Trustees united: a platform for 2017
by Pastor John Surridge, British Union Conference Executive Secretary

From Saturday evening to Monday afternoon, 26 to 28 November 2016, the executive committees of the North and South England Conferences, together with that of the British Union Conference, gathered at Staverton Park Conference Centre in Daventry for training in their roles as trustees. Principal lecturers were Edwina Turner and Cynyr Rhys from Anthony Collins Solicitors, the company which advises the Conferences on most of their legal matters – particularly when it comes to governance issues. Established with a Christian background and ethos, Anthony Collins provides excellent insight into the specific challenges faced by churches.

In addition to local legal expertise the attendees were informed about the wider church environment by Karnik Doukmetzian, General Counsel at the General Conference.

In planning this event the BUC officers realised that, on paper at least, this line-up of speakers could appear somewhat intimidating, so a friendly, wise and experienced counsellor was recruited to complete the quartet of speakers. That counsellor was former BUC president, Pastor Cecil Perry, unquestionably the most experienced administrator here in the British Union.

Over the three days Pastor Perry presented five devotional talks, each one carefully crafted to fit in with the general theme of good governance. Beginning with a word of warning he pointed out that some committees act like the kingdoms represented in the statue of Daniel chapter 2, with each new ‘regime’ trying to demolish the works of the one which went before. ‘What actually happens,’ said Pastor Perry, ‘is that they end up reinventing the wheel, passing the same actions and ending up with the same result.’ He went on to paint a more positive picture of a church in which the past is used as a platform on which to build, using new ideas and new technologies as it advances.

Sunday was an intensive, 14-hour day of lectures interspersed with brief breaks for meals and socialising. Far from the dry and boring presentations that some had expected from the solicitors, the trustees were entertained and informed in equal measure as the solicitors drew on their experience and presented case studies – some highly amusing and others deeply disturbing. A few were even drawn from our own recent church history, which made uncomfortable listening for some.

Time and time again the same messages came out: stick to your charitable purposes; operate strictly according to your constitution and policy documents; watch out for conflicts of interest; beware of misuse of charitable funds; ‘Governors manage, and trustees govern,’ was the mantra: ‘Day-to-day matters versus big-picture strategies.’

Karnik Doukmetzian took his audience on a fascinating tour of Seventh-day Adventist Church organisation and structure. Although this should have been old hat to many of those present, there were few who could answer all the questions he posed. Perhaps his most important message was the incredible interconnectedness of the Adventist Church. ‘There are separate entities,’ he said, ‘but all are interdependent.’ The situation here in the UK, where we have three separate charities, is actually not unusual. In fact it is part of the organisational strategy of the church. This does not mean, however, that we are independent of each other.

In this way a presentation on the technical aspects of church governance and structure led back to the spiritual foundations of our church, echoing Paul’s metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12 where the church is presented as a body – with separate parts, but unified in purpose.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive and most feel that church governance is on a firmer platform now as we head into 2017.

We would like to give special thanks to all of those who helped to make the programme a success, especially the three administrative secretaries at the BUC: Jacquie Johnson, Sophia Prince and Lucinda Calvert. We would also like to thank Shelley Prince, a BUC trustee, for leading the song services at the 7am worships.

May 2017 bring you many blessings and a closer walk with God.
Boxes for Ghana

This year’s ADRA Gift Box Appeal for Ghana was well supported by Hackney’s members. One of those who took part was Petra Prince. She said: “While packing for the children in Ghana, my children and I were having conversations about the children we were packing for as if we knew them personally. We imagined great stories of these children’s delight in opening their presents, just like my children do when opening theirs.”

Petra admitted that she is not a huge fan of shopping, but for her, on this occasion, the experience was rather different. “I am not a shopper; when it comes to the Gift Box Appeal my mentality changes. I love shopping and making up the boxes for the children. I get so excited, especially as the children are sending gifts to are far more fortunate than my own. Also, it’s a good opportunity to fellowship with the church family as we laugh and have fun while packing the boxes together.”

BeWell Programme Manager, Jennifer Robinson (PhD), provides this advice on planning health goals:

- Get a health MOT
- Move more
- Measurements (blood pressure, cholesterol, waist, weight)

March – manage your ‘M’

Older children of that era were supplied with a piece of slate and a slate pencil – the forerunner of writing chalk. You could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and write in the dust with his finger. They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

So here is the health ‘forecast’ for 2017:

- Broad goals for us to work towards together. Each month will concentrate on specific aspects of health with an associated action point. This way we can all encourage and support each other to make 2017 our healthiest year yet.

