BUC session and day of fellowship report

In this issue of MESSENGER we report on the British Union Conference session, which closes the chapter on the Church’s activity in the United Kingdom for the years 2006 to 2010. It also inaugurates another five-year cycle of challenge and opportunity for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

This was a unique session, where the election of officers and committee members was run to a different timetable – thereby drastically reducing both the time and money normally required for Union sessions. In this bumper magazine we have tried to capture the wonderful day of fellowship and worship that preceded the session – relying on a selection of photographs and an edited version of the Sabbath sermon.

We have also given you an edited version of the president’s report, and some brief excerpts from those of the secretary and the treasurer. The full text of all the reports is to be found in the session booklet, which is online at <http://www.bucsession.org.uk/documents/index.php>, as is a lot of other good material that space would not permit us to publish here.

For the session itself, we have covered the main outcomes: the staff appointments and the next steps in the restructuring process.

We need to thank Pastor Victor Hubert and Dr Richard de Lisser for their contributions on pages 14 and 15 respectively, and that of our respected former editor, Dr David Marshall, on pages 22 and 23. We also need to recognise the photo-journalism of Dan Sabatier, Victor Hubert, Kevin Johns and Wes Kapon, which expertly captures the mood of both events. To see more photographs, please visit: www.adventistpictures.org.uk. For online videos, visit: http://www.hopetv.org.uk/content/media-library/show/1985/buc-session-2011.
Editorial

For months now we have been waiting for the BUC decision. Some have entertained themselves with speculation about who the next leaders will be, while others may even have gone beyond speculation into imagination.

So, what happens next? How do we know what to expect? Can we continue with business as usual?

The ‘saints’ have had practice

This strategy is not new. Regular upstanding churchmen tried it on Jesus 2,000 years ago. After dinner the Pharisees and the lawyers attacked Him with all kinds of questions, hoping He would say something wrong. From them on, they acted more like His enemies than His friends.’ (Luke 11:53, 54, The Easy English Clear Word.)

Ingratiation

Another approach to new leadership is ingratiating. Those who employ this strategy are often masters in the use of subtle compliments that gently caress the carnal nature. Suggestions that ‘Things have never been so well-run before’, or ‘You fellows are a breath of fresh air’, can create dangerous illusions of success for new leaders.

It is human to want to be close to our leaders and count them as our friends. But ingratitude slides easily beyond compliments to tangible favours, and favours build obligation, and obligation may cloud objectivity!

Beware of ‘courtiers’

A ‘courtier’ was one of those people who once swarmed around the rich and the famous, especially royalty. The courtier couldn’t ‘buy’ the regent’s favour with gifts of money or land, but if he supplied choice information he gained a special status, and the protection of the king.

Some leaders have an insatiable thirst for certain types of information. They want to know about the latest alliances, what people think of them and their leadership style, the moral blind spots of their colleagues and counterparts – anything that may give them perceived leverage over those they lead!

But the real ‘leverage’ is in the clever courtier’s hand. He may use information selectively, mischievously, partially, or in any way he chooses, to manipulate the gullible leader.

How does God want us to act?

He can’t support aloofness, aggression, ingratitude, obligation or manipulation. So what does he expect from us? Perhaps these ideas will be helpful!

Join them in ‘Gethsemane’ – Every leader is going to have moments of intense stress, or times when nothing runs to plan, and nobody seems to care. These are often very, very lonely moments – times when our leaders need to know there is someone else in their ‘Gethsemane’ with them – someone who is praying with them.

In Matthew 26 we see how much Christ would have appreciated the praying presence of Peter, James and John. Just look at the sadness and raw human need in these words: ‘Then Jesus came with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane where there was a garden, “Sit down here while I go over there and pray.” Then he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be in terrible pain and agony of mind. “My heart is breaking with a death-like grief,” he told them, “stay here and keep watch with me.”’ (Verses 36-38, New Testament in Modern English, J. B. Phillips)

His vivid anticipation of the next day’s legal charades, public humiliation and inhuman torture, and the burden of humanity’s measureless, insoluble, squeezed blood from his hands – but they slept. He was in severe turmoil – but they slept. Three times he urged them to ‘watch with him’ – but they slept!

So, BUC members, let’s join Ian, Paul and Victor in their daily ‘Gethsemanes’.

Hold up the leaders’ hands – On the way to the Promised Land, Israel was attacked by the Amalekites, and this is what happened:

As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, ... Aaron and Hur held his hands up – one on one side, one on the other – so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.’ (Exodus 17:11-13, NIV)

Moses was holding up his rod, a symbol of God’s power and grace, but he could not do it alone. He needed the ongoing support of Aaron and Hur, because victory is always a team effort!

So, when Ian, Paul and Victor are holding the symbols of God’s power and grace, let’s support them tirelessly!

Tell truth to power, but do it properly – Bob Stone, a management consultant, makes the following observations:

‘Telling the truth to the boss is the first responsibility of an ethical subordinate. . . Speaking the truth isn’t just a matter of personal integrity; it’s crucial for organisational success.’

And he is right on target. The one thing our new leaders will want is that we tell them the truth. We need to be open with them about what we think should be stopped, fixed or initiated for God’s work to be successful.

But we must make sure that we have the truth before we tell it: that our motives are pure, our facts accurate and our perspectives balanced.

