
by Victor Hulbert

“What a beautiful family we belong to,” an upbeat Ted Wilson told worshippers during the closing ceremony of the 56th General Conference Session of the world church in Atlanta, USA. Following the traditional Parade of Nations, representing every country where there is a Seventh-day Adventist presence, he stated, “The explosion of our mission advancement is going to be seen in every corner of this earth.”

After his election as GC President on Friday 25 June, Pastor Wilson immediately put his mark on the session, requesting that church members ask for God’s guidance “and pray that the Holy Spirit would bring us revival and reformation.”

Wilson, 60, has had 36 years of denominational service, including administrative and executive posts in the Mid-Atlantic United States, Africa and Russia, and since 2000 as a General Conference vice president. He is the son of former General Conference president Neal C. Wilson, who served in the post from 1979 to 1990.

In his Sabbath morning sermon he emphasised: “We are to be a peculiar people, God’s remnant people, to lift up Christ, his righteousness, his three angels’ messages of Revelation 14, and his soon coming.”

The world church saw the appointment of a new executive secretary. G. T. Ng is originally from Singapore but is a man who has a wide breadth of experience, beginning his ministry in war-torn Cambodia in the 1970s where he and his wife were forced to flee the capital city of Phnom Penh before it was overrun by the Khmer Rouge. He later worked in various positions in Asia, including that of professor, and eventually received a call to the GC, where he served as associate secretary. Bob Lemon was returned to office as treasurer. He has been in the position since 2002.

They were the top three of 75 positions up for election during the ten-day session. Among other changes, but closer to home is that of a new executive secretary for the Trans-European Division, based in St Albans. While Dr Bertil Wiklander was returned as president and Johann E. Johannsson as vice president, the Trans-European Division was given a new executive secretary: 17-year-old Asher McKenzie, joint host of the Global Mission Programme. Audrey Andersson, née Boyle

Proclaiming God’s Grace
As a child one of my favourite kids’ programmes was ‘The Muppet Show’. It was set in an old theatre with a frog called Kermit who was the compere and director. Kermit made sure that all the performances were mad and tried to crack all the antics of the performers. Although I enjoyed the show there was a part that I really disliked. Following the performance two muppets would heckle the acts. They were called Statler and Waldorf. These two old men resided in the left hand side balcony. They were obvious, disrespectful and in no regard for the performers on stage.

Very little is known about these two old men. We do not know if they were once performers or if they had just been spectators. If they were performers, did they now feel that they had the right to sit back and be critical? Did they think they had reached a stage of perfection and therefore now deemed themselves worthy to shout out corrections? Did they now heckle the performances because they were once heckled from the balcony and they no longer remembered the hurt and discouragement that this negative judgement made them feel? Alternatively, had they always been part of the audience and felt that they were there purely to judge the performers who came on stage? Had they forgotten the reasons why they came to the theatre to enjoy the show and to cheer the performances on and encourage those who tried their very best?

When I think about this children’s programme, I find a similar trend within the church. Sometimes it is easy to sit in the congregation and to judge those around us, and, intentionally or unintentionally, we end up heckling them with little regard to those people’s feelings or where they are in their Christian journey. Other times we can think that it is OK to be critical, because that is what happened to us, and we are still in the church. Sadly, I think this is more prevalent with regard to how we treat our youth and children. Some within the church feel that it is their right to ‘sit in the balcony’ passing judgement on the youth, and to disregard their feelings, causing them pain with their harsh words and criticisms. They feel that because they were weaned when they were young and they have remained in the church this same approach will work today. These people enforce a dress code for worship, allowing only those who wear the appropriate clothing to take part in the church service, regardless of their relationships with Christ, and thus make appearance more important than what is in the heart. If a young person does not follow the age-old tradition of how church works, then the ‘baconaires’ pour wrath on them, instead of loving and encouraging.

As with Heather Keough, sometimes things get so bad that the young people feel that they do not deserve God’s love and forgiveness, because their Christian walk is based on a list of Adventist rules passed down through the generations, as opposed to the unconditional love and acceptance of Christ.

When Christ walked on this earth, he encouraged and he loved. He never made anyone feel unworthy of his mighty grace. I love the story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8. This story illustrates Christ’s love for us. The Pharisees want to make an example of her and they want her to be punished. So they throw her at Jesus’ feet, insisting that he pass judgement on her. They want her stoned.

I imagine that Jesus lifted his eyes from the woman and with a look of disappointment he said to the Pharisees, ‘I guess you have never sinned or made a mistake, therefore throw your stones.’ As Jesus wrote in the dirt, it is not surprising that those stones were dropped to the ground, and the woman was not hurt.

