What really matters

by Don McFarlane, president, British Union Conference

My recent article regarding the visit of the Pope has drawn a larger response than usual. While I am happy that many have understood my intent and found the article helpful, on reflection I think the intent could have been more clearly stated. My aim was to make a distinction between the Pope as a person and what he represents, and also to urge a more constructive approach in dealing with Catholics and others who do not share our faith.

In writing again on the subject of how we relate to Catholics, there are four points I wish to make:

Adventists have an end-time message. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an end-time movement, which God has commissioned to maintain the purity of the Gospel in an age when, due to gross misrepresentation by Christians, the modern world is spiritually confused and grossly misunderstands the sinner’s relationship to the Saviour. Our Church has been raised up as a voice of hope to those lost in sin’s darkness. The three angels’ messages, which form the basis of our understanding of our mission, are designed to shed light, to emphasise our accountability to our Creator, to distinguish between truth and error ‘masquerading as truth’, and to warn of the consequences of rejecting truth.

Truth is Jesus Christ. Truth is a word that is important to Adventists; but what is it? I studied Spiritual Formation with John Dybdahl, an esteemed theologian in our Church. I and other ‘aged’ men were often in tears in those classes as we realised that ministry is much more about who we are as individuals than about what we do and say. As ministers, we do need to preach, visit and so on; but spending time discovering the God of the Bible, and allowing the Saviour to transform our hearts, makes ministry more than mere formality; it allows God’s presence to work in our lives. Truth is not merely a compendium of teachings or a set of doctrines: truth is Jesus Christ. Unless Christ rules our lives, affecting our plans, ambitions, attitudes and our view of others, we are not in possession of the truth. As Adventists, we constantly face the danger of seeing truth merely as knowledge, instead of seeing it as Christ and his likeness. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Adventist-Catholic relations. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is no ‘friend’ of the Catholic Church. We oppose its distortion of truth, particularly its misrepresentation of the provision made by God, through Jesus, for the redemption of the human family. This accounts for the fact that I did not accept an invitation to attend a reception for the Pope at Westminster Central Hall. While not being a friend of the Catholic Church, though, we should be friends of every Catholic, as we are of Anglicans, Baptists and others of different religious persuasions, including those who claim to follow no religion. By coming close to people and treating them with love and respect, we are able to show them the face of Jesus.

There is much prejudice in our world, and most of it has arisen from forming judgements on people without taking the time to discover how they think and what they believe. We need to fight the tendency to label other people; we should take time to discover whether or not what we think of them is accurate. I heard recently of a Sabbath School class in which most of the members of the class described Muslims in very negative terms, except for one young lady, who had been a student missionary. Asked for the basis of her disagreement, she replied, ‘I have spent time with Muslims and have found many of them to be loving, courteous, helpful and God-fearing people.’

‘The Lord wants His people to follow other methods than that of condemning wrong, even though the condemnation be just. He wants us to do something more than to hurl at our adversaries charges that only drive them further from the truth. The work which Christ came to do in our world was not to erect barriers and constantly thrust upon the people the fact that they were wrong.’ (E.G. White, Testimonies, vol. 6, p.121.)

Love your neighbour. Most readers are familiar with the 24 September Sabbath School lesson entitled, ‘All the rest is commentary.’ This lesson was the cause of heated debate in some churches, and some members said the Church’s standards were being lowered. The author of the lesson was merely saying what Christ said in different words: ‘“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”’ (Matt. 22.37-40, NIV)

The purpose of the entire Bible is to foster closeness with...
One of the expedients used by English bishops, to keep a steady supply of Tyndale's work circulating, was to have copies made and published Bibles in the current languages of Europe. They have done this because, like Miles Smith (who wrote the introduction to the King James Version), they saw the importance of rendering the Bible into the everyday language of the people. Why? Let Miles Smith speak for himself:

"Translation it is that openeth the win-
shell, that we may eat the kernel; that put-
teth aside the curtain, that we may look
into the most holy place; that removeth the
cover of the well, that we may come by the
water of life."

The Bible had originally been translated into Greek by the early church fathers, and the original manuscripts were in Latin. The translators had been given specific instructions. They had to begin with basic pieces of paper in front of them, and then they would focus on the text, translating it as accurately as possible. The translators had been given specific instructions. They had to begin with basic pieces of paper in front of them, and then they would focus on the text, translating it as accurately as possible.


**Protestant riles?**

*Dr Patrick Lowe* 

...and all the world wondered...

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Last occasion the Pope visited Britain was in the 11th century, and to all appearances the office remained vacated for almost 900 years. That is why the present Pope Benedict XVI's recent state visit to Britain has been described as a historic moment. It was an occasion of international and media interest. The visit was also an expression of the current relationship between the two major Christian denominations, and it was an opportunity to advance the cause of mutual understanding and respect.

