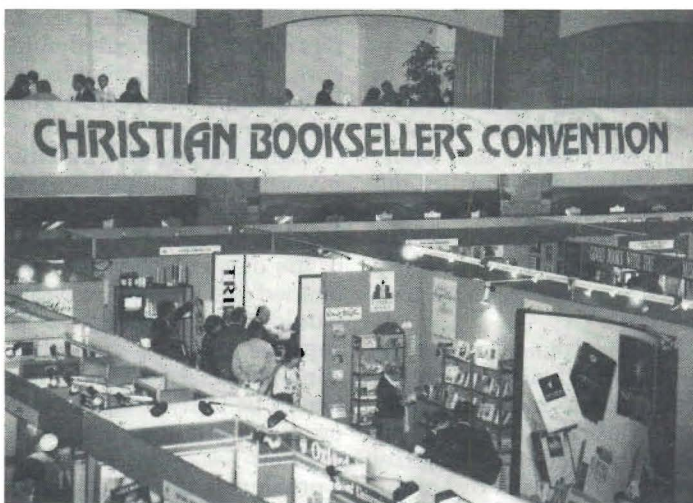
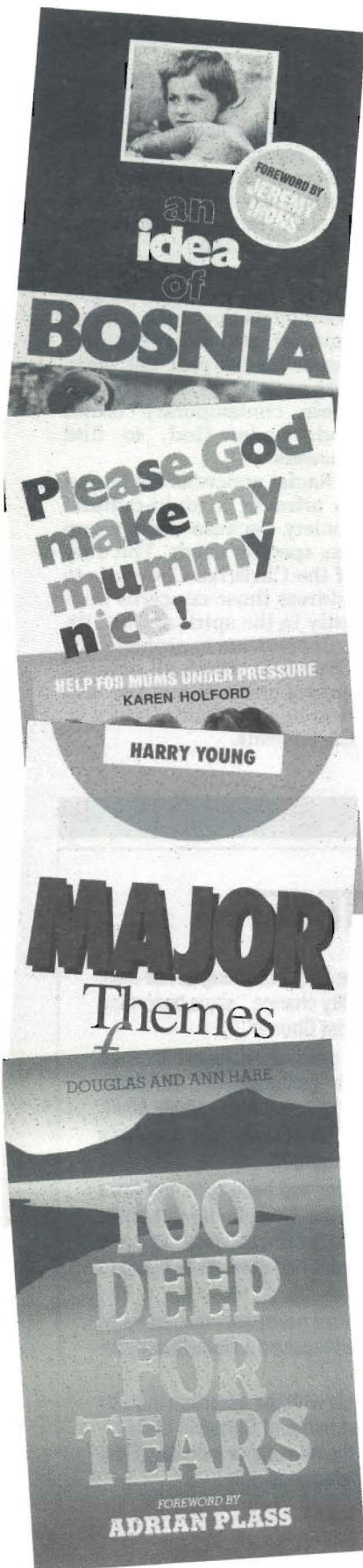


MESSENGER

NEWS JOURNAL FOR THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN THE BRITISH ISLES



PRESS CBC TRIUMPH

The Christian Booksellers' Convention, this year at Blackpool, was the annual shop window display for all the Christian publishers.

Our own Autumn House is now regarded as one of the top half dozen Christian publishers in Britain. 'It was the best exhibition sales-wise in the North in the nine years we have been exhibitors,' said Press marketing manager Edward Johnson.

On show were four brand new books. • *Please God, Make My Mummy Nice* — a humorous guide for Christian mothers under stress. • *Too Deep For Tears* — a narrative of how one family coped with great loss. • *Major Themes from Minor Prophets* — an easy-to-read study guide. • *An Idea of Bosnia* — the story of Bosnia's trauma.

Representatives Tony Brownlow and Alison Jeins, assisted by Barry Mallinson, took some good orders. Authors Ann and Douglas Hare and Feed the Children's chairman David Grubb were on the stand to assist with the sale of their books. □

Douglas and Ann Hare, authors of 'Too Deep for Tears'.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Impact Edinburgh

The BUC Youth department is currently seeking senior youth volunteers for a street-level youth evangelism task force to undertake an outreach programme in Edinburgh from 21 to 30 June. The programme will consist of a field school of youth evangelism, plus training in drama, mime, puppet ministries and other effective youth witnessing methods.