We then get to my favourite part of the story. Jesus could have condemned her, he could have told her she was not good enough to be in his presence, he could have heckled her from the side lines. Instead, he told her, ‘I don’t judge you guilty either. You may go now, but don’t sin any more.’ Jesus did not say, ‘Go home, put on your Sabbath dress, remove your make-up and jewellery and then come back to me for forgiveness and acceptance.’ No, he accepted her right there and then. How does this relate to how we treat our youth?

We have to remember that they are children of God, even if they do not dress as we would wish. If they wear make-up, and even if they dye their hair every colour of the rainbow. God still looks down from Heaven and celebrates every time they enter through the balcony. But what is in our hearts. Only God knows where we stand.

Society has changed so much in just a decade, even since I was a teenager. I look at what the world has to offer young people today and I get a sense that we need to love and provide an environment that is safe for them. It is simple for us to say that life is so much easier for young people today, because they are ‘better off’. They have a better chance of a good education, they can have nicer clothes to wear, they have free health care, they have bigger homes, and all the toys and gadgets that they want. But there is a flip side to the coin. Children have a much higher chance of being part of a broken family. They are surrounded by drugs and alcohol, it is part of everyday life for teens to drink regularly. The average age in the UK for someone to lose his/her virginity is 16 – a massive difference from the 1950s when the average age was 21. According to The Office for National Statistics (2005), one in ten children in the UK between the ages of 1 and 15 has a mental health disorder. Also suicide remains the most common cause of death in men under the age of 35. The UK has one of the highest rates of self-harm in Europe. Schools are now moving away from teaching basic biblical principles, and people are calling for God to be banned from the classroom.

Wow, what a world we live in! Where are our youth to find out about the real, loving God? Their only chance is within the church. Therefore, it is not better that we encourage and love them for who they are instead of heckling and discouraging them and sending them into the world where they will be accepted and where God is not present. Praise God every time a young person walks through your church doors. Pray for them as they were your own children, love them as the Lord would love them. Seek God’s wisdom so that you are slow to condemn and quick to show love and acceptance.
The return of God? (He hasn’t been away)
by David Marshall

For as few folks have been writing of Christianity.

In the 1950s a lot of people were writing Christianity’s obituary. It was a death sentence. Then in 1954, the Evangelical Alliance invited Billy Graham over to conduct his ‘crusade’. Historically ‘crusades’ had involved Christian armies massacring the armies and civilian populations who were of other religions or were Christians and simply looked as if they might be of other religions. So the choice of term was not a happy one!

Graham came and, perhaps based on what the chairman of the Evangelical Alliance was saying, there was a slight change in the wordology. The Daily Herald headlined ‘Apology, Billy – or Stay Away’. Graham did neither! But church attendance was becoming a micro-minute, middle-class pursuit.

I thought then, and continue to believe, that the decline of church attendance had more to do with slavery to the TV and to the triumph of materialism and consumerism than with bombs and ‘socialism’. The churches and their bombs were apt to be the full and principal achievement of British ‘socialism’ – the National Health Service – had, I imagine, little influence on church attendance one way or the other. The fascinating, though partisan, history of the last fifty years has been written by A. N. Wilson. Wilson chronicles and accounts for the decline of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches but is by no means rash enough to talk about the decline of Christianity. Indeed, the penultimate chapter of his book is entitled ‘The return of God’. Wilson makes his case from a global perspective, and includes Islam and Muslims as well as Christianity, in his analysis.

Richard Dawkins – who, like the old man who ran Russia and ran China, seems to think that all you have to do is kill God to teach atheism – would be seriously disturbed by A. N. Wilson’s penultimate chapter. Permit me to share the developments he outlines which may discourage Dawkins, because they will encourage you.

• After seventy years of enforced and atheistic propaganda in the countries of the former USSR, the churches are now hearing. Thousands of worship buildings mercilessly destroyed by Lenin have been rebuilt and are full of worshippers.

• Despite Chairman Mao’s expulsion of all Christian missionaries in 1950 and the brutal bloodletting in China, Christians number have grown massively in Red China. ‘The number of Christians in China grew from 1 million in 1900 to 400 million – and rising’.

• Nazi-clad Christian-Moslem conflicts in Nigeria have made 20,000 martyrs. Nevertheless, the Evangelical Christians in that country doubled in number between 1990 and 2007.

• Those who spearheaded resistance to Apartheid in South Africa and steered the country to majority rule without bloodshed were largely Anglican Christians.

• The Peace and Reconciliation Commission, which placed such an important role in the post-Apartheid healing process, was led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the President of South Africa.

• The Confessing Church of Germany, a micro-minority, middle-class pursuit.

• The return of God? (He hasn’t been away)

What is your handicap?
by Ted Shirley

I was the swaying sides and I was working out of a office in Rambo. As I made my way one morning to the Beaconsfield estate at nearby Dagbeir to see a client, I passed Central Park and noticed the circuit was in town.