First there was the slate

Children had an even tougher time when my grandfather was a boy, at the end of Queen Victoria’s long reign. Paper was scarce and not to be wasted, with the result that many working-class children formed their first letters in sand trays. Listen to an account of this novel technique by Florence Cole, who used it herself more than a hundred years ago:

“‘One of my earliest memories of school in the early 1900s was being given a tray of sand to write out my letters with my finger. It had the advantage that there was no serious rubbing out to do. To start afresh, we children only had to shake the tray.’”

Then came the slate

Older children of that era were supplied with a piece of slate and a slate pencil – the forerunner of writing chalk. You could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust. ‘And Jesus said, “If any woman in the temple. The lines His finger traced in the sand were as much an offer of grace to them as were His words to the woman: ‘”There was Jesus, doing what those Victorian children once did, writing in the sand (dust). What was He writing? It seems from the reaction of the angry men that He was reminding them of their own imperfections – their own infidelities. But did they need to slip away in shame? Or was the dust precise of their sinfulness not also an opportunity for confession and forgiveness – one that they completely missed? Christ was not in deliberate engraving their sins into the floor of the temple. The lines His finger traced in the sand were as much an offer of grace to them as were His words to the woman: “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?”’

“ ‘No, Lord,’ she said. ‘And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”‘”

I like the way Florence Cole put it: “At a first afresh, we children only had to shake the tray.” We couldn’t wish for a better way to begin 2017.

Enhancing Health

by Sharon Platt-McDonald, RGN, RM, RHV, MSc

Health Ministry Director, BUC

Health forecast

The Kings Fund publication, ‘People in control of their own health and care’, highlights that when individuals are supported with planning their health goals, they are more likely to achieve them and experience better outcomes.

People will often set goals for themselves in the areas of money, career, weight, personal development, houses, cars and clothes. But people very seldom set goals for exactly how long they want to live and what standard of health they want to enjoy… When you think about it, it doesn’t matter if you accomplish everything you could dream of in the material world and then die years younger than you really should. It’s better to have behaved well towards each other and to have tried your best in every situation you could control.

Healthy behaviours take about a month to become a new habit, but even longer if you want these improved behaviours to become a sustained part of your life. Sometimes we get too wrapped up in setting “achievement” goals when a “maintenance” goal would better suit us.

This year, I hope to challenge us all to healthier living by setting some broad goals for us to work towards together. Each month will concentrate on specific aspects of health with an associated action point. This way we can all encourage and support each other to make 2017 our healthiest year yet.

Here is your health forecast in more detail for the next three months:

January – juggle your ‘J’s

- Juicing
- Jumping
- Joy

February – feeling passionate

- Fruit fasts
- Focus on fluids
- Fun activities
- Forget negative mindsets

March – manage your ‘M’s

- Get a health MOT
- Move more
- Measurements (blood pressure, cholesterol, waist, weight)

Are you ready for the journey? Then let’s go!

We only have to ‘shake the tray’!

Following which, as if by magic, they could lift the grey acetate off its darker backing and the slate was clear again: ready to use, over and over again.

Have you ever wished for a magic slate? A device so effective that it could forever remove all trace of those embarrassing moments that we all experience. We may call them what we will – gaffes, faux pas, social blunders or ‘fail’s’ – but they are some of the hardest things to forget, especially when witnessed by those who know us well.

There may even have been a period in your life, a stage or a phase, when your conduct was undignified, rebellious or even antisocial. A time when you dropped out of uni, had a brush with the law, lost a job, threw away your childhood and tarnished your credit history. These painful events, shameful incidents and harsh experiences are often the things that we would most like to expunge from our memories, forever.

The things done to us

Often the things that are hardest to forget are those that are said and done to us by others. Those things we did not deserve – painful experiences that may have changed our lives in unimaginable ways!

But there are also those things of which we are guilty, and others may treat us badly for it. Jesus met just such a person in the temple early one morning. He was teaching a crowd of people and a woman with a sin all the same – nothing to show your parents, otherwise than your dusty grey fingers. Every letter you had painstakingly shaped, every word you had spelt, and all the sums you had done were wiped away at the close of the school day – before you handed back your slate and pencil.

