Press Open Day – 13 September – Pastor Mark Finley will be there!

The Stanborough Press Open Day will host Pastor Mark Finley and some excellent gospel singers this coming Open Day. Don’t miss this special event.

Something to smile about

Based on a report by Katie Allen and Pastor Steve Thomas

The future of youth ministry in the South England Conference is certainly looking bright due to the recent purchase of a 33-acre site near King’s Lynn in Norfolk. The decision to acquire this desirable property in Runcton Hall ends a decade-plus search for a venue that will meet the needs of the varied youth programmes run by the SEC for its youth, teens and Pathfinders. This will include such events as Teen Faith and Prayer conferences, Extreme Teen camps, GO UK, youth training, Adventurer camporees and drilling and drumming camps.

According to Pastor Steve Thomas, SEC Youth director, ‘There has been a need for a larger youth site for a long time and I believe this opportunity, especially for the price of £800,000, was God placing it in our hands!’

It ticked all the boxes

The site was discovered by his colleague, Pastor Kevin Johns, SEC Pathfinder director, while he was ‘aimlessly perusing potential options’ during 2014. Pastors Johns, Thomas and Stojkovic (SEC Teen director) wasted no time in visiting the site and ‘fell in love with it’ once they realised that it ticked all the boxes for their combined youth ministries.

According to Pastor Thomas it was not difficult to convince the conference administrators about the value of their find. As he put it, ‘Looking back, I must say, the trustees were brilliant and visionary, and we received their full support.’ But, as with projects of this nature, the team assigned to the job has had to spend long and tiring hours getting everything in place. So much so, that when the sale was concluded on 14 April this year, Pastor Thomas says that, ‘My body cried out, “Yes Jesus!”; then I packed up, clocked out and went home to sleep.’

The always-enthusiastic Pastor Johns expressed his thoughts like this: ‘This gives us an opportunity to host all our Pathfinder and Adventurer events on a site that belongs to us! The cost of accommodation is sometimes hard to afford, especially for families with more than one child in Pathfinders. I think that this will be one of the big benefits of having our own location, as well as it being a holistic environment where our young people can come together. It is a huge investment in the future of our youth – who are the future of our Church.’

Proximity to London

One of the biggest selling points of the location is its proximity to London – just an hour and a half away – which makes it suitable for both SEC events and local church use. Another person who is excited about the project is Pastor Dejan Stojkovic, who made the point that ‘it can be used by departments, churches, families, even as a spiritual centre for thousands of our teenagers through our annual events.’

The SEC president, Pastor Sam Davis, feels that ‘It is really a godsend to us at this time. Since the closure of the Broomhill Conference Centre, we have been looking for a place that will serve as a centre for our young people. Runcton Hall is now that place!’

This is our project

This is a project that will need the prayer and practical support of every member. Why not view the latest update on the project (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kf_nat3HHus) to see what is planned and how you can help make it all happen soon.
The following points from its guidelines on the use of natural products are helpful:1

- It is advisable to use only alternative or complementary treatment or therapy that has a scientific validation and is shown to be safe and effective for use.
- Individuals taking prescribed medication or undergoing medical treatment must consult their regular practitioner before undertaking any alternative or complementary medicine. This is to ensure that there are no contraindications, negative drug interactions or serious side effects as a result of additional treatments.
- We encourage members to seek medical help in terms of elective or emergency surgery and use of medication – for the treatment of serious or life-threatening conditions.

Who and what to trust
Health practitioners with a recognised qualification in health, nutrition or natural therapy and evidence-based lifestyle intervention programmes are the safest choices to consider.

Health practitioners
Health practitioners who have received their qualifications from a recognised authority or accredited course are the best choices to consider.

Health claims
Health claims refer to statements that are made about a particular food item or health product by manufacturers to inform consumers about the health benefits of that product. The EU’s Register on Nutrition and Health Claims has stipulated which health claims have been authorised. These can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/claims.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) requires proof of safety and benefit before health claims are allowed to be placed on the market. The EFSA addresses many questions regarding health claims – for example, when the EFSA initially rejected around 500 health claims for not satisfying scientific requirements. The EFSA has also published a list of health claims that are allowed to be used by manufacturers to inform consumers about the health benefits of their products. These claims are based on scientific evidence and are shown to be safe and effective.

The EFSA requires health practitioners to provide evidence of their qualifications and professional experience before they can use health claims in their practice. This is to ensure that individuals seeking alternative or complementary treatments or therapies are receiving safe and effective care.

Be warned
Before using alternative or complementary treatments or therapies, it is important to consider the potential risks and benefits. It is advisable to seek medical help in terms of elective or emergency surgery and use of medication – for the treatment of serious or life-threatening conditions.

