Horley Gatwick Pathfinders lead the way!

by Taitos Matafeni

Braving the chilly Remembrance Sunday morning, the Horley Gatwick Pathfinder Club, the Royal British Legion, local councillors and church members joined together for a solemn remembrance service at Horley Gatwick Church. The church, built in the village of Lowfield Heath, not only stands as the last remaining building in that village but also houses a war memorial, beneath which lie the remains of three veterans.

As part of its outreach in the community, Pastor Matthew Herel once again invited the local branch of the Royal British Legion to share in the service. This year the opportunity was further extended to local councillors, members of the Charlwood Historical Society, and the local community.

Under the direction of Pastor Herel, the Pathfinders led the memorial service into the grounds with three drumming pieces. Then, after two minutes of silence, they led the procession into the church building, where Pastor Herel delivered a short sermon, based on John 15:13, in which he drew links between Jesus sacrificing Himself for us and those who gave their lives for peace in the two world wars.

Following the service, the Pathfinders again drummed the procession out of the church to where the Women’s Ministries team had prepared some tea and biscuits. This allowed all present to warm up, while reflecting on the message of the day. The Pathfinders took the opportunity to have a moment with Jim Huke, Lowfield Heath Royal British Legion branch president, who is now in his nineties, while he shared his first-hand experiences as a veteran of World War II.

Through our support of this event, Pastor Herel found out that the Legion no longer had a padre for their various services throughout the year. They welcomed his offer of help when they needed a minister for their different programmes. All of which will open up opportunities to reach out to the community and offer our church, and especially our young people, the chance to minister.
GAIN Conference
Newbold College 21 February – 1 March 2015
Global Adventist internet Network (GAIN) is a GC initiative, consisting of Seventh-day Adventist technologists, technicians and communicators connect to discuss the creative use of internet technology in their work and for the church.
GAIN/Academy, organised by Pastor Kirsten Oster-Lundqvist, SEC Communication and Media director, brings these media and communication professionals together to inspire and equip and connect. It aims to serve the local church by inspiring and equipping the members and pastors who attend to understand and use media in their church settings, by providing an inspirational framework as well as ensuring practical implementations. We have seen an improvement in churches that are intentional in their application of media and communication in their outreach.

To achieve this the conference consists of a mixture of inspirational presentations and practical workshops relevant to the local members, leaders and pastors.

Speakers include: Nancy Lamoreaux (GC); John Beckett (GC); Celeste Ryan (USA); David Weber (RAD/USA); James Pouliner (UK); Sheridan Vesey (UK); Delwin Finch (USA); Pedro Torres (Spain); Tom de Bruijn (NL); Victor Hubert (UK); Kirsten Oster-Lundqvist (UK); Karsten Lundqvist (UK); Daryl Gungadiso (GC/UK) and Allan Breezeje (UK).

Some of the presentation titles include: "Theological Storytelling for the Contemporary World"; "Branding Your Story"; "The Power of a Story in a Digital Age"; "Storytelling through Photography"; "What Story Do We Stream?"; "Crisis Communication"; "IT Security and Legal Issues"; "Leading Your Tech Team"; "Talking in Context"; "E-vangelism 3.0"; "How to Market Your Church Event"; "Engaging With Your Online Community"; "Managing My Digital Identity"; "Digital Faith Narratives"; "God's and your Story in Social Media"; "Communicating with Colour and Creativity".

There will be workshops on: websites; radio; camera operations; photography; using Pro-Presenter; news writing; crisis communication; church audio; set-Adventist websites. For registration and more information please visit the website: http://sec.adventist.org.uk/gain.

Enhancing Health
by Sharon Platt-McDonald, RGN, RM, RHV, MSc
Health Ministry director, BUC

Healthy beginnings
Each New Year brings the potential for far-reaching changes as we seek to improve on the previous year. If you are looking to improve your health in 2015 and there are several aspects of your well-being that need addressing, which area would you address first? Is it advisable to tackle one health change at a time or a few simultaneously?

Previous studies looking at the benefits of introducing more than one health change at a time have reported conflicting findings. However, researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine discovered that individuals focusing on changing both exercise and diet at the same time had better outcomes than when tackling them separately.

An online article from Stanford Medicine News Centre published on 21 April, 2013, carried the headline: 'Change diet, exercise habits at same time for best results...'

For registration and more information please visit the website: sec.adventist.org.uk/gain.