Just think about this for a moment

Surely, though, there is something to be said for a clean slate. Firstly, it bears no formal record of your failure. Not...
This year, 2017, has been designated the Year of Restoration throughout the South England Conference under our quadrennial theme, Evangelism, Everything for Everyone. Wherever. But what does restoration mean? In a general sense restoration means the action of returning something to a former owner, place, or condition. However, restoration in the biblical sense means more than just returning something to its former owner, its former place, or even its former glory. Restoration in the biblical sense is to receive back more than has been lost. As the point where the final state is greater than the former, the main point being that someone or something has been improved over and beyond measure to the extent that all who witness it can only conclude that this is the hallmark of our Creator, and it is marvellous in our eyes! Psalm 118:23. The prophet Joel, speaking prophetically and prophetic about God’s promise to restore His people in these last days, says this in Joel 2:25 (NKJV):

The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the cutting locust, for they have not eaten all the land.

In 2017 God wants to restore His Church and restore His people. In the devotional book Maranatha by Pastor Dr. Richard Jackson, White G. White says in 'Before the final visitation of God’s judgements upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God shall be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of God has sickened, and which have supplanted religious with worldly interests. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has chosen to bring to light.

This year God not only wants to restore His Church and restore His people. He also wants to restore our faith in Him. As a Church, we are called to be the friends, the community, the family of God. It is hoped that many members in our community, having been impacted by our Friends, can then join with their local movement and become disciples. They will walk alongside us, as we continue engaging with our local community. As a family, we become the witness, the ‘Go ye therefore’ mandate and not recognise the whole commission of our Lord.

Extending God's Kingdom

By Pastor Richard Jackson (NEC President)

The time to which we have come in earth’s history demands that we must be ready for Christ’s return, and that we should do everything in our power to help others get ready for it too. As a Christian community, we need a closer walk with God. We need to experience genuine conversion and a greater level of spirituality in our personal lives, our homes, our churches if this can happen. Our theme for this quadrennium is Extending God’s Kingdom. Our mantra or motto is Nurturing Each Other and Winning Another. Extending God’s Kingdom is for every member of the church to become involved in utilising their talents and gifts in ministry and mission to others. Every member of the church is asked to connect with at least one member for mutual support and encouragement and at least one non-Christian for the purpose of helping that person to accept Christ, follow His plan for peace and truth.

By Pastor Emmanuel Osei (SEC Acting President)

In the parable of the talents one servant was given five talents, another was given two, and the last was given only one. Therefore, every member has at least one talent which can be used in ministry. We are all ministers!

Evangelism is a cycle of preparing the ground, seed sowing, nurturing and harvesting. Evangelism does not stop at harvesting, however: the cycle must continue until the church to rise morally, socially, intellectually and spiritually. People on a mission must never settle for mediocrity as our God of Missions will continue to open doors for us. So we should adopt a business-like attitude as missionaries and avoid distraction.

The prophet Joel, speaking prophetically and prophetic about God’s promise to restore His people, to restore His Church, to restore His people, to restore our faith in Him: God also wants to restore our family. In the devotional book Extending God’s Kingdom, by Pastor Richard Jackson (NEC President), he says in Chapter 2, ‘The time to which we have come in earth’s history demands that we must be ready for Christ’s return, and that we should do everything in our power to help others get ready for it too. As a Christian community, we need a closer walk with God. We need to experience genuine conversion and a greater level of spirituality in our personal lives, our homes, our churches if this can happen. Our theme for this quadrennium is Extending God’s Kingdom. Our mantra or motto is Nurturing Each Other and Winning Another. Extending God’s Kingdom is for every member of the church to become involved in utilising their talents and gifts in ministry and mission to others. Every member of the church is asked to connect with at least one member for mutual support and encouragement and at least one non-Christian for the purpose of helping that person to accept Christ, follow His plan for peace and truth.

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There’s life before death: The mission of a caring church
by Pastor Dan Serb (Ireland Mission President)

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. Do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

The church seems to be now more countercultural than ever – these are the words of former archbishop of Canterbury, Revd Dr Rowan Williams, who is currently chair of the trustees of Christian Aid. He used them at the beginning of his keynote address on 18 November in Hoddesdon, England, at a meeting of the sponsoring churches of the said organisation where he had the privilege of representing the British Union Conference. Dr Williams concluded his address by lamenting two of the most recent political events which seem to permeate all spheres of life around the world: namely, Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States of America. What was of consequence to him was that even though both events were exceptionally marginal, the expression often used in relation to the results was ‘the people had spoken’. Are we also counted amongst ‘the people’? He asked.

As a good Shepherd, Jesus sought to calm the fears that terrorised those who were afraid, and who were suffering from what he called ‘suspicion’, and a message cannot reach people who are confused about the message. As a church, we must make good our offering in time of crisis. The simple fact is that when we see that care we are able to open dialogue, to build relationships characterized by trust, and so create opportunities to make God known effectively.

