Our editor reflects on the 11 March tragedy

My reflections on that Friday evening of the quake were sombre to start with. I realised that this world-gripping spectacle ... stresses the fact that this planet is not our jurisdiction. We don't own it, cannot control it, and will never tame it.

We cannot disaster-proof the environment. Even the most idyllic locations, the most benign climates, are only an ash cloud or a tsunami away from calamity.

Prophetically, the psalmist captured the decaying nature of this earth in these words:

'In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, ... they will be discarded.'

(Psalm 102:25, 26, NIV.)

On 11 March the earth tore its tired 'seams' apart off the coast of Japan – and more 'wear and tear' lies ahead!

A timely reminder

The events of that day have been a timely reminder to me of two important things. Firstly, that I must come to terms with a harsh reality – this planet is in decay, and nothing in the safe, secure environment that I enjoy can be taken for granted!

I must be ready – emotionally and spiritually – to leave for 'higher ground' when the tsunamis of life threaten to take it all away.

Secondly, the events of that day remind me that, when disaster and calamity strike, I am not alone! The psalmist’s prophecy portrays a scene of geological and ecological decay. The earth splits its seams, tears its fabric, frays its edges and loses its shape ... but he added something that I left out when quoting the verse above:

'They will perish [heavens and the earth], but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.'

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A ‘megathrust’ quake

Geologists are calling it a ‘megathrust’ quake, caused when one tectonic plate is forced over another, deep within the earth’s volatile crust: in this case, along the Pacific rim – the so-called ‘ring of fire’.

The epicentre was well out to sea – some 130km from the city of Sendai; but at a relatively shallow depth below the seabed – just 24km.

According to news reports this quake, at a magnitude of 8.9, was 8,000 times more powerful than the one that recently ripped through Christchurch.

This is not our jurisdiction

My reflections on that Friday evening of the quake were sombre to start with. I realised ... stresses the fact that this planet is not our jurisdiction. We don't own it, cannot control it, and will never tame it.

We cannot disaster-proof the environment. Even the most idyllic locations, the most benign climates, are only an ash cloud or a tsunami away from calamity.

Prophetically, the psalmist captured the decaying nature of this earth in these words:

'In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, ... they will be discarded.'

(Psalm 102:25, 26, NIV.)

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A timely reminder

The events of that day have been a timely reminder to me of two important things. Firstly, that I must come to terms with a harsh reality – this planet is in decay, and nothing in the safe, secure environment that I enjoy can be taken for granted!

I must be ready – emotionally and spiritually – to leave for ‘higher ground’ when the tsunamis of life threaten to take it all away.

Secondly, the events of that day remind me that, when disaster and calamity strike, I am not alone! The psalmist’s prophecy portrays a scene of geological and ecological decay. The earth splits its seams, tears its fabric, frays its edges and loses its shape ... but he added something that I left out when quoting the verse above:

‘They will perish [heavens and the earth], but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.’

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A ‘megathrust’ quake

Geologists are calling it a ‘megathrust’ quake, caused when one tectonic plate is forced over another, deep within the earth’s volatile crust: in this case, along the Pacific rim – the so-called ‘ring of fire’.

The epicentre was well out to sea – some 130km from the city of Sendai; but at a relatively shallow depth below the seabed – just 24km.

According to news reports this quake, at a magnitude of 8.9, was 8,000 times more powerful than the one that recently ripped through Christchurch.

This is not our jurisdiction

My reflections on that Friday evening of the quake were sombre to start with. I realised that this world-gripping spectacle of natural destructive force stresses the fact that this planet is not our jurisdiction. We don't own it, cannot control it, and will never tame it.

We cannot disaster-proof the environment. Even the most idyllic locations, the most benign climates, are only an ash cloud or a tsunami away from calamity.

Prophetically, the psalmist captured the decaying nature of this earth in these words:

'In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, ... they will be discarded.'

(Psalm 102:25, 26, NIV.)

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A timely reminder

The events of that day have been a timely reminder to me of two important things. Firstly, that I must come to terms with a harsh reality – this planet is in decay, and nothing in the safe, secure environment that I enjoy can be taken for granted!

I must be ready – emotionally and spiritually – to leave for ‘higher ground’ when the tsunamis of life threaten to take it all away.

Secondly, the events of that day remind me that, when disaster and calamity strike, I am not alone! The psalmist’s prophecy portrays a scene of geological and ecological decay. The earth splits its seams, tears its fabric, frays its edges and loses its shape ... but he added something that I left out when quoting the verse above:

‘They will perish [heavens and the earth], but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.’

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A ‘megathrust’ quake

Geologists are calling it a ‘megathrust’ quake, caused when one tectonic plate is forced over another, deep within the earth’s volatile crust: in this case, along the Pacific rim – the so-called ‘ring of fire’.

The epicentre was well out to sea – some 130km from the city of Sendai; but at a relatively shallow depth below the seabed – just 24km.

According to news reports this quake, at a magnitude of 8.9, was 8,000 times more powerful than the one that recently ripped through Christchurch.

This is not our jurisdiction

My reflections on that Friday evening of the quake were sombre to start with. I realised that this world-gripping spectacle of natural destructive force stresses the fact that this planet is not our jurisdiction. We don't own it, cannot control it, and will never tame it.

We cannot disaster-proof the environment. Even the most idyllic locations, the most benign climates, are only an ash cloud or a tsunami away from calamity.

Prophetically, the psalmist captured the decaying nature of this earth in these words:

'In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, ... they will be discarded.'

(Psalm 102:25, 26, NIV.)

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A timely reminder

The events of that day have been a timely reminder to me of two important things. Firstly, that I must come to terms with a harsh reality – this planet is in decay, and nothing in the safe, secure environment that I enjoy can be taken for granted!

