A group of Adventist members in Wimbledon are busy with a form of outreach called the ‘simple church’, which was officially launched in the South England Conference on 28 October 2010, under the guidance of Pastor Aris Vontzalidis, the SEC Church Growth director.

The ‘simple church’ is not our brainchild, but the Adventist Mission department of the General Conference has adapted the concept for use in reaching religion-resistant people in such places as North America and Europe. Although the method is unconventional and adaptable, it may not work in every context; but it does have the potential to create caring fellowships where unchurched members of the community may be reached.

Pastor Vontzalidis makes the important point that:

‘The simple churches consist of front-line missionaries: not those who travel abroad, but those who are based in the UK and focused on reaching a secular and atheistic population.

Simple churches are house churches, patterned in many ways upon the early Christian network of congregations that were raised under the ministry of the apostles, especially as set out in Acts and Paul’s epistles:

1 Corinthians 16:19.

The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Romans 16:5.

Paul . . . to the church in your house.

Philemon 1 and 2.

Wimbledon project

Simple churches may differ from each other but this is what the one in Wimbledon is like. The outreach emphasis (through which ‘members’ are found) has so far concentrated on support for the homeless, and visitation of the sick in their homes, hospital beds and nursing homes.

Below: Members of the new project warm up in the night air.

For example, those who support this simple church may be found in Central London on Friday nights giving out soup, hot drinks and warm food, as well as toiletries and clothes to those who live on the streets: most of whom are work-seekers, from here and abroad, who are trapped on the streets by financial circumstances – but others are the victims of domestic violence or drug and alcohol abuse.

Although presently few in number, the members involved in this new venture are passionate about it. As one member put it:

‘Every time we go out, we pray that we will be the hands and feet of Jesus. If Jesus were here now, I think he would want to bring comfort and encouragement to these very lonely people. We pray with them, listen to their stories, and give them whatever encouragement and help we can.’

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the South England Conference application of the simple church concept, please contact Pastor Aris Vontzalidis at avontzalidis@secadventist.org.uk or phone 07941094219 for further information.
The 'indigenous deficit'  

Dear Editor

I write on a matter that has been a serious concern of mine for several years now. It is pleasing to see membership of the Adventist Church growing within the UK. But it must be realised that this growth is based on immigrants and students coming to these shores already having the faith, rather than local converts. Whereas all are very welcome, before the indigenous membership falls below 1,000, less than 4% of the total UK membership.  This situation has led to growth only in a few big cities, but to the decline of the Church in the countryside. While the Church is thriving in London, Manchester, Birmingham, and so on, it may soon have died in smaller towns and rural counties. Also, many of the big city churches will have become foreign enclaves. If we allow this to happen, we are surely failing in the 'Great Commission' (Matthew 28:19). If Pope Gregory could see this 1,400 years ago, surely we should see it now. Not only should we see it; we should act on it as a matter of urgency!  Way back in 2006, the then SEC president launched a campaign to address the indigenous deficit. . . . However, I have to say that five years later there is little evidence of anything concrete being done. I readily confess that I do not know all the answers but I do recognise the urgency of the challenge. I would strongly urge the SEC to take this up, this year, so we may see more indigenous folk embracing Christianity, and to dig our part in the 'Great Commission'. Clearly it is the duty of those who are now in desperate need of missionaries. Let us answer the call I hope that this issue will be a main agenda item for our conferences this year.

Aidan Kearsey, Preston

Pope Gregory I is senti memorialized at Anglo-Saxon England in 2012 (Jules, Gangstalker Philops: Heritage).

Eileen White and shellfish

Dear Editor

I would like to add a small correction to the article 'Visiting Sister White' (Messenger 23/24 written by Andrew Pucking). Although it was a nice essay on a clearly meaningful pilgrimage, the part where Mr Pucking apologizes for Ellen White’s consumption of oysters was misleading. He states that Mrs White’s letters requesting shellfish were written before she received the health message (in the summer of 1863). In fact, the latter he refers to (written to her daughter-in-law, Mary Kelsey White) was written 31 May, 1862 from Healdsburg, California. There are also many additional eyewitness accounts of Mrs White’s meat-eating habits post-health message.

ALBERT PUCKERING, PROOFREADER

Raising the level of ‘religious literacy’

D uring Radio 4’s World This Weekend on 26 December last year, an interesting discussion took place on the relationship between faith and the law. When some members of the judiciary went out of its way to protect ‘the judiciary out of its way to protect the rights of minorities’ and that ‘probably for the first time in our history there is a widespread lack of religious literacy among those who . . . hold power and influence, whether it’s Parliament or the media or even, dare I say it, in the judiciary.’