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** Welcoming the Pope**

Dr Patrick Lowe in response to the article, "Can the Adventist Church welcome Pope Benedict to Britain?" I think this is an interesting question, and I would like to hear your thoughts on it.

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** Fighting our Frontiers**

by Steve Holden*

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As Pope Benedict XVI arrived in England, the world turned its attention to the Adventist Church's response to his visit. The Church's stance was clear: "Welcome Pope Benedict to Britain!" This was a significant moment for the Church, as it marked the first time in over 900 years that a Pope had visited Britain. The Church's message was one of peace and cooperation, and it was well-received by the public.

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*Steve Holden is a freelance writer and photographer based in the UK. His work has been featured in numerous publications, including *The Messenger*. He is also the author of several books on Adventist history and culture.*
The CAN (Children Achieving Now) Music Academy is a community-based project designed to provide children, young people and families with diverse abilities together to practise and develop their musical skills. The academy offers a structured environment with activities including vocal training, choir, musicianship, theory, instrumental training and orchestra. The CAN music environment is stimulating, friendly and dynamic. Staff and students focus on eleven benefits of music, and work as a team to learn, enjoy and perform music.

The doctors who offered the diagnosis recognised the rarity of the Morquio’s Syndrome – the rare metabolic disease which had affected Espen’s development. His diagnosis was confirmed and he began his journey with the CAN music environment in which Espen, his parents (Patrick and Kari) and his sisters (Miriam and Espen’s brother) were all involved.

The varied repertoire comes from many genres of music, including classical, gospel, pop, rock and blues. The group in national costume from South America performed with Espen’s family, while the oncology ward in which Espen’s family live witnessed through music. They have performed at churches in London and Watford, at the St Albans Arena and the Fairhaven Residential Home, and at Pathfinder and Guyanese days, and have staged concerts at the Stanborough Centre, to recognise the outstanding achievements of the CAN Music Academy.

The CAN Academy is bound up with the community engaged in a range of activities, including music workshops, community singing groups, and events for young people and their families. They meet at the Stanborough Park Centre, Watford, and the response has been overwhelming from all over the South of England region. The CAN Academy is a testament to the power of music to bring people together and create a sense of community.

Over the last two years, local people have expressed their appreciation for the difference this music programme is making in the lives of their children. Please join CAN in the near future as it provides more opportunities for children, young people and families to unleash their musical potential.

The CAN Academy will host an Open Day on 24 October from 1pm to 3.30pm. Please email: CANMusic to obtain more information on attending the academy.

A beautiful life

by Helen Pearson

The CAN (Children Achieving Now) Music Academy is a community-based project designed to provide children, young people and families with diverse abilities together to practise and develop their musical skills. The academy offers a structured environment with activities including vocal training, choir, musicianship, theory, instrumental training and orchestra. The CAN music environment is stimulating, friendly and dynamic. Staff and students focus on eleven benefits of music, and work as a team to learn, enjoy and perform music.

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Sunshine Club

Eleven years ago, Joy Elliott opened the Bournemouth church doors 10am on a Thursday morning in September, and put up the new sign, ‘Sunshine Club’, inviting mothers with toddlers in the local community to a weekly two-hour session of socialising and games. The mothers came, and continued to come, with a number attending for years as new babies were added to their families. Well over two hundred and twenty community families have attended the club over the years – a good number have also attended other church programmes, with a few coming to the children’s Sabbath School.

Joy has remained committed to this community programme for all these years, and it has been a challenge to find the necessary helpers. In the early years, when retiring members moved to Bournemouth, a number took up the challenge and helped while they were able. In recent years volunteers have been harder to find, as younger adults have work and family commitments, but God has provided. It would be impossible to list all those who have helped over the years, but the Bournemouth church thanks them all.

This year the club has faced its greatest challenge. Due to age, health and family commitments, Joy had to announce that she could not continue to run the club, and it looked as if the club would finally have to close. Help came in a most unexpected way when one of the mothers from the community volunteered to take on the running of the club. After all the arrangements were made, the Sunshine Club opened its doors for the beginning of its twelfth year with Helen Hotton as the new co-ordinator.

Winds of change

Those warmly welcomed at Press Open Day by Copy Editor Andrew Rockering (6) had come to hear Pastor Jan Paulsen, retiring GC president (5), listen to the London Ghana Choir (10) and Charnamare Morgan (11), and to stock up with books and health foods. They were to be disappointed. Pastor Paulsen was on form, as were the choir and Charnamare. There were plenty of bargains in the book tent and, as ever, the friendly staff were eager to help (9 and 12).