Stopping off at a nearby shopping parade to purchase a newspaper, a chocolate bar, and a bottle of Lucozade, I could not help but notice the Rolls Royce that had turned up to meet us.

For those who believed that human beings could simply be taught not to be religious … to hear the jaunty strains of “Sing, Hosanna!” or “Shine, Jesus, Shine” from the parked doors of evangelical churches.

Those who have just returned from the GC session have heard and shared stories of Adventist growth that have staggered all of us. God is on the move. You are part of a great global movement.

You have much to sing about. So, sing up!

Men may say ‘God is dead’ as many times as they like. It doesn’t change anything. And there’s a reason for that.

Reference:

Enquiries among the Adventist community and my Health National Health Ministry suggests you may be mistaken all the world of TV and to their ‘peace’ with an ‘unhealthy’ fish. It is, all I agree, much simpler if we stick to a vegetarian diet.

Aunty knows best? Editor: Enquiries among the Adventist medical fraternity and our Health National Health Ministry suggest you may be mistaken in your belief that active smoking is ‘unevenly linked’ with a healthy life and an ‘unhealthy’ fish. It is, all I agree, much simpler if we stick to a vegetarian diet.

Aunty knows best? Editor: Enquiries among the Adventist medical fraternity and our Health National Health Ministry suggest you may be mistaken all the world of TV and to their ‘peace’ with an ‘unhealthy’ fish. It is, all I agree, much simpler if we stick to a vegetarian diet.

Editor: Time will tell me what he/she make of it all?

When God chose Moses for his front man as the clash of Pharaoh, he (Moses) pleaded his handicap. In fact, each time Moses opened his mouth he pleaded for that (Exodus 3-4).”

God knows our handicap, but sees our assets too.

Jacob had cheated in order to get what he thought he should be his. In the end he was given a handicap by God so that God could bless him. Every time Jacob limped it reminded him of what God had done for him.

Paul, for all the great things God had wrought in him and through him, still struggled daily, and tells us of his ‘thorn in the flesh’ – a struggle with his eyesight ‘lest I should be exalted above measure’ (2 Corinthians 12:7). But God gave him sufficient grace (verse 9). When Naaman outwardly had a physiologic lesion – his hidden handicap was perhaps his pride. Being an army commander he thought he outran the man of God who failed to accord him the respect he thought he deserved (2 Kings 5:11; 12), but it took the simple logic of a servant to get him to see what a barrier the sin of pride could be between man and God (verse 13).

He had to humble yourself to be blessed!
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Fourteen sat in the Pendeford church for two days, Wednesday and Thursday, 2 and 3 June, from 9 am till 5 pm, to be informed of the duties of those involved in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

Our lecturers were Bernie Graham and NEC Health and Temperance director, Grace Walsh. Their talks were most professional and down-to-earth. Bernie, the main lecturer, was careful to make a complex subject (MHFA) easy to understand, enabling everyone to finish the course.

The appraisals at the end of the course were very encouraging and went as follows: Beneficial for all; Excellent; Insightful; Very well presented.

On a practical level we were shown clearly what to do when meeting an over-stressed person. Rather than being judgemental or offering a diagnosis, we were invited to follow the ALGEE formula.

Assess the risk of suicide.

Listen without being judgemental. Give reassurance and relevant information. Encourage the person to seek professional help.

Encourage self-help strategies.

We were shown, through lectures and films, those suffering from severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and various kinds of depression. The MHFA can help these sufferers by following the ALGEE formula and, according to the situation, following the strict guidelines on what to avoid.

If the person needs calming we were shown how to slow down their breathing rate by raising and lowering our arm and getting the person to watch our arm and slow their breathing to match it, asking them to breathe in time with us.

We were shown the importance of listening and, in threes, did role-plays highlighting this skill. One person talked for five minutes about a painful experience. The other person had to sit and listen, avoiding direct eye contact with the one talking, while the observer watched the interaction between the talker and the listener.

When we reported our role-plays to Bernie Graham we discovered that it took more than five years to become a qualified listener. We wondered how many people have been hurt through lack of listening.

Wherever we may live, the MHFA can offer loving support in a non-threatening manner to anyone suffering from anxiety in its various forms. If things are very difficult, the sufferer can phone any one of a number of contacts, including the Samaritans who operate 24/7 service, the police, and the ambulance service.

We learned about the ‘mental health continuum’ through a group exercise. Mental health is a state of mind that can fluctuate like the weather. Hence there are no absolutes regarding maximum mental health.

Rosie Winterton, Minister of State for Health Services, has adopted a five-year plan to tackle the stigma and discrimination on mental health grounds. She says, ‘People with mental health problems frequently tell me that the stigma and discrimination they face because of their diagnosis has a bigger impact on their lives than the underlying symptoms of mental illness.’ They tell me they can manage their symptoms and get on with their lives, but fear, prejudice, and the resulting discrimination take away the rights that most of us take for granted.