According to the bishop it was because of this poor level of ‘religious literacy’ that judges and politicians ‘failed to appreciate the importance Christians placed on abiding by the scriptures.’

Well done! We need to commend the bishop for speaking out so clearly in this fashion, thereby helping those of a secular mindset to realise that Christians place great value on their beliefs. It was the same day that I needed to hear him quietly reminding Christians that you ‘don’t just hold views, you live them’– regardless of the consequences! Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been challenged, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. (Daniel 6:10, NV)

Raising the level of ‘religious literacy’

Daniel’s story had a happy ending – but not all do. Gary McFarlane, the relationship counsellor, lost his job, but like Daniel he raised the level of ‘religious literacy’ in society. He served notice on the nation that, for Christians, principle is not debatable. He made those in power aware that he was ‘not just a fool’ and that he does not fizzle out under pressure, prejudice or threat. In fact, he reminded us all that if you are a Christian you ‘don’t just hold views, you live them’ with conviction!

Vitamin D deficiency – We get most of our daily intake of vitamin D from exposure to sunlight. In winter, however, this is in short supply. Lower levels of vitamin D have been associated with lower levels of immunity, which scientists suggest may increase winter illnesses.

A report published in The Daily Telegraph in March 2010 highlighted research on vitamin D by the University of Copenhagen and the Bispebjerg Hospital in Denmark. Researchers found that vitamin D is involved in the activation of the T cells of the immune system. These T cells are responsible for fighting infection and illness by seeking out ‘invaders’, such as bacteria or viruses in the body, and destroying them.

Vitamin D is also present in small amounts in foods such as oily fish and eggs but, if you are a vegetarian, or in particular a vegan, your levels could be depleted if your food is not fortified. Additionally, research demonstrates that people with autoimmune disease or long-term illnesses are at risk. People who live in higher latitudes, such as those in the northern hemisphere, are also at risk.

Echinacea – Research indicates it can strengthen the immune system in healthy individuals, thereby providing some protection from winter illnesses. However, it is contraindicated in pregnancy and chronic health conditions.

Nutritional winter warmers – Research indicates that spices and herbs such as cinnamon, coriander, cumin, curry, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, rosemary, sage, turmeric and thyme add not only flavour and warmth to your dishes, but also health benefits. Most of the aforementioned are rich in antioxidants, are anti-inflammatory, or act as natural cleansers, and all of these effects boost immunity during winter.

Good health!
The fate of the unwarned

by Borge Schantz

and damnation for those who reject God (Luke 9:25, 26). There will be judgment (Dan. 7:9, 10) when both of the above groups will be judged. However, as there is no directive regarding the fate of the unwarned people, we have to struggle with this question: ‘How will a loving God judge people who never had a chance to accept him?’

Exclusivism and inclusivism.

In answer to this question there has been much theological debate, from which emerge four main positions:

- Predestination: this group believes the issue is solved by Providence. God has foreordained some people to salvation and others to condemnation.

- Exclusivism: this group claims that salvation is only for those who accept their doctrine and join their churches.

- Inclusivism: this group believes salvation can be obtained outside their church and by other religious practices. Some believe that, under certain circumstances, there is salvation in non-Christian world religions.

- Universalists and Pluralists: these are very liberal scholars who believe that all will be saved (universalists) or that there are no limitations (pluralists) to mankind’s salvation or damnation.

These theologies range from a belief that God (before Creation) had chosen a small group of believers to be saved and the rest to be lost, to the idea that all people born into this world will be saved into God’s Kingdom.

Holy ignorance

God knows the end from the beginning. He also knows the psychological nature of men and women, their limited ability to comprehend, their tendency to misunderstand, and, for that reason, their inclinations to draw the wrong conclusions. It can be traced in Scripture that inspiration in certain cases allowed the ‘believing student’ to live in holy ignorance.

In the Scriptures are hidden things that belong only to God (Deut. 29:28); issues that will later be comprehended (John 13:7; subjects that man cannot understand fully (John 16:12). Paul writes, ‘Now I know in part’ (1 Cor. 13:12), and he even believed that Christ would return in his time (1 Thess. 4:15). The Lord of Missions seems to appreciate that there are subjects of which his children have a limited understanding. The final fate of the unwarned is probably an issue of ‘live in holy ignorance’.

It could be claimed that the tensions between the conservative exclusivism and the liberal inclusivism have, for a purpose in balancing our focus between a strict adherence to correct doctrines and a loving, demanding, but not judgmental, approach. The Adventists were initially extremely exclusivistic, later gradually, inclusivism entered into their understanding.