We are a global movement and thus need to think globally, but then act locally. That is where we can truly leverage lasting change. It is not too much to say that it is not so much about the number of one person that one can affect as how well one concentrates at one project at the time. ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few’ (Matthew 9:37, NIV);

“You also go and work in my vineyard” (Matthew 20:4, NIV);


We have this hope
by Pastor Paul Tompkins (Scottish Mission President)

Many years ago when I was a student at Newbold College a visiting speaker came to take the annual meeting of the students. He began each meeting with the same sentence and this has stayed with me ever since. I shared this again with the young people at a recent Scottish Mission youth retreat, and repeat it once more at the start of the new year, as I can see the young words are even more applicable today than ever before.

We are living in a time when centuries are compressed into a few short years. Names of great men appear on the horizon, ficker, then a moment, and are lost in a sea of forgetfulness. But there is one name that grows brighter with every passing day, and that is the name of Jesus. (Morris Vanden.)

Undoubtedly, in the twenty-first century, we live in an uncertain and fast-changing world and we all need an anchor for our faith. The good news is that this anchor remains the name of Jesus, and His words give us hope for today, tomorrow and every passing day. Hope and change seem to be the watchwords of the age.

In his redemptive work Christ accomplished the work of God. True Gospel brings about a lifestyle delivered from the powers of this evil age, and this true Gospel brings about a lifestyle delivered from the powers of this evil age, according to the will of our God and Father (Galatians 1:4, NKJV). Our ‘identity gift’
by Pastor Emanuel Bran (Welsh Mission President)

In an age when many people have multiple devices with which to communicate globally, online security and the prevention of identity theft are at top priorities. Within the case, to what effect does my church contribute to the dialogue on how – and, may even be more pertinent – the changes occur?

After more than 20 years in the ministry, I believe more than ever that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a mission and a message worth sharing with the world. Conversely, the contrary to the many voices labelling religion and faith irrelevant and even dangerous, I see the fulfillment of Christ’s commission by the one normalising factor in a society crippled by fear, suspicion, and confusion. But for this to be felt and efficiently transmitted, the church needs to become more visible and more involved in the communities where believers live and work.

Another notable thing that stood out for me at Christian Aid’s meetings was their motto: ‘We believe in life before death’. I found that statement to be revolutionary in its applicability. Dietrich Bonhoeffer believed that the church is Christ existing as community, and I also believe that our response to the pains of the world now, as a present and caring community, makes our message of a hereafter without pain more credible.

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Balham’s novel music ministry

Were you one of those children who were pressured to learn an instrument when you were growing up? Or did you want to play an instrument but have no one to teach you, or were you the one who actually wanted to learn and got the opportunity to do so?

If you were to come to Balham Church on Sabbath afternoons and go upstairs to Room 1 you would see a group of children who are not only keen to learn to play instruments, but also the opportunity to do so. The music director, Euthan Newman, has spearheaded a drive to involve children in playing an instrument at church as a gateway for their spiritual growth.

It all started in December 2012, when Euthan started giving violin lessons to a few children. A music group was subsequently set up, along with a library and music room, and a group of violin players was then established. They were originally called ‘Little Strings’, but this was later changed to ‘Balham Strings’ as we hoped the children would continue to play as they grew up, and of course would no longer be seen as little.

The group has since played during our worship services and at a number of other churches during their services and at concerts. They also performed at the Conference-run Kidz Praise programme and at the Balham Heath expo earlier this year. The group has also played during our monthly street-witnessing activities in the Balham area, as others sang and gave out literature.

The music lessons have now been extended to other days in the week, and involve children from other churches, whose parents have heard what is happening in Balham and sent them along. One of the parents, who used to attend Balham but left many years ago, has visited the church on a few occasions since her child has been attending the sessions. If you cater for the children you often end up reaching the parents.

The ministry now includes an annual children’s summer music school, where children come along for a week of music, craft and fun and are challenged to express their creativity. The music room that was set up is now too small, and as they practise playing their instruments the children sometimes spill out into other rooms and even the passageway.

By observing and speaking to the children it soon becomes clear that they haven’t just been ‘sent’ to learn an instrument, but actually enjoy both the learning and participation in music ministry among our churches. Sometimes they can be seen in the music room even when they have no lessons. I spoke to two of the children who were among the first to join, and they told me that they enjoyed playing at other churches and concerts, and at the street-witnessing ventures. They also enjoy learning new songs, playing in a group, fellowshipping with other children and even helping the younger children to hone their skills.