I must be ready – emotionally and spiritually – to leave for ‘higher ground’ when the tsunamis of life threaten to take it all away.

Secondly, the events of that day remind me that, when disaster and calamity strike, I am not alone! The psalmist’s prophecy portrays a scene of geological and ecological decay. The earth splits its seams, tears its fabric, frays its edges and loses its shape ... but he added something that I left out when quoting the verse above:

‘They will perish [heavens and the earth], but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.’

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A ‘megathrust’ quake

Geologists are calling it a ‘megathrust’ quake, caused when one tectonic plate is forced over another, deep within the earth’s volatile crust: in this case, along the Pacific rim – the so-called ‘ring of fire’.

The epicentre was well out to sea – some 130km from the city of Sendai; but at a relatively shallow depth below the seabed – just 24km.

According to news reports this quake, at a magnitude of 8.9, was 8,000 times more powerful than the one that recently ripped through Christchurch.

This is not our jurisdiction

My reflections on that Friday evening of the quake were sombre to start with. I realised that this world-gripping spectacle of natural destructive force stresses the fact that this planet is not our jurisdiction. We don't own it, cannot control it, and will never tame it.

We cannot disaster-proof the environment. Even the most idyllic locations, the most benign climates, are only an ash cloud or a tsunami away from calamity.

Prophetically, the psalmist captured the decaying nature of this earth in these words:

'In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, ... they will be discarded.'

(Psalm 102:25, 26, NIV.)

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!

A timely reminder

The events of that day have been a timely reminder to me of two important things. Firstly, that I must come to terms with a harsh reality – this planet is in decay, and nothing in the safe, secure environment that I enjoy can be taken for granted!

I must be ready – emotionally and spiritually – to leave for ‘higher ground’ when the tsunamis of life threaten to take it all away.

Secondly, the events of that day remind me that, when disaster and calamity strike, I am not alone! The psalmist’s prophecy portrays a scene of geological and ecological decay. The earth splits its seams, tears its fabric, frays its edges and loses its shape ... but he added something that I left out when quoting the verse above:

‘They will perish [heavens and the earth], but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.’

On 11 March the earth tore its tired ‘seams’ apart off the coast of Japan – and more ‘wear and tear’ lies ahead!
Knowing your body – part 2a

Adrenal health

In this issue we turn our attention to the adrenals. These glands sit on top of the kidneys and are responsible for many of the functions essential for life and the maintenance of good health. Adrenal health can be compromised by stress, diet, and certain medical conditions. Understanding how they work is important for maintaining overall health.

- Maintaining metabolic processes such as energy production by converting carbohydrates, proteins and fats to blood glucose.
- Balancing fluids and electrolytes.
- Regulating blood pressure.
- Controlling the ‘fight or flight’ response.
- Producing hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol, progesterone and testosterone.

The hormone cortisol is crucial for cell protection and maintaining blood pressure. When functioning normally, it helps the body to adapt to physical and mental stress.

Inferior Adrenal health

When functioning optimally it increases appetite and energy levels, but it also tones down our immune system, allergy and inflammatory responses. Cortisol assists our body by resisting the impact of internal and external stressors like infections, extreme temperatures and traumas, and helps to maintain stable emotions.

Signs and symptoms of adrenal fatigue:

- Morning fatigue – inability to feel alert until late morning, even when you’ve been awake for several hours.
- Insomnia on awakening, even when feeling tired.
- Cravings for salty and fatty foods.
- Lack of immunity to infections.
- Insomnia to handle stress, increased allergies, and/or dizziness.
- Headaches or migraines.
- ‘Misty’ eyes.
- Poor digestion.
- Muscular weakness.
- Unexplained hair loss.
- Loss of memory.
- Decreased sex drive.
- Lack of energy.
- Inability to get out of bed.
- Procrastination.
- Insomnia.
- Sensitive teeth.
- Unexplained weight gain.

Although these are common subjects, if you can identify with several of them, you may be experiencing adrenal fatigue. It is advisable to consult a medical practitioner.

The adrenal glands are responsible for the release of stress hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, which help the body to respond to stress.

In the next issue we will explore the causative factors in more detail and examine some preventative health practices you can follow. Until then, try to get adequate sleep, reduce stress and boost your immunity. This will support your adrenal health.

Good health!

---

BRITISH UNION CONFERENCE QUINQUENNAL SESSION

Notice is hereby given that a quinquennial session of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held on Tuesday, 1 July at the Stanborough Park church, 609 St Albans Road, Garston, Watford, Herts, WD25 3L.

BIBLICAL STUDY: The session will commence at 8.30am in the Stanborough Centre adjacent to the church, and the opening business session in the Stanborough Park church is scheduled for 9am.

The business session will be preceded by a day of fellowship at the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, London, SW1H 0BE on Sabbath, 2 July 2011.

---

In 1977, after three years in urban ministry, I transferred to a large town in an agricultural region. It sported a good university and a large military base, both of which supplied the church with a few new, young faces each year.

I was glad for these ‘temporary’ youth, but was also concerned that some of the congregation had no longer attended. Where were they? The majority had moved away to the cities in search of better jobs; some had married and joined spouses elsewhere; but there were one or two who seemed to be ‘friendly fire’ casualties.

One of them ‘died’ in a skirmish during a Sabbaths School class, just a few years earlier. It happened on a sweltering day, in a room that bore the full brunt of the mid-morning sun. To survive the heat, the young men had removed their jackets – but for not long. The elder assigned to the lesson that day walked in and fired on them without warning. ‘Put your jackets back on!’ he said. ‘That’s the rule! They had done nothing, not even provoking the bullets’ in the chest – he picked up his jacket and left for good!

What a tragedy! Our youth are so precious, yet sometimes, they take the proverbial ‘bullet in the chest’ – he picked up his jacket and left for good!