With this in mind, the National Institute for Mental Health in England is investing in the development of a national programme which is based on the MHFA work pioneered in Australia and Scotland. During 2001 Business pioneer of MHFA, trained fifteen instructors in Scotland who ran courses for nearly 900 participants for the first part of 2004 – the ambulance service, nurses, the prison service, the police, those working in further education, people who work with and support young people, businesses and local authorities.

Health Scotland is allowing us to use its materials. We thank the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health for their support and for enabling Mental Health First Aid to come to England.

Thanks too to Bernie Graham who made a very difficult subject understandable for Mental Health First Aiders. Appreciation to Grace Walsh, a trained instructor who is invaluable to the NEC Church. Thanks to Pastor Moses Mishanga for the use of the Pendeford church and not least to those who prepared the wonderful food that brought smiles to our faces.

How to be a Street Pastor

by Lily Kidwell

‘No preaching. No judging. Just listening.’

Everyone’s heard of Street Pastors these days, but what do they do and how do you get to be one? Here in the Swanswea church some of our members recently decided to find out. Mary Paul is our Personal Ministries leader and she, her two sons Eifion and Eiddon, and as new member Rozz, attended the required intensive training for a month.

Every Street Pastor tells a different story, but basically their work involves walking the streets during the night to demonstrate God’s love and care to vulnerable people. I had a chance to attend the Street Pastors’ commissioning service here in Swansea and heard how the project is helping different church organisations to work together with the police and the emergency services.

Street Pastors don’t preach but they do listen. Being around in the early hours to provide support and basic needs often says more about God than words. Another important part of the Street Pastors’ success is the prayer group. During the night volunteers work alongside each other and also pray for the cases they come across.

Rozz is currently a trainee and part of the prayer group, and she is passionate about the whole programme. ‘When I was training to be a Street Pastor, it was a real eye-opener,’ she says. ‘The things you are told wake you up to the world outside and it can be pretty intense. People are grateful that we don’t talk about God – we’re just there to help them. No preaching. Just listening.’

As Christians, not talking about God is hard, but unless they want to talk about God, we don’t. You’re there for them, not for what you want. One 19-year-old girl needed us to take her home. She was drunk. Her friends had left to get drugs. That night was the first time she had said No to drugs. We never spoke about God but before she left she asked us to pray for her, gave us a hug and said thank you.

Mary Paul tells the story this way: ‘I first heard about Street Pastors from a colleague at the hospital where I work. As Personal Ministry leader I thought this could be a good way for some of our members to do something for the people of Swansea – and so for Jesus. Our training lasted nine weeks – about 50 hours altogether – and included practical advice, teaching about drugs, first aid, basic counselling skills, how to talk for Jesus in practical ways and how to give an answer to people when they ask who we are and why we are doing what we do.

‘Our commitment as Street Pastors is one night a month (Saturday for us), from 10pm to 4am. We go out as a team of three to five people and have radio contact with the emergency services, door- men, CCTV operators, etc. We meet lots of people and we’re able to help the vulnerable, give basic first aid and do our best to build good relationships by being non-judgemental and caring. We’ve had many interesting conversations – even getting to pray with a few – and we’re supported by a prayer team at the local church (used as a base) which we contact if we feel a situation needs God’s intervention at that point. I, for one, am very happy to be a Street Pastor. It gives me the opportunity to listen, to help, and to talk with people who I would otherwise never meet. We also do very practical things such as disposing of glass bottles (which could be used as weapons), clearing up broken glass and handing out flip flops to girls, as many of them can cut their feet when they walk barefoot.’

Street Pastoring is not for everyone, but if you think you could be part of this ministry, either as a Street Pastor or as part of a prayer support team, check out the details online at www.streetpastors.co.uk and then talk it over with your church pastor.
Hello Christian Stars,

One of the best things about July is that it marks the end of a hard year of work at school and the beginning of the summer holidays! We are sure you all deserve a good break and wish you lots of fun and sunshine in the next few weeks! Daniel and his friends from the Bible were star students, too. They drew strength from God and made many good choices that developed their confidence and contributed to their happiness and success. After all, the Bible tells us that when they took their tests at school, they were ten times cleverer than the smartest students in Babylon! Their brilliance was extraordinary. Through the ages, the stories of David and his friends have continued to inspire young people to make right and good choices leading to similar outcomes. We hope you will enjoy the puzzles and activities that focus on the fine qualities of these exceptional young boys. Even better, we hope it will inspire you to ‘dare to be like Daniel’!