Migrants have problems too!
No one can really argue against the facts: Mediterranean migrants pose an enormous problem to the EU. By the sheer weight of their numbers and their desperately needy circumstances they place a heavy burden on the resources of Europe. They have the potential to compete with ordinary working-class Europeans for social housing and benefits, medical care, education and employment. To put it plainly then: migrantry is a major problem!

On the other hand, it behoves us to remember that migrants are more than a statistical or geo-political reality – they are people too!

Everyone ‘is an immigrant’!
A very recent project to study the genetic origins of the so-called White British component of our population prompted the lead researcher, Professor PeterDonnelly, to tell Sky News, ‘One of the nice things about our study is that it reminds us that everyone in Britain is an immigrant.’ Confirmation of the fact that people have been migrating to this cluster of islands we call ‘home’ for thousands of years, largely from France, Germany and Scandinavia, and all – up till modern times – by boat.

In reality, the history of the world is the story of countless migrations (people movements), usually driven by more than pure curiosity! Most migrations are caused by two powerful factors – bad things that people desperately want to get away from – and better things that they hope to discover at their journey’s end.

North America is populated largely by people whose ancestors went there for a better life – many to escape harsh rule by church or state. Former British colonies like Australia, New Zealand and South Africa drew people from here wanting to escape the threat of unemployment and poor living conditions. We once waved goodbye Yes, my grandparents left this ‘fair and pleasant land’ for Cape Town shortly after the Great War, taking with them my father and his older brother. They were leaving the bad and hoping for the better! I wonder how they felt when they arrived in Table Bay with no one to greet them? They were not penniless, but had to manage what they had carefully. There were no benefits to claim, or social housing to inhabit. They had to work hard and make their contribution, which they did bravely.

Sadly, not all who migrate around the world do so with the same ethic in mind, and, sadder still, some are persecuted and exploited along the way.

No easy solution
Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to the complex problem of Mediterranean migration because the root causes actually lie beyond our jurisdiction. The best we can hope for is that the authorities seek a way to control it firmly with as much compassion as is prudent under the circumstances. Perhaps there is a personal lesson in all this, though. In reality the Bible is a story of migration: Noah ‘migrates’ to the antediluvian world in a boat; Abraham migrates to Canaan; Jacob to Egypt; Moses to the promised land. The Bible is a story of migration, from Bethlehem to Egypt – and so the story goes until we all migrate to ‘what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined’ (1 Corinthians 2:9, ESV).

Our lives should also be a story of migration – from bad to best!

‘By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God’ (Hebrews 11:8-10, ESV).


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Mediterranean migrant crisis

Jillian Hibbert
Editor

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Editorial

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Enhancing Health

by Sharon Platts-McDonald, RGN, RM, RHV, MSc
Health Ministries director, BUC

Going natural Part 2 – informed choices
To utilise nature’s remedies to maintain good health and, where appropriate, to treat certain illnesses, it is important to be aware of the current legislation, such as the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation.1

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Appropriate use of natural interventions
In 2011 the British Union Conference Health Ministries Department launched its Natural Medicine and Holistic Lifestyle Strategy in order to raise the importance of informed choice and assist in safeguarding individuals, health practices and health-related programmes within the BUC.

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Good health

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- We encourage members to seek medical help in terms of elective or emergency surgery and use of medication – for the treatment of serious or life-threatening conditions.
W e hear much from all the political parties leading up to the general election concerning ‘austerity’ – of getting the deficit down and balancing the books.

Reports a week or so back in the national press told of a time during the Second World War when Her Majesty’s treasury was even more severely challenged than it currently is. The reports told of how a steamer named SS City of Cairo, which was dispatched on a desperate mission from across the empire, it steamed across the South Atlantic on a perilous journey that began in India and, ironically, took it around the Cape of Good Hope.

Whitehead called in Britain’s remaining reserves of wealth to fund a war that seemed – in November 1942 – a threat to its very existence. Part of those precious reserves were stowed aboard SS City of Cairo – 2,000 boxes of silver coins – 100 tons of silver to help pay for food, arms and much-needed munitions. Unfortunately this 27-year-old merchant ship was travelling without escort and at only 12 knots (22km/h). To make matters even worse, she had an exessively smoky boiler, which dangerously increased her visibility.

These coins were not to reach their destination. Sadly, she was spotted by a U-boat and torpedoed some 500 miles from the nearest land and her crew and passengers had to take to the boats. Strangely, the U-boat captain surfaced amid the lifeboats and pointed the survivors towards the nearest land – St Helena, some 500 miles away – apologising for sinking their vessel, and the ‘Great White’ before U-68 submerged to continue hunting for other prey.