‘Telling truth to power’ is never easy. It takes courage – but it also needs to be done in a gracious spirit and with due tact. Time and place are also important. Many a true word has been wasted because it was said at the wrong forum. The rule of thumb for ‘truth telling’ is simple: the smallest audience will usually deliver the best results! Nathan confronted David about his sin, not Israel. ‘You do not do a good work’ – Ian, Paul and Victor are waiting!


The worst of times

· The damage to the BUC building by fire in 2008 ranks in the ‘worst of times’ category. It brought in its wake dislocation for some BUC staff, having lost familiar surroundings, and dislocation for everyone who worked in the building.

· The difficulties one over our schools, its falling into Special Measures and all the attendant issues were all depressing matters, which did little to advance the work of the Church, and left behind broken bridges and relationships that will take years to mend.

· The sale of Roundelwood, our only health institution, was made after realising that none of the alternative measures considered was in the overall interest of the Church. We regret the negative impact this had on many faithful employees and the health ministry of the Church.

· Several workers who were made redundant in the North England Conference for obvious reasons may not be positive about the quinquennium. Leaders recognised the trauma that that action caused for families, but realised that for the good of the wider work of the conference there was no credible alternative.

· The quinquennium also saw a number of members lose their jobs, as the recession deepened and both public and private businesses shed staff in order to keep afloat.

While we express our praise to God for the good times and the developments in the Church that provided evidence of God’s leading in His Church, we must also take time to reflect on those decisions that may have
Sadly, Dalbert Elias passed away unexpectedly while in the midst of serving as the treasurer of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, based in the United States. He had accepted a call in 2010 to serve as treasurer of the association, a position that he had held for ten years, with a notable contribution to the finances of the press.

Throughout the quinquennium, leaders emphasized the importance of the concept of fatherhood in the Church. This idea was not just theoretical; it was lived out in the everyday practices of the Church. The Church is a family, and every member has a right to sit at the dining table and partake of what is available. This principle was strengthened by the fact that the Church is pleased to refer to itself as a family. That fundamental belief has been at the root of the efforts of the leadership and members alike as they have sought to come to terms with the growing diversity in the British Union.

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Leadership changes

While the current structure of our Church exists, leaders are required to serve in different areas of the organisation. The past five years were in many respects not unlike the previous five-year periods in terms of changes. Some stalwarts of the cause fell by the wayside. Others decided to retire and take up new interests, while a limited number were called to work overseas.

David Marshall, after forty-two years of service, thirty-two of which were spent as editor of The Stanborough Press and editor of The Adventist Discovery Centre. He was succeeded briefly by Michael Hamilton, who was called to serve at the TED office, and then by Desmond Rafferty.

The future

The future of the Church is safe in God’s hands. There are some keys, however, that we must hold in our hands, which must be used to open up new opportunities and access additional resources as we seek to expand the Kingdom of God.

One such key is the re-organisation of the Church in the British Isles. The reorganisation of the structure of the Union was put into place over a hundred years ago. Communication and travel at the time were not as easy as they are now. The Union had to be restructured in a way that was appropriate then, and for several subsequent decades. However, modern communication and travel have opened up new avenues for us to make major changes in the way in which the Church has been operated, in order to make it more mission-efficient and to save on expenditure, while preserving the positive features of the past.

Being relevant to ourselves and to the wider community must be a continuing objective. We must be adaptable as we journey into the future. The Gospel needs to touch our lives in practical ways – our work, our recreation, our travel, our relationships with our neighbours, friends and the general public. The Gospel is to be presented, not just as a body of rules, but as a dynamic spiritual experience that changes attitudes and perspectives, and provides a reason for optimism amid economic difficulties, natural disasters that litter our world.

We must find ways to present the Gospel as a story that is rooted in the man, Christ Jesus, and not in a creed. He stated it more succinctly than I can when he said, ‘And the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking goodly pearls. And he found one pearl of great price, and went and sold all that he had and bought it’ (Matthew 13:13-41). He stated it more succinctly than I can when he said, ‘And the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking goodly pearls. And he found one pearl of great price, and went and sold all that he had and bought it’ (Matthew 13:13-41).
Sabbath 2 July 2011
That the world may know!

To be able to see more pictures from the BUC day of fellowship, go to: http://www.adventistpictures.org.uk.
Audio and video content can be found at: http://www.hopetv.org.uk/content/media-library/show/ml/buc-session-2011/.
Without a doubt, love is considered by many to be the most powerful word in the English language. And what a force love is! It is a force that can move the highest mountain, but so tender that it can wipe away the tears of a crying child. Love is so powerful ... and work together. It allows neither to see the colour of the other’s skin, but rather the colour of the other’s heart.

But when we look at what has happened to love in recent years, we just have to shake our heads in disbelief.

Although love is still the most popular theme for music and movies in our culture, in many cases it has been reduced to a mere commodity; something to be bought and sold.

But as disciples of Jesus Christ, we don’t take our cues from the world when it comes to love, because we have access to the very Source of love itself. And although the world may view love largely as a noun, God’s Word describes it as a verb, an action word. This theme probably permeates the Gospel of John more than any other. In John 14:15 (NKJV), Jesus says, “If you love Me, keep my commandments.”