Solve the mystery:
You will find me in dine, but not in mine,
You will find me in tame, but not in time,
You will find me in dine, but not in dime,
You will find me in line, but not in lane,
You will find me in tile, but not in till,
You will find me in mole, but not in mote.

Who am I?

Say ‘Yes’ to health
At the end of the ten days, they looked healthier than all the others. Daniel 1:15

It is not easy to say ‘No’ to unhealthy things that might taste nice, especially if doing so would make us look silly to our friends. Daniel knew that praying for God’s strength was the only way to be able to say ‘No’ to an unhealthy diet. Here is a delicious healthy salad recipe you can try. The ingredients were plentiful in Babylon, where Daniel lived. Chances are that he would have eaten something very similar! Dare to be like Daniel as you choose to live a happy, healthy life.

Daniel’s salad
• Put 100g couscous in a bowl. Ask an adult to cover it with boiling water to just below the surface of the couscous. Let it stand for about eight minutes or until all the water has been absorbed.
• Make a dressing by whisking together all the following ingredients:
  • Juice of 1 lemon, 1/2 garlic clove, crushed with 1/2 tsp salt and 6 tablespoons olive oil.
  • Now add to the bowl 400g chopped celery, seeds from 1/2 a large pomegranate, 70g almond flakes, 4 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley, 1 tablespoon fresh mint, finely chopped. Mix. Then pour over the dressing. Check the seasoning and serve immediately.

Daniel’s praying hands
Take a sheet of A4 paper and fold it in half so that it looks like a ‘closed’ book. Place your hand on the ‘front’ cover, make sure your fingers are close together and your baby finger is on the folded edge. Draw around your hand. (It should look like a praying hand.) Cut on the edge of the line BUT do not cut around the baby finger on the folded edge. (This will give you a praying hand shape that can open and close like a book.) Open the book and write a prayer on the left side that you think Daniel might have prayed when he was in the lions’ den. Think about the things that make you afraid and tell God about them in a prayer on the right page. Remember, he promises to be with you and help you overcome every fear you face. How do you feel about sharing your prayers in family worship this evening?

Problem-solve with co-ordinates:
Use the co-ordinates to find out what Nebuchadnezzar said when Daniel’s three friends walked out of the furnace.

Feedback from children who visit Christian Stars Children’s pages – or from their parents – is welcome. The address is children@adventist.org.uk. Heather Haworth, Children’s Ministries director, BUC

Anne Pimmoor & Heather Haworth
This year, the adult and youth halls were supplemented by a third venue and a dedicated speaker specifically for the 10-15-year-olds. Australia-based Pastor A.J. Grant introduced himself in an Indian accent – which soon gave way to his native American twang which we could all identify.

On the Youth/Health and Temperance side, Nyse Collins introduced us to a Brooklyn drawl, while the adult commitment speaker, Alex Royes, and Youth 'power hour' speaker, Dr Eric Walsh, added Californian American to our palette of tongues. We were also blessed with the presence of Boston-based Sebastian Braxton, Youth commitment speaker, and Canadian singer, Sebastian Braxton, to ensure that the services and workshops ran smoothly and the youth programmes were broadcast live to an online audience of over 1,000 people in more than ten countries – courtesy of the recently formed Advent Broadcasting Network (ABN) led by Nigel Buxton.

The technical performance, however, was overshadowed by the event. At one point a medical emergency was announced during the morning service. An excellent sermon was followed with prayer for the person en route to hospital and, to little surprise, it was noted that recovery started as the prayer was being offered. Due praise was given to God.

Clear-minded youth, ready to proclaim

The youth programme at this year’s camp meeting involved several different elements. In the mornings, Nyse Collins began by sharing health principles from the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy and good science. As a textbook for his presentations, Collins gave everyone a free copy of The Ministry of Healing. Not only did he share with the youth the Adventist heritage of the health message, but he also provided practical tips on how to live a healthy life. As Nwamiko Madden sang the appeal song, virtually every young person in the room came forward and pledged to begin practising the principles of healthy living.

Collins brought God’s health principles to life, and led practical, fun workshops. Cookery demonstrations with guest volunteer demonstrators included how to make dairy-free cheese, cashew milk and our own breakfast cereal.

Dr Eric Walsh focused further on spiritual as well as mental health by pointing out the dangers that many young people who ‘know’ present faith persist in exposing themselves to. By explaining that salvation happens by accepting Jesus, and that accepting God happens in our mind on a day-to-day basis, the speaker made it clear that Satan loves to influence our minds so that accepting Christ and living daily for him becomes more difficult. His presentation included counsels on how to stay in the Church, music and sexuality.

Dr Walsh’s combination of spiritual insight and medical expertise made him all the more interesting to listen to. He engaged the youth by his sympathetic speaking style.