The six lifeboats embarked on a weeks-long journey, led by Captain William Roper, that would become one of the epic tales of maritime survival. History tells us that 104 of the 311 crew died, and all but six of those who died did so after reaching the overcrowded lifeboats.

The City of Cairo sank, and for 70 years a significant chunk of taxpayers’ money was gathering silt some three miles beneath the surface of the Atlantic. Fifty million pounds’ worth of British silver lain on the seabed since that fateful day. The means to help save a nation: lost to the deep, never thought to be seen again! But thanks to the deepest salvage operation in history, the government now has got most of its silver back.

It has required some extraordinary advances in underwater exploration, but a salvage company led by John Kingsford, a British deep-sea diver, has retrieved the vast majority of it from a depth of one mile lower than RMS Titanic’s final resting place – and after signing a contract with the British government, it has been allowed to keep an undisclosed proportion of the treasure. The salvage operation started back in 2011 and the wreck proved extremely difficult to locate, having sunk to a depth of 5,000m. The spilled silver was also buried in the ocean floor because of the speed and angle of the ship’s impact, owing to the weight of the cargo. Eventually, with sophisticated sonar, she was rediscovered and the silver coins were retrieved. Referring on this event makes me think of the words from Romans 8:38, 39 (NKJV), where it is made clear that nothing can ever separate us from His love: ‘For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other thing whatever, is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

This programme, conducted over two summers, is for those with an interest in health evangelism, nutrition, wellness and fitness, who wish to serve in their local church and community as they seek to share the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle – including the benefits of a vegetarian diet and of regular exercise and physical fitness. To register or for more information please email info@newbold.ac.uk or visit Newbold’s website www.newbold.ac.uk.

By Stephen Holden

The city of Cairo

A word of caution here: some Christians see that phrase, ‘dead to the law,’ and use this very passage to try ‘to prove the Ten Commandments are abolished,’ claiming that ‘all Sabbathians are guilty of adultery,’ along with Galatians 5:1 and calling Judaisers for daring to keep the Sabbath. However, they fail not only to appreciate the blessing of keeping particular commandments, such as the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13, 14; Mark 2:27), but also to notice the end of Romans 7:4, which suggests the consequence of our marriage to Christ is ‘that we should bear fruit to God’ (NKJV).

But God is also in the salvage business. He too can bring extraordinary measures to bear in any situation or circumstances – and without delay recover that which is precious to Him.

What is the significance of ‘bearing fruit’? Well, God has always expected His people to bring forth a ‘fruit’ of worthy actions (Isaiah 5:7), and Jesus reaffirmed this expectation (Luke 17:10–12). Paul, right after proclaiming that we are not saved by works, immediately says that God has prepared them for us to do (Ephesians 2:9–10), and exhorts us to keep the fifth commandment, noting the blessing of so doing (Ephesians 6:1–3).

Therefore, although we are ‘dead to the law’ in Romans 7:4, that doesn’t mean we should ‘continue in that sin’ (Galatians 5:19–21), or ‘sin because we are not under law but under grace’ (Romans 6:15–16).

But God is also in the salvage business. He too can bring extraordinary measures to bear in any situation or circumstances – and without delay recover that which is precious to Him.

What an encouraging thought for today!
Aboubacar’s story . . .

This story comes from Fred Coker, an Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM) worker in Guinea, west Africa. When Aboubacar became a disciple of Christ in 2007, his family rejected him because of his new faith. In most African cultures being rejected by one’s family is a terrible thing. Entire villages and neighbourhoods are often marred by the rejection of just a few extended families. This results in a very tight communal environment where everyone depends on family members for most kinds of help. The more in-laws, family members and children you have, the more aid you can get in times of need. In desperation, Aboubacar repeatedly tried to connect with his family members, but no one would do much as to talk to him. They just shut their doors in his face. He returned to the town of Fria utterly crushed and despondent. ‘I am alone now in this world,’ he told the AFM missionaries. ‘I don’t have a family anymore, I am finished.’ The missionary family came to his rescue and adopted him into their family and the church family.