In John 15:13 (NKJV) he says, “Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

Today I invite you to take a look at another such instance in John 13:34-35 (NIV): “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Jesus recognised that his days with his disciples were quickly coming to an end, and here he leaves them some final instructions (John 13-17).

He begins by giving them what is referred to as a ‘new command’. In essence it was a command to love. Now, this wasn’t a commandment in the sense that we view the Ten Commandments. In other words, Jesus wasn’t adding an eleventh commandment.

But ‘command’ in this context simply refers to a new instruction or saying that Jesus was leaving his disciples. It was an instruction that he expected them to adhere to, and pass down to future generations.

But I’m certain that as they heard these words they must have felt somewhat confused, because the Gospel of loving one another was nothing new. Leviticus 19:18 counsels that no one should seek revenge, but that everyone should love their neighbours as they love themselves. So, in essence, Jesus’ words could be viewed as merely a restatement of the Mosaic principle of loving one’s neighbour as oneself. Even in Matthew 7:12, which has been referred to by many as the ‘golden rule’, Jesus himself admonishes that we treat others in the manner that we would have them treat us.

So in reality, there was nothing ‘new’ about what Jesus was saying: that is, until he added the words, ‘As I have loved you’. Now this changes everything. You see, Jesus wasn’t giving his disciples a new commandment as much as he was giving them a new way to love. It was a command to love others, not as they desire to be loved, or even as we would desire to love them, but in the same manner that God loves us. And how does God love?

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Membership
BUC membership at 1 January 2006 stood at 25,520, and enjoyed a net increase of 6,142 members to take it to 31,662 by 31 December 2010. This gave a net overall growth for the period of 24.07% — equivalent to a net gain of 6,142 members.
The total number of acquisitions by baptism and profession of faith for the period was 5,339.
While we give thanks and celebrate the miracle of God’s grace in the lives of the 5,339 acquisitions, the Church continues to be challenged in reaching out to the majority population of the British Isles. This remains the greatest mission challenge in the BUC.

Members dropped and missing
While we rejoice with those who have come to faith and committed their lives to a path of Christian discipleship, we are saddened by those who, for one reason or another, have travelled in the opposite direction. 435 members were dropped or recorded as missing from the church membership roll, during the past five years.

Ministerial worker changes
Of the 187 paid ministers and Bible workers (not including task force workers) as of 31 December 2005, just over a third (nearly) left the employment of conferences and missions in the BUC in the five years to 31 December 2010. In total, eighty-four paid ministers and Bible workers left within the period, eighty-seven joined the ranks – some fourteen starting and leaving within the period.

Deaths and obituaries
The Love Church
When I introduced the subject, I mentioned that I had recently attended a conference in the United States. One of the speakers was a church leader who had been born in Latin America, and as a result of his work now led a congregation in Boston. He had been a very active leader in the BUC, and had come to the United States for various reasons to attend the conference.

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Session outcomes 3 July 2011

A Union business session should achieve more than just a series of collective decisions about staffing, policy, constitution and strategy. It must also result in the following:

God’s people must meet, greet and grow their relationships. They must become aware of the extensive nature of our Church family, that we are a diverse group from ‘all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues’, but that we are united ‘before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes’.

God’s people must hear each other’s concerns, pain, disappointment, failure, success, joy and vision for the future. They must speak plainly, seeking answers to their questions – and they must listen and be listened to.

God’s people must sense that we are on a ‘new page’ in the life of the Church – a time to try new things, or pursue past successes with renewed passion.

If we measure the 2011 BUC session against these outcomes, hopefully it was a success!

Appointments

One of the tangible outcomes that our members are interested in will be the following list of appointments for the new quinquennium:

**BUC officers**
- President: Pastor Ian Sweeney
- Executive secretary: Pastor Paul Lockham
- Treasurer: Mr Victor Pilmoor

**Mission officers**
- Irish Mission president: Pastor David Neal
- Scottish Mission president: Pastor Bernie Holford
- Welsh Mission president: Pastor John Sunidge
- Missions’ secretary-treasurer: Referred to BUC executive committee

**BUC departmental directors**
- Communication & Media: Pastor Victor Hulbert
- Education & Sabbath School: Mrs Anne Pilmoor
- Evangelism (Personal Ministries, Church Growth, LIFE development, Literature Ministry): Pastor Eglan Brooks
- Family Ministries & Children’s Ministries: Mrs Heather Haworth
- Health Ministries & Women’s Ministries: Mrs Sharon Platt-McDonald
- Ministerial Association, Discipleship & Continuing Education: Pastor Brighton Kavaloh
- Youth, Pathfinders & Chaplaincy for Students in Tertiary Education: Pastor Nathan Stickland