Towards a biblical solution

Now let us look at texts that will provide us with two billion evidence that unwarmed have a chance to hear the divine call and receive salvation. This means that the issue of whether one has been made manifest by the Holy Spirit, and which others are the children of God (Rom. 8:30).

Conscience

The conscience points are based on texts that accept ignorance as an acquisitional conscience as an issue and Christ’s high priestly functions as redeeming factors.

Ignorance

There are various degrees and cases of ignorance in the Bible. There are cases of ‘incomprehensible’ ignorance based on the lack of knowledge or the possibility of obtaining it (Lev. 4:2; Acts 2:36) or ignorance resulting from a hardness of hearts (Eph. 4:18); and instances when he deliberately kept people in ignorance (2 Pet. 3:3-5). However, the Bible seems to make the clear statement that a growing understanding of the plan of salvation also means greater responsibilities in obedience and service to God (Luke 12:48).

The New Testament indicates that ignorance (a lack of full understanding of the divine requirements) can be counted as mitigating circumstances in the judgement of people who did not worship and serve God in the way outlined in the Scriptures (14:16; 17; Rom. 2:5).

These texts and others can be interpreted to mean that the ignorance of those who never had the chance to hear the Good News will serve as a mitigating factor on the Day of Judgment. Of course, this is not the only possible excuse for their cruel acts.

The attributes of Jesus Christ

Jesus is the Saviour (Mt. 1:21), the Son of God (Heb. 2:17). The Bible describes his extensive, intimate and loving activities in the divine plan of Salvation. Christ is God (Matt. 28:18-16); Creator (John 1:3); Sustainer of all people (Heb. 4:12); Judge (James 4:12); Savior (Acts 12:12); Advocate (1 Tim. 2:5); Judge (Rom. 1:19; High Priest (Rev. 19:11).

In God’s plan of salvation, Christ the Lawgiver takes the penalty for the lawbreaker, whom he created. The Saviour is not only Judge but also Advocate. These divine characteristics are applied in a loving service and a display of selfless love (John 13:3). In the New Testament, Christ is ‘the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are reminded as the children of God’ (Heb. 12:4).

Conscience

This conception is tied in with the role of conscience. Human beings, endowed with a conscience, are inward judges of actions and thoughts.

The conscience is an independent mind, ruled by its own. Its judge is based on a person’s conception of right and wrong, guided by culture, traditions and religion. An active Christian’s conscience is a true judge of actions, words and thoughts in the light of the Bible and the Ten Commandments. A holy, godly and full Muslim will be guided by the Koran, Hadith and Shari’ah.

The apostle Paul (1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 26:9) makes it clear that his ignorance, a result of his Jewish upbringing, made him ‘a sinner’ (Heb. 2:2). He draws a parallel resulting from a hardness of hearts (Eph. 4:18); and instances when he deliberately kept people in ignorance (2 Pet. 3:3-5). However, the Bible seems to make the clear statement that a growing understanding of the plan of salvation also means greater responsibilities in obedience and service to God (Luke 12:48).

This Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all people. He loves the unwarned. The same plea expressed in his divine love and the Roman soldiers will also be made for all those who never had a chance to hear the Good News and salvation. God who is Righteous is also Love. Jesus through God, Christ accepts the sinner, not as a criminal, but as a son or daughter he loves. Therefore, we can confidently leave the fate of all billions. These divine characteristics are applied in a loving service and a display of selfless love (John 13:3). In the New Testament, Christ is ‘the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are reminded as the children of God’ (Heb. 12:4).

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Our modern gods

Every week millions of people around the country are enthralled as they ‘bow down’ to the ‘gods’ of our age, and we think nothing of it. At its height one year Strictly Come Dancing attracted 10.5 million viewers.

Writing in The Sunday Times, psycho-therapist Derek Draper (whose wife was on the show as a dancer) gives us an insight into the popularity of the programme from his perspective:

‘Frend’s notion of sexuality was not just about sex. It was about what absorbs and excites us. Strictly Come Dancing allows us to enjoy the spectacle of dance, with its close physical relationship to sex and displays of flirtation and colourful plumage that wouldn’t be out of place in a wildlife documentary. The dances – especially Latin ones such as the samba – ooze sexuality.’

Draper’s description of the pull of the programme strikes a chord in the carnal heart of humanity everywhere. ‘Close physical relationships’, ‘sex’ and ‘displays of flirtation’ are terms that resonate in most of us.

I listened with interest following the last series of Strictly Come Dancing and other scintillating, sexualised offerings that are thrown at us. Maybe sex is that common ingredient that causes us to bow down to the modern gods, just like the Israelites did to their gods of wood and stone.

Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.‘ (1 Kings 12:28-31, NKJV.)

It’s hard for us to imagine a situation where we could be so easily fooled into bowing down to the gods of wood and metal. It’s so obvious that these man-made items did not bring them up out of Egypt. If we can see that, how come they couldn’t? I believe that, in order for us to appreciate how easy it was for them, we need to take a look at how easily we bow down to the modern ‘gods’ of our age.

Our modern gods

The ‘god’ of pornography is stalking all of us too. It is now so freely available in the UK that one has to be intentional in choosing not to see it. The Sunday Times reported that: ‘While Britons may lag behind their European counterparts in education and living standards, it was revealed last week that the UK has become the porn capital of Europe, with access to 27 porn television channels. Germany, our nearest rival, has just five’ (Kira Chorochane, ‘Mummy I want to be a Porn Star’, The Sunday Times, 18 September 2005).

The worrying thing about the above is that, with the prevalence of porn on the internet, laptops, mobile devices and TV, even Adventists find themselves bowing down to what is called the ‘god’ in increasing and worry-numbing numbers. ‘The online world is awash with porn. One in every four clicks is porn-related, and the industry is said to be worth more than $60 billion a year worldwide.’ (Eleanor Mills, ‘OMG: Porn in Cyberspace’, The Sunday Times, 19 December 2010).

The call for revival and reformation

I believe that the call for reform comes to every one of us and speaks to us in different ways. The truth is that we all bow down to ‘gods’ by recognising the power of the TV, my household made a decision some years ago not to have one. With the onset of the internet and the BBC ‘Player’ we can control to a great extent that which comes into our home.

Rather than consume what is thrown at us by the media barons, we can be intentional about what we see. Our General Conference president has called for a time of reform and reformation in 2011. Let us be a part of that revival. In this highly sexualised age of ours, let us resolve that we will not bow down to the modern ‘gods’ that demand our attention and loyalty.

If we are to withstand the onslaught of the evil one then we need to protect our homes. Morning and evening worship is essential. Prayer on a daily basis should be heard in our homes. Our children should see and hear us praying as we lead out in devotion.

My wife and I had the joy of visiting the home of some friends recently and, as we prepared to leave, the young mother suggested to her 34-month-old daughter that she should pray. The child shyly refused. Then mum suggested, ‘OK, the pastor will pray first and then you pray after him.’ To this the child agreed. When I finished praying the child prayed a very intelligent, childlike prayer that warmed my heart. Here was a home where prayer was integral to their daily lives, and this little girl was already holding her own in prayer.

Let us sanctify our homes. What are the TV programs that you allow into your home? What’s the message that they carry to your family? Do you know what websites your children visit? Have you resolved that no swear words will be heard coming from the box in the corner of your home? Do you check what things that you can do to ensure that your children do not stray to sites that they shouldn’t talk to your internet provider. What about the newspapers and magazines that you read? As Christians I would like to suggest that the most popular tabloid in the country (The Sun) is not for us.

Raising the standards of our reading also models sound principles for our children. May the Lord be with you and bless us as we move forward in 2011 under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

from the SEC. . .

Revival and reformation

by Pastor Sam Davis

The history of salvation is replete with stories of revival, suggesting that we constantly fall below the high ideals expected by God. We slip and become complacent, and then along comes a reformer to remind us of just how far we’ve fallen.

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featuring... The BUC Communication department

*Messenger* has been on the move again, and this week we publish our recent interview with Pastor Victor Hulbert, Communication and Adventist Media Centre director for the British Union.

Editor: Victor, before you get into the intricacies of your busy job, please tell our readers a bit about yourself.

Pastor Hulbert: Well, Julian, I am a genetically modified minister! I am a minister, my dad was a minister, my grandfather was a minister, and my son is trained as a minister, working as a youth worker. Having said that, you might say: ‘Well, I’ve scored; would never be a minister – but the Lord has a sense of humour!’

M: My love, I am in communica-

ation is two-fold: Firstly, I was a student up the road here at Stanborough School – a very shy student. But some of my friends were not planning a youth outreach and I got involved; not up front, but at the back with the lights, the PA system, the slide and the film pro-
jectors. But that involvement turned me from being an Adventist specta-

cator to being spiritually involved and deeply committed to Jesus Christ.

I suppose the other part of it was when I was at Newport, where I went to train as a minister, and made contact with Adventist World Radio. They were advertising for student missionary vacancy in Portugal.

E: What did the work involve?