Early in 2011, Aboubacar wanted to marry a girl in his neighbourhood, and he made a proposal to her family. As part of Aboubacar’s adopted family, I was part of the delegation that went to see the girl’s family. We had put everything in place for the first step, called a service, Newsmax, Seventh-day Adventists are among the top five according to the independent news source, adventist.org.uk

Christian denominations that hold to a positive view of biblical Creation. But is it still logical to support this position in the face of what appears to be an overwhelming barrage of current scientific evidence? The answer is a clear ‘Yes’ for two scientists, Dr Alastair Noble and Professor John Walton, who discussed the issue with some forty Adventist ministers who wanted to face the facts at the BUC offices in Watford on Tuesday, 19 May. The ministers had their belief in a Creator God revitalised, and, as Pastor Geert Taps stated, ‘It was positively eye-opening . . . even if you don’t understand it all’! He had been tempted not to attend, but stated, ‘I’m glad I decided differently. What great presentations, and brought by bright minds! Mind-blowing facts, pointing to an Intelligent Designer. Dr Alastair Noble noted that between 50 and 70% of young Christians lose their faith when they go to university, and that part of this is due to the strong influence of Darwinian evolution. How can we tackle this, he asked, when, according to a US statistic, only 1% of youth pastors see it as important to include anything on the subject in their curriculum? He then finished off that it is perfectly possible to show the need for intelligent design (ID) in nature without any recourse to a biblical text. He asked, ‘Can we design in nature even before we come to theology? If we can then Darwinism falls apart.’ As a chemist he pointed out how hard he has to work to synthesise relatively simple substances. ‘How then,’ he asked, ‘without any thought, design, and so on, could evolution provide DNA? It maintains that certain features of the universe and of living things are like explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection.

There are those who challenge Christians who go down the ID route, asking why should not be more open in using the biblical account of Genesis? His response is, ‘I happen to believe that you can’t be a Christian without being a Creationist.’ However, he can understand the hesitation of bringing Scripture into science lessons; therefore, arguing ID using only the scientific data can lead people in a direction that even the apostle Paul commended. ‘For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.’ (Romans 1:20, NIV)

The Word of God then needs to be placed against the statements of some top evolutionary scientists. For instance, Dr George Waltz, a Nobel Prize winner in the area of Physiology or Medicine (1967), wrote, ‘There are only two possible explanations as to how life arose: spontaneous generation arising to evolution or a supernatural creative act of God . . . there is no other possibility. Spontaneous generation was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others, but that just leaves us with only one other possibility . . . that life came as a supernatural act of creation by God. I can’t accept that philosophy because I do not want to believe in God.’ Thomir Zestun summed up the feelings of the many pastors who attended: ‘Today’s Creationism presentation brings some important answers. I find it important from my personal perspective and also to be equipped to give answers in church and in my own family.’

More on the subject of Creation versus Evolution can be found on the Adventist Church website: adventist.org.uk, including lectures, documents and links to resources. The programme was part of the BUTCIC continuing education for ministers, run by the BUC Evangelism and Ministerial Association departments.
F rom 9 to 16 May Cardiff Church hosted a major ‘Core of Adventism’ evangelistic series. Although primarily an in-reach event, the Welsh church took the opportunity to invite members of the public to attend. The event was planned to coincide with the ‘Three Missions’ workers’ meetings, a three-day ministerial training event that was held in that Copthorne Hotel, just a few miles from the church. The 28 attendees came to four of the evening evangelistic meetings in the Cardiff church, helping to swell the crowd and also being on hand to give counselling and general support to the local members and visitors. The main speaker for the evangelistic meetings was Dr Errol McLean, associate director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute. Topics included much more to consider to be the core doctrines of Adventism: the state of the dead, the sanctuary, the investigative judgement, and the second coming. However, Dr McLean was careful to wrap each subject in the language of grace, the grace of God as revealed through His Son Jesus, which is the true core of Adventism. As the week progressed, word got around that something special was happening in the Cardiff church and people brought their friends to enjoy the inspiring singing, receptive atmosphere and good preaching. At the close of each meeting Dr McLean gave an appeal and people responded by standing, raising their hands and even coming to the front.

Behind the scenes . . . by Howa Avan-Nomayo

I n the early 1990s my father worked for the World Bank as procurement adviser on a poverty-reduction programme in Lagos, Nigeria. I was about 8 years old at the time and simply couldn’t comprehend the concept of a ‘world bank’. Surely there is way too much money in the world to keep it all in one bank,’ I said innocently to my dad. He took the time to explain to me about the World Bank and, specifically, the poverty-reduction programme that he was working on. I was about 8 years old at the time and simply couldn’t comprehend the concept of a ‘world bank’. Surely there is way too much money in the world to keep it all in one bank,’ I said innocently to my dad. He took the time to explain to me about the World Bank and, specifically, the poverty-reduction programme that he was working on.

However, it isn’t all plain sailing. There are demanding deadlines to meet and a host of other challenges, but the hardest part of this job, by far, is that we are often confronted by the harsh realities of this broken world. Where infinite human striving meets the limits of human achievement. We see and feel, at first hand, the human impact of poverty, war, hunger and disaster – both natural and man-made.

