DFID visits ADRA-UK
by Bert Smit, ADRA-UK CEO

International Development Secretary Justine Greening and local MP Richard Harrington visited the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA-UK) offices in Watford on Monday morning, 20 May 2013, for an hour and a half.

The Secretary of State’s visit focused on ADRA-UK’s work in Myanmar (Burma), where we are implementing a project with funding from the DFID. The project is designed to create jobs and promote income generation while also raising awareness of gender, HIV/AIDS, disaster risk reduction and environmental protection issues and activities.

The visit put ADRA-UK in the spotlight and gave us an opportunity to highlight the excellent work that ADRA does around the world.

ADRA-UK was established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a charity in 1999. It stands, however, in a long tradition of helping people in need. This year the Church in the UK is celebrating 100 years of collecting from door to door by our members to fund medical, educational and development work overseas.

Since its beginning, ADRA-UK has become a professional organisation focusing on long-term development and the provision of relief during major emergencies.

On paper ADRA-UK is relatively small – with just eight people in the office – but we are supported in the UK by over 50,000 people, young and old.

Our close link to the Church is important because it not only gives us the ethos for our work, but also gives our church membership in the UK an opportunity to be involved in the wider scheme of social responsibility and humanitarian work.

According to the latest statistics, ADRA as a network employs more than 6,000 staff worldwide and helped 31.5 million people in 2012.

We are a small team here in the UK, but with your support and the global reach of the international ADRA network we are able to engage in projects that attract the funding of the DFID, and visits from its Secretary of State.

Justine Greening, International Development Secretary, makes her point

Watford’s MP Richard Harrington, and Justine Greening chat with Helia Mateus, chief financial officer at ADRA-UK

Ben Endley, senior reporter for the Watford Observer (21 May 2013), quoted Ms Greening as follows regarding the ADRA-UK Burma project:

‘To be get a chance to meet up and hear about their project that we have helped fund is fantastic, and also to hear about how they have been working with DFID.

‘It’s really common-sense development because it’s about helping people to be in a better position to generate their own economic livelihood, both as individuals and as a community.

‘The effects of this will last long after the project is finished and that is one of the reasons why it has worked so well.’

He also captured this comment from Mr Harrington:

‘It’s very different from the old type of top-down and where wealthy countries gave money to small countries and hoped that enough flowed through. This is actually handing a project at grass roots and it’s helping people to set up their own businesses, Survive themselves and build an infrastructure . . . . ’
Radiation damages the genes in our cells, thereby causing gene faults.

Skin cancers are mainly caused by over-exposing your skin to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. The risks are increased if you:
- Are fair-skinned;
- Have several moles;
- Have a relative who has had melanoma or non-melanoma skin cancer.

Sun exposure

Asbestos

Cancer Research UK found that:
- Too much sun exposure and sunburn (radiation from UVA and UVB) increases our risk of developing skin cancer;
- Exposure to radioactive materials and nuclear fallout can increase the risk of developing leukaemia and other cancers;
- The risk from small doses of radiation, such as from a single X-ray test, is very small.

Workplace hazards

Asbestos is made up of tiny fibres that can be inhaled. It causes a cancer called mesothelioma, which commonly affects the pleura (covering of the lungs). The time frame between exposure to asbestos and the development of cancer is usually about 20 to 30 years, and sometimes even longer. Asbestos is now banned in the UK.

Cancer: the facts – part 3g

Examining causation and risk factors

The environment

The environmental causes of cancer are those things that surround us daily and that could cause or contribute to cancer. These include factors such as tobacco smoke, sun overexposure, natural and man-made radiation, workplace hazards and asbestos (www.cancerresearchuk.org).

Cancer Research UK found the following in connection with these factors:
- Tobacco
  - A quarter of all cancers are smoking-related. In 2010 there were 60,000 such cases in the UK.
  - Tobacco causes cancer of the mouth, throat, larynx, oesophagus, pancreas, stomach, liver, bladder, uterus, cervix, bronchus, bowel and ovaries, and myeloid leukaemia.
- Sun exposure
  - Skin cancers are mainly caused by over-exposing your skin to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. The risks are increased if you:
    - Are fair-skinned;
    - Have several moles;
    - Have a relative who has had melanoma or non-melanoma skin cancer.
- Radiation
  - Radiation damages the genes in our cells, thereby causing gene faults (mutations) which could lead to cancer. The more radiation exposure, the greater the chance that a gene change (mutation) will occur that could cause cancer to develop.
  - We are all exposed to some radiation daily, such as:
    - Natural radiation from the earth and space;
    - Radiation from the nuclear power and weapons industries around us;
    - Radiation from medical tests (X-rays).