The third speaker for the youth was Sebastian Braxton, the director for STRIDE, which is a Campus Ministries programme. Braxton shared his messages with a passion that shone his love for Christ and his burden for the youth and the fulfillment of the ‘Great Commission’. He touched on different aspects of being a Christian, including the stewardship of our time, money and influence.

Offsite activities

Further instances of God’s work at camp meeting were seen as campers returned from street witnessing with testimonies of good news. Students were also treated to a visit to the famous tram and the North Pier in Blackpool.

On Thursday a coach-load of 0-2-year-olds and their parents enjoyed a schooling day at Chester Zoo, and, continuing a recent tradition, pastors challenged the campers to a cricket match at the Ainsdale Cricket Club – and won – again!

So what were the spiritual results? People were drawn to give themselves to God in appeals. Some people decided that they really did need to reform their diets. Many made enquiries about continuing their education and service for God through the PEACE evangelistic training programme. Young people were also shown the various audio-visual teams. Visiting speakers told their stories. Friends were made. Young and old alike were thrilled by new ventures developed by the Conference – including an outdoor Sabbath evening vespers that brought the event to a delightful close.

Many went on to the General Conference heartened and ready to see God’s people continue to grow in ability, spirituality and in numbers. Above all, the presentations, special music and relentless efforts of the NEC staff and volunteers, together with the presence of the Spirit of God, made this year’s NEC camp meeting an experience that will not be forgotten soon. The week has refreshed, encouraged and resonated in the minds of those who attended and those who watched online to ‘Lift up the trumpet’ and proclaim the goodness of Christ.
Forty years married

In an era when marriage is considered outdated or just a means to enterprise on tax benefits, Patrick and Margaret Dick from the West Bletchley church in Milton Keynes, originally from Zimbabwe, celebrated four decades of married life on 7 February. They attribute this exceptional milestone to the third party in their relationship – God. Sharing a good sense of humour and keeping well-informed on current affairs and sport has enabled them to engage with each other. Over the years they have also experienced the reassurance that sharing the same faith enables them to face whatever crises come – working together and not pulling apart.

Indeed, we see that marriage is an investment that pays dividends if we pay interest!

Sylvonne Noel

Outdoor baptism at Cork

Outdoor baptism at Cork baptism is always a special occasion, but on 12 June in Cork we had a really unique one. Not too many Western churches practise outdoor baptisms. Most churches have their own indoor baptistries, but in Cork we had to get creative due to our not having one. The Lord blessed us with a wonderful, warm sunny day, a real treat in Ireland, and after divine service the whole church headed to the ocean side in the village of Ringaskiddy. We all walked to a remote area on the rocks and sang songs as Pastor Jeff and our friend Saman Clarisse walked into the freezing water. At that moment I thought to myself, Wow, that’s commitment! After going through his profession of faith Pastor Jeff immersed Saman in the water and brought up our new brother in Christ. It was a little bitter sweet as this was Saman’s last Sabbath with us. He was returning to his home in Seychelles. We see him as our own foreign missionary. We all gave him a warm embrace as he embarks on a new life in Jesus. It was a beautiful baptism and we hope to be blessed with many more. Perhaps outdoor baptisms will become a tradition here in Cork.

Sylvonne Noel

West Bletchley baptism

West Bletchley Community church met on Sabbath 17 April at Milton Keynes Central church to share in the delight of Joel Seidu (West Bletchley), Abigail Omijeh and Carol Nelta (Milton Keynes Central) as they were baptised by the local pastor, Augustus Lawrence. As usual it was a joyous occasion that attracted the support of family, friends and acquaintances.

Sylvonne Noel

Music witness

The Mbenenges and the Ayehs are two Seventh-day Adventist families resident in Birmingham. They, with their singing, guitar-playing friend Mark Smith, have begun a community witness reaching out to the elderly, the sick and the youth through the witness of music. Pam and Kim sing duets. Nu and Okatan play violin duets. Mark sings and accompanies himself on the guitar. They have become great favourites, particularly in homes for the elderly where the hymn most requested is ‘Amazing Grace’.

It is a challenge to each of us to use our God-given talents to bring the love of Christ to the people, writes Antoinette Mbenenge. ‘To say “People don’t want anything to do with God” is simply not true. People invariably join in a sing. So stand up and sing up for Jesus. Leave the rest to the Holy Spirit.’

From material supplied by ANTOINETTE MBENENGE

Music witness

On Friday 14 May the young people of Bournemouth church were invited to another Agape feast in the church hall – our third. This time the theme was Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, so red was the predominant colour. While the Agape feast was passed around the table, several people read excerpts from writings on the Holy Spirit from early Christian authors. Then everyone stood and joined hands while we sang our theme song, ‘Let there be love found among us’, after which we tucked into a wonderful spread.