My journey with ADRA has been an amazing one thus far. I have had the opportunity to work with some truly wonderful and talented individuals and to do some great work that has had a tangible impact on the lives of thousands of people in the poorest parts of the world. However, it isn’t all plain sailing. There are demanding deadlines to meet and a host of other challenges, but the hardest part of this job, by far, is that we are often confronted by the harsh realities of this broken world. Where infinite human striving meets the limits of human achievement. We see and feel, at first hand, the human impact of poverty, war, hunger and disaster – both natural and man-made.

I have seen the difference that our work makes. While working on projects with thousands of subsistence farmers in northern Ghana – who could barely produce enough food to feed their families and were reliant on the UN for food aid – I have seen them transformed in two years with ADRA’s help. Now they are producing so much food that they can sell it back to the UN. In Nepal, where ADRA has supported communities affected by civil war – helping children back into school and providing vital vocational skills training to young people – I have seen the positive difference ADRA makes. I have travelled to many of these projects – meeting and connecting with people, hearing their stories and their hopes and dreams for the future. It all serves to reinforce my own hopes that, together, we can achieve something better!

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Dancing for peace
by Pastor Victor Hubert and based on a BUC devotional by Pastor Cyril Sweeney

C hurch members might have been surprised by a dancing pastor had they passed by Jubilee Park, Leicester on Friday, 15 May. Pastor Cyril Sweeney was surprised himself. He had been invited to attend a ‘Peace Picnic’ under the Celtic cross in the park, part of the commemorations on International Conscientious Objectors’ Day. Since two Leicester Adventists, C. E. Bartlett and Walter Manson were conscientious objectors during WW1, Pastor Sweeney cautiously accepted the invitation to represent our Church at the event. He could not have been made more welcome.

Despite being considerably younger than the sprightly-looking seventy- and eighty-year-olds draped in CND T-shirts, some with the slogan, ‘Fly kites, not drones’, Pastor Sweeney discovered a warm and open fellowship in a group of people that he might otherwise have simply walked past. He was even more delighted to discover that the picnic was totally vegetarian or vegan and that all beverages were non-alcoholic. He started to feel more at home, stating, ‘They welcomed me with open arms and were appreciative that we as a Church should be supportive of such an initiative.’

The group was small but, according to Pastor Sweeney, ‘showed a commitment to the cause of world peace that perhaps put us to shame as a Church’. Adventists were one of only two denominations represented at the event, the other being the Quakers.

The group spontaneously decided to dance a ‘peace dance’, and, despite confessing to having two left feet, Pastor Sweeney felt compelled to join. ‘They were so sincere, and so motivated, I couldn’t let them down,’ he stated. Thus, for the first (and possibly the last) time in his life, he found himself dancing in public.

Taking a stand for peace does take courage. Mel Gibson is currently working on next year’s Hollywood blockbuster, MadMax: Fury Road, the story of WW1 conscientious objector Desmond Doss. Doss was an Adventist who refused to bear arms but who, as a medic, courageously saved the lives of hundreds of US troops in the heat of battle. He is the only non-combatant to have ever received the Congressional Medal of Honour. Leicester CO, Walter Manson, was equally courageous in his own way, spending WW2 in Wormwood Scrubs and Winchester Prisons, rather than breaking with principle.

As the Leicester Peace Collective sought ways to involve young people in a living memorial to peace, Pastor Sweeney’s mind turned to another young man who, just before the greatest act of self-sacrifice, stated, ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you’ (John 14:27, KJV). Jesus’ peace efforts went far beyond the recent historic handshake of Prince Charles and Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams, or the peaceful revolution of Ghandi. For Jesus, peace meant a total opportunity to reconcile God and man. It meant dying on a cross so that all men might be saved (John 3:17). It means a final victory as portrayed in the Book of Revelation – and a world without pain, suffering and death (Revelation 21:4).

And, if, Pastor Sweeney, it means a peace dance with some apparently eccentric senior citizens in a Leicester park, that is a small price for sharing the good news and fellowship of the Son of God, who calls Himself ‘The Prince of Peace’. Building bridges that Friday lunchtime was important for Pastor Sweeney – and yes, he says, he would do it again.

To discover more of the peace movement in the Leicester area visit Memories in Conflict at https://memoriesinconflict.wordpress.com/. Their fantastic book, Uncovering Resistance, includes two sections on Seventh-day Adventists. More about this exciting story can be found on the Adventist Church website: http://adventist.org.uk/ww1/.
**Baptisms**

This was no coincidence!