Chemicals

Chemical carcinogens (carcinogenic) is high because of their type of work. For example, workers in the chemical dye industry have been found to have a higher incidence than normal of bladder cancer.

Employees exposed to workplace chemicals such as asbestos, benzene, formaldehyde, and so on, have an increased risk of developing certain cancers, especially if they have been exposed to them without any protection.

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In the next issue we examine genetic makeup and immunity.

Good health!
Absolutely this is opportunity to speak to the professionals about A-levels, university selection, career paths, internships, ... There will also be entrepreneurs on hand to help qualified adults who are currently unemployed or seeking a career change.

Sunday, 14 July – Careers Fair:
Venue: Houndsfield Road, Edmonton N9 7RA,
Time:

Sunday, 7 July – Surviving University:
Location: Newbold High College of Higher Education, Venue: Eden Church Hall, London E7 0RD, Time: 12:00pm–4:00pm

Sunday, 14 July – Careers Fair:
Location: Newbold High College of Higher Education, Venue: John Loughborough School, Holcombe Road, Tottenham N7 9AD, Time: 10:00 am–4:00 pm

What will be the impact of such comments on the young ladies concerned?

Would you like an academically engaging, faith-affirming experience during the summer of 2013? If so, you may be attracted to the study option of Our Summer Intensive programme during June/July 2013.

We offer study options designed to appeal to the heart and challenge the mind. Whether your desire is to see new places, embrace new perspectives or earn undergraduate or postgraduate credit – we invite you to consider a study option that is right for you.


As you consider the study options, our hope is that you will find an option that is right for you. We look forward to seeing you in June or July 2013.
Children of divorce: Helping them find themselves

Jacques Vente, senior pastor at Stanborough Park Church, shares some of his research on the topic of vital concern to the Church.

I have noticed that the Church is now openly grappling with certain issues that, as a Theology students, we never really got to discuss. Sometimes in Church has initiated the exploration of these challenging issues, while at other times it has been compelled to join the conversation by the demands of the ever-changing society in which we find ourselves. Such important issue that has gone unaddressed is the need to care for and nurture children whose parents have divorced.

In my opinion, society has generally been very helpful in its support of divorcing parents – something as we a denomination are, hopefully, also getting better at. But who cares for the children of divorce? Long-term studies, such studies show that the long-term impact of divorce on children is so damaging that it is better for children to grow up in an intact family environment with safety and security, even though this is obviously far from ideal. The obvious problem is that many children in divorce are affected. It affects their belief in God and in religious teachings, and their relationship with religious institutions. All of which indicates that, as a Church, we have a responsibility to try to make a difference. We need to understand the damage that divorce can do to their experience of God, and help them find good models for relationships, faith, forgiveness and Christ-like living. We often praise our children’s resilience in the face of adversity, and more so when they are faced with separating parents. At such times you often hear parents say, ‘They [the children] will get through it as they are coping very well.’ Yet it is more than two decades of careful research work that tells us they are not coping well as well as their parents think they are.

Some of the problems involvement of divorce often experience a much lower level of well-being than children from intact families. After their parents’ divorce, children often find relationships unreliable, have feelings of loneliness, and suffer a strong fear of abandonment. Some even believe that their childhood ended the day their parents got divorced.

Children of divorce are often expected to care for their parents during this time, thus reversing the parent-child roles and forcing the burden of maturity on them before they are emotionally ready. This burden is reflected in a rise in depression, expressed towards God, when these children of divorce face difficulties later in life.

The church’s role

Due to its location, and its role in the lives of children, the local church as a family of families can become a ‘family wellness centre’. By letting the church be the ‘wellness centre’ for families, it helps them find solutions that may be losing out on their experience of positive and healthy relationships. Yet if we, as a church, are not aware of this, and do not put a framework in place to support these children, then we are failing them as a spiritual support mechanism.