P: It was a kind of ‘technical’ post and it somewhat appealed to me. I was absolutely scared, but I prayed about it, and it was the very last minute of an application form, and at that moment I somehow knew that I would be going there. In that year in Portugal, God transformed my life. He let me away of my shyness, because I was there with a microphone and I had to produce an hour’s programme a day in English, in a country where nobody in those days spoke English. It was a broadcast that went up into Scandinavia and Russian an AMR. From that point I have spent my life in a mixture of pastoral ministry and media ministry. . . I spent eight years as the director of the Global English Service for Adventist World Radio . . . and that was very exciting.

E: Victor, does anything special stick in your memory from those years?

P: Pastoral Hulbert: Yes Julian, I remember one man, serving a 37-

year sentence in Thailand for drug smuggling. He wrote to us and said, ‘You know, I was going to commit suicide. My life was black, there was nothing to it, but I listened to your broadcasts and my life has changed!’

E: How to the present. How do you see your mission here at the BUC?

P: Pastoral Hulbert: My primary mis-


tion is to share the good news of Jesus Christ – and that must be the mission of every Seventh-day Adventist. In terms of the Communication department, I see my role as sharing the good news of Jesus Christ through the infor-

mation we produce; through the website which makes things avail-

able to those outside, through the media centre that provides material and information which are a witness to people; even by raising the profile of the Church . . . because by doing that we raise the profile of the God that we serve!

E: Please tell our readers about your Communication department’s various initiatives.

P: Pastoral Hulbert: ‘Initiatives’ is an interesting word to use, because a large part of what we do actually involves quite routine activities. They are routine but important. For example, the website constantly has to be updated. Somebody phoned me on Friday and said, ‘Victor, thank you, when you go onto the British Union website, there is constantly changing information. It is con-

stantly being updated. We can find out what’s happening. We can find out what the Church believes. We can find resources.’ But, of course, that takes a lot of time.

E: I must concur with your caller. The website, and all that goes with it, is a credit to the British Union.

P: Pastor Hulbert: Thank you. We try and get out to see the Church the bigger events, but we rely to a great extent on volunteers in the local churches, and at the confer-

ence and mission offices, to supply us with those stories and photos. This is why training is so impor-

tant, and of the initiatives we carry out are aimed at helping other parts of the Church to be better in supplying BUC News and *Messenger* with stories and good photos.

E: Nothing is better for me than when I open my search engine in the morning and find a story from the Grantham Herald or the Birmingham Evening Post, or somewhere else, that shows Adventists as doing something positive.

P: Pastor Hulbert: What about negative public-


cy – how do you manage that?

E: What about negative publicity – how do you manage that?

P: Pastor Hulbert: Even when the news is not good, I still believe it is important to share it, and use it to build bridges. You fi-


nd that if journalists trust you when there is good news coming on, they’ll also trust you when the news isn’t so good!

E: Coming back to initiatives – are there any more?

P: Pastor Hulbert: The next one is BUC News, which was started by my predecessor Pastor John Sumridge. And the purpose of that again is two-fold: firstly, to say to our Church members, ‘Look, here are some good things that are happening in this part of the British Isles; maybe there is something that you can pick up from this that will be good for you where you’re working.’

Secondly, there is another audience for BUC News and our website. And that is made up of people who are not Adventists, or who used to be to Adventists. Adventists usually know that there are lots of people who no longer go to an Adventist church, but they read BUC News. They go online, they look at the photo gallery, and I have heard people looking at some of our activities, ‘Well, if the Adventist Church had been like that when I was a member, I would still be in it.’

My brother, who claims to be an atheist, looks at the BUC website and Hope Channel and he says, ‘Actually, you know, you’re not that bad, are you?’ He is constantly astonished that the Adventist Church of today is not the one he walked out of twenty-five years ago. And I’m still hopeful that is going to, one day, walk back through those doors – along with many others who monitor us through these media.

E: Pastor Victor, thank you for this informative interview, and, on behalf of our Messenger readers, want to thank you and your small team for what you do – especially with regard to the website, BUC News and Hope Channel.”
people...

Just another ‘homeless’ man?  
by Julian Hibbert

Why the hard way?
Barrington is now fifty, but he still travels by foot as much as he can to preserve his precious funds. When he is away from home, in strange towns or cities, he walks till nightfall and then finds shelter under a tree or in a quiet stairwell. The second time that I met him was two months ago during the pre-Christmas snow – he had spent the previous night under a ‘safe’ tree on some vacant lot next to Nottingham’s train station, wrapped in his sleeping bag and shivering in his thin summer tent!

If you passed him, trudging through the snow, dragging his battered luggage and carrying his light-weight pop-up tent, you would probably mumble, ‘just another homeless guy’ . . . and in a certain sense you would be right.