Pastor Richard Jackson’s recent Manchester South revival series led to a rich harvest of new members. Here are the experiences of two of them:

**Tinashe:** She testified about her struggle to convince some of her church family that she was ready to make such a life-changing decision at the tender age of 16. Despite her shyness, her Bible instructor, Rose Gomez, encouraged her to give an inspiring, eloquent public address that really impressed her school friends who turned up in support! They said they ‘had never experienced such an event and were really touched by everything that was going on’. In fact, they were even in tears during Pastor Jackson’s sermon.

**Fabian and Trevor:** As Pastor Mapp was about to close the event in prayer, he received a request from Fabian Best to allow him to testify. Fabian was on a trip from London to Leeds, but the bus driver had inexplicably diverted through Humberbridge, ending up in Manchester near the Manchester South church. Little did he know that there was a baptismal service taking place and his best friend was among those getting baptised. Fabian hadn’t seen Trevor Clarke for years. Both Barbados-born men, they met in England as nurses more than 30 years ago.

Seventy-six-year-old Trevor had left church when he was young and here he was being baptised, to his friend’s great delight. Trevor agreed with Fabian’s declaration that God had intervened to get them both to the same place with perfect timing, and added: ‘I’m back home!’

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**Wakefield baptism**

A small, intimate and touching baptismal service took place at the Wakefield church on Sabbath, 30 May. Members from the Barnsley, Wakefield and Doncaster churches gathered to celebrate with the two candidates, Eddison Munuzi and Onanefe Adjenughure and their families. Both young men have interesting and encouraging stories behind their decisions to be baptised.

Eddison (15) is a keen national-level swimmer and a talented rugby player who was in the news recently for refusing to play rugby on the Sabbath, even though it meant he would miss out on playing in the national schools final at Twickenham Stadium. After discussion with his father it was agreed with the coach that Eddison would concentrate on midweek games only and thereby remain on the team. As it happened, the big match was unexpectedly moved because of a scheduling conflict with the Six Nations Championship, the major rugby union tournament, and Eddison was able to play. His team won and claimed the unbeaten Schools Cup for under-fifteens for the first time. It was this experience that caused him to think more deeply about his relationship with Christ and his decision to be baptised was the result.

David Patrick, an elder from Barnsley, who studied with Eddison, thanked him for ‘teaching him an awful lot’ as they explored the Scriptures together. His mum, Dolores, is thrilled that her son has taken a stand for Christ at the age of fifteen. She explained that ‘Eddison decided on his own to take his relationship with the Lord to the next level. He has even got his teammates praying with him, and his coaches are very happy that he is still on the team.’

Pastor Stokes, who conducted the baptism, said, ‘I admire him as a conscientious and talented young man who was prepared to give up his coveted sports career in order to put God first. It’s such a good witness when a young man does this.’

Proud dad, Eddie, summed up his role as follows: ‘My job here is to just look after Eddison and Edwin as a father. I’m really doing God’s work.’

Eddison added, ‘Today I’m getting baptised. I have been preparing for three months with David and Angela and enjoyed the Bible studies. This is setting me up for life in the church. I am very excited and happy to be here. I can apply all this stuff in my daily life. It has inspired me to be better.’ He is looking forward to continuing his study of the Gospel of John with David.

Over the years the congregation has developed positive links with the St Oswald’s Church of England congregation, a neighbouring Adventist family, led by Pastor Sam Gungaloo, assisted by Pastor Wayne Erasmus.

The pastors involved in the event were Sam Gungaloo, Wayne Erasmus and Julian Thompson.

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**Vicar attends baptism**

On 9 May the Sheffield Manor church was privileged to baptise four new members: Sibongile Ngwokwi, Lateho Hlotz, and brothers Joshua and Nathan Clarke.

Pastor Victor Marshall officiated with the baptism, but was not the only member of the clergy present. The Vicar of St Swithin’s, Julie Upton, was also present to witness her first baptism by immersion, and seemed moved by the service and its powerful symbolism.

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**Taunton expands**

Five new members were added to the Taunton church on Sabbath 23 May. Three were baptised and the other two accepted on profession of faith, which drew a supportive audience to the Weston-super-Mare church where the service took place.

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Here’s one for the record books!

Stanborough Park – both church and primary school – were involved in the opening of a new supermarket of The Co-operative Group in Leavesden on 15 May – surely a first for any church or school in the BUC!

How did this come about? Well, that organisation’s area co-ordinator, Enoch Kanagaraj, who is a member of Stanborough Park Church, was responsible for the invitation, which was aimed at raising the church’s profile in the area. During the opening ceremony, Watford’s mayor, Mrs Dorothy Thornhill, was accompanied by a group of children from Stanborough Primary School, and Stanborough Park’s senior minister, Pastor Jacques Ventier, had the opportunity to speak a few words prior to her speech. For her part the mayor warmly praised the work that people from Stanborough Park Church and School do for the local community.