Editorial
Is it OK to ‘live within our means’?

It works differently
If we think we can sanction our spending habits by ‘living within our means’, we need to think again. For the simple reason that when we focus on ‘living within our means’ we allow our spending power to determine our needs. The formula for our stewardship is then reduced to this: ‘If it’s good and you can afford it, there’s no harm in having it!’

But is it? From my observation of debt-driven economies, there is little evidence that principle works reasonably well while it doesn’t? But is it? From my observation of debt-driven economies, there is little evidence that principle works reasonably well while

Dear Reader, this is our prayer for you this year...

‘The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD renew your face towards you and give you peace.’

Numbers 6:24-26 (RSV/CSB)
Let’s start with a little story: it was many years ago that villagers in Downstream were visited by a person struggling in the river that flowed past their village. Some old-timers still remember how they realized that the river was now safe to swim in. The men had inefficiently were at managing that sort of thing. Sometimes, they say, it would take hours to pull ten people from the river and then only a few would survive.

Though the number of victims in the river has increased greatly in recent years, the good folks of Downstream have responded admirably to the challenge. Their rescue system is now clearly second to none: most people spotted in the swirling waters are reached within twenty seconds, many in less than ten. Now only a small number drown each day before help arrives — a big improvement on the way it used to be.

Talk to the people of Downstream and they’ll speak with pride about the new hospital at the river’s edge, the flood of rescue boats readily for deployment at a moment’s notice, the comprehensive plans in place to coordinate all the manpower required, and the large number of highly trained and dedicated swimmers always ready to risk their lives to save victims from the raging currents. Surely, it costs a lot, say the Downstreamers, but at least we can decent people do but provide whatever is necessary when so many lives are at stake.

Oh, a few people in Downstream have raised the question from time to time, but most folks show little interest in what’s happening Upstream. It seems there’s so much to do to help those in the river that nobody’s got time to check how all those waggling people bodies are getting there in the first place. (Adapted from www.seekwellness.com.)

The concept of ‘upstreaming’ highlighted in this little story has been around a long time. Here is how Edouard de Bono, a leading authority in the field of creative thinking, expressed it:

It is well known that ‘problem avoidance’ is an important part of problem solving. Instead of solving the problem upstream and after the system so that the problem does not occur in the first place.

(Quote from upstreammarketing.com)

It is an approach, I’ve found (after some poking around on the internet), that is commonly used in the fields of engineering, science, healthcare, diplomacy and management, among others. For example, in healthcare a good example of an ‘upstream approach’ is a person being diagnosed early so that the problem does not occur in the first place.

Preventions 4:23 may be helpful here to focus our thinking. ‘Guard your heart more than anything else, because the source of your life flows from it. (God’s Word translation.) The NV translation puts it this way: ‘Above all, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.’

Guard your heart! Watch over your heart! I have to conclude that this ‘upstreaming’ in the Christian context is to ‘guard the heart’. How is that done? Instead of focusing on the sins in our lives and trying to fix them, we should nourish, nurture and cherish the spiritual ‘heart’ by drinking the Living Water, daily. In Jeremiah 2:13 God is identified as the Source of Living Water. In John 4:14 (NT) He is recorded as saying: ‘But those who drink the water I give will never thirst again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life. He also claimed to be the Bread of Life.

So how do we drink the Living Water? We can do precisely what De Bono wisely said: instead of solving the problem, we can go upstream and alter the system so that the problem does not occur in the first place. In the Christian’s life that means: Bible study, every day. Prayer, every day. ‘Drinking at the Spring of Living Water’, every day.

Let that be our New Year’s resolution. In fact, to the word ‘resolution’ is too weak here — let us rather speak of our New Year’s commitment!

Lack of courtesy? Judging each other? Being opinionated? Each of us has seen our own set of sights, smells and sounds floating by this year.

As Christians, I wonder what ‘struggling bodies’ we’ve seen floating by in our lives this year. There may even have been some ‘dead bodies’. Make no mistake, dead bodies floating by are not a pretty sight. Neither are the matters mentioned in Matthew 15:19: ‘Evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and slander.’ (NIV). We could use more up-to-date language, I dread, lack of integrity, lies (do we call it ‘spinning’?), unfairness. OK, no actual murders, but hatred?

Since 1980, the global prevalence of daily tobacco smoking has declined by an estimated 25 percent for men and 42 percent for women, although due to more effective education and raising of awareness of the serious health consequences of smoking, and so on.