I also spoke to some of the parents, and they expressed their delight at watching their children develop as they learn. One parent expressed appreciation that their children were given the opportunity not only to learn to play, but to get more involved in church life. They felt that as they got more involved they would be more likely to stay in church. Another parent from Brompton Church, who now brings his children, heard about the sessions from another member and said what was happening at Balham was ‘brilliant’.

I also spoke to Euthan and other helpers to find out how they saw this ministry. They talked about the benefits of adults engaging with the children and how the activities kept them occupied instead of being restless or bored on Sabbath afternoons.

The sessions gave the children a chance to learn new skills and use them to participate in the church services, and helped them associate church with something positive and a place where people cared enough to cater for them.

The group attending our weekly sessions is growing in leaps and bounds. I recently visited the music room one Sabbath afternoon and counted 18 children. They were all keen and listening intently, something that is not always easy to get a children’s group to do.

We are building musicians at Balham Church and helping to shape these young lives for the future. However, I did not need to write this article just to make Balham Church look good, but because I feel that other churches could use it as an inspiration to develop something similar. Your children will be given the opportunity not only to learn a new skill, but also to become more useful members of your church and the larger community in the years to come.

EUTHAN ANDERSON

Innovation

diversity lecture

The November Diversity Lecture
‘Christianity and Politics: A Challenging Conversation’

In the wake of Brexit and a week before the American election, the November Diversity Lecturer focussed on the challenge to Christians to think about the political implications of their faith. The whole career of Nick Spencer, now Acting Director of the Christian think tank, Theos, has been devoted to exploring and communicating the connection between various Christian values and politics.

He began his lecture by showing how difficult it is to identify specifically ‘Christian’ voting patterns in Britain over the last 50 years. Research does show that people who call themselves Anglicans have been more likely to vote Conservative and self-described Catholics have been more likely to vote Labour. Of course, whether Christian values drove that electoral behaviour is a significant question. But research on the 2010 election showed that Christian and secular groups were barely differentiated. Both groups were most concerned about the economy, immigration and the budget deficit. On the spectrums between left and right, libertarian and authoritarian, individualist and libertarian, there were some minor differences between self-declared Christians and others, but they weren’t significant.

But significant differences between Christians and the rest were discernible on two specific issues. Regular Christian churchgoers were consistently likely both to oppose the death penalty and to support censorship to uphold moral standards. Christian values, it seems, did make a clear and noticeable difference to political attitudes in ‘certain localised areas’.

So if people want Christians all to vote the same way and therefore make a political impact, they are going to be disappointed. It’s not that simple. For Nick Spencer, it is not an option for Christians to give up political action just because they don’t agree with each other or secular people. ‘To throw our hands in the air and say simply that the Gospel tells us where we are heading but has nothing to say about how we should get there is... a betrayal of the Gospel itself,’ he said.

First of all we need to think critically about political categories. Asking where on the political spectrum Christians should fall is to treat modern political categories as if they were the pre-existing ones into which the Gospel should fit... It’s as if ‘left-right, libertarian-authoritarian, individualist-collectivist categories represent the basic parameters of public reality.’ Of course they do not.

What will happen if Christians begin not with politics, but theology? Putting theology first and imagining a Christian society may lead us to fantasise about a Christian utopia where everyone is celibate or faithful, looks after their health, honours their parents, tends to those in need and lives at peace together! Unlikely. Even if human nature were not fallen, there would still be a need for government.

Economies would still run in cycles, family networks would be unable to cope with heavy personal burdens and crime would still be committed for deep psychological reasons.

So, if we believe that the action of God in Christ is the centre of our political gravity, how will it affect our political choices? Nick’s answer to that question was that a Christian consensus might be formed around ‘what is needed to enable God’s word and people to work for our salvation in the full sense of the word’. Protection of life, security, equal rule of law for all, basic property rights, and religious freedom would all be important.

Healthcare provision, work and income issues, education, and migration policy will all be significant, but Christians will differ in how they believe those services should be provided. Encountering differences between us should not stifle debate between Christians or lead to fake consensus.

The Christian response to the sobering realisation of diversity of opinion is not cynicism, but faith – continuing to see and respond to the world from a new vantage point. The challenging conversation must continue!

HELEN PEARSON

North Manchester remembers 22 October 1844

From 15 to 22 October the North Manchester church explored the history and significance within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination of the Great Disappointment (22 October 1844). They were led each night by Andre Crawford of Crisis Talk Ministries.