From material supplied by ANTOINETTE MBENENGE

Agape feast

 MPs and Mayors at 50-year Thanksgiving

April 17 was a day for celebration in Gloucester church. It was more than that. It was a day of reflection on the goodness of the Lord and how he has led his people over the past fifty years. It was also a day of reunion as members who have moved on came back and worshipped with us, including the families of former ministers – specifically sisters Margaret Stewart and Mrs D. West whose husbands are former ministers at Gloucester. Many invitations had been sent out and those who couldn’t attend had sent letters or cards which Pastor Tafvey read out, he also went through the list of former ministers.

Gloucester church was honoured with the presence of local politicians who took a morning off the campaign trail to come and worship with us. These included prospective MPs, Parmij Bhanda and Richard Graham (new current MP) with his wife Anthea, Mayor of Gloucester Chris Witte, Mayor of Barnton and Tredworth Harjid Gill, and city Council member Paul James.

Numerous other friends of Gloucester church came from various parts of the country to join the regular members in commemorating this wonderful occasion.

The worship service started with a colourful march in by the Pathfinders, followed by a warm welcome by first elder Robert Hinds and distributing gifts to the special guests.

The worship service was interspersed with congregational singing and other special musical items. The message for the day, delivered by Pastor Richard Daly, himself a former minister of Gloucester church, was apt – Count Your Blessings.

A sumptuous lunch was provided for the visitors and the afternoon programme was conducted as a trip down memory lane, giving the history of the church which has actually had a presence in Gloucester for seventy-five years, although the first twenty-five were spent in rented accommodation. This included a roll of honour of ministers and elders, question and answer sessions from the oldest members who related their experiences, more singing and funny anecdotes from the past.

Angela Conoly

Agape at Bournemouth

Leila Bressy

Ministering at Agape feast

Music witness

Antoinette Mbenenge

Music witness

Joy Elliott
LEO’s tenth anniversary

The Lay Sugarcane Outreach (LEO) team led by Brenda Edwards celebrated its tenth anniversary on 29 May and ran a special Sabbath day’s programme at Clapton Methodist Church to commemorate and celebrate this fact. The LEO seeks to serve the community and the Church in various ways. It is involved in evangelistic training, prison visiting and overseas aid, among other things. Brenda is a member of the Clapton church in East London and, along with her team, has done a marvellous job over the past ten years.

The day began with a rousing song service led by Pastor Curtis Murphy. Publishing director at the BUC, and this led to a time of reflection and prayer. Pastor Roy Morgan, retired recently from working in the NEC, led in a thought-provoking Bible discussion on self-control. Pastor Curtis Murphy, who has been territory pastor in this region and Robert, who spoke on the importance of health in evangelism, Pastor Terry Messenger, Personal Ministries and Sabbath School director at the SEC, gave the sermon on the power of intercessory prayer. Prayer is highly uplifted in the ethos of LEO.

As is the tradition of LEOS, practical evangelism was also taking place in the morning. Health checks were given and a group of Pathfinders from the Holloway church marched around the surrounding streets. LEO has been heavily involved in the past with street witnessing and knocking on doors in the community. A wonderful lunch was served, after which Brenda Edwards and her team shared an historical overview of the past ten years with us. There were stories of prison visits made, Bible studies given, and soul winners and, more recently, large bar-rels of goods to Kenya, counselling, and so forth. Testimonies were shared of people met and influenced by the Gospel. At the end of the day, thanks were expressed to all those who had contributed to LED over the years. The practical work that LED has conducted will only be truly known in eternity. Their aim is to help people become enthused about sharing the Gospel – not just in theory but in action!

LEO Job Vacancy

The North England Conference is seeking a committed Seventh-day Adventist who has suitable qualifications to serve as a minister of religion and has practical experience in the area of Family Life and Children’s Ministry. The candidate needs to have the relevant experience that would include: the ability to train church leaders and support other pastors in Family Life matters; counseling skills in pre- and post-marriage; and a working experience of child protection as understood in LED. Salary according to denomination.

Candidates should send their CV to the Executive Secretary, North England Conference, 22 Zulla Road, Waltham, NG3 5DB by Tuesday 10 August.

Quilling in Galway

Quilling – what’s that? Well, some of the children in Galway were introduced to quilling in April. Linda Wilson, wife of Stephen the Galway pastor, had her husband working long week shortened by one day.

She decided to use the spare day for a quilling class in her local library. We wanted to teach some of the neighbour-hood children the art of quilling. Quilling is done with long thin strips of coloured paper curled into various designs. The children thought it was wonderful, and so did the mothers and library staff. Irene Dunne, visiting Galway, also got roped in to help. The central area director for all the public libraries came in to thank Lindita for her fab-ulous addition to the programme of their library.

What a way to make friends!