Disability awareness at Wallington

On Sabbath 25 April, the Wallington Community church held their first ever disability day, where 85% of those taking part had some form of disability. From the Sabbath School, through the adult class and songsters, to the drama and singing, the theme of the day was ‘Trading Places’, with disabled members from Lewisham, Wimbledon, Beckenham and Willesden churches. The afternoon programme was all about the importance of being an inclusive church, and the importance of being as ‘blind’ as possible in our churches. We were then commissioned to go out into our communities and invite the disabled to our churches.

Feedback on the sessions included: ‘I have totally enjoyed this programme . . . I have lost weight and have a new-found energy due to obeying the principles of healthy eating, exercising and resting.’ Sara Shakes.

‘I have been really blessed by learning about the benefits of healthy living while attending the Eight weeks to wellness course. I understand that we have a fantastic message as Adventists and I am putting into practice all the principles I have learnt. I no longer eat meat and look closely at what I consume, by which I mean reading labels, particularly watching for salt, sugar and additives. I now eat a large amount of fruit and vegetables and drink mainly water. Exercise is an integral part of my life and I am walking daily. I want to continue looking after my body in a way that is pleasing to God.’ Lucy Donolson.

The programme has seen an increase in attendance at the church’s weekly exercise class and two healthy cook-and-eat sessions have been held so far, one during and one after the event.

The Munro challenge

The Scots call any of their mountains that reach over 3,000 ft (914.4m) a Munro, based on a list compiled by Sir Hugh Munro in 1891 (and modified periodically). This year the Adventist youth of the Scottish Mission have chosen to climb two of the Munros in what they have dubbed the ‘Munro challenge’. Their objective in doing so is to raise £5,000 for the ADRA-UK organised mission trip to Nepal in September. So far the sponsored climb by ten youth to the top of Ben Lomond (991m) has helped to raise £2,618 towards their goal. The second Munro to be conquered will be Ben Nevis (1,342m), the highest peak in the British Isles.

The funds raised will be used specifically towards the renovation of a library at the Shree Bal Kumari Secondary School in Nepal, which will benefit 655 children.

If you would like to learn more about the ‘Munro challenge’, please visit www.justgiving.com/teams/Youth4Nepal.

ADRA benefits from bake sale

On Sunday 3 May, a bake sale was held at Clapton Community Church in aid of ADRA. A number of the cakes on offer were baked by the church’s youth and children: the youngest being Kacia (11), whose beautiful rainbow cake was one of the first to sell. Together the ‘bakers’ raised £312 for ADRA, but some visitors from the local community who bought cakes also took a tour of the church’s historic building, which is currently undergoing restoration works. Some of the visitors even expressed an eagerness to bake for the next fund-raiser!

Ringway’s ADRA fund-raiser

On Sunday afternoon, 10 May, Ringway Life Building was the venue for a concert by local professional pianist Jean Braddock. She attracted more than 50 people, many of whom were visiting the church for the first time.

They were impressed not only by her superb playing on the beautiful grand piano, but also by the beautiful building, which always leads to questions about our beliefs and what we do at the church: opportunities and contacts we would normally wait years to make.

Cakes and drinks were served by the members, and just short of £250 was raised for ADRA Nepal from donations.
JUNE COOMBS

Marjorie had a happy childhood, even though the Ashton family were relatively poor. Her mother joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church when she was young. Their mission was to help the homeless, so, without a car and with no money for public transport, the three children had to walk to church every week. Marjorie was a very loving husband and father, and they had four girls together.

It is with sadness we announce the passing of Marjorie Watts, who died peacefully on 1 April 2015. He made good progress until his release on 22 February. Sadly, however, he suffered a major stroke that same night and passed away on Tuesday, 24 February 2015.

His funeral was held at Burngreave Church, the same church where he spent his first few years and where his funeral was a beautiful celebration of a beautiful man's life and was conducted by Pastors Victor Marshall and Andrew Rashford-Henry, who led the service. Marjorie's remains were interred at Bamford, with the service led by Rev. Bob Jones, president, who had actually had the privilege of baptising Rupert, presenting him as a child for Christ.

Since Brother Watts' death, several of his sisters and brothers have attended church in his honour. Some weeks after the funeral, some of them were there again and asked to say a few words after the service. They told us that while they were going through his effects they had come across a jar marked 'Church Building Fund', and on opening it they had found £120 that he had been saving towards the Building Fund. They then presented this to the church, along with an envelope with his note that he had not had the chance to come to church before his illness. They also returned a donation envelope that the church had given the family towards funeral costs – as an offering – further testament to the man and the example that Brother Watts was to his relatives and church family.