---

Christ wasn’t so tolerant

In the military, someone who misdirects fire at his own troops will be the subject of a high-level inquiry. His actions will be reviewed in minute detail, and may lead to censure and severe military discipline – even a dishonourable discharge!

In the Church, however, such offenders often get off with a ‘friendly fire’ indictment. They are on our side, they are on our side... Please don’t let ‘friendly fire’ cause any more casualties in your church.

---

There is a better way?

There is a better way to deal with difficult youth in the Church? Yes, I think there is, and here are some suggestions:

1. Don’t act impulsively, angrily or before a good night’s sleep and a full day’s reflection – first make sure you’re not a difficult adult.

2. Don’t confront the young person until you have had time to think about the possible consequences.

3. Seek the advice of the pastor, head elder, youth leader, parent or guardian first, before saying or doing anything you may regret.

4. If it is necessary to speak, do so with kindness and respect.

5. Youth – like most of us – respond best to those they respect and trust, so build positive relationships with them. You will be blessed!

---

Acknowledgement

There are success stories too. Let me tell you mine. My early experience of religion had been in the Church of England Sunday School, but by the time I was in my early teens we were attending a small but active Adventist church.

There I found the adults to be affirming. They allowed us to put out the hymnbooks, hand out your jackets on, or leave!

‘Affirmation works’ was my motto.

---

Commentary

Because of ‘friendly fire’, adults who fire off impulsive, irresponsible or angry statements at them,

- Christ wasn’t so tolerant

But why are our youth so often the target of trigger-happy adults, who fire off impulsive, irresponsible or angry statements at them?

Yes, we know from personal experience that youth is a time of inner turmoil, identity formation, collating and volatile emotions, irresponsibility and silly behaviour. Most of us have been there, done that, and earned the T-shirt – and I earned more than one!

---

Julian Hibbert
Editor
Pastor Sweeney: Firstly, the sermon needs to be biblical. The message of the sermon needs to be the message of the passage, and not what I think or believe. This came home to me early in my ministry, while preparing a sermon for an evangelistic series. The topic happened to be the Second Coming of Christ, and I was using my newspaper clippings to show how wars, famines, pestilences, and so on, were a clear indication of his soon return. It was in this context I was intending to scare the people into responding to the message. Fortunately, the Spirit guided me to read Matthew 24:6–KJV: ‘... see that ye be not troubled...’ I was using the Bible to make my point, without realising, or even acknowledging, the point that Jesus was making.

Secondly, I believe that our sermons should be more like those of Jesus than those of Paul. If you study the preaching of Jesus, you will see that he was building around his message and illustrating things that captured the imagination of his diverse audience. He used simple, unambiguous language to convey deep biblical truth.

Editor: How important is preparation, and what forms does it take?

Pastor Sweeney: It is from a pulpit! Under those circumstances, does preaching still have a role in the Church today?

Pastor Sweeney: Yes! I am convinced that preaching still has a role in the Church today, and this is reflected in the fact that most Adventist congregations experience their peak attendance in the lead-up to the sermon. To me, this is an indication that people view the sermon as the highlight among the various Sabbath services. They want to hear the Word of God proclaimed.

Additionally, sermons that are biblical, Spirit-guided and well-prepared will engage ‘secular, postmodern’ people because they will deal with life. They will discuss the great universal themes we all grapple with – such as love, acceptance, poverty, pain, doubt, fear, and so on.

Editor: Pastor Sweeney, thank you for granting us this chance to chat to you about the role of the preaching ministry in membership retention.

Pastor Sweeney: Julian, I am your good friend and pastoral mentor saying to me, ‘Sweeney, leave them at the foot of the Cross!’ Preaching is not about winning an argument. It is not a debate. It is about revealing God and his love, and his desire to save all people. Yes, when we preach, it should be in the realisation that this might be the last word from God that they may ever hear.

Editor: Pastor Sweeney, it has been great to have you engage with us on the topic of preaching. From your answers, and the enthusiasm with which you shared them, I have a strong sense that uncondi- tioned conviction that preaching is not passé – the Sabbath sermon still feeds God’s sheep! Thank you.

Pastor Sweeney: Early in my ministry, a close friend and pastoral mentor counselled me to preach in series form. I took that counsel on board, and so now my sermons are nearly always part of a series. I base these series on a biblical text such as Jonah, or the life of a biblical character such as Joseph or David.

Editor: A final response from you on this quotation, please. It is from Evangelism, page 193: ‘Some ministers err in making their sermons wholly argumentative... but often the cross of Calvary is not presented before the people. Some may be listening to the last sermon they will ever hear, and the golden opportunity lost, is lost forever.’
As a child I saw illustrations of Jonah in the belly of the fish, seated on a chair at a table, reading a book with a cup of tea – but the reality must have been so terrifying. In the belly of the fish, sloshing gastric juices washed over his body burning his skin, eyes, throat and nostrils. He would have contended with the rank smell of half-digested food as he himself slowly suffered a similar fate. Everything he touched would have had a slimy feel about it from the mucous membrane of the fish’s stomach. Jonah would have felt claustrophobic, and with every turn and dive of the great fish he would have shivered and wallowed in the cesspool of digestive juices. For three days and three nights Jonah endured this journey.

When Jonah plunged into the water, he must have believed that his life was coming to its end. As he struggled for breath and consciousness, his body slowly descending to the bottom of the sea, his entire life and recent rebellion must have flashed before him. Jonah must have believed that his life was coming to its end. As he struggled for breath and consciousness, his body slowly descending to the bottom of the sea, his entire life and recent rebellion must have flashed before him.

Text: Jonah 1:15-2:10

Jonah's life, but it was not that he swallowed a whale; rather, that a great fish swallowed him. Jonah the prophet was called to be a fisher of men, but it was a fish that ended up fishing for him. The medium God uses to deliver us may not always be pleasant, but we should thank God that he still wants to save us.