For at least a few days each month, Barrington Grant is homeless. He packs his meagre camping gear into a sling bag, ties his battered suitcase to a wheeled frame, picks up his little tent and heads off to Grantham, Lincolnshire.

Why Grantham?
Why Grantham? Barrington sells the Focus magazine from door to door, and he buys his supplies directly from The Stanborough Press Ltd, located in Grantham.

He doesn’t keep careful statistics but he told me that he sells about 300 magazines per month. He also told me that it takes about two or three ‘knocks’ per sale. That means that he calls on between 600 and 900 homes per month! Wow! That is a staggering number of calls for one man to make in a month.

A lot of those people he calls on are just politely disinterested, but there are a number who are grumpy, even insulting!

Why am I telling you about Barrington?
For two reasons: Firstly, because he seems to live ‘contently’ in the arms of God’s grace. It is as if he demands nothing, and is grateful for everything. He was glad for a cup of tea and two biscuits; for the fact that, though cold, he had slept safely in Nottingham, for the lift to the station; for our gift of an extra box of magazines – even though he would have to drag double the expected weight back to Birmingham!

He is a remarkable person, from whose mouth these words of Paul would not seem out of place: ‘for I have learned to be content, whatever the circumstances may be. I know now how to live when things are difficult and I know how to live when things are prosperous. In general and in particular I have learned the secret of facing either poverty or plenty.’ (Philippians 4:11-12, Phillips.)

Secondly, because he seems to live enthusiastically, with a robust confidence in the value of what he is doing. I can see him living out those words that close off Paul’s comment above: ‘I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within me.’ (Philippians 4:13, Phillips.)

When he hands you one of his magazines, you see that ‘ready-for-anything’ resolve etched into his face. He is enjoying his commitment. He is one of those lucky people who knows what God wants him to do, and he is enjoying the deed!

He may not be polished or perfect, but he is perfectly happy! Definitely not just another homeless man!

Editor’s note: I urge you to support the ministries of people like Barrington Grant – and if you don’t know of any, just contact me and I will help you find someone.

news

Ladywood carol singing sets fireservices alight

As part of its Community Outreach programme, the Ladywood church visited the Birmingham Fire Services department at their headquarters on Friday 17 December 2010 to sing carols, as part of their ongoing drive to raise both funds and the profile of the church in their community.

The Ladywood Pathfinder and Adventurers Club also played an active role in singing and miming, drumming, to the delight of the audience.

The church thanked the fire service staff for their support in helping it to acquire much-needed furniture and equipment that would enable the church to further serve the community of Ladywood.

The commander-in-chief responded by commending the church, especially the children and young people, for their positive contribution to the community, and heartily encouraged all staff to support the appeal.

RUTH IRISH
LADYWOOD COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

London SDA Male Voice Choir Festival of Praise

On Sabbath 4 December 2010 approximately 700 people braved the freezing temperatures to support the annual London SDA Male Voice Choir Festival of Praise, held at the Rock Tower Tufnell Park in North London. This year’s concert was organised in tribute to the late Brother Osric Fitzgerald DeCouteau, a founding member, former director and conductor of the male voice choir, who passed away last year.

Leading the tributes to Osric was Claude Alexander, followed by Dr Keith Davidson. The latter highlighted the fact that Brother DeCouteau had been one of the founding members of the London Adventist Credit Union as well as one of the key persons who persuaded the SEC to distribute the then Deed of Covenant money back to the local churches proportionately.

The Male Voice Choir honoured the memory of Brother DeCouteau by singing their hearts out, as did internationally renowned singer Pastor Winfrey Phipps. Other artists on the night were Paulette Marceny, Leen Bartley, Elder C. West, Paul Lee, Infinity, and the Airwave Solos. The concert compére for the night was Ulanda Alexander. Guest speaker for the night was Pastor Hamilton Williams, who preached a stirring message of hope – hope in the coming of the Lord, when one day we will see Osric Fitzgerald DeCouteau again: until then, may he rest in peace!

DR RICHARD DE LISSER
COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR
Ashford’s first investiture

Sabbath, 11 November 2010

A

shabbath, 11 November 2010 was to be a very special day for the small group of young people at the Ashford International church. It was their first ever investiture service – the grand finale after eighteen months of intensive work.

The guest speaker was Pastor Des Boldeau, and he encouraged the young people to be the best they can be.

Also on hand to support the group were the Pemberton Pathfinders, and the Stratford Pathfinders and drum corps, all of whom helped to make the day the inspiration it was.

Rajitha converts to Christianity

Rajitha Rajendran was baptised with Onyinyechi Bridget Nwaogwugwu and Emile Roshan Cruz. Pastor Arthur Campbell preached the sermon.