The attendance varied between 30 and 40 people, who were joined by an average of 100 people online each night. The session finished on 22 October, with a Sabbath spent in Bible study and prayer that culminated with the screening of ‘Tell the World’, which recounts the events and subsequent impact of the Great Disappointment.

MANNCHSTER NORTH COMMUNICATION TEAM

Some scenes from... Curative Music Foundation have once again put on a wonderful evening of theatrical performances and singing. Among those featured were Bobby Carr, Alafia Maxwell and the Edmonton SDA Drama Group.

‘Till and Terence McKenzie-Cook are the founders of the charity, commonly known as CMFL. They are also responsible for the drama group which puts on plays during Black History Month each year. Here are some scenes from their most recent performance, entitled Pure Resilience.

ROSETA ALLEN
Over 160 South England Conference (SEC) employees gathered to network, build relationships and be rejuvenated in Beticci, Montenegro, from 6 to 13 November last year.

Under the theme, ‘Preparation for the Harvest’ they used the week to reconnect with Christ, refocus on the mission of the church and find ways to more effectively achieve it. Pastor Emmanuel Osei, SEC Acting President, explained how important the meetings were and expressed his confidence in the SEC ministry: ‘There is a willingness to give oneself to the work of ministry and I see this with all our ministers.’

Attendees had a number of seminars and workshops to attend, one of which was on conflict resolution. This topic is important because conflicts exist in all our churches, and our pastors can never have enough time to manage and resolve them.

Another seminar focused on natural church development (NCD), which was run by the NCD President, Revd Lynn Chetcuti. She was able to help pastors gain a snapshot of their churches’ spirituality and give an eight-step assessment, designed to help them grow.

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The health team made health screening available to all the SEC employees, and even the hotel staff. Millie Williams, leader of the health team, said that she and her health team were there to encourage the ministers to make positive lifestyle changes where necessary.

The SEC’s Health Director, Dr Chidi Ngwaba, also offered some tips on managing stress and lifestyle. ‘It is imperative that as we take care of other people, we also take care of ourselves,’ said Elsie Staple, health team assistant.

Pastor Lawrence baptised the four new members – Trevor Kettle, Andrew Yaffe, David Docker and Brian Lye. The baptism service was witnessed by Pastor E. Lawrence, who was very happy about the new additions to the church. He said, ‘I am happy about the new members who have come to the church. The church is growing, and a process of seeing how to make the changes that will have the best impact on our people, a lot of excellent advice is being shared. Church plant pastor, Luke White, thought that the social aspect, and the fact that a mixture of age and experience was represented, was very important. He made this point: ‘Some of the things that are really obvious to us don’t seem to be so obvious to others, and it’s only when you are in this type of setting that you really get to see exactly that, and work a way forward that makes sense for everyone.’

Pastor Osei was very happy about the direction the ministers were going as a team, and expressed it this way: ‘I applaud all my ministers and I see that there is a burning desire for them to really see the Gospel preached throughout the whole South England Conference.’

A memorable October for Xavier

October 2016 was a memorable month for Xavier Marchena-Stanciu, for on 1 October he and his wife, Alice, brought their son, Enzo, to the Exeter church to be dedicated by Pastor Ian Lorek. The baby wore the pastor’s own dedication gown, which made it an extra special occasion for all concerned. Then, on 22 October, Pastor Lorek had the privilege of baptising Xavier, who had been brought up as a Roman Catholic in Spain. When he met Alice he found out about Seventh-day Adventists for the first time, and when they moved to England they started to attend the Exeter church and requested Bible studies. Pastor Lorek and his wife, Romola, were only too happy to oblige. It was a joy for the Exeter church to witness Xavier’s baptism, and a celebratory cake was shared during refreshment time after the service.

Winson Green Church has grown since its humble beginnings. Not only does it now have a beautiful church building, but it has had a number of baptisms over the last few years, the latest being on 13 August 2016.

Pastor E. Lawrence baptised the four new members – Trevor Kettle, Beverley Shaw, Leroy Watts and Tasimi Simms – while family and friends looked on with great joy.

**URGENT REQUEST** (Exeter Camp)  
Skilled volunteer craftsmen required

Aberdaron Camp needs volunteer craftsmen, skilled in carpentry, building and DIY, to help complete urgent construction projects. If you can spare a few days or even a week or two, we would love to hear from you.

*Pastor Ouadjo has since accepted a call to the South England Conference.*

The editor regrets that a photo of the baptismal candidates has not been supplied.
Pathfinderers at Parliament

The London Ghana Church Pathfinder group toured the UK Parliament on Monday 24 October. The four-hour tour by the 85-member group was aimed at helping them appreciate how the legislative institution of the United Kingdom operates. They also learned about the role of MPs and how to gain their help within one’s constituency.