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For us to begin 2015 together. A new year brings with it new challenges and opportunities.

God’s heart brought us through 2014 and into this New Year. I am sure we have many plans for our personal development as we anticipate the Lord’s return. One thing rests upon my heart as I look back over the past year – the Lord has been faithful and I am grateful to Him. To God be the glory – He has accomplished much.

You cannot fail to notice that many of these popular New Year’s resolutions are important for industries that focus on health and can be extremely profitable. Across the United Kingdom and abroad, many new gym memberships will be taken out in the month of January, but by March, the majority of people will have given up. This is not surprising, since according to Professor Richard Webster, a Canadian psychologist, his research indicates that only 12% of people who sign up to lose weight actually go on to make a long-term commitment.

There is no denying that making resolutions is easier than actually following through with them. This makes me wonder whether it is ever worth making them in the first place.

Before making bold promises or signing up to any agreement, careful and deliberate considera-
tion should always be exercised. In the book of Exodus we read the account of the Egyptian deliverance from Egyptian slavery. Some 50 days later, when the Israelites were on the brink of freedom, they made the following resolution (Exodus 19, vv. 5–6). This promise was repeated in verse 10 of the following chapter (Exodus 20, vv. 1–6).

Knowing God’s heart  
by Pastor Sam Davis, WC president

As we begin this new year together, the Lord Jesus Christ be with you, me and everyone who has accepted him as their personal Saviour. Once you are saved, there is no more danger of you falling away from the Lord, because you are no longer subject to the power of sin. The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, even though he may fall into sin; he is not counted a sinner (John 5:24).

As we begin this new year, we need to be very careful not to fall into the trap of thinking that the Lord Jesus Christ will be with us only for as long as we are keen and enthusiastic about Him. The Lord Jesus Christ will be with us always, even when we are weak and discouraged, so long as we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord. We need to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is always with us, no matter what we are going through.

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To God be the glory  
by Pastor Lorance Johnson, NEC president

The resolution to be sad no more is often the first place. This is where we come to the ‘or sociology’ bit. A rule, I would say that only a very small percentage of people leave the Church because they disagree with the Church. Very few ever seem to think about this and put it down to the fact that we’ve already had a change of heart before God can be improved upon. Or, we can manslaughter the whole ‘God is greater than’ stuff, or the ‘God is love’ stuff, or the ‘God is love’ stuff is far less important than ‘sociology’.

The Mirrors of 2014  
by Pastor John Surridge, WM president

Over the years I’ve seen many people graduate from the Church, and I’ve seen the quarterly reports give a boost to the existing members and a real sense of fulfiliation to the leaders and ministers. Sadly, though, I’ve also seen a lot of talk and little action. I read an article recently which put the attrition rate at around 40%, so I take the view that it’s five steps forward and two steps back. This information that we are not so keen on sharing.

We need to continue loving those who have gone AWOL. We need to keep a close eye on what’s going on and respond quickly when we see that someone is missing.

To God be the glory – He is the one who is providing a good home, travelling, retiring – whatever it is. God is giving our children this first place. This is where we come to the ‘or sociology’ bit. A rule, I would say that only a very small percentage of people leave the Church because they disagree with the Church. Very few ever seem to think about this and put it down to the fact that we’ve already had a change of heart before God can be improved upon. Or, we can manslaughter the whole ‘God is greater than’ stuff, or the ‘God is love’ stuff, or the ‘God is love’ stuff is far less important than ‘sociology’.
administrators and directors for their attendance, counsel, and the provision of funds for Dublin.

- The Irish Mission Executive Committee for your counsel and stewardship of Irish Mission resources, particularly in relation to this project.
- Mark and Teenie Finley and their team of helpers (Bible workers, health instructors, singing evangelist and computer programmer) – not to mention General Conference and ASI support.

- The Emerald Foundation (USA), which continues to support the Irish Mission financially, and specifically contributed funds and people to support the Dublin project this year.
- The Stanborough Press management, editorial and design team, for their work on a special Irish Mission edition of FOCUS magazine (40,000 copies), and advertising (175,000 brochures), and for getting them to Dublin on time.
- 472 Irish Mission members old and new. This is your proj-
ext, a new dawn for Dublin, a new day for the Irish Mission. Your enduring faithfulness to the Lord is making the Dublin City of Hope project possible.
- The Dublin Adventist diocese – and friends who have had their passion for the work of God in Dublin re-ignited this year.