**BUC executive committee**
- 1. BUC president (chair) 18. SEC lay person: Mrs Sophia Nicholls
- 2. BUC executive secretary (secretary) 19. SEC lay person: Mr Kwao Tetteh Abbequaye
- 3. BUC treasurer 20. SEC lay person: Mrs Stella Jeffery
- 4. Newbold College principal 21. SEC lay person: Mr Brian Davison
- 5. Stanborough Press manager 22. SEC lay person: Mrs Sophia Nicholls
- 6. Editor of the BUC MESSENGER 23. SEC lay person: Ms Asha Wije
- 7. NEC president 24. NEC lay person: Mr Philip Emm
- 8. SEC president 25. NEC lay person: Mr Kwao Tetteh Abbequaye
- 14. BUC Evangelism director 31. Mission lay person: Mrs Stella Jeffery
- 15. BUC Health & Women’s Ministries director 32. Mission lay person: Mrs Stella Jeffery
- 16. SEC lay person: Mr Kevin Weatherall 33. Mission lay person: Mrs Stella Jeffery
- 17. SEC lay person: Mr Brian Davison 34. Mission lay person: Mrs Stella Jeffery
- 18. SEC lay person: Mrs Sheila Jeffery

Revelation 7:9, NKJV
Restructuring

by Victor Hulbert*

It was the last item on the business agenda but was the one most anticipated and discussed – not just on the day, but in the months leading up to the session. The debate had been building up since letters started appearing in the Mission almost a year ago suggesting it was time to look at modernising the Church structure in the British Isles. And it was not just Mission readers. Discussions also took place at both Conference and Union levels. This led to the document that appeared in the 13 May Mission, ‘A mission-driven structure for the British Union’.

The document itself, however, was not the primary focus of the ensuing debate. Even earlier in the day Pastor Don McFarlane had hinted that the proposal being made might not be quite what delegates were expecting. Chairing the session, Victor Pimlott noted that things have changed over the years, and we need to ask the question: ‘How can we do things better?’ One of the reasons that there had not been change was, he argued, that ‘Turkeys don’t vote for Christmas!’ What we need now, he suggested, is a substantive conversation, not about contraction or failure, but on how best to take this Union forward.

Illustrating his Sunday afternoon presentation with PowerPoint, Pastor McFarlane outlined the history of the organisation and structure in the Adventist Church, looked briefly at various models, and suggested it was time to look at modernising the Church structure in the British Isles. And it was not just those who thanked Pastor McFarlane for undertaking a difficult task. ‘That the leadership is looking at it is commendable’, he said, while equally wanting to ensure that the committee taking this forward would be appropriately qualified and representative. A round of applause followed Mr McFarlane’s cry for change as, he argued, our members are frustrated that even with all the good we are doing, we are only scratching the surface evangelically. ‘This’, he said, is the motion, ‘is a very positive move.’ Mr Samuel Amor also noted that this is in line with many charities that are streamlining their operations to be more efficient and effective.

In the final vote delegates agreed ‘To set up a study committee, in harmony with GC policy, to review the structure of the British Union, with a view to:’

- Eliminate unnecessary duplication;
- Reduce expenditure on executive/departmental leadership;
- Provide more resources (financial and human) for local churches, where the mission of the Church is carried out;
- Position leadership closer to members and the community;
- Operate the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK as one charitable organisation;
- Streamline HR and financial services;
- Provide stronger and closer support and evaluation of pastoral staff.

Initial motion

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BUC session 2011

Report by Dr Richard de Lissier*

Sunday 3 July 2011 will go down in the history of the BUC as a watershed moment, as we saw the practical impact of the changes made to the BUC Constitution in 2009. Those changes meant that most of the committee work was completed before the session started, shortening the time required from four days to only one!

Although the time and cost-saving was appreciated by all, not everyone was entirely happy with all the proceedings. For some the venue was too small, too crowded, and too hot. For another, the monopoly of the microphone by certain speakers was an annoyance. Many had waited five years to raise their concerns, but felt that they were not given enough time to adequately express them on the day.

One delegate questioned whether the BUC was being accountable enough by limiting the question time on the reports to a mere forty-five minutes. Another delegate said that delegates had travelled from Scotland, Ireland and Wales to have their questions answered, and not to engage in ‘breakout sessions’.

On the point of participation, some delegates felt that the use of a church venue limited their freedom of expression, as well as their feeling of community and oneness, because delegates were seated on both the upper and lower levels of the church.

Further to this, some delegates felt that more time should have been given to debate and discussion over vital issues that affect the Church.

The question of the ‘validity’ of the Union was also a point raised by a number of delegates, as well as the issue of the duplication of ministerial roles and functions at different levels within the BUC structure. There was a strong feeling that money could be saved for use in the soul-winning mission of the Church.

It was felt that the discussion on the restructuring was much-needed, and the BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane, was congratulated for bringing this issue to the fore.

Brian Davidson of the Stanborough Park church, a member of the new BUC executive, we served that the session was well-planned and that he had enjoyed the day of fellowship.

On a point of history, the election of Pastor Ian Sweeney as the BUC president at age 44 makes him the youngest person to serve in the office of president in the BUC’s history. The election of Pastor Paul Luckham as executive secretary keeps up his family’s tradition of service to the BUC, as his grandfather, Pastor John McMillan, served as BUC president from 1958 to 1967. The election of Pastor Nathan Stickland as Youth director puts him in the footsteps of his father, the late Pastor Mike Stickland, who served in the same office from 1965 to 1991.

At the end of the session many delegates may have left wondering what the future holds for the BUC, but the new BUC president, Pastor Ian Sweeney, has no doubt that it will include evangelism – everywhere, and to everyone!