Cost: subsidized at £30 inclusive of meals and floor space accommodation in the Edinburgh church (travel at volunteer's expense). If you are interested phone Paul Tompkins on (01923) 672251. Deadline: 21 May.

La Sierra choir in London

On 22 March members of the Advent Centre were visited by the La Sierra University Choir from California. The choir was visiting the UK for one week, giving a series of concerts. The Advent Centre was delighted to be chosen for the choir's Sabbath day visit. This group of forty young people shared their love of music through musical instruments as diverse as the cello and the bongo drums, as well as their various styles of singing.

N. D. FACEY

Bragan update

On 11 January 1996, Jeris Bragan received what he described as 'a fiftieth birthday present' from the Tennessee Supreme Court: a one-sentence denial of permission to appeal his 1994 conviction.

Jeris had not been overly optimistic. His lawyers immediately pursued relief through a writ of *habeas corpus* in the Federal District Court.

Attorney John Herbison prepared the writ and it was filed on 1 April. 'Our best issue for federal review has to do with vindictive prosecution,' Herbison says. Herbison specifically called the Federal Court's attention to the fact that the second prosecution (and consequent retrial) of Jeris Bragan didn't begin until after he had made a number of statements to the news media alleging corruption in the district attorney's office.

NORMAN GULLEY

C. R. PERRY

TACKLING THE ISSUES

At the Harrogate Union Session in 1991, the delegates recommended that the BUC request the North and South England Conferences and Missions to set up working parties to study the advantages of merging the two Conferences and Missions. The exercise is aimed at increasing efficiency, achieving economies and maximizing our present resources to fulfil the mission of the Church.

The Church has entered into frank and free discussion with its membership on how to address the issues of rationalization, taking on board the major concerns within its ranks. Since we are a multi-cultural denomination we would not like to dodge any issue which might be a hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel or inimical to Christian human relationships.

Regrettably some appear to want to hijack the process in order to emphasize racial divisions within the Church. We are committed, as a worldwide Church, to the proposition of oneness in Christ Jesus. On our Reorganization

and Rationalization Committee at the British Union Conference, all kinds of options were considered. However, no support was given to the idea of division on racial lines.

The recent publicity in certain journals and on the air, of an intended split in the Church along racial lines, is both mischievous and divisive. Nevertheless, reality demands that we acknowledge cultural, ethnic and social differences and aim for unity though not necessarily uniformity.

We admit that there is an urgent need to halt the membership decline in the indigenous Church as well as evangelizing the majority population. In the rest of the Church we need to regain the momentum of growth especially among the second and third generation Adventists. These two goals we can only achieve by working together, not apart.

Over the past forty years the Church has had to come to grips with the challenge of cultural adjustment and understanding. This is a continuing process which we are

trying to work through by the grace of God. Asking the media to arbitrate in the internal affairs of the Church is not God's way of solving our problems. Those who would relish this means of exposure should consider their position in relationship towards God and the Church.

The administration and the majority of the Church are not recommending *any* separation along racial lines. Most of the data collected and examined over the past two years would suggest otherwise. To separate on racial lines or to condone racial discrimination would be to fly in the face of every Scriptural principle. In the New Testament, Peter had a problem in unconditionally accepting the Gentiles even after Pentecost. However, this did not prevent him from maturing to the point where he — interpreting God's clear admonition — stated, 'God is no respecter of persons', but He accepts all as equals.

Ellen White was clear on the question of equality: 'Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the founda-

tion for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, black and white, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood recognized as equal in the sight of God.' *Testimonies*, vol. 7, page 225.

She further said: 'The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ.' *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, page 259.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been clarifying its position on doctrinal, ethical, cultural and organizational issues for the past 150 years. Hence it is not afraid to address contemporary issues and, under God, to find answers.