The ‘encourager’, the caller or emailler who simply says, ‘We’re praying for the Irish Mission, for Dublin and the work going on there.’

- The Holy Spirit – for hovering over Dublin and going before us.

Joy to the world

by Pastor Bernie Holford, SM president

2014 has been a momentous year for the Scottish nation and for the UK as a whole. The Scottish independence referendum was a powerful reminder that UK politics is not predictable. The positive message of the ‘Yes’ campaign appealed to many people. Some commentators suggested that the ‘Yes’ campaign capitulated on a deep longing for something better. It seems that looking forward to something positive builds the human spirit.

Despite many good things happening, 2014 probably brought most of us some disappointments, losses, or even tragedies. The advent of the New Year brings a great opportunity to look forward and to build something better. Many Christians see our society’s celebration of Christmas as an opportunity to think about the time when Jesus first came into the world. Isaiah’s reflections on Psalm 89 led him to write the poem that has become known as the hymn ‘Joy to the World’. Christ’s birth in Bethlehem is the reason for great joy not only for believers, but also for everyone in the world! In Christ our greatest problem has been solved, and He soon will return to end the suffering that saddens both us and God.

Recently I visited a prisoner who became a Seventh-day Adventist while in prison. He said his experience made him appreciate even more the privilege of being a Christian. His joy comes from the experience of Christ in his life and his hope is sure, he has paid his dues to society, he has been transformed, and his release will be a new beginning. His smile is contagious.

It is my prayer for all who read this message that the joy of Christ will shine out of our lives during these dark winter months. This is my prayer for all who have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. Revelation 3:8, ESV.

Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart?

One might think that the Bible gives a very simple answer to this question. In Exodus 7:15, ‘I will harden Pharaoh’s heart’ (Exodus 7:15). In verse 27, ‘17:10; and 14:4, 8 say much the same thing. However, Exodus 8:15, 32 parts a different picture. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart. . . . But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and – then 9:6 says that ‘Pharaoh . . . sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart and he said to his servants, “What is going on here? Is God or Pharaoh hardening Pharaoh’s heart? Can we get a clue from the rest of the Bible?’

Well, Paul mentions Pharaoh in Romans 9:17, and continues, ‘Therefore [God] has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” (Rom. 4:14, 15).’ This passage – reminiscent of Isaiah 45:10 – seems to some Christians, to suggest that God irresistibly ‘wills’ to harden the hearts of some, including Pharaoh. The reformer John Calvin certainly thought so, and St Augustine – even, at one point, Martin Luther, in his zeal to prove that salvation is wholly of God’s grace, had enough of all the bad news . . . ?

In other words, God has no ‘cause’ for Pharaoh’s heart change. He sends them light to correct their errors . . . it is by rejection of this light that the eyes are hardened and the heart hardened. Specifically regarding Pharaoh, the Bible Commentary says, ‘Even the heathen recognised the fact that it was Pharaoh and the Egyptians themselves who hardened their hearts, and not God (1 Samuel 6:8).’ God specifically asks us not to harden our hearts (Psalm 95:8). Clearly, it was not God who hardened Pharaoh’s heart! Why then does Scripture describe God as hardening it? White

Q

A

Ever had questions about our faith, doctrines or practice that you want to see resolved? In each issue I’ll be hosting Q & A in an effort to answer them.

Andrew Puckering

news

Gloucester members honoured

During October Black History Month celebrations were held in the Gloucester Guildhall Arts Centre with around 400 in attendance.

During the Service of Praise and Thanksgiving two members of the Gloucester Adventist Church team were recognised for their work in the community and contributions to the county at large.

Audrey James received the Award for Services to the Economy and Community. She is a psychodynamic counsellor who provides both short-term and open-ended counselling to individuals and couples. Her aim, as she puts it, is ‘to help clients to understand and restore their lives.’

Audrey works in partnership with Ebony Community Carers, offering counselling support to carers in Gloucestershire; serves as parent counsellor at two local city schools in Bristol; and works with teens in Crisis Plus, a Christian organisation providing counselling services for young people and their families.

In 2015 Audrey hosted a number of radio programmes on Gloucester FM 96.6 which addressed complex social issues in the community. More recently, Audrey hosted Black Men on the Couch, an event designed to encourage African-Caribbean men to consider counselling and psychotherapy services, either for themselves or as a profession.