*Pastor Victor Hulbert and Dr Richard de Lissier are the BUC and SEC Communication directors.
Farewell message

Dear brothers and sisters

Many and so far have had the privilege of serving in the British Union for thirty-three years. The cold wind and overcast skies that greeted us that October morning as we emerged from Heathrow airport, that whispered to us that we had made a mistake in coming here, are now a distant memory. The memories that we cherish are those of being engaged in heart-racing evangelism in the Midlands, of the youth’s responsiveness in Handsworth, Newtown, Northfield, Camp Hill, Castle Vale, Windsor Street and Tamworth, and of our various phases of leadership. We will also cherish the memories of the friendships that we have formed, and the love that members have showered on our children.

Twenty-seven of our thirty-three years have been spent in Church administration. I was taken by surprise when Pastor Ron Surridge, NEC (then North British Conference) president, chose me to work alongside him as executive secretary in 1984. I did not think that I had any special ability for such a position, but Pastor Surridge did. I want to thank him and his wife, Rachel, for believing in me and for being there for us over the years.

It is always dangerous to try and quantify that for which there is no objective measurement, but we would like to think that relations between members of various backgrounds are less fractious today than they were twenty-five years ago, and that we have, in some small way, contributed to that development. If that were our sole contribution, we would have fulfilled the purpose for which we were invited to the British Union as two young ‘missionaries’ in 1978, when racial fissures threatened the unity of the Church.

I have endeavoured to be even-handed and fair in my work, and both colleagues and members know my dislike of injustice. Members of the new group of immigrants, the members from the majority population, or a person who was being taken advantage of, or a pastor being treated unfairly by his church, or a church not being served well by its pastor, or a church leader who was unjust in his treatment of a worker or member, I have sought to effect or maintain some degree of equilibrium for the good of all and the Church. Receptionists in Church offices in which I worked will recall that I instructed them to treat all people alike. The ordinary church member should not be treated differently from the way a pastor or even the president of the General Conference may be treated.

It is doubtful that I will have the chance again to influence the Church nationally, so let me share with you five matters that are imperative for growth in the British Union, particularly in reaching the wider society:

Authenticity. It often appears that Adventism is about ‘talking’, whether debating the Sabbath School lesson, discussing some great prophetic theme, spending hours on committees, preaching sermons or conducting seminars. We could be called ‘the Talking Church’, but there needs to be far less talk among us and much more action on the principles of our Christian faith: compassion for the lost and efforts to share Good News with them honestly with others; seeking the good of others; and being in the dark what we claim to be in the light. ‘Who are you when no one is looking?’ is a question that is worth asking by all. Its answer provides a fairly accurate index of whether or not we are authentic Christians.

If we say we are. Authenticity should be the outcome of any revival and reformation experience.

Dealing with harshness and stridency. We are not going to receive medals from God for being harsh with people, inside or outside the Church. We may receive medals from some brothers and sisters who see harshness as commendable, but I urge you to take your cue from Jesus. Study how he treated people. Whether it was a woman caught in adultery, one who had several husbands, a cheating tax collector, a Roman centurion, or a person from another faith tradition, he always treated them with respect, sensitivity and dignity. As Seventh-day Adventists we have no special claim on his favour. What we have is a fuller understanding of God’s message for these times, which is to be shared with fellow Christians and the unsaved world with urgency, clarity and love. We have made much progress in recent times in understanding this fact, largely due to the silent impact of LIFE development, but there is much still to do to become a Church that truly loves and genuinely cares.

Raising quality. Apart from authenticity, perhaps the area of church life that requires greatest attention is the quality of the ‘product’ that we offer. Improvement of that product is likely to have a very big impact on evangelism and church growth. One Sabbath morning, a young lady whom I knew said, ‘Pastor McFarlane, now I am at a church to which I can invite my friends. For years she had wanted to invite her friends to church but felt she couldn’t because of the ‘cringe factor’. There are many like her — members who would love to invite friends and acquaintances to church, but don’t because they are afraid that church will not end on time; that someone will go up to the front and say something insensitive; that the music will be poor and unrehearsed; or that the sermon will not lift up Christ. I believe that each church made the effort to raise the quality of its Sabbath School, its music, the sermon, the overall worship experience and the genuineness of its welcome, and to ensure that time limits are honoured, we would see many more new faces in church.

Engagement with the community. ‘You are the salt of the earth,’ Jesus told his followers. For salt to work it must touch that which it seeks to flavour. We will not touch our society by rolling up our sleeves and getting into our towns, cities and villages to engage with the destitute, the addicts, the poor, and the friendless. We touch our society by working with other Christian and non-Christian organisations and groups to make a positive difference in the lives of people. Peter Roemerfeldt, who once worked in the Trans-European Division, asked the members of a newly established church in Australia when church really happened for them. Their answer was one in which I hope that every Seventh-Day Adventist would give: ‘Church happens for us when we are out on the streets helping the addicts, giving food and shelter to the homeless and just assisting people with whatever challenges they have.’ They went on to say that meeting on a Sabbath was to renew their spiritual energies so that they could go back out to do church. What an amazing concept! Amazing, but true.