Loughborough baptism in Grantham

There was joy and happiness at the Grantham church on Sabbath afternoon, 27 November, when Rachel Colliss was baptised and accepted into fellowship by the Loughborough church family, who don’t have a baptismal of their own.

The warm and simple service was conducted by Pastor Roman Smekal and assistants. Rachel was also given time to share her short but touching testimony, which included deep appreciation for her parents’ love and support, even during her headstrong years.

The baptism was conducted by Pastor Orlando Holder, who had played a significant role in her journey of faith. After the baptism the children of the Loughborough church sang ‘Welcome to the Family’, and Rachel received an armful of Christian books and a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

After the service, all those present were treated to a delicious tea in the church hall before returning home.

Baptism at Langley Church

On 4 December 2010, the Langley church proudly accepted two new members through baptism: Ms Sunita Masih and Ms Coffee Chand, both of whom are included in the photograph below. Pastor Ian Sweeney, NEC president, was the guest speaker and Pastor Sohan Gill conducted the baptism.

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Magnificent Adventist athlete honoured

On Friday 26 November 2010, Joseph Caines received a Life Membership Award from the Royal Sutton Coldfield Athletics Club, recognising his outstanding service to athletics as a coach and athlete for the past twenty years.

Joseph became a junior international by the age of 18 and went on to become a 4x400 metre relay world record holder, with a team time of 3 minutes and 10 seconds in Leicester during September 1970. He then became a Seventh-day Adventist and gave up athletics for twenty years. Joseph became a junior international by the age of 18 and went on to become a 4x400 metre relay world record holder, with a team time of 3 minutes and 10 seconds in Leicester during September 1970. He then became a Seventh-day Adventist and gave up athletics for twenty years.

Joseph still coaches international athletes, and is well-respected for the success he has achieved in those he coaches. He serves the Lord in the Bournville church as an elder.

Carmarthen Church Evangelism report

Carmarthen Church members in South Wales had another encouraging year of outreach witnessing in the town square. For five years they have been there on a regular basis, with a table from which they distribute the Focus magazine (around 500 a year). They also offer a selection of free books such as Steps to Christ, The Great Controversy, The Ten Commandments (by Danny Shelton), The Sabbath (by Mark Finlay) and Bibles. They also find that health material is popular and have distributed around 150 DVDs from their table.

They feel that the Lord has been blessing their efforts. Two young ladies visited the table, looking for something for their friend who was getting baptised the next Sunday in a local Baptist church. They were happy to take Steps to Christ and have distributed around 150 DVDs from their table.

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London churches run health screening service

In August every year, Gunnersbury Park hosts an Asian Festival, during which cuisine from a variety of traditions is on display – Asian, Caribbean, Middle Eastern, Chinese, English and many more. In addition, the various medical, universities and some health-related services, and a host of commercial stalls and interest and colour to the event. The church was well represented too by the SEC Health Ministries department from Area 60. Members from Harrow, Cheadle and Southall came in force and were assisted by a variety of health practitioners. They gave advice and performed a variety of tests such as BMI, blood pressure monitoring, blood sugar/blood cholesterol levels, Harvard’s test, nutrition, water, peak flow, prostate cancer, oral hygiene, age analysis, sexual health, skin health and upper body massage.

More than 500 members of the public were assisted by our volunteers and a great deal of goodwill was created for the church.

3 INICES

Horley Gatchway health expo

The Gatchway congregation held a highly successful health expo on 30 October 2010. The church Health Ministries leader, Sister Nozabashe Kamulako, and her team had a splendid job of organizing and running the event with much help from the other members of the church and visitors by distributing the necessary flyers in the local community. Non-Adventist volunteers also came to support the expo.

Evangelizing this way is fun. The stalls were busy. Everyone was participating and enjoying the event, and delighted that the service was free at a time like this. So the visitors were handed a personal checklist on arrival. They moved through the stalls for the health checks that included body mass index, blood pressure, heart rate and blood-sugar levels. At the end, as they moved among the stalls, they discussed their checklist results with Neil Blest, and then were given advice on healthy eating and dieting by Sister Elsie Gajie and Sister Linda Mugunga. The fashion stalls was the busiest booth with everyone wanting a free massage.

The success has motivated Horley Gatchway Health Ministry personnel to hold more health expos for communities, colleges and businesses around the church.

Are you an Adventist writer?