In a state of terror, one man shouted to the other: ‘Put up a prayer, John. We are in for it.’ That was the words of the morning, and dwelt in the uttermost parts of the sea; there they shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.’ (Psalm 139:7-10, KJV.)

While Jonah was trying to escape the presence of God, his subsequent deliverance is a wonderful illustration of the means by which God can be grateful that he could not outrun or hide from God. God loved Jonah and was not prepared to see his prophet die, so an unusual but necessary medium of salvation was sent to save him: a great fish.

Meaning of salvation not always pleasant

As his means of salvation, God can use a prison cell, a doctor with a pessimistic prognosis, a failed relationship, bankruptcy, unemployment, or many other unpleasant experiences.

Lessons of prayer – 1

But Jonah's experience inside the fish also teaches us lessons about prayer. Jonah's prayer, which is recorded in chapter 2, shows to us that we can pray to God even when we have blatantly failed him. Even in the times when we are experiencing distress as a result of our own rebellion and recklessness, like Jonah, we ought to pray.

It is in the times of our wilful disobedience that we can find it most difficult to pray believing that our self-condemnation is at work, and we think either that we have no right to call on God, or that he will pay no attention to us.

Lessons of prayer – 2

Another prayer-related lesson that Jonah teaches us is that we should not wait for a crisis before we cry out to God. Yes, how often is this true of us? We are so negligent in our Christian life; we allow our prayer life to deteriorate, and it is not until a crisis hits that we are awakened from our spiritual slumber.

We should resolve to be diligent in prayer at all times, and not just in the difficult times. When difficulties come, people often find faith, seek God out in prayer and attend church. This is all fine, but we also should seek to develop an attitude and apply our faith when things are going smoothly in our lives. As a sign at the front of a church so aptly put it: “Don't wait for the fire. To bring you to church.”

Lessons of prayer – 3

I sense in John 2:4 that Jonah's desire was not solely to be saved, but that he desired to have fellowship with God, and so there was a longing look towards God’s Temple. The story of the three angels demonstrates that the Church, in removing us from the grip of God’s presence, but now in the belly of the fish he desires fellowship once again. Jonah would have felt the joy of being in God’s presence and not simply because we want something from God, whether that be health, a job, a spouse, money, or whatever? How would we feel if people only spoke to us when they were after something from us? The believer should include a desire simply to be in God’s presence.

Lessons of prayer – 4

Another lesson we might learn about prayer from Jonah is that we should seek opportunities for thankfulness even in situations of distress. Jonah was given such an opportunity when he is told by an angel that he will see the ‘fountains’ of the deep which brought Noah’s Flood. They refer to the same event. The angel is not trying to teach us a lesson of evolution. In fact the Flood is the key to our understanding of Creation, the Fall and the young age of the earth.

All too human

We all know the consequence – although Israel was delivered by being swallowed by a fish. As his means of salvation, God can use a prison cell, a doctor with a pessimistic prognosis, a failed relationship, bankruptcy, unemployment, or many other unpleasant experiences.

Lessons of prayer – 1

But Jonah's experience inside the fish also teaches us lessons about prayer. Jonah's prayer, which is recorded in chapter 2, shows to us that we can pray to God even when we have blatantly failed him. Even in the times when we are experiencing distress as a result of our own rebellion and recklessness, like Jonah, we ought to pray.

It is in the times of our wilful disobedience that we can find it most difficult to pray believing that our self-condemnation is at work, and we think either that we have no right to call on God, or that he will pay no attention to us.

Lessons of prayer – 2

Another prayer-related lesson that Jonah teaches us is that we should not wait for a crisis before we cry out to God. Yes, how often is this true of us? We are so negligent in our Christian life; we allow our prayer life to deteriorate, and it is not until a crisis hits that we are awakened from our spiritual slumber.

We should resolve to be diligent in prayer at all times, and not just in the difficult times. When difficulties come, people often find faith, seek God out in prayer and attend church. This is all fine, but we also should seek to develop an attitude and apply our faith when things are going smoothly in our lives. As a sign at the front of a church so aptly put it: “Don't wait for the fire. To bring you to church.”

Lessons of prayer – 3

I sense in John 2:4 that Jonah's desire was not solely to be saved, but that he desired to have fellowship with God, and so there was a longing look towards God’s Temple. The story of the three angels demonstrates that the Church, in removing us from the grip of God’s presence, but now in the belly of the fish he desires fellowship once again. Jonah would have felt the joy of being in God’s presence and not simply because we want something from God, whether that be health, a job, a spouse, money, or whatever? How would we feel if people only spoke to us when they were after something from us? The believer should include a desire simply to be in God’s presence.

Lessons of prayer – 4

Another lesson we might learn about prayer from Jonah is that we should seek opportunities for thankfulness even in situations of distress. Jonah was given such an opportunity when he is told by an angel that he will see the ‘fountains’ of the deep which brought Noah’s Flood. They refer to the same event. The angel is not trying to teach us a lesson of evolution. In fact the Flood is the key to our understanding of Creation, the Fall and the young age of the earth.

All too human

We all know the consequence – although Israel was delivered by being swallowed by a fish. As his means of salvation, God can use a prison cell, a doctor with a pessimistic prognosis, a failed relationship, bankruptcy, unemployment, or many other unpleasant experiences.

Lessons of prayer – 1

But Jonah's experience inside the fish also teaches us lessons about prayer. Jonah's prayer, which is recorded in chapter 2, shows to us that we can pray to God even when we have blatantly failed him. Even in the times when we are experiencing distress as a result of our own rebellion and recklessness, like Jonah, we ought to pray.

It is in the times of our wilful disobedience that we can find it most difficult to pray believing that our self-condemnation is at work, and we think either that we have no right to call on God, or that he will pay no attention to us.