Joy. Adventism is not just a body of doctrines — it is a way of living. It is by the way we live that we demonstrate whether Adventism works. If, as a people, we do not reflect the joy and give the impression that life is burden-some, we will not attract people to the Lord. Jesus desires that his people be full of joy. ‘I have told you this so that you may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:9-11, NIV) This joy is not always the same as being happy. I am happy when Liverpool FC wins a game and so are they. The Christian joy is of a wholly different character. It is unaffected by circum-stances. It is a settled state of contentment and an unfailing confidence in God’s promises. The Kingdom of God is here and now. Let it be filled with obviously joyful people, for whom the Lordship of Christ provides a heavenly glow.

‘What will you do now?’ is the question that kind members are asking me. At this moment I do not know. All I seek is a position where I can be of service to God and of benefit to people. Please pray that God will bring me to such a place.

Pastor Sweeney and his team have my prayerful support. I am confident that the British Union will continue to grow and prosper; should my counsel be sought, it will be readily given. As the book of Hebrews says, your confidence will be rewarded and the Lord will come without delay.

Don W. McFarlane

BUC departmental directors*

Communication & Media: Pastor Victor Hulbert

Education & Sabbath School: Mrs Anne Pilmoor

Evangelism (Personal Ministries, Church Growth, LIFE development, Literature Ministry): Pastor Eglan Brooks

Family Ministries & Children’s Ministries: Mrs Heather Haworth

Health Ministries & Women’s Ministries: Mrs Sharon Platt-McDonald

Ministerial Association, Discipleship & Continuing Education: Pastor Brighton Kavaloh

Youth, Pathfinders & Chaplaincy for Students in Tertiary Education: Pastor Nathan Stickland

*Certain BUC directors are appointed by their boards or the executive committee, and this is why they are not listed in the nominating committee report.
Scottish Mission challenges

Bernie Holford

We praise God that our membership has risen from 332 to 487, which is an increase of 155 over the term. Along with Ireland, this more than 33% increase is to be welcomed. However the population of Scotland is over 5 million, which means there is less than one member for every 10,000 people. There are probably only seventy-five ‘white Scots’ in our Church in Scotland!

Both our black and white members ask me how we can reach the indigenous people. How are we to address the challenge of reaching the 5 million with the 500 or so active members we have? Firstly, I believe we should pray and risk the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field – Matthew 9:38 (NIV). Secondly, we must prioritise evangelistic outreach to our churches and share the methods that are working with others in similar contexts. It is really important to work with those people who have an understanding of different cultural backgrounds who are open to the Gospel. Thirdly, we have been exploring the possibility of missions for the indigenous people to come to Scotland. Adventist Frontier Missions is one organisation which is exploring this possibility with us.

It is our prayer that during the next quinquennium God will dramatically grow our congregations and that we will reach the people that he loves, from all communities and people groups, including those of Scottish descent.

Irish Mission growth

David Neal

Membership

For the Irish Mission over the past five years there is only one characteristic that can adequately describe what has taken place – ‘change’. The world has changed; the Church has changed. In 2006 it seemed for Ireland and its people that there was only one way for us to go, and that was up! A couple of years later – we were bust! The Church during this period, however, continued to grow. In 2006 we started with a membership of 388, and by the end of the quinquennium it was 579, with ninety-four baptisms and forty professions of faith – for which we praise the Lord. Even though the nations of Ireland and Northern Ireland have struggled economically over the past five years, the Church has gone from strength to strength, due primarily to the influx of ‘New Irish’ from Brazil, Romania, South Africa, Ghana, and the Philippines. The arrival of the new members has been a positive experience for the Irish Mission. Where we once had no presence in certain towns and cities, we now have members.

Conclusion

Our pastors have worked hard. Our elders are faithful in their leadership of the local churches. The work in Dublin continues to grow significantly. In 1998 there were twenty-five members attending church – today there are 450. This city now has three churches, and a fourth is on its way. By contrast, in other parts of Ireland and Northern Ireland, some members worship in isolation or travel 70 miles to attend church. A new group of believers suddenly appeared in the city of Kidkenny in 2008, claiming to be Adventists from the Sudan. Today thirty-five worshipers (adults and children) meet faithfully each Sabbath under the care of a volunteer lay pastor.

The Irish Mission held its triennial session in autumn 2010, and a full report may be found online at http://irish.adven- tistchurch.ie/irish-mission-session-2010.

Welsh Mission report

John Surridge

Media ministry

The Welsh Mission website, www.adventist- wales.org, plays a key part in evangelism and outreach, and is now the primary means by which people find their way to our churches, whether they are visiting members or visiting contacts.

At the beginning of 2009 another website was launched. Located at www.quas29.org this site was designed to offer a alternative outreach approach by simply inviting people to complete an online Bible quiz. As an incentive for completing ten online Bible studies, particip- ants are rewarded with a free Bible. After just five months of operation, this new website had resulted in forty Bibles being given out to members of the public and many more contacts being made.

Welsh language outreach

This Mission is unique in the BUC in having a significant number of people who speak the native language of their country. In 2006 the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wales had a stand at the National Eisteddfod in Felindre Park, Swansea. Thanks to the dedication of our Welsh-speaking volunteers, magazines and Welsh tracts were distributed, and many contacts were made with people from the Welsh-speaking community.

A further Welsh-language initiative took place in the summer of 2010, with more than 10,000 Welsh books being distributed throughout Wales. A Day to Remember, or, in Welsh, Diwrnod I’w Gofio, was a unique project which the Ystrad Mynach church, and The Stansborough Press arranged the most economical printing possible.