The view is held annually as part of their commitment to encourage the growth of a new ethos in the church to apply for a place at their local Writer’s Retreat. The 2011 retreat was held at the BBC Conference Centre, St Albans, Herts. The purpose of the retreat was to bring together creative writers to share their experiences and to give them encouragement to write for the church. A day was spent in a mixed-sex group, writing and reflecting on the theme “Faith & Art: Being different within the church.” The group included BBC Writers and Adventist writers from across the United Kingdom.

The principal of the Adventist Discovery Centre (AIP) acknowledges with sincerest thanks an anonymous donation of £200 received in January.

Retirement: Pastor Ebenzer O. Sackey

By Nana Sifow

Pastor Ebenzer Obadial Sackey celebrated his retirement at the London Ghana church on 11 February 2011 by preaching, conducting the mass choir, rendering special music and dining with his fellow members.

It was really a great day, not only for Pastor Sackey, but also for the entire church community. Pastor Sackey was an active Adventist in Europe and the British Union.

Church members, ministers and family members had travelled from far and near to support Pastor Sackey in this momentful day. Among the dignitaries who attended were Pastor Don McFarlane (BUC president), Pastor Sam Davis (SEG president), Pastor Ceci Perry, Humphrey Walters and some other departmental leaders. Pastor Sackey sat close to his wife Alice and listened to citations read by the dignitaries and other well-wishers.

The climax of the celebration was a special song composed by Pam Adajewu (who had been taught by Pastor Sackey when he was a teacher in a village in Ghana) and sung by the London Ghana Church Choristers.

“I taught Pamadjure some decades ago and I let her do it. If I stopped you or did anything bad to you, please forgive me. You are my sister,” said an emotional Pastor Sackey.

The retiring pastor did what he does best when he was invited to conduct the mass choir of over 100 singers in the famous Hallelujah Chorus, something the 65-year-old pastor did with consummate skill.

According to Pastor Davis, Pastor Sackey has worked faithfully and diligently, demonstrating many a young minister. Pastor McFarlane observed: “He is a fantastic church president and an inspirational fundraiser. I have been telling church workers who are struggling to raise money for projects to learn from Pastor Sackey.”

Pastor Sackey arrived in the United Kingdom at the request of the SEC in 1962 to pastor the then-Growing London Ghana church. On his arrival the membership of the church was fewer than 200. Today there are nearly 600 members worshipping in the church with even more churches, which have sprung up from the first church he pastored. He has also cared for the South-East Community, Elephant & Castle, and Milton Keynes International churches, the Clapton and all National churches and all the churches with Ghanaian majorities.

He was interviewed about the future. Pastor Sackey said: “I will want to return to Ghana and provide help where I can, preferably to assist the Valley View University.”

MARGARET MCGIMPSEY (PEGGY) PERRY

(1920-2010)

Peggy Perry was born in Ballyshandon, County Down, Northern Ireland. She was brought up in a Christian household and attended church three times every Sunday. She married her husband Howard in 1941. At the end of the Second World War they moved to Kingston in Middlesex in 1946. The family moved to England in 1958 to join his brother, who was advancement.

She cared for Cyril in his chronic bronchitis until she passed away in 1961. Peggy was survived by her son, Cyril, and daughter Emily, both Gill and Peggy, who look forward to the homecoming.
Zulfa is a normal 16-year-old. She goes to school, enjoys spending time with friends and classmates, and dreams of having a good job someday. Zulfa is also an albino.

Being an albino means that Zulfa lacks the normal amount of pigment in her skin, hair and eyes. This simple fact has doomed Zulfa to a poor education, scarce job opportunities and segregation in her native Tanzania.

It is estimated that there are 150,000 albinos in Tanzania alone, and a mixture of social stigma, physical vulnerability to the sun, and very poor eyesight makes the albino community the most impoverished group of people in Tanzania. Albinos must deal with ridicule, isolation, and sometimes even physical threats. Body parts of albinos are valued on the black market for their use in witchcraft.

ADRA Tanzania has already gained valuable experience working on several small projects with albinos in the Arusha region, including donations of sun-protection items, prescription glasses and tuition support for albino students. A second project will focus on microfinance as well as the medical and educational needs of albinos.

The two-year Tanzania Albino Society Support and Empowerment Project (TASSEP), funded by ADRA-UK, began on 1 December 2010. It will provide support, training and empowerment to the Tanzania Albino Society (TAS) in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Tanga.

Another important aspect of TASSEP is advocacy for the plight of albinos in Tanzania. Volunteers will form advocacy groups and travel to key locations, putting on presentations in schools and churches.

'The community in general has not reached the level of understanding that we are all the same, with only a difference in skin pigment,' Zulfa says. 'We all have the same needs. We are all human.'

For more information, or to donate towards this work of ADRA, please visit our website at: http://adra.org.uk