Lessons of prayer – 2

Another prayer-related lesson that Jonah teaches us is that we should not wait for a crisis before we cry out to God. Yes, how often is this true of us? We are so negligent in our Christian life; we allow our prayer life to deteriorate, and it is not until a crisis hits that we are awakened from our spiritual slumber.

We should resolve to be diligent in prayer at all times, and not just in the difficult times. When difficulties come, people often find faith, seek God out in prayer and attend church. This is all fine, but we also should seek to develop an attitude and apply our faith when things are going smoothly in our lives. As a sign at the front of a church so aptly put it: “Don't wait for the fire. To bring you to church.”

Lessons of prayer – 3

I sense in John 2:4 that Jonah's desire was not solely to be saved, but that he desired to have fellowship with God, and so there was a longing look towards God’s Temple. The story of the three angels demonstrates that the Church, in removing us from the grip of God’s presence, but now in the belly of the fish he desires fellowship once again. Jonah would have felt the joy of being in God’s presence and not simply because we want something from God, whether that be health, a job, a spouse, money, or whatever? How would we feel if people only spoke to us when they were after something from us? The believer should include a desire simply to be in God’s presence.

Lessons of prayer – 4

Another lesson we might learn about prayer from Jonah is that we should seek opportunities for thankfulness even in situations of distress. Jonah was given such an opportunity when he is told by an angel that he will see the ‘fountains’ of the deep which brought Noah’s Flood. They refer to the same event. The angel is not trying to teach us a lesson of evolution. In fact the Flood is the key to our understanding of Creation, the Fall and the young age of the earth.

All too human

We all know the consequence – although Israel was delivered by being swallowed by a fish. As his means of salvation, God can use a prison cell, a doctor with a pessimistic prognosis, a failed relationship, bankruptcy, unemployment, or many other unpleasant experiences.

Lessons of prayer – 1

But Jonah's experience inside the fish also teaches us lessons about prayer. Jonah's prayer, which is recorded in chapter 2, shows to us that we can pray to God even when we have blatantly failed him. Even in the times when we are experiencing distress as a result of our own rebellion and recklessness, like Jonah, we ought to pray.

It is in the times of our wilful disobedience that we can find it most difficult to pray believing that our self-condemnation is at work, and we think either that we have no right to call on God, or that he will pay no attention to us.

Lessons of prayer – 2

Another prayer-related lesson that Jonah teaches us is that we should not wait for a crisis before we cry out to God. Yes, how often is this true of us? We are so negligent in our Christian life; we allow our prayer life to deteriorate, and it is not until a crisis hits that we are awakened from our spiritual slumber.

We should resolve to be diligent in prayer at all times, and not just in the difficult times. When difficulties come, people often find faith, seek God out in prayer and attend church. This is all fine, but we also should seek to develop an attitude and apply our faith when things are going smoothly in our lives. As a sign at the front of a church so aptly put it: “Don't wait for the fire. To bring you to church.”

Lessons of prayer – 3

I sense in John 2:4 that Jonah's desire was not solely to be saved, but that he desired to have fellowship with God, and so there was a longing look towards God’s Temple. The story of the three angels demonstrates that the Church, in removing us from the grip of God’s presence, but now in the belly of the fish he desires fellowship once again. Jonah would have felt the joy of being in God’s presence and not simply because we want something from God, whether that be health, a job, a spouse, money, or whatever? How would we feel if people only spoke to us when they were after something from us? The believer should include a desire simply to be in God’s presence.
**health issues**

**Natural medicine and holistic lifestyle strategy**
by Sharon Platt-McDonald
BUC Health and Disability Ministries director

2011 sees the launch of the BUC Health Ministries Natural Medicine and Holistic Lifestyle strategy. A key aim of the strategy is to highlight the safe and effective use of natural medicine, while balancing this with the use of contemporary medicine in chronic and acute cases of illness. As part of the strategy launch, guidance on these issues has been given to both health leaders and ministers.

**Use of natural products/treatments**

Among some of the key messages that our department wishes to get across with the strategy are the following:

- It is advisable to use only those alternative or complementary treatments and therapies that have a scientific validation and are deemed safe and effective for use.
- Individuals taking prescribed medication or undergoing medical treatment must consult their practitioner before taking any alternative or complementary medicine.
- It is to ensure that there are no contradictions, negative drug interactions or serious side effects as a result of additional non-medical treatments.
- We believe that members should not be reluctant to seek medical help in terms of elective surgery and use of medication for the treatment of serious or life-threatening conditions.

**Guidance on health programmes and presenters**

- First check whether the conference-organized or independent Health and Disability Health Sponsor, is aware of or familiar with any individual who wants to undertake a health programme, run training events or approach members in the capacity of a health practitioner/advisor.
- Request evidence of specialist training or qualifications in the specified area of practice from individuals who want to act as consultants.
- Health evangelism courses of up to four weeks are not enough to classify an individual as an independent practitioner of any kind, but it is in natural, alternative or complementary medicine.
- Courses such as LIGHT (Lay International Global Health Training) are excellent as training in medical missionary work, as is the MEEF Ministry (Missionary Education and Evangelistic Training); however, these do not qualify individuals as practitioners.
- Medical missionary courses of six months and over are sufficient to credit individuals to practise; however, the BUC Health Ministries department cannot be held responsible for the practice outcome of these individuals, as they are undertaking work as independent practitioners.
- Lifestyle centres – a number of our reputable health institutions undertake comprehensive training in natural medicine. For example, Uchee Pines (USA) runs the courses, Lifestyle Educator (for six months) and Lifestyle Counsellor (for twelve months). Individuals undertaking these programmes and qualifying as practitioners are free to practise independently; however, the BUC Health Ministries department will be looking at how this may be undertaken within the parameters of natural medical practice in the UK.