It also gave them an insight into the long-lasting relationship between the UK and Ghana, as well as whipping up their enthusiasm to become Members of Parliament themselves!

The group were told about parliamentary ethics and procedures, the history of the UK Parliament, and its contribution towards the socio-economic development of the country.

They visited both Houses of Parliament, Lords and Commons; the Queen’s robing room; and a number of other venues, to learn about their functions.

Adventist Church represented at Lambeth Palace

On Monday evening, 31 October, BUC Executive Secretary Pastor John Surridge represented our Church at a special dinner hosted by the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Pastor Surridge was standing in for BUC President Pastor Ian Sweeney, who has attended a number of such events in the past. Of the fifty or so people present, most were the presidents, general secretaries or moderators of other sizeable Christian denominations in England.

Following a liturgical worship service in the chapel, which has been in use for nearly 800 years, the Archbishop led his guests through to the dining hall, where they spent some time renewing acquaintances. At the meal itself Pastor Surridge sat with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, whose archdiocese actually extends as far as Watford, where the Adventist Church has its British headquarters. As well as being the head of the Roman Catholic Church in England, Cardinal Nichols is also one of the presidents of Churches Together in England (CTE), and is very interested in developing relationships with other churches. ’We had a very pleasant conversation,’ said Pastor Surridge. ’He knew quite a lot about our church, both due to our presence in London and from his numerous trips around the world. He also expressed quite a lot of interest in a new Catholic web-based resource entitled ’The Art of Dying Well’, which has just been launched. Although we differ fundamentally on our theological views regarding death, there are a number of things that we as Adventists can learn from the work they have done in this area.’

’The purpose of the event, which was organised by CTE, was twofold: to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and to encourage young people to engage in ecumenical dialogue. Although there are many things that we as Adventists can learn from the work they have done in this area,’

The group were told about parliamentary ethics and procedures, the history of the UK Parliament, and its contribution towards the socio-economic development of the country.

Pathfinderers and Adventists attend such events as observers, with voice but no vote. Despite this, we were inevitably welcomed with warmth and a genuine interest in the work that we are doing.

PHOTO: JOHN SURREIDGE, BUC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Middlesbrough Men’s Ministry retreat 2018

The second Middlesbrough Men’s Ministry retreat took place over the weekend of 4-6 November at the Langton Beck Youth Hostel in the north of England.

This year the theme was ‘Men Making a Difference’, and we were also blessed with men from the Bradford and Darlington churches joining us.

On Friday evening, after a hot meal, we enjoyed a short devotional that looked at men who made a difference in the Bible. This was followed by a time of prayer. Typical for Middlesbrough men, there is always lots of singing and this weekend was no different.

The Sabbath started with an early-morning devotional that took a look at the opening chapters of Ruth. After breakfast we all put on our wet-weather gear for a walk to the High Force waterfall, the final part of which was spectacular, with nature showing off all her autumn colours.

On the rocks below the falls Brother Ben shared some thoughts with us on how we as men can make a difference.

The whole focus of the weekend was how we as men can make a difference: after the Sabbath School lesson we had a discussion on the various ways men can make a difference in our neighbourhoods, at work and in the family.

Saturday evening was devoted to various team-building activities and this resulted in lots of laughter and much fun.

Sunday’s early-morning devotional was led by Brother Joseph, who spoke on the difference Nehemiah made, and how we can do the same. The view from the hostel was beautiful that morning, with a coating of snow covering the surrounding hills.

During the morning Brother Owsef gave us a glimpse of his childhood and what it took to be called a man, and then showed how Jesus is the only true Man we should model ourselves on. This was followed by a special time of prayer, and shortly after lunch we all went out our separate ways, already longing to have a similar weekend next year.

PHOTO: ANDREW HULL

Leeds Central investiture 2016

Leeds Central Adventurer and Pathfinder Club held its annual investiture service on 8 October last year. The theme for the year had been ’Be Ready: Jesus is Coming’, and 29 Adventurers and 18 Pathfinders were ready to receive the awards. The awards ranged from Eager Beaver to Voyager, and many club members also received honour tokens as well. The speaker for the day was the NEC Pathfinder Director, Ikwia Mawusumi.

PHOTO: LEEDS CENTRAL ADVENTURE TEAM
New perspectives at Newbold

The new academic year brought new perspectives to Newbold with the arrival of new staff, new students, new topics of study, and plans to expand Newbold’s mission and vision ‘student by experience’ by bringing life to old favourites with fresh ideas.