Albert Gardner received the Award for Promoting Community Cohesion and Making a Difference in the Community. He has been a driving force, working tirelessly over many years to bring different communities, churches and groups together. Albert has used his skills in, and passion for, volunteering to mentor, empower and encourage others to do the same. He has helped many groups to obtain funding for community activities and is regularly volunteers for projects within both church and community.

In presenting the award to Albert, the Member of Parliament for Gloucester, Mr Richard Graham, said: ‘Albert is clearly right ahead of his time as all this is done in a voluntary capacity. Albert consistently makes a difference to the area. He is certainly putting himself forward to help those in need.’

COMMENDATION

- The Stanborough Press

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News

To order your copy now speak to your Personal Ministries secretary, or telephone 01476 591700 Monday-Thursday.

www.spsch.org/scholarships/.
Pathfinders make a mark in Derby

As the sun rose over Pride Park in Derby on Sabbath 6 September 2014, the Pathfinder clubs of Areas 4 and 7 descended on the Riverside Centre – 500 of them in immaculate full dress uniform from Nottingham Bulwell, Rugby, Derby Bethel, Coventry Central, Leicester Central, Nottingham Central and Northampton.

Inside the hall, the audience enjoyed their marching entrance, presentations about club activities and news of their community outreach.

Club officers received their basic staff training awards and Rugby Pathfinder Club claimed the crown as Area 4 and Area 7’s very first Camporee winners against the stiff opposition of Derby Bethel and Nottingham Central.

There were cheers as Aaron Stewart and Anton Stewart were invested with Pathfinder Leadership Awards, simultaneously taking the title of Area co-ordinator. The theme of the day was ‘Bug of War’ and a brilliantly written and delivered sermon on the subject came from 17-year-old Wesley Bishop.

Our Rally Day was graced by dignitaries: Derbyshire Constabulary’s police divisional commander Jack Atwal, who inspired the young people to give their best to their communities, and NEC Pathfinder director, Pastor Alan Hush, who also played an integral part in the day’s proceedings.

The highlight of the day, however, was the club parade as 500 Pathfinders, Master Guides, Adventurers, Eager Beavers and Little Lambs with three drum corps, six instruct drills, 19 marshals and a police escort marched 3km to the centre of Derby. The parade was one of the most extraordinary sights Derby had seen for a while.

All this impressed the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Paul Peg, Like Commander Atwal, he was utterly impressed by the order, the commitment, the drums, the fancy drilling from Coventry Eagles and, more than anything, the positive witness of the young people.

Back at Riverside Centre he invited Derby Pathfinders to join the military and other uniformed services at this year’s Remembrance Day Parade. He invited the Pathfinder leaders to visit the council chambers at his request. He gave the name of our club to the Lord Lieutenant of Derby to include as part of the youth organisations with which the council wanted to be associated.

And, finally, he asked the club to come back to Derby again. This was a mighty witness and a wonderful day. All glory goes to God.

Enough to share their personal experiences and marital journeys and express how relevant the event was for them. Some of them are also planning to come back to the next retreat with their friends, as this is something that they do not have in their own churches. One Pentecostal couple was actually there because another non-member couple had paid for them to come and experience what they had been privileged to experience the previous year.

We thank all the directors, staff and club members for working so hard to make this possible.

Bournemouth international evening

The Bournemouth church recently hosted an international evening of food and song in which eleven countries and four continents were represented. The evening was hosted by Pastor Daniel Thompson and his American wife, and it marked my first visit to an Adventist church.

The culinary delights were lovingly prepared and served on tables with flags from those countries, including Brazil, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Poland and the United Kingdom, specifically England.

I was already familiar with the Czech and Slovak dishes, having visited there before, but some of the African staple food was really new to me. There were also some interesting Brazilian dishes full of unique Latin flavours, including passion fruit mousse, Brigadeiro (Brazilian chocolate bon bons) and deep-fried cassava, their substitute for French fries.

The teams voted that the Czech/Slovak group and the South African tables jointly had the best food, while the Brazilians were the best dressed.

I left the evening with warm and positive impressions and the clear sense that there is definitely more to unite cultures than to divide them.

Holland Camporee 2014

The Pathfinders of Manor Church in Sheffield had an unforgettable time at the 2014 Camporee in Holland. The activities, making new friends, worshipping with thousands of other youth, the baptisms and the laughter made this an incredible week for each of them.