In order to safeguard the health choices and health practices of our membership, this is what we would aim to do:

1. Encourage pastors and health ministries leaders to ensure that, if alternative or complementary products or therapies are mentioned or presented as part of a health programme, they first must be vetted for validity by a medical or health professional or an individual with a science background. The information should also be presented in the context of a holistic lifestyle which promotes good health maintenance.

**Health practices**

Health practices, dietary guidelines and unregulated therapies which conflict with Adventist belief are valid areas of concern. The General Conference voted in 2007, at the Autumn Council, to reaffirm the health guidelines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A letter to this effect was sent out to all pastors and health ministries leaders at the beginning of 2008.

At the forthcoming health summit (scheduled for 21-26 June) we will launch the WELLNESS initiative, which underpins the holistic lifestyle aspect of the strategy and will train members to deliver this programme to their churches and communities.

**ADRA-EC project gives sight’ to the blind!**
by Isaac Kankam-Boadu, EC project manager, Ghana

Like the blind Bartimaeus who sat by the road to Jericho begging (Mark 10:46–52), many blind people in Ghana sit by the roadside and beg for alms. The case of blind Suonkorate Faah, from Kpaglaghi in the upper-west region of Ghana, is different however. Instead of allowing his predicament to overwhelm him, he has decided to confront his challenge courageously.

Before the inception of the ADRA-EC Food Security project, Suonkorate used to harvest 150kg (one and a half bags) of maize from a one-acre field he cultivated each year. Insufficient to meet both his food needs and other livelihood needs. The low yield was caused by planting the local variety, a lack of funds to purchase fertilizer, manual tilling of the land, and the use of traditional cultural practices.

Though he worked hard, his returns were low, making him live in a perpetual cycle of poverty. Lack of money to repair his leaking roof forced him to sit up all night in a corner of the room any time it rained, as the entire room got wet. Though he manages to give his crops basic yields, he has loathed the rainy season as it made sleep very uncomfortable for him. His dream was to increase his production, get enough to eat, and sell the surplus to repair his leaking roof.

As a result of the support he received from the project (tractor service support, improved seeds, 150kg of fertilizer, and technical training), during the 2010 farming season Suonkorate was able to increase his maize yield per acre from 150kg (one and a half bags) to 700kg (seven bags) of maize, an increase of over 360%. He has set aside 300kg to sell and enable him to pay for the tractor service and fertilizer for next season’s farming.

He also intends to sell 200kg when the price of maize increases so that he can purchase aluminium roofing sheets to repair his leaking roof. He will keep the remaining 200kg (two bags) for consumption. He is happy and thankful because his dream has been fulfilled. Like the blind Bartimaeus whose dream was to receive his sight, blind Suonkorate’s dream of having sufficient food to eat and repairing his roof has been met through the ADRA-EC Food Security project.

There are many blind and vulnerable people like Suonkorate who need just a little push to become capable of living independent and dignified lives. Your contribution for this year personal speaks whatever the amount, can make a great difference in the lives of such disadvantaged individuals. As you help to feed the poor and the blind you are lending to Jesus!
Strong Arab support for new TV channel by Amir Ghaith/NEWS.BUC News

On 1 February the Al Waad (Arab Association of the Hope Channel) was launched. While political and social unrest buffets much of the Middle East and North Africa, this new force appears to be affecting the hearts and minds of the Arab-speaking world. Founded by a satellite as Hope Channel Europe, Arab programmes from the Al Waad Media Centre in Beirut, Lebanon, have caused an extraordinary phenomenon shortly after the launch of their broadcast. While the Audience Relations department has witnessed a surge in the number of received emails and hits on the Al Waad website, something more unexpected is taking place.

Viewers are so excited about the Al Waad channel that many of them are promoting the Al Waad Channel on their own websites. To my utter surprise I found that so many others who have watched Al Waad on TV are promoting it on their own websites. They’ve put up pictures of the broadcast, made links to our website, posted the frequency of how to find Al Waad, and written recommendations about the content.

One of the keys, says Tawfik Megally, Audience Relations Manager at the Al Waad Media Centre, is the websites encouraging people to watch Al Waad. Many non-Adventists are being exposed to God’s Word which is an important step towards spreading the truth.

The Al Waad channel is the brainchild of Dr. Arif Al Saeed, who is also the Chairman of the International Renaissance. He is a member of a group of five Arab Christians who have been working to bring Arabic-language programming to the Arab world. The channel is broadcast in Arabic from Lebanon, with plans to expand to other countries in the region.

The channel is hoping to have a positive impact on the Arab world by providing a voice for Christians and spreading the Christian message. They have also partnered with the Adventist church to bring their programming to the region.

Songwriters write for light

The weekend songwriters’ retreat organised by Diana Sinclair, NEC Music advisor, and Paul Lee, SEC Music co-ordinator, was packed with relatives, friends and well-wishers from far and near. Many candidates who had wandered far from God and had now come home. Perhaps you’ll build a house, construct a school, help an orphan, encourage an impoverished family, or plant a vegetable garden. Whatever the task, your presence will make a difference.

ADRA-UK is joining ADRA Canada’s Connections programme to give you the opportunity to participate in a short-term project with local Christians. You can join our team of volunteers as we travel to an ADRA project and meet families and communities who are struggling with poverty. You will have the chance to encourage an impoverished family, or plant a vegetable garden. Whatever the task, your presence will make a difference.

Songwriters interested in further meetings should contact SDAsongwriter@me.com

Diana Sinclair

More great news from Kilkenny!

On 1 January the Sudanese group which arrived in Ireland in 2008 celebrated the baptism of Samuel Morgan, Esther Nasser Samuel, and their son Emmanuel Tacima Samuel. Samuel and Esther are four other children, they worship right at 8pm, and they hope to start a Bible study group in their home for their Christian friends. They were baptised by Pastor Ben Pontanar, who ministers in the Dublin district.