A plaque commemorating the efforts of Brother Watts, as he was lovingly known in the Carter Knowle CK church, came to England from St Thomas, Jamaica, in the 1940s. He had eight children – four boys and four girls – all very precious and close to him, as were his grandchildren.

Efforts to help the people of Watford and in setting up the CVS were recognised in a plaque on the organisation's walls. In recognition, a 'good neighbours' scheme, which grew into the CARE scheme, and established the first hostel for the homeless in Watford.

A plaque commemorating the efforts of Alf Gridley was also unveiled in the church, the same church where he spent his first Sabbath. The plaque reads, 'Alf Gridley, who was a man who always had a twinkle in his eye and time for a word with everyone, who often gave others senior members a lift home rather than letting them wait for the bus.'

ALF GRIDLEY

Brother Watts served as a deacon and head deacon for many years. He had a beautiful voice and often enhanced the worship services with his lovely solos. He was also an active member of the TK Community Health and Craft Club and joined in with all their activities. He also attended the camp and the harvest festivals were always one of his highlights of the year. Many of his church family also benefited from his cooking skills, such as tomatos, onions, spinach, persimmons, and much more.

He was a gentle, approachable man who always had a twinkle in his eye. He always had time for everyone, who often gave other senior members a lift home rather than letting them wait for the bus.

Rupert suffered a stroke and was hospitalised on 1 January 2015. He made good progress until his release on 22 February. Sadly, however, he suffered a major stroke that same night and passed away on Tuesday, 24 February 2015.

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Reading the Bible for all its worth

Four theologians from Newbold College of Higher Education tackled the question of ‘How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth’ at the college’s free annual Bible conference on Sabbath 18 April.

The conference, which was hosted by the college’s new Centre for Christian Leadership, attracted record numbers of attendees, with almost 200 people coming from as far as Birmingham, Bristol, Wales and Greece for the event.

Dr Laurence Turner opened the conference with a session that taught attendees ‘How to Read Old Testament Stories’. ‘The Bible does more than entertain us,’ he said. ‘It explores the most significant matters of life. We need to take them seriously, but first we have to understand how they operate.’ Dr Turner went on to compare the characteristics of modern texts (such as Charles Dickens’ Great Expectations) with stories such as those of Elijah, Absalom and Jacob, to demonstrate the way that we should read the two types of narratives.

Dr Jean-Claude Verrecchia spoke about reading the Bible – the book of Hebrews in particular. ‘The Bible is the only book in the world for which you need to read not only with your eyes but also with your ears,’ he explained. ‘Reading the text is necessary, but we need to do something else – we need to train ourselves to be ready to hear the text.’

He went on to explain that Hebrews should be considered as a sermon rather than a letter. ‘A sermon needs to have devices to facilitate the memorisation of the text. The most prominent device used in Hebrews is the use of refrains such as we see in hymns. Looking at the refrains is key for understanding the sermon of Hebrews.’

Dr Cedric Vine began his presentation on ‘How to Read the Gospel of Matthew’ by reviewing some basic reading techniques. These included summarising content and identifying significant themes. He then emphasised the significance of the Gospel as a collection of Jesus’ words and deeds. The implication for reading the Gospel is that we should read the discourses of Jesus (that is, His ‘words’) in light of miracle and conflict stories (that is, His ‘deeds’) and vice versa. To read the Gospel of Matthew, the reader should identify why the evangelist has ordered the material in the manner he has – each passage should be read in the light of its context.

The final session was held by all three speakers, and tackled ‘The ABCs of Reading the Bible’.

Dr Verrecchia began by explaining the importance of using a good translation because, in part, many translations were completed prior to the discovery of 90% of the manuscripts upon which the Bible is based. Dr Verrecchia’s advice to attendees was to use a verbal translation as a study Bible, and to choose a version that was completed after the 1950s. We don’t travel with old maps, but rather we update our SatNav. Therefore, readers should use recent, up-to-date translations.

Dr Turner focused on the way to study, recommending to focus on a single biblical book and to study one book and one chapter at a time. He suggested starting with the first episode of John. He also made the point that the reader should try to understand each book in terms of its main themes. He also advised that the book then be read in another translation to gain a different perspective on the text.

Dr Vine closed the session by providing attendees with a selection of books and other printed and online resources to aid Bible study.

The conference closed with a lively ‘question and answer’ session, hosted by Dr John Baildam, the college’s principal.

Videos of the talks from the day will be made available online at www.newbold.ac.uk/bible-conference.

Sign up to receive news about the 2016 Bible Conference, and other workshops available through the Centre for Christian Leadership, at: www.newbold.ac.uk/centre-christian-leadership, and keep in touch with the centre on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/centrechristianleadership.