But the winds of change were blowing. The surprises were not limited to the appearance of our veteran Press manager, Paul Hammond, or the balcony castle (3) or the appearance of lots of fresh new faces (2). When the crowds assembled to hear Pastor Paulsen, they noticed that the Press management and some prominent board members were with him on the platform. As Press Treasurer Graham Barham stood up to introduce Pastor Paulsen (6), there was something familiar in the tone of his remarks. Exactly why became evident when Victor Pilmoor (7) announced the launch of a new message book entitled Experiencing the Joy: 42 Bible studies. It has been released in connection with LIFE development.info, costs £9.95 (plus p&p), and was written by sixteen different authors, the majority of whom reside in the UK. The aim of the book is to ‘unpack ancient biblical values and make them understandable by twenty-first century readers.’

Some things change at Open Day. At least one remains the same. For each of the past thirty-five years, Brother Smiley has been working in the treasury department. Victor Pilmoor (7) announced the launch of a new message book entitled Experiencing the Joy: 42 Bible studies. It has been released in connection with LIFE development.info, costs £9.95 (plus p&p), and was written by sixteen different authors, the majority of whom reside in the UK. The aim of the book is to ‘unpack ancient biblical values and make them understandable by twenty-first century readers.’

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Pastor Hibbert comes to the Stanborough Press from the Stanborough Press Office in Southern Africa, and has served as editor and, later, manager of the Adventist Publishing House in South Africa. Pastor Hibbert can be seen being interviewed by Angela Patrick of By Faith Messenger (9). He will begin work at the Press on 1 November and will continue to be based in the USA.

Graham had been Trans-European Division treasurer. There he had for many years worked at close quarters with Pastor Paulsen, then TED president. At the time of the General Conference Session this June, there was a sea-change in the management team at Review and Herald. Graham was made the vice-president for Finance, and has already taken up that position. The Stanborough Press board, when it meets on 5 October, will have to address the vacancy for a Press treasurer.

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For further information please contact Elias on 07961251207, or by emailing: eck2@hotmail.com
Effective health evangelism

London Ghana: Letting go, letting God

By Rubina F. Arthur

When Rubina F. Arthur, a health evangelist, returned to England as a missionary to the London Ghana church for the first time in September 1996, she had high hopes for her new assignment. After all, she had been called to serve in this capacity, and she was looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead.

But life in England was not what she had expected. The language was difficult, the culture was different, and the people were not as welcoming as she had hoped. She struggled to make friends and to feel at home, and she began to question whether she had made the right decision.

However, Rubina did not give up. She continued to work hard, to share the message of health evangelism, and to serve the people of London Ghana. And eventually, she began to see results.

In the following years, Rubina led health expositions (or ‘health expos’, as they are more widely known) that are conducted in line with well-established protocols. These efforts, in conjunction with the health programs of the church, have helped to make London Ghana a shining example of effective health evangelism.

O n 1 August 2001, the day before Brethren and Asians took their vows which they had made to their Lord in private, I just took a deep breath and let God do the rest. I have been very pleased to see me, and offered words of encouragement and reassurance. But, as I look back, I can see that it was God who made you change your mind then? Such comments were hurtful, but, with the Lord’s help, I didn’t lose courage and here I stand, confidently serving the Lord.

With help from our friends

O n one occasion, the current SEC president, Pastor Sam Davis, was very vocal in his support of the health expo arena. Your church won’t look back but will be motivated to keep on following in the steps of a more learned colleague, friend or, in the case of health evangelism, Jesus.

The president of the Central Ghana Conference, who obtained a B.A. in International Tourism Management with Human Resource Management from Middlesex University, and was a member of the Wildwood Adventist Lifestyle Health Centre in Ogun, UK, was given a healthy welcome at the church. With help from our friends, we can work through our problems and as a result of my parents getting married and were told how the differences between men and women and were told how the differences between men and women can make a marriage work. The president of the Central Ghana Conference, who obtained a B.A. in International Tourism Management with Human Resource Management from Middlesex University, and was a member of the Wildwood Adventist Lifestyle Health Centre in Ogun, UK, was given a healthy welcome at the church. With help from our friends, we can work through our problems and as a result of my parents getting married and were told how the differences between men and women can make a marriage work.

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Family Life Weekend stresses ‘duty of care’

The Family Life Weekend at the Seventh-day Adventist church in Crouch End, north London, was held on Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd August. The weekend was aimed at strengthening family relationships and providing practical support and guidance for those experiencing challenges within their family.

The weekend began with an open house on Friday evening, where families were encouraged to come together and share their experiences. The session was led by the Pastor, who highlighted the importance of maintaining strong family ties, especially in today’s society where family structures are often disrupted.

On Saturday morning, the focus was on the role of the church in supporting family life. The worship service was punctuated with powerful poetry and music, which aimed to inspire and encourage families to remain united.

In the afternoon, the emphasis was on the importance of education within the family. The session was led by a speaker from the church’s educational department, who discussed the role of parents in guiding their children towards making informed decisions.