The change in development was packed with relatives, friends and well-wishers from far and near to witness the baptism of four young candidates. The first candidate was Min-Young Bae, a Korean girl studying at the Royal College of Music. She is already an accomplished pianist, often playing at concerts on international tours.

The Hankin brothers were baptised by Pastor Paul Clee. The next three candidates were others, twins Stephen and Michael (aged 10) and Luke (aged 15). Their father, Nigel Hankin, is part of a large family, having two sets of twins! The boys are third-generation Adventists and are part of the Hankin and Wells families, which have deep Welsh roots.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY JOHNSON WONG

The Peru mission will be to assist the construction of a lodge at a training centre for rural Peruvians, built with funding from ADRA-UK. You will learn about the country of Peru as you visit Machu Picchu and other historic sites, and see first-hand how ADRA works with the underprivileged of Peru.

Many viewers are now enjoying the extra hours in English programmes from the Al Waad Hope Channel. For extensive scientific research on Creation, we suggest his book Creation in Revelation.
Christian education is worth it! 

Tanisha Burgher

During my time at Harper Bell I have learned many lessons. I remember in Year 4 that at the beginning of every lesson we had to recite Philippians 4:13 – ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me’ (NKJV).

At my new school, many people used the Lord’s name in vain, often without realising. Such an environment can be challenging and a bad influence. I explained why they should not blaspheme. They understood and tried to avoid doing so, and would correct themselves when they were around me. With Christ’s strength I could help others.

If I hadn’t gone to Harper Bell, I don’t think I would be as far as I am now. I am able to express myself but also live by the religious standards. By doing this I have made a difference in others’ lives. But I believe I can strive towards ‘a more excellent way’.

I don’t think I would be as far as I am now. I am able to enjoy myself but also live by the religious standards. By doing this I have made a difference in others’ lives. But I believe I can strive towards ‘a more excellent way’.

If I hadn’t gone to Harper Bell, I don’t think I would be as far as I am now. I am able to express myself but also live by the religious standards. By doing this I have made a difference in others’ lives. But I believe I can strive towards ‘a more excellent way’.

Making friends for life, not just for Christmas

by Patrick Herbert

On Christmas Day 2010, the New Life Community Church put on a programme entitled, ‘Hosting the Homeless and Loving the Lonely’. Regular members, along with friends and community guests, gathered to share the blessings of Christmas with the lonely and homeless. As early as 2 December 2010 an invitation to all of them to spend Christmas day together was placed in the Sandwell area local paper. That day the Christmas story was told, following Matthew’s account and using sölos, narration and carol singing. After the worship came the ‘cordon bleu cuisine’ – Christmas dinner, prepared and served on the front platters.

People responded to the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways. On the day the article was placed in the paper, Winsome Brown-Baarges (the leader of New Life) was interviewed by the media in different ways.
Maureen Razell
(1964-2010) d. 13 May. More than 760 people, including family members from Canada, Grenada & Jamaica, friends and members of Chiswick and other Adventist churches, gathered together on 27 May 2010 to celebrate the life of Maureen Razell. Born on 20 September 1964 in Stratford, Maureen was the eldest of 10 siblings. At the age of 3 she moved to West London. During her school years she was very popular and enjoyed many sports, especially hurling and netball.

In her early teens, Maureen took on the responsibility of looking after her siblings while her mum was at work. Her brothers and sisters recalled that she would often take their punishment, such was her love for them. Even at a young age Maureen showed signs of being a devout leader.

At the age of 21 Maureen gave her life to the Lord Jesus and was baptised at the Chiswick church. She always gave her very best, for Maureen, it was all or nothing. Her passion was for deep Bible study and door-to-door witnessing. She served in a wide array of leadership roles at Chiswick church, most notably in her favourite area of health. Maureen trained as a professional nutritionist and used her skills in her local church and community.

Maureen also led in her work with children and in the great outdoors, both of which she was able to enjoy in her last position as leader of the Pathfinder and Adventurers club. Many of the Pathfinders gave witness to her unfailing love, care, listening ear and her desire to see children and young people excel.

Maureen had an excellent sense of humour, loved music and always enjoyed a challenge. One such challenge was the completion of her Master’s degree, however, three months before achieving the goal she was diagnosed with myeloma (cancer of the blood). She continued to be a bring witness to the goodness and faithfulness of God. Even the doctors were confounded when she said, “It is in the hands of the Lord.” Maureen was exposed to a new mission field in hospital, bringing a knowledge of God as well as words of comfort and encouragement.

Maureen constantly put others before herself; it was her nature to help. She always made sure there was someone there to support her mother. Her character was filled with self-sacrifice and generosity. Maureen invited family, friends and colleagues to thank and praise God for her life.

It was Maureen’s greatest desire to see her family and friends at the Resurrection, when Christ shall come.

**Phyllis Neath (1920-2011) d. 10 January.**

Phyllis was a loved member of the Norwich church, and was one of its church’s oldest members.

Norwich members celebrated her 90th birthday in the church, and she enjoyed the celebrations just two weeks before her passing.

Phyllis served in the army for three and a half years, upon finishing, she lived in Somerset for forty-five years. She was the widow of Wally, who died in 1968. She also served in the army.

Malcolm and Iris, Phyllis’s brother and sister-in-law, decided they should come to live near them in Norfolk, and shortly afterwards Phyllis joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She had a lovely, comfortable bungalow in Trowse, Norwich, and was involved in all the activities at the Dell.

Phyllis will be missed greatly by all who know and loved her. **Wendy Grady**

Julia Smith (1956-2011) d. 26 January.