As churches we can support the children of both divorced and intact families by recognising the resiliency factors that help buffer children against the negative effects of parental divorce. Research has shown that positive inter-personal relationships, such as when peers are supportive, or when the children have a neighbour in which they can confide – are helpful. Also, the presence of children often find relationships unreliable, have feelings of loneliness, and suffer a strong fear of abandonment. Some even believe that their childhood ended the day their parents got divorced.

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In November 2010 Ian married Natalie Redman, and in May they joined the Winchester church and the story is now complete.

How it all began

On Friday 11 January 2013 Winchester Church borrowed Southampton’s baptistry for an evening baptism of two sisters and Pastor Douglas McCormac. They are Agatha, Agnes and Alex – Brazilians who started coming to Winchester Church just over two years ago.

Agatha’s story:

‘I was born in Brazil, raised in America and moved to Europe at 17. The family came to England about two years ago and began attending the Winchester church, where everyone was so welcoming and friendly.

I had a tough time growing up, but have always believed in God. I thought my past was holding me back, but then realised it was just that: the past. Whatever happens in the future, I know Jesus will be there for me. I have never been happier, now that I know Jesus as my personal Saviour.’

Alex’s story:

‘I was originally a Catholic, but I lacked a true understanding of the Bible and God. After studying God’s Word I decided to get baptised as an Adventist, and I have learned through John 8:32 that Jesus and the Bible is the truth that sets me free.’

Agnes’ story:

‘I was brought up in a Christian family, and my decision to get baptised was one I made in childhood. Becoming a new person through Jesus Christ has amazed me and taught me the depth of God’s mercy.

The warehouse after extension number 2

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Profile aims to bring young people and other members of the community together to build trust and understanding, and to promote community solutions towards the growing concerns about gang crime and youth violence.

Hermiina Mathieu, organiser of the day, said, ‘Profile is about who we are, what we represent and who influences our lives. We live in a “facebook” culture where our profile and the choices we make in our lives are important and impact upon our values.’

Mathieu Mathieu-Marius, co-organiser of Profile, added, ‘It’s important to choose your friends rather than let them choose you, and to choose your ending rather than let others choose it for you.’ Young people join gangs for a number of reasons: recognition, excitement, friends, acceptance, a sense of belonging, power over other people, money from crime, protection, territory and respect. For those who join gangs the consequences can be catastrophic — both for themselves and for their families.

Maria Vivas, a senior trauma unit nurse and member of the Hackney church, spoke about knife crime and the fatal effect that just one stab can have. ‘In cases where a young person has been stabbed, the flow of blood to the heart can stop, cutting off oxygen to the brain; the patient then quickly becomes brain-dead — meaning that there’s nothing more that can be done but to switch off the life support. It’s emotionally distressing for families to realise that their loved one will never regain consciousness! The choices you make affect both your present and your future, so make the right choices.’

Ex-gang member, Mario Naragrove, who now works for Gangs Line, spoke of how his new-found belief in God has turned his life around: ‘I believe God will always find you — wherever you are!’ He also stressed the importance of a male role model in your life, ‘because it’s those man-to-man talks that got me through some of my most difficult challenges’.

The main speaker was Andrew Fuller, who asked the audience how much value they placed upon themselves. Andrew then went on to say, ‘The assassin, who is our enemy, only attacks important people, and his creed is to desensitise you from knowing that your life is worth the very life of God.’ He made it clear to the youth that the material things of the world amount to nothing, neither should a person define himself by such things. He also encouraged parents never to give up praying for young people, as God finds value even in a mess. An individual’s true worth and value is in knowing that his life is worth the very life of God, which is evident in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!’

Andrew exclaimed, ‘The day concluded with a play based on the life of a young person who was killed as a result of gang violence in a shopping mall in East London. Youth from the Carmel Greystone Theatre Company depicted the devastating impact knife and gun crime can have on individuals by reaching out and bringing change to the lives of those caught up in it. The play shows leaders, followers and the voice of reason, which should be listened to,’ said Mark Grey, the play’s director.

