children’s Choir sang, and Joshua Anderson-Grey read a poem written by his own hand, Patricia Bolger sang a soulful rendition of ‘Summertime’, Personality kniress – our British Sign mime group – performed to Kirk Franklin’s ‘Believe’. Brother Haws on harmonica finished the concert with a thought-provoking rendition of Jesus you are the centre of my joy.

The final part of the evening consisted of a game show called ‘The last man or woman standing!’ Winners were able to choose their prize. The programme and wonderful weekend was closed with prayer by Balham elder Errol Anderson.

New book of the week

The Centurion

by Dick Stenbakken

Meet Longinus, a once frightened young soldier, now the trusted centurion for the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Life in the legion had once seemed to offer all the answers. Now it created only questions. How should he react to the Man he’s now been commanded to crucify – this Man Jesus who seems to be the only One who really offers any hope?

Contact ABC sales on 01476 539900 to purchase your copy at £11.45 plus p&p.