Church planting and growth

Numerical growth in the Welsh Mission over the quinquennium has been close to 25%, with a net increase in our membership of ninety-five. This includes forty-nine baptisms and twenty-six二氧化联袓的专业isoarion of faith. However, with thirty-nine deaths and seventeen names dropped, it can be seen that membership transfers were in fact the main reason for this growth. As we are very careful to be grateful for the members who have transferred in from elsewhere, we are well aware that our focus must be kept on evangelism and making new contacts within the territory of the Welsh Mission.

Mission presidents, left to right: Pastor Revana Horrocks, Southern Ireland; Pastor Theo van der Walt, Northern Ireland; and Pastor John Surridge, Welsh. These are excerpts from the Mission presidents’ reports. See the BUC website for the full text: http://www.bascunion.org/colloquium/sessions/wnth.html.
Paul Lockham

Editor: Paul, your election as executive secretary is barely a day old, and you must be processing a wide range of thoughts and emotions. Please share some of them with our readers.

Pastor Paul: While I am excited at the challenge, I am awed by the responsibility that the delegates have placed upon me, and the confidence they have expressed in my ability to carry out this leadership role. I feel that I can only serve the Church in this way by God’s continued leading.

Editor: Victor, congratulations on your election to a third term as BUC treasurer. It was clear from the vote that you have the support of the constituency. Share with our readers what you consider to be the core issues the new administration will have to face this quinquennium.

Victor: Our mission is simply the proclamation of the Good News that Jesus has done everything necessary for our salvation from sin and that he has a place prepared for his disciples, with the day of redemption being imminent. Our regional remit is toward the hurting people around us: to be effective, this means that we have to be acutely aware of their cultural and spiritual orientation and the media through which they learn.

There was a time when a soap box in the town square was enough, when the town criers shouted news in the streets, after which it was shared by ear. But personal and emotional needs are still satisfied by personal touch. Leadership, to be effective, must be ‘touchably’ close.

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The headline buzz is about ‘Revival and Reformation’ – the inference being that we could be more effective in our lives and work, more consistent with our message and more vibrant in our witness. For most people this means change, and most of us would prefer the change to be in other people, from whence the tension may come, even in our convocations. The choice for us all is whether we manage the change, or wait for circumstance to impose it upon us. We have freely acknowledged the asymmetry of our current structures, and agreed to do something to draw the best out of each other and those who serve with us. There is a lot of healing and trust-building to be done.

Pastor Paul: Thank you, Julian.

Paul Lockham, newly appointed Union executive secretary, and Victor Pilmoor, who was returned to office as Union treasurer.

Interviews

The Messenger editor conducted interviews with Pastor Paul Lockham, newly appointed Union executive secretary, and Victor Pilmoor, who was returned to office as Union treasurer.
Two standing ovations

Dr David Marshall helps us understand why Don McFarlane and Eric Lowe received standing ovations at the BUC session

D uring the last quinquennium (2006-2011) the British Union has been served by an outstandingly gifted team of officers, two of whom were not re-elected at the session on 3 July 2011: Don W. McFarlane and Eric C. Lowe. Both men had given truly outstanding service in a variety of other posts prior to their becoming, respectively, president and executive secretary of the British Union.

Pastor Don W. McFarlane

Don and Mary McFarlane arrived in Britain in October 1978, the first of the seven couples scheduled to arrive over a twelve-month period as a result of the ‘Passion Package’, negotiated by the General Conference president earlier that year. Mary and Don, in common with the majority of the couples, came from Jamaica. These couples, together with the

Howells from Barbados, were all inclusive and inclusive in their approach to the host community.

In the first quarter of 1979, in my capacity as editor, I took the opportunity to take preaching appointments at churches where they pastored. Two of the families, the Perrys and the McFarlanes, invited Anita and I to their homes. (Those who did not invite us back were not wanting in hospitality, but were over-stretched work-wise and had commitments elsewhere.)

Though a relative youngster, I was in the confidence of at least two of the field leaders because I can recall my conversations following initial meetings with the incomers. The Union president was most impressed by the spirituality, wisdom and maturity of Pastor Perry, and saw in him a great leadership capacity. The North British Conference president, a former elder, was dazzled by Don McFarlane and saw in him tremendous potential as an evangelist as well as a leader. He was not wrong. During his first twelve months at Handsworth, Don baptised a hundred people. A few years later, he was appointed executive secretary of the NBC. Subsequently, he was executive secretary of the Union, and

served for fourteen years as president of the South England Conference, before serving for a brief period at the Division.

In seeing leadership potential in Pastors Perry and McFarlane, I believe that the brethren had identified in both men a vision of the Church as more than a hierarchy to be dominated by people of one ethnicity. Rather a structure whose sole purpose was to promote the nurture and growth of God’s Kingdom. Both leaders have shown a capacity to rise above their ethnicity and to promote an integrated Church community.

In common with certain of his predecessors, however, Pastor McFarlane was a moderniser. If a given church practice or structure was too expensive, had lost its use-by-date, ceased to be best practice or perhaps, become a hindrance rather than a help to church nurture or growth, his instincts were, having taken counsel and examined all possibilities, to propose change. While acknowledging the changelessness of the everlasting Gospel, he is acutely aware that aspects of church practice would benefit from changes that recommend detailed proposals for such change he has identified himself as a man of courage.