Steve Joseph, a former gang member, and founder of Change In Lives, an organisation which works with young people involved in gangs, had this to say: ‘I’ve never been particularly religious, yet I recognise the importance of spirituality and the role a church can play in helping the community to reclaim the lives of our young people involved in gang culture.’

Choices, value, worth — the message is clear, and Hackney are making it heard in their community!
Sutton-in-Ashfield International Day

Recently the Sutton-in-Ashfield Church held a successful International Day, with members representing the Czech Republic, England, Finland, Mauritius, Romania, Scotland, South Africa, and Wales. Not only was each country represented by examples of its fine traditional food, but the afternoon programme was packed with hymns, songs, Bible readings and prayer in the different home languages used by these members.

One of the quaintest contributions of the day was the use of Doric, a dialect from Aberdeen, Scotland – but all this wonderful diversity reminded Sutton's members that Adventists are a great global family!

Northampton Highlands Avenue

Northampton Highlands Avenue Church rejoiced on 4 May at the baptism of eight new members by Pastor Cyril Sweeney. It was his first baptism in Northampton since taking over as pastor at the Highlands Avenue, Hatfield Road and Loughborough churches at the beginning of the year. The baptismal candidates were, from left to right: Peter Warnbura, Colin Warnbura, Martin Obisesan, Trevor Warnbura, David Falade, Lixia Martinis, Eric Martinis and Syrian Martinis.

A double blessing

Despite the cold, snowy weather that preceded it, Sabbath 30 March was a glorious morning, marking the beginning of a blessed weekend for the Aberdeen members.

It began with the baptism of six new members. The service was conducted by two ministers: Pastor Richard Brooks, who was there at the invitation of Sean (one of the candidates) and Pastor Victor Harewood, Aberdeen’s interim minister in his sermon Pastor Brooks spoke about God’s forgiveness.

The candidates came from all walks of life. Some had even found the Adventist Church through the internet and their own intense personal study. The newest members are Sean (the youngest of the group, who turned 16 that week), David, Graeme, Hannah, Marek, and Thandiwe, who also celebrated her birthday that day.

The following morning some members were witnesses to the marriage ceremony of Hannah and Marek: a beautiful, simple service that was also conducted by Pastors Harewood and Brooks.

Eager Beavers can reach the summit

Two Eager Beavers (ages 5), two Adventurers (ages 7, 8) and a larger number of Pathfinders walked a total of 8 miles while climbing to an elevation of over 2,000 feet on the bank holiday, ... set off to reach the summit of Kinder Scout, the highest peak in Britain’s most visited national park – the Peak District.

Two Eager Beavers can reach the summit

I didn’t really expect the little ones to complete the whole hike, but to our amazement and joy they did it – with life still left in their little batteries. I wish more clubs would connect with creation and experience more of this. If Eager Beavers can do it, we all can.

The hike contributes towards the Hiking honour as well as being a prerequisite for the Walking Group Leader and Mountain Leader awards, which will be rolled out in October for the NEC Pathfinder Leadership Team.

Raising money for ADRA

Leamington Mission members (of all ages) have been coming up with increasingly creative ways of raising money for ADRA. Two of the starling activities this year have been the ADRA auction that raised over £600 and the sponsored bike ride around Draycote Water by the younger members of the church. Draycote Water is a local reservoir 5 miles in circumference. One of the stars was Toby Gilbert, only 3 years old, whose little legs cycled a total of 2 miles on the day and raised £275!

Another superb effort was that of Nigel Clark, Leamington Mission’s ‘seasoned’ marathon runner. For several years Nigel has run about two marathons a year, donating the money raised by sponsorship to ADRA. On this occasion he ran the Shakespeare Marathon in Stratford-upon-Avon on 27 May. He finished a creditable 138

Good news from Wednesfield

Five new members were added to the Wednesfield church. Wolverhampton, on 13 April, Leon James, Keegan Baker, Melanie Barrett, Maria Vickers and Billy Thomas. Pastors Herbert and Appiah led out during this inspiring service, with the help of musicians from Bilston and Wolverhampton Central.
SEC Urban Ministry Summit

by Katie Ramharacksingh

"If postmodernism were an artist, her canvas would be the city," said Pastor Kleber Gonçalves, director of the Centre for Secular and Postmodern Studies at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) during the Urban Ministry Summit, 3-5 May.