Julia (née Andall) was born on 25 July 1956 in the parish of St Patricks, Grenada, to Coslimus and Abertinal Andall. Julia was sickly as a child, being born with a heart defect. Her condition was considered so serious by her family that they prepared for her burial.

When her parents moved to England to find work she was raised by her grandparents in a large, extended family, but she joined her parents when she was 12 and attended the Mary Rose School for Girls in London. Julia was a gifted pupil and she excelled academically and as an athlete.

Julia left school at 16 to work as a residential social worker. One evening, shortly after she had started her new job, she returned home with a black eye after intervening in a fight between two teenagers. This baptism of fire appeared to spur Julia on, and she held various prominent positions in local government. In 2009, she became the head of Race and Diversity for the Metropolitan Police Authority in London.

While pursuing her career, Julia still found time to highlight women’s issues in the Church. She became a Women’s Ministrers sponsor, in a voluntary capacity for many years and then in a paid capacity in late 2010. She was the first Women’s Ministers director of the South England Conference and was instrumental in developing much of its programme. Julia was able to transfer her ideas into positive action.

Following the devastation of Hurricane Ivan on the island of Grenada in 2004, Julia galvanised community groups in England to donate money and supplies for those who had lost their homes or families. She also visited the country to personally deliver the aid to those most in need. In 2006 she organised a trip to Ghana to assist the women there, and in 2007 she visited Rwanda, a country that would have a lasting impact on her.

On leaving church employment, she became CEO of one of her own empowerment initiatives as well as co-director of JCS Mediation, a team of family and employment solicitors and mediators.

While she was a true professional, she was also engaged with a heart of compassion for those who were suffering, particularly those who were being bullied, particularly those who were being bullied. She formed the organisation WOMAHH to support victims of abuse.

In spite of her many projects, she found time to spend with Mike, her husband of nearly forty years, and her beloved daughters, Zoe and Gabby. Julia loved quality moments with her loved ones.

Norwich church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.

The church family is also involved in an ongoing partnership with the Children’s Trust, which is experimenting with a new worship format in their current venue at the Holy Trinity church, went ... Sport evenings are arranged during the week, ensuring there is also a good variety of activities for the young people.
Brother Smiley (71) has been going door-to-door with a collecting tin for ADRA-UK since 1966. During March 2010, however, he broke his foot, and on 30 December he contracted deep-vein thrombosis, impeding his ability to walk. He appeals directly to readers to continue his work, ‘a real ministry’.

It is written: Work, Leading to a Decision for Christ.

How much do you give for God? This young student missionary gave everything. In her diary entries you can catch a glimpse of her commitment, her humanity, and her perception of the Lord she served.

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

New book of the week

Love, Kirsten

Rainey H. Park with Andy Nash

Wednesday 15 June 2011: Registration, Opening of the ASI Exposition, Touristic Programmes: Constance, City Walks, Supper, Convention Opening (John Bradshaw), Testimonials and ASI Projects.

Thursday 16 June: Morning Worship, Workshops, ASI Europe Administrative Meetings; Lunch, Workshops, ASI Europe Administrative Meetings, Supper, Testimonials and ASI Projects. Special Sabbath Beginning (with John Bradshaw).

Sabbath 18 June: Sabbath School, Testimonials and ASI Projects, Donation for ASI Projects, Service with Ted N. C. Wilson (President, General Conference), Lunch, Presentation of the New Elected ASI Board, Testimonials and ASI Projects, Lecture (Ted N. C. Wilson), Supper, Public Concert with the Harmony Quartet, Festival: The Creation.


Workshops:

Science versus Faith, Founding of Small Bible Study Groups, Leading of Evangelistic Campaigns and Effective Outreach Work, Leading to a Decision for Christ.

Inspiration and special music: Public concert with the Harmony Quartet.

Testimonials:

Current Experiences, Testimonies and Projects.

Main speaker: John Bradshaw
(speaker/director of the international ADI project ministry).

Special speakers:

Dr Jan-Harry Cabungcal, Rahel Ludwig, Gabriel Maurer, Dan Millares, Dr Rivelino Montenegro et al, Ted N. C. Wilson.

Brother Smiley address change

The Dudley congregation now worship at Wolverhampton Street, near KFC. Postcode: DY1 1DB. For details, phone: 07780 286171, 07736606625 or 01384 213803.

Camp meeting transport

Coaches will be picking up members from twenty-eight churches across the midlands to attend the 2011 Revive camp meeting, from Birmingham to Wolverhampton. For details, phone: 07868288310, 07780286171, 07736606625 or 01384 213803.

Brother Smiley – ADRA needs YOU

Brother Smiley (71) has been going door-to-door with a collecting tin for ADRA-UK since 1966. During March 2010, however, he broke his foot, and on 30 December he contracted deep-vein thrombosis, impeding his ability to walk. He appeals directly to readers to continue his work, ‘a real privilege, to do what you can while you’re still able’. Workers are needed for this year’s Annual Appeal; next year may be too late. Brother Smiley.

Dudley Church address change

The Dudley congregation now worship at Wolverhampton Street, near KFC. Postcode: DY1 1DB. For details, phone: 07348 213803 or 07868288310.

Camp meeting transport

Coaches will be picking up members from twenty-eight churches across the midlands to attend the 2011 Revive camp meeting, from Birmingham to Wolverhampton. For details, phone: 07868288310, 07780286171, 07736606625 or 01384 213803.

Brother Smiley – ADRA needs YOU

Brother Smiley (71) has been going door-to-door with a collecting tin for ADRA-UK since 1966. During March 2010, however, he broke his foot, and on 30 December he contracted deep-vein thrombosis, impeding his ability to walk. He appeals directly to readers to continue his work, ‘a real privilege, to do what you can while you’re still able’. Workers are needed for this year’s Annual Appeal; next year may be too late. Brother Smiley.