Don has also been courageous in his advocacy of the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith, knowing that his constituency will always include an active minority of convinced, politically active nationalists.

Nevertheless, Don’s presentations on justification by faith have been the best since the death of J. A. McMillan, another ‘Mac’ to be Union president earlier. Don is an excellent chairman of committee, has endless patience with committee members who feel they have to speak on every agenda item, is decisive when challenged on issues of principle, has a better grasp of church policy and finance than most of his predecessors, and will not cave in under pressure.

Over the years these gifts have become conspicuous to those who have worked with him. To most they have been a big plus. Others may have felt threatened. The polished McFarlane style, including that aura-pro-fundo voice, may have been perceived as intimidating by a few. ‘Too Anglo’, I was told by a person who thought that the style was assumed. Assumed it was not. He had the same style when he pastored at (the same time!) eleven churches in and around Kingston, Jamaica, thirty-five years ago.

Don McFarlane is among the most gifted church leaders with whom I have served. At 58 his eye is not dimmed, nor is his natural force abated! I feel sure that God has great plans for Don and Mary. Given that his gifts have been developed over three decades in the British Isles, I cannot help but hope that he has further opportunities for service here.

Pastor Eric Lowe

Pastor Eric C. Lowe, in regard to style, very different from his colleague but, in regard to substance, very similar.

Eric had enjoyed many years as a pastor of churches great and small in northern England before he became a Conference administrator. He was born in North Wales and raised as an Adventist. Photographs of Eric as a young man reveal striking good looks and a fashionable, stylish haircut. His scholarly interests were scientific and he began work at the Meteorological Office in Bracknell. His interest in his motorbike accident in Reading left him looking – from the tarmac – at the signboard of the Adventist church. When I interviewed him on the occasion of his appointment as North England Conference executive secretary to Pastor Egberton Francis, Eric gave me to understand that this was the occasion of his conversion. He enrolled as a ministerial student at Newbold, and graduated with one of the highest Grade Point Averages in the college’s history.

Eric married Margaret Marshall. She is not related to me, just as Eric is unrelated to the other church leaders and prominent lady who have been called Lowe. Although Eric is not a relation – by marriage – I must, however, declare an interest where he is concerned. For more than six years Eric was my church pastor. In six decades I have been pastored by a great many men. None was more efficient and effective pastor than Eric C. Lowe. He had all the gifts a pastor needs, and then some.

A former elder, who served with Eric, remembers him as the best chairman of committee he has ever encountered. And, in case

that sounds cold and impersonal, permit me to record my recollections of his excellent preaching and visiting. Eric was always the professional, and any confidence shared with him was safe. He tried to avoid betraying his feelings and strongly-held views. However, on occasion he did, and was prepared to confront a church leader who was acting unjustly.

When Eric began his years as executive secretary of first the NEC and then the BUC, I have a feeling that he was not expecting promotion. The minutiae of church policy are not such as to provoke fascination, and I did wonder how Eric would take to them. He mastered his brief like none other, and his mastery of policy will remain legendary.

However, Eric’s concern for justice and his gift of people skills are also remarkable. Those who consider the infrequency of Eric’s interventions on the Union committee, and the professionalism which limits his statements of strong opinion, as indicators of an uncaring personality have seriously misunderstood the man. The model committee chairman is also a model committee member: he speaks when he has something to say. His practice of economy of words makes the words he does use all the more important. It also benefits his preaching.

Those who like a good gossip would be well advised to avoid Eric Lowe. He doesn’t do gossip. Those who like flowery speech would find Eric a disappointment. He doesn’t do flowery speech or argument for argument’s sake. He does gist. And he is a master of it.

Eric has been 65 for a few months now. If anyone deserves a long and healthy retirement, he does. He has been one of the most intellectually gifted and hardworking leaders in my experience. Like Pastor McFarlane, he knows how to handle the difficult people and pressure groups, and has an enviable unflappable temperament. Both men have a strong personal faith grounded in a close relationship with God, and have given principled, caring leadership.

also leaving . . .

Joining them in retirement is Pastor Alan Hodges, lapsing Ministerial and Trust Services director and former Irish Mission president. His kindly demeanour and caring attitude endeared him to many. Pastors Des Boodeau and Curtis Murphy will also be moving on from the roles in Youth and Training, respectively.

Once again the delegates rose to their feet to express appreciation of a way God has led these three men.
TWO PRIMARY TEACHERS URGENTLY REQUIRED
(To start as soon as possible – latest: January 2012)

Salary: MPS, will apply (depending on experience)

The Governing Body wishes to appoint two Seventh-day Adventist teachers who are approachable, determined to succeed, confident, dynamic and inspirational, with a passion for school improvement and driving up standards. The successful candidates should:
• Have QTS and up-to-date professional knowledge;
• Take an active part in school life;
• Demonstrate the Seventh-day Adventist Christian faith, with the ability to integrate this faith into the curriculum;
• Show an interest in the teaching of extra-curricular activities.

Candidates will be subject to a disclosure check through the CRB. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its children, and expects all staff to share this commitment.

For an application form, contact the school on 0121 693 7742. A visit to the school is welcomed.

Closing date for applications: 1 August 2011, 4pm.