John Doherty, Sh. Communications Department

**Father’s Day Co-operation**

When churches help each other things get done. On Father’s Day in Ireland members from Newmarket-on-Fergus, Galway and Cork joined their skills to run a Health Expo in the Newmarket community centre. They didn’t have a minute’s break, and when closing time came people were still crowing in. The local pas-tor Tony O’Bourke will now be kept busy with all the requests they made for help in living a healthy life.

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**HEINZ ALBERT LEWIS (1929-2010) 4. 20 June – North London Conference church where he served as elder, SabbathSchool teacher, Community Services manager, District Evangelist, for 46 years, and was involved in many ministries. He was a major part of the church’s growth from the house fellowship to church with about 350 people. He received many awards, including the 2009 North London Conference Pre-Service Worker of the Year award.

Newbold church and in Cornwall, and the support that came from school and university friends as well as work colleagues.

Three ministers participated in the service: Pastor Victor Hulbert, father of the groom, created a relaxed atmosphere with the congregation in his welcome – and also with his introduction to the traditional wedding vows in the model of a con-temporary-style service led by the Focus Band, a group Steven and Jena had formed some years previously. Pastor Patrick Johnson, senior pastor at Newbold church, added his wit and wisdom pro-viding sound biblical advice in a manner that was engaging for the numerous uncircumcised people in attendance. Some who had not been to church for years commented that if the service was like this they would want to return. One girl who had been anti-church stated that now she was considering church as a possibility for her own wedding, as a result of this service. This fitted in perfectly with the intention of Steven and Jena and with the special prayers offered by a close family friend, Pastor Nick Smart.

In addition to the Focus Band and their skilled renditions of contemporary worship songs, two duets brought tears to the eyes of participants. Especially memorable was the stunning perfor-mance of ‘The flower duet’ sung by Felicity Guy and her school friend Sophie Spencer.

June 1 may have been the only day with rain in the week – but that did not deter the many family and friends from across the UK, Indonesia and Portugal who joined with Steven Hulbert and Jennifer Bahr in a truly international and family-oriented service. According to both Indonesian and Portuguese tradition, on a wedding day means that God is blessing, but the blessings were to be seen more in the commitment of this dedicated Christian couple; the support of the many youth they have worked with both in Newbold church and in Cornwall, and the support that came from school and university friends as well as work colleagues.

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Equally memorable was the excellent catering at the reception organised by Jena’s mother, Iritta Palask. It surpassed expectations both in quality and quantity. The Indonesian community had worked together to provide the mouth-watering feast and fully deserved the praise heaped upon them by guest after guest.

It was a joyful day for guests and family carrying-on into the late evening as the happy couple retreated to the wedding car under a deluge of clouds. The local pastor Tony O’Rourke will now be kept busy with all the requests they made for help in living a healthy life.

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16

is a strong point that he has. He's

those whom you serve, and I think that

ity of a leader to know your people,

name. I think it's a very important qual-

Whenever he sees me he knows my

work relentlessly to ensure that, as a

our church and I believe that he will

believes passionately in the mission of

man and I think the world church is

aware of that. He's someone who

Impressions

OFFICERS

Jóhann Jóhannsson: Planned Giving & Trust Services

Nenad Jepuranovic: Associate Treasurer

Janos Kovacs-Biro: Ministerial Association Secretary, Pastors & Evangelism, Personal Ministries and Publishing

Michael Hamilton: Secretary

Audrey Andersson: ADRA, co-ordinator for Ingathering & Community Services

Steven Cooper: Youth Ministries & Adventist Volunteers

Paul Tompkins: Family Ministries, Health & Stewardship Ministries

Miroslav Pujic: Field Secretary, & Assistant to the President in Administration, Adventist Mission, & liaison for AMR & AJF , Public

Correspondence Schools, Chaplaincy Ministries

Johann E. Johannsson: Treasurer

Clair Sanches: Publishing

Bertil A. Wiklander: President

Janet A.칙: Adjunct Secretary

The GC Session – my first – helped me

needed to lead a church that is diverse,

wing. But he's a wise man and I'm sure

'the call but that she and her husband perceive it as

lishing. She states that she was surprised to receive

administrative role in Sweden she worked in book pub-

of Pastor Patrick and Mrs Rosemary Boyle, Audrey has

executive secretary in the Swedish Union. The daughter

Monday afternoon that invited Audrey Andersson (née

executive secretary. This was filled by a vote on

The former head boy of John

joint host of the Global Mission Programme on the

to a 17-year-old Londoner, Asher McKenzie. He was

various representatives from the UK provided strong

session. Beyond the loud cheers when the Union

that will come to the next GC Session in St Antonio,

http://news.adventist.org

Loughborough School performed well in front of the

first Sabbath afternoon. The former head boy of John

to the agenda of mum and dad kind issues.

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