Newbold’s Department of Theological Studies (DTS) was joined by Dr Toon van der Brink in early August. As a Newbold graduate, Tom is the former executive secretary for the Netherlands Union Conference, and teaches Greek and other New Testament modules. He has spearheaded the introduction of a new postgraduate module, New Testament Exegesis, which focuses on the real-world skill of understanding difficult Bible passages.

Together with Thorin (THS) Lap, who recently defended his Doctor of Philosophy thesis at the University of Oxford, and who is teaching a newly-developed postgraduate module on the theology of church (ecclesiology), Tom represents what Dr Bjorn Ottesen, Head of DTS, describes as ‘a younger generation of theologians’ at Newbold. Dr Pávelík Kupspangak joins the college’s teaching staff just prior to the start of the academic year as Interim Head of the School of Business. Having spent seven years as a lecturer, researcher, and administrator at the University of Turku, in Finland, and with two decades’ experience in people and project management, Pávelík is well placed to lead the school into a new era.

I would like to see the school offering a postgraduate qualification in Business some time in the near future, and for us to be able to tailor our programmes to what our future students want and need in today’s ‘wandering business environment,’ said Pávelík.

Bisser Stoykov, a graduate of Newbold’s School of Business and former student member of the Recruitment, Marketing and Sales (RMS) committee at Newbold, rejoined the college community over the summer when he took up leadership of the RMS team where he now oversees the college’s student recruitment initiatives.

One of the things that had the biggest impact on my Newbold experience as a student was the close sense of community, and the diversity of opportunity that this allows. The Newbold experience provides much more than just a degree or qualification, but the chance for personal and spiritual transformation,” Bisser plans to focus on establishing and enhancing relationships between Newbold, the college’s students, and its stakeholders across the TED.

Bisser’s team is working closely with the Newbold Student Association (NSA) to enhance the student experience. Robert Keszeg is a second-year Business student and current president of the NSA. Newbold has already given so much to me, first as a church member and then as a student, and I thought that joining the NSA would be one way to give back. What I really want to do is to enhance student life on campus, and to help students really make the most of their time here,’ said Robert.

We are focusing on involving the whole student body in events and encouraging other students to be involved in event organisation, so that the events are more personalised and so that, through this involvement, students are encouraged to take more ownership of their experience at Newbold,’ said Robert. ‘Our main goal is to enhance the sense of community and family among our students.’

The NSA plans to offer a range of activities that will encourage students to leave the ‘Newbold bubble’, to interact with the community and other Adventist universities and organisations, and to become more in touch with the local community.

Newbold is the TED’s flagship higher education institution and offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and programmes, including Theology and Religious Studies, Business Studies, Liberal Arts, Health and Wellness, Leadership, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. The college’s campus is based in Binfield, Berkshire, and its diverse community includes representation from around 50 nationalities.

Pastor Amos Cooper (1928-2016) 6 October. Pastor Amos Cooper, husband of Vera, and father of Graham, Adrian (deceased), Russell and Karen, passed away peacefully, early in the morning of 6 October, after a rapid decline in health.

Amos was born 1928 in Losth, Lincolnshire, England. He graduated from Newbold College in 1950 and the following year married Vera Howard. Amos and Vera began their ministry in Wales, pastoring in Cardiff, the Rhondda Valley, Shrewsbury, Rhyll and Llandudno. He then pastored in Manchester and Nottingham in the North England Conference. In 1963 Amos became president of the Welsh Mission, and in 1969 president of the Scottish Mission. In 1972 Amos and his family moved to America where he pastored small churches in Georgia and Tennessee. He then served in Asia: first in Hong Kong, as president of the Hospital Church, and then in Sri Lanka, as president of the Sri Lankan Union. In 1986 Amos served as interim pastor in Victoria, Canada, as staff pastor at Spokane Valley Church in Washington State, and, more recently, he assisted Pastor Jerry Arnold at Collegedale Community Church in Tennessee.

Amos and Vera were married 69 years. Vera and family are grateful for the many writings and spoken remembrances, and the countless expressions of love and support from friends and family. AMOS COOPER OBITUARY

Flowers raise £1,500 for local hospice

Stanborough Park member, Audrey Balderstone, is well known for her love of flowers, but less well known for using her love of flowers to raise funds for good causes.

This year she opened her beautifully laid out garden to raise money for a cause close to her heart – sponsoring a room at the local hospice in Watford, called ‘The Stanborough Room’. Each year she raises enough...