LEIGHSA ANDREWS

Combined investiture is ‘twice as nice’

Area 4 and Area 7 (NEC) enjoyed a Sabbath together in November as two clubs presented their candidates for investiture.

Derby Bethel Pathfinders, fresh from their memorable inclusion in the city’s Remembrance Day parade, were led by director Nobani Sihlola and introduced proudly by their counselors. Their Companions, Explorers, Rangers and Guides all received their insignia along with the richly deserved admiration of the church.

Every person in the room was moved by the preacher, young Ms Beke Kheswa, who delivered an outstanding sermon entitled ‘Stand Up! Stand Out!’ Her message to ‘be a winner, not a quitter, with the grace of God’ brought young people forward to the pulpit with her appeal.

In the afternoon, the spotlight fell on Nottingham Central. Their huge investiture saw every class from Little Lambs to Guides step forward. Apart from the smartly dressed and sharply drilled club members receiving their hard-won awards, honours and pins, directors Devon Elliott and Patricia Thompson also acknowledged the excellence and selflessness of many club members throughout the previous year.

We thank all the directors, staff and club members for working so hard to make this possible.

JOHNS, IRIS JOHNS, DANIEL FLEMMINGS-DANQUAH, RUTH RICHARDS, NIGEL MANUNERE

Couples’ retreat at Windsor

This year, Rekindle The Spark Ministries hosted their second successful couples’ retreat at the Beaumont Estate in Old Windsor.

This ministry is proving to be more than just an in-reach exercise. We were joined by about fifteen non-member couples, as well as a few Adventists with their non-member partners. It was a blessing to hear testimonies from the non-members who felt comfortable enough to share their personal experiences and marital journeys and express how relevant the event was for them. Some of them are also planning to come back to the next retreat with their friends, as this is something that they do not have in their own churches. One Pentecostal couple was actually there because another non-member couple had paid for them to come and experience what they had been privileged to experience the previous year.

There were a variety of age groups represented at this retreat, from couples who had been married for not even a year, to a veteran couple who had been married for over 50 years! One young couple, Mr and Mrs Hove (NEC), described the retreat as a ‘much-needed, reviving and refreshing weekend, practical and authentic, based on spiritual principles. We have been equipped with the right tools. Now it is up to us to use these valuable tools wisely.’ Another couple, the Gwebus from Manchester, described the weekend as ‘Holy Spirit-filled fun and it doesn’t get better than that!’

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Nembhards from South Africa for their powerful ministry during the retreat. Rekindle The Spark Ministries was established in 2013 by three couples who accepted God’s call to strengthen family units. Its aim is to reach as many couples as possible. If you would like to be a part of this ministry please contact Linda Mukwada at mukwaladin@yahoo.co.uk.

All photos by Myrie Mwazami
Ready, willing and able
On 22 November last year, a Sabbath, Camp Hill Church (Birmingham) ordained ten deacons in a moving ceremony under the supervision of Dr Patrick A. Herbert. The deacons were Errol Coulson, Harris Phillips, Ketson Maphosa, Scott Hosten, Garnett Palmer, Joel Pryce, Harvey Harriott, Mical Humes, Delroy McKreeth and Jonathan Harris.

Stanborough Park baptism
A-level student Giovanna Gayle fulfilled a long-held wish when she was baptised on 8 November at Stanborough Park Church, where she has worshipped for the past seven years.

With the sanctuary under redevelopment and the old baptismry no longer available, the well-attended afternoon service took place in the church hall using a portable baptismal pool. Another of our third-generation Adventists and a keen Pathfinder, ‘Giovanna has long been keen to commit her life through baptism to the Lord,’ says her mother, Doreen. According to Giovanna there was ‘a series of events’ that led to her decision to be baptised, but ‘I have always wanted to.’ She studied with her parents and Pastor Mary Barrett and was baptised by Dr Steve Thomas, SEC Youth director, who has known her for many years.

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Grantham’s helping hands
On 23 November, the big winter aid collection by ‘Hand in Hand for Syria’ started on its journey from a Nottingham warehouse. The consignment included nine boxes of lovingly hand-knitted and crocheted baby clothes and blankets, plus duvets and quilts from the Grantham church.