On Sunday morning, the emphasis was on the need for families to come together in meeting the challenges of the day. The service was led by a speaker from the community, who shared her own experiences of building strong family relationships.

The weekend concluded with a family worship service on Sunday evening, where families were encouraged to celebrate their unity and commitment to each other.

The Family Life Weekend was a timely programme, considering the world we live in today. The devil is at war with the church, hitting hard at its very core, targeting young people at home and at school. The weekend was an opportunity to reach out to our community’s children. We trust that the programme will continue to have a positive impact on the families and children who attended.
Music and health witness in Canmore Hill Park

Music and health witness in Canmore Hill Park

Three new members at Crieff

When we met on August 26, Emma and Friends were busy with the “Crieff is 40” programme, which is a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the town of Crieff. The programme has been designed to engage the community and bring people together to celebrate the town’s history and culture. Emma, a member of the programme, was present to share her experiences. She mentioned that the programme has been a great success and has brought people together from all walks of life.

Baptism follows Youth Revival Week in West of Scotland

A week marked by a series of events, the West of Scotland church has been marked by a series of events, including a baptism ceremony and a youth revivcal week. The baptism ceremony was held on Sunday, September 5th, and was attended by a large number of people. The youth revivcal week was a series of events designed to engage young people and bring them closer to the church.

Obituaries

JOHN HENRY HALL (1949-2010)

We report the death of John Hall, a former member of the church. He was recently baptised as a result of an evangelistic outreach. He was born on 18th September.

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Gift Aid in the midst of austerity
Dr Richard de Lisser, SEC Stewardship director

In spite of the economic downturn, the South England Conference Stewardship department launched its Gift Aid drive called Sign Up Sabbath on 5 December 2009; the goal being to sign up as many new gift-aiders as possible.

The incentive for each church was a cash gift of between £750 and £4,000 for the church that signed up the highest number of new gift-aiders overall, as well as for the church that signed up the highest number pro rata of their membership. In the former category, Croydon received £4,000, Tottenham West Green Road received £3,000 and London Ghana received £750. In the latter category, Worthing received £3,000, South London Portuguese received £2,000 and All Nations received £750.

To date the SEC is in the process of claiming back over £400,000 for the Lord! This represents the largest uptake in Gift Aid since its inception!

On behalf of the SEC I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to all of our members who have signed up to the Gift Aid programme: because of your faithfulness in the midst of austerity we can continue the work of God in this Conference. May God continue to bless your faithfulness!

Edinburgh Adventists take it to the street

A call for local evangelism initiatives, at the Scottish Mission’s triennial session last year, convinced an Edinburgh member that there was an opportunity in the heart of Scotland’s capital city.

While travelling to church every Sabbath he would notice, from time to time, various organisations displaying their wares on the east end of Princes Street, one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city of Edinburgh. A thought took hold: ‘Why not the Seventh-day Adventist church? We can be there also.’

It is not the Seventh-day Adventist denomination that is unique in trying to engage the public. For example, the Edinburgh based ‘Café 12’ which is run by American missionaries, aiming to show people that they can be Christians and enjoy the freedom to go to the pub, serve alcohol. In contrast, the Adventist church to make its first appearance on Edinburgh’s streets on Sabbath 12 June, and this has continued once every two weeks ever since.

Engaging the public has been a rich experience for our outreach team: people who stop at our table for a chat are often surprised by these Christians who go to church on Saturday, who not only preach salvation through Jesus but offer a wide selection of Bible information on health, diet, lifestyle, family issues, the benefits of Sabbath rest and so on. In effect they see a whole lifestyle package for everyone, from a church which has no equal in this field.

Sure, it’s ‘early days’ yet, but positive results are already showing. Firstly, the Adventist table display in the city centre is becoming a familiar sight in Edinburgh. Secondly, relations are also being established with other Christian groups who come to see these ‘new kids on the block’. They are also often amazed at the scope of our denomination. Moreover, the sound biblical foundations of the Adventist Church and thorough study of Scripture have enabled us to hold our ground convincingly in response to the many questions about our beliefs. Finally, the healthy number of volunteers ensures hundreds of pieces of literature (mostly tracts) are given out to Edinburgh’s citizens each fortnight. Combined, these seeds — sown by us and watered through prayer — cannot fail to produce a sure harvest. A new confidence is showing in our Edinburgh church, with every arm growing, empowered through Christ by a sense of what God’s Ten Promises can do.

JOHN WILBY

New book of the week
God’s Ten Promises
Helping children understand the Ten Commandments by Kimberly Tagert-Paul

In this book you will find a refreshingly different approach to learning about the Ten Commandments, using practical applications to show exactly what they are all about. The teaching tips at the end of each chapter will assist teachers, parents or caregivers to help children recognise that God is love and that his law shows how much he loves us and always wants the best for us.

Contact ABC Sales on 01476 539900 to purchase your copy at £9.25 plus p&p.