Racial concerns are bound to arise in a multi-cultural society because each group has specific needs. The duty of the Christian Church is to address those concerns honestly in the spirit of God. We will continue to promote one Church in which all cultural groups and nationalities will find equality and dignity in Christ Jesus.

INSIGHT

WHY GOD DOES NOT WORK IN FLEET STREET

This heading appeared in London's *Evening Standard* on 10 April. The article was written by media-watcher Roy Greenslade. Roy combs the newspapers in search of biases and inconsistencies. His full-page article led with an exposure of the mix of hostility and ridicule with which the newspapers had greeted Tony Blair's Easter article about his Christian convictions.

Roy Greenslade continued; 'The truth is that modern newspapers, for all their hand-wringing about the supposed decline of Christian morality, have a very difficult relationship with organized religion. . . . Tabloid editors have noted the dramatic transformation of a society which once scorned those who were open atheists. Now it is the Christians who are treated as deviants.' The writer goes on to cite a number of instances of the glee with which newspapers jump on stories that bring ridicule upon the churches.

Christian churches, continues Greenslade, are persistently misrepresented in the national press. 'Last year there was a fascinating example of the way in which the Press has not only marginalized religion and all its works, but reached the point where it can now suggest it is a potential danger to society. A woman, Joy Senior, had killed her three children before committing suicide. Most newspapers were in no doubt about the reasons. She was

"brainwashed by a Bible cult", said *The Sun*. According to *The Daily Mirror*, she had undergone a personality change "since becoming involved with the Seventh-day Adventist Church".

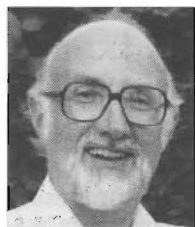
'The headlines and the reports were unequivocal in their condemnation of the blameless Church,' continued Mr Greenslade. "'A sudden change and she went out to buy Bibles' (*Daily Mail*); "God squad warped her young mind" (*The Sun*); "Killer mother a Seventh-day Adventist" (*The Daily Telegraph*). . . .

'The truth soon emerged. Mrs Senior had been suffering from depression and probably paranoia. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has 18,000 adherents in Britain, had played no role in her death. Just the reverse. The pastor had done all he could to help.

'By then the harm had been done. Most newspaper readers without direct knowledge of the Church had received a simplistic message: God is bad for you.'

Roy Greenslade concluded his article with the assertion that, by systematically undermining the good name of Christian denominations and of individual Christians, the newspaper industry (Fleet Street) was aspiring to supplant the churches' role.

DAVID MARSHALL



CLOCKWORK PARROT STRIKES AGAIN!

Exactly twelve months ago I used this column to warn you that Clockwork Parrot was up and active and in our midst. (MESSENGER 100/9-10). 'Clockwork Parrot', it will be recalled, is the expression used by some of my young friends to cover the obsession with church politics (yes, you got it — Polly-ticks — Clockwork Parrot) that periodically afflicts some of us.

Twelve months ago I was at pains to explain that not only were 'Clockwork Parrot' solutions not the same thing as God's solutions; but that political activity, stratagems to exert political pressure, political accommodations reached as a result of such pressure and the very existence of political factions, were contrary to the counsel of Scripture, represented an affront to the concept of 'God's Church' and 'God's People' and implied unbelief (certainly lack of confidence) in the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Only those who have been on a Poundstretcher to Mars for the last three months will be unaware that we are currently being ravaged by a serious 'Clockwork Parrot' epidemic. The virus at the centre of the current epidemic has only occurred once before to my recollection, viz. exposing personal views/interpretation of events in the mass media as a means of exerting pressure to achieve desired ends. At the time of writing, what has *actually* been achieved is, perhaps, the projection of a picture of a Church in the throes of racial conflict. In short, regardless of how good or bad the 'desired ends' were, the means used to achieve them ('going public') have given the scoop meisters of the media a negative story to add to others that, through no fault of our own, have plagued the Church in recent years. It has also woken up at least one crusading ex-Adventist who is using the opportunity to attack the Church and Ellen G. White.