Helping closer to home, the annual Community Services concert raised over £200 for Newark MIND, which also incorporates the Grantham and Lincoln groups of MIND. We learnt about the work of MIND in our district, supporting those with long-term mental health concerns, as well as those at the point of crisis. Our annual toy service at the beginning of December is our special ‘giving’ service, when MIND will be presented with the cheque for the amount raised by the concert and Grantham Home Start will receive gifts of toys. Through December we will also place gifts on our Christmas tree in aid of the Open Doors charity, which will use the funds to help care for children in Iraqi refugee camps.
MARGARET RITA PONDER (1920-2014) d. 14 July. It is with a sense of sadness that we report the death of the oldest member of the Dublin church. Rita Ponder was one of God's outstanding saints. Baptised as a young girl, she faithfully followed her Lord and Saviour all the days of her life.

The Scriptures tell us no one is perfect, yet we agreed with that conclusion. What we can say about her, though, is that she was committed to the Lord Jesus. Her life was one of service and devotion. There was no easy way to be a Sabbathkeeper during her early and middle years. At the same time, useful and helpful Rita took her employment at low rates of pay, which made life economically difficult for her, but she would not compromise her commitment to the will of God as expressed in His law. Salvation is by faith alone but that does not absolve the Christian from obedience to God's will, and she was an outstanding witness to that fact.

In an age when it was difficult to find young people indefatigable in visitation of any person interested in the truth of the Gospel, she was still involved in visiting and helping elderly people whom she knew who had been less fortunate than herself. She was a gift from the Lord.

The local Ranelagh Dublin church had two services for her. At the morning service, which was attended by Mrs. Mary Clancy and the next day, a funeral service in the church. The former was for the many people, members and non-members, to pay their tributes to this lovely woman. It was noted, however, that Rita's service was held in the newly refurbished Ranelagh church of which she was so much a part. She rarely missed a Sunday in church. Sabbath School, Church worship, youth meetings and the mid-week prayer meeting. She was a lovely instrument of the Lord to deter her from being present to worship God. Even old age didn't reduce her attendance and participation in church life. Her loyalty was to Christ and His work in the church. She is missed for her witness and her living testimony to the enduring power of the Gospel of salvation.

At the funeral service the local pastors, Anthony, Pontanar and Wilson, all participated along with David Neal, the mission president. A beautiful musical tribute was rendered on the violin by Mireia Petcu. The hymns were numbers that were her favourites, as well as faith and hope: The Old Rugged Cross' and 'When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder'.

She is mourned by her sister Betty, her two brothers-in-law, Pastor Arthur Cooper, her nephews and nieces, her niece Marion Rayle and a host of friends within and without the church. Her interment was at Mount Jerome Cemetery, Harold's Cross, Dublin, where she rests with her parents until such time as she calls forth her life to everlasting when He comes again.

Helen Mary McGowan

GLASGOW'S WEEK OF PRAYER XTRA

Glasgow Church followed their annual Week of Prayer with a 'Week of Prayer Xtra' from 9 to 15 November, which included programmes on both Sabbaths. The programme emphasised the need for personal evangelism in the Glasgow church and stressed the need for the church to be a beacon of love and light to people in need of salvation.

It turned out to be a week of wonderful testimonies, answered prayers, and thanksgiving – a great blessing to all who attended.

It is not only sewing that is done. Two sisters, Isabel and Margaret, are keenly busy making up leaflets for the Adventist schools in Romania, using bright fabrics, attractive cord and old greetings cards. Some help them to count, while others help them to learn the different colours, shapes, and so on. All the books are skillfully done – both beautiful and educational. Isabel is a retired primary school headmistress so she knows exactly what things to make up for kindergarten children. In addition to the leaflets, some years she and David knit a huge number of blankets and hats and gloves for the homeless in the nearby city of Peră. There is also a cupboard in the kitchen where non-perishable food is put. Harry used to go there, along with the scarves, and in so, to CATH. Churches. For the Homeless.

So, a big venture has come from a simple request from Romania for help. On Hearts and Hands’ third birthday they celebrated by having a small party – while they continued to work! There were hot and cold drinks and special cakes – and the rest of the members were invited too. There was another celebration that day because a baby was born. The ladies had been teasing the men for many months that it was time they got a working group together, and eventually they did just that. On this date, they have taken over the work of the retired ladies. They tidied up a piece of ground at a house for an abused woman, and laid it under gravel, then joined the celebrations. May we have many such birthdays! And may our existence encourage others to do something similar. All of which raises this question: “What on Earth are you doing for Heaven’s sake?”