The summit, held at the Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre in Bedfordshire, was organised by the Personal Ministries department of the South England Conference (SEC). Their aim was to bring together eight captivating speakers from around the world who would present a weekend of seminars on how to successfully create a community-based presence in the tough, urban areas around England.

"Usually we don’t take into consideration the differences in people’s perspective about life," explained Kleber Gonçalves, who is also the pastor of a church-planting project in Sao Paulo, Brazil. "Evangelism is nothing more than communicating a message. Often we think people understand what we are trying to share, but they do not. It’s so important for us to find relevant ways of communicating to see how we can really say something that finds a hiding place in their hearts."

Among the speakers were experts in Urban Ministry, East Asia Religions and Traditions, Church-planting, Adventist-Muslim Relations and Jewish-Adventist Relations, all of whom work in various leadership roles at either the General Conference or the British Union Conference (BUC). All their topics were focused on the GC evangelistic initiative planned for London later this year. The event, known as ‘Mission to the Cities’, will focus on spreading the Gospel to London, and also the town of Potters Bar.

Community involvement was a high priority for each presenter, with a special focus on meeting community needs.

“We don’t need to run every programme for every single community service needed in London!” commented Pastor Gary Krause, director of Adventist Mission at the BUC. "We need to concentrate on being friends with them, and through that friendship we can go and attend their gatherings, from there we can learn about them and build their trust, and after that we can discuss about Yeshua (Jesus) and the promised land. It’s about finding the common ground first – and it works! We now have fifty Adventist synagogues worldwide."

Other presentations from Sam Neves, a pastor in Wimbledon, UK, and Andrew Clark, a pastor in Pennsylvania, USA, looked at radical ways of impacting both the local church and its community. They spoke of using bold techniques to get churches to truly mix with their communities, such as redesigning church interiors, creating job opportunities, providing a church café for anyone to relax, and building sites like parks that reach community needs.

“It was a spiritual and God-centred event for the times we are living in,” enthused organiser Pastor Kirk Thomas, Personal Ministries director at the SEC. “It was spiritual and practical; these speakers were bringing years of tried and proven methods and experience to those willing to listen.”

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Northampton training sessions

‘Interactive lesson planning’ and the ‘five-stage hermeneutic process’ were just two of the intriguing topics that were covered during the two North England Conference Sabbath School Teacher Training workshops at the Northampton Highlands Avenue church on Sundays 14 and 21 April. At least thirty delegates attended the lively sessions led by Beulah Plumlett, and they were left inspired and equipped to lead their students to a deeper knowledge of the Bible, with a renewed motivation for evangelism and a closer walk with God. Coral Gordon, a delegate from Northampton, said: ‘What I have learnt will greatly benefit the church and the Children’s Sabbath School, because a teacher’s role is to be taken seriously. The knowledge of God must be communicated and it must be made accessible to all. I now aim to inspire all my learners so that what they have learnt can be applied to their lives and bring about change!’

AUBREY DAVIS, COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

Congratulations and goodbye

Dr Dennis Wilson-Cole and his family (Marilyn and Charlette) will shortly leave the British Isles for a senior executive position in North America. Dennis has been very active for a number of years at the Brixton church, where he served on the church board, in the Sabbath School department, and as the church’s first internal auditor. He has also had a personal ministry, ‘Excellence in Christian Service’, which helped many members in London, the Midlands and Freetown, Sierra Leone, to identify their spiritual gifts. Marilyn served the church as a faithful and dedicated deaconess. The family will be sorely missed and the Brixton church family wish them Godspeed!

BRIAN DICKINSON

Jim Frost turns 92

On 30 March Jim Frost celebrated his 92nd birthday in a very special way – with a surprise birthday party arranged by members of the Great Yarmouth church.

Jim served in the ministry in the Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft area, and later in Torquay. He conducted numerous evangelistic meetings during his years of service, all financed from his own pocket.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER

The principal of the Adventist Discovery Centre (VOP) acknowledges with sincere thanks an anonymous donation of £20, in memory of Stanley Maxwell; also an anonymous donation of £1,000: both received in April from the Watford area.