Harry Dorman (1935-2014) d. 4 March 1935. Harry was born on 5 March 1935. Harry, with all his two sisters, Rae and Ruby, and younger brother, David, were brought up in Rutherglen and attended the Glasgow church in Renfrew Street, where their parents were members. On 21 February 1953, Harry was baptised by the late Pastor ‘Jock’ McGougan. When Pastor T. H. Fielding and his family moved to Glasgow to become the pastor there, the two families found a strong connection in sharing music. The archived copies of the Sun newspaper (Glasgow) are speckled with their names as they sang and played at Days of Fellowship, wedding sermons, evangelistic programmes and other events. Harry and June Fielding became engaged in 1939 and Pastor Fielding officiated at their wedding on 19 June 1961 at the church, which was then in Queens Drive, Glasgow. In 2011 the couple celebrated their golden wedding anniversary with their three children, Stuart, Karen, Kevin; four grandchildren, and their extended family.

Harry played an active role in the Glasgow church over the years, having a number of offices including head deacon, tithe treasurer, Sabbath School superintendent and young people’s leader. 

Harry was cremated at South Lanarkshire Crematorium on Thursday, 11 September 2014. The service was conducted by the local three Area ministers – Pastor Victor Miller, due to Harry’s husband and wife team, Roy and Ivana Mender. He is survived by his sickness, John and Jane on his 50th wedding anniversary.

GLASGOW'S WEEK OF PRAYER XTRA

Every year there is a ‘National Animal’ & ‘Farm Animal’ show in Tullamore (Republic of Ireland) with approximately 65,000 in attendance. On 10 August my family and I travelled to this show with a car full of books, leaflets, books, cards, books, and books. We gave away 130 bags and had many interesting chats on various spiritual and religious topics. We gave away 12 copies of The Adventist Discovery Centre acknowledge, with grateful thanks, an anonymous donation of £5.00 received in the month of October 2014.

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Mothers’ prayer conference

‘It was such a mountaintop experience!’ This was the sentiment of an attendee at ‘Gathered Together’, the mothers’ prayer conference held on 1 November 2014 at the Parliament Hill School, Highgate, in North London.

Organised by Mums in Action, a supporting ministry, the 270 people made history at this ground-breaking event, believed to be the UK church’s first prayer conference for mothers run by mothers.

Laura Osel, head teacher of the Eden High School, was the main speaker for the day. Her intriguing presentation, ‘When Mothers Cry’, definitively resonated with the feelings and thoughts of those present. It was based on Jeremiah 31:16, 17 (TLB), where God urges Israel: ‘Don’t cry any longer, for I have heard your prayers and you will see them again; they will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy…’

Her second presentation was interactive, during which she spoke about the ‘seven great prayers’ and invited the audience to participate in them.

Forgiveness was the topic of Dr Gloria Mushe’s seminar. A member of the Milton Keynes church and an experienced GP, she spoke of how a lack of forgiveness can hinder our prayers.

A powerful personal narrative was delivered by Donna Fletcher-Bryan, an educator from the Stanborough Park church. ‘Despite your pain, you should praise anyhow’ was her closing remark to an audience whose eyes were awash with tears after listening to her moving story of faith.

The resident prayer warriors, Toyin Aworinde and Tola Afe, prayed powerful prayers for the children of those present to be ‘delivered from the hands of the enemy’. Close to 40 people of all ages attended the presentation and heard about the important rules of nutrition that will keep us healthy longer, enable effective weight control and clarity of mind, and not only help us to engage in day-to-day tasks more effectively, but also allow our communication with God to improve.

James Sewell attended Camp Hill Church on 22 November 2014 to present an evening seminar. He is the founder of GHET (©2014 GHET Ministry. All Rights Reserved), which stands for ‘Gospel and Health Evangelism Team’, a ministry that aims to educate members on the relationship between health reform and the third angel’s message, thereby enabling them to share the Good News of Christ’s love with others. His ministry stems from the PEACE programme in 2012 when he joined the Adventist faith.

James also emphasised that trust in God is an important aspect of keeping healthy and he emphasised that our Adventist health message could be used more dynamically to share the Gospel with others.

One of the highlights of the day was the meaningful praise and worship that enhanced the seminars and set an appropriate mood of prayer.

In her opening remarks Barbara Lawrence, one of the organisers, stated ‘that we are looking for a breakthrough’, and said in her closing thoughts, ‘I believe that the Father was here and has already answered our prayers.’