The Clockwork Parrot epidemic must be seen in context of:

- Satan's restlessness; he knows he has 'but a short time' Revelation 12:12;
- three sessions — Union, North and South Conferences — are up-coming this year;
- in line with a Plans Committee recommendation at Harrogate in 1991 and General Conference guidelines, we have, for the past four years, been giving serious attention to the structure of Church organization;
- in line with another recommendation from the Harrogate Plans Committee, a BUC-appointed panel of brethren and sisters has been addressing the issue of conserving and evangelizing certain people groups — Whites, Asians, young Blacks — which have been posing a serious soul-winning challenge;
- the evident unawareness of faction-fighters that Christ's true followers will always be known for their

love for one another; 'by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples . . .'. John 13:35. See last Editorial.

The problem has resulted from the media's extracting the elements in our discussions that are potentially divisive, playing them up in typical tabloid fashion, and using them to besmirch the Church's name. There is some evidence to suggest that those of our number who have 'gone public' have, to a degree, become victims of clever editors and producers.

In the course of the deliberations of the BUC Restructuring and Rationalization Committee all kinds of options were thrown around. (I was a member.) Ironically, the option discussed in the papers — division on racial lines — was one that had no support whatever. Repeat. No support. Zilch. Zero. No score. Out for a duck!

Exactly what was discussed on the committee to examine ways and means of reaching the evangelistically challenging people groups, I couldn't say, not having been a member. What I *do* know about, of course, are the results of their deliberations. They have taken their task seriously and done their work well. There is nothing that should cause anybody to feel threatened. Negative consequences will only ensue if, in advance of the Portsmouth Session, we somehow manage to get the issues hyped out of all proportion in the national media and end up debating the issues surrounded by what we used to call (in irony) 'Fleet Street's finest'. If that worst-case scenario occurs, you may be sure that only those with extreme views will receive media exposure. Moderate speeches never merit news coverage.

We need bridges, not walls.

We need brotherly and sisterly love, not racial tension.

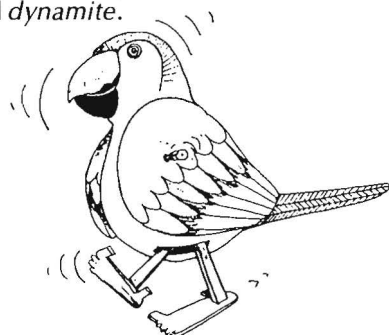
We need large-heartedness, not mini-minded mean-spiritedness.

We need — and must pray earnestly for — the Holy Spirit's guidance. We do *not* need political stratagems and pressure groups.

We are about evangelism, not political power — so we need the Lord, not the Clockwork Parrot.

The Gospel is 'the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes'. (Romans 1:16, NIV.) The Gospel is not a feeling or an emotion, it is the power of God. The Greek word for *power* is *dynamous* from which we derive the word *dynamite*.

God, give us the dynamite of Your Gospel through Your Spirit to blast away our sinful ways and strategies, that Your will may be done in Your Church, as it is in Heaven. Amen.





'This is Your Life, Alf Kelly' — Audrey Balderstone presents the Red Book to Alf. But who could know that the long life would end so soon afterwards?

Reversing the decline

The NEC Executive has asked PASTOR ALAN CONROY to accept the position of Indigenous co-ordinator (see last issue). Here he sets out preliminary plans.

Sometimes the truth is not easy to accept; we know this when we share some of the truths of Scripture, and find people unwilling to believe. Other times truth may be unpleasant, and we shy away from it, and perhaps pretend it is not there.

It is a fact that over the last thirty years the NEC has seen more than twenty churches, companies, or groups of believers melt away never to be seen again. Towns where we once had worshipping believers we now have no church presence. Sometimes this means that Seventh-day Adventist churches have had to be sold because there are no members to worship in the buildings.

In other cases there are churches which once had one hundred plus members which now have only a quarter of that number. It is hard to take, but it is true. This decline has taken place almost exclusively in the white section of the Church.

These unpalatable facts are shared not in any sense to discourage you. But when we know the truth about the trend then we can attempt to reverse it. We need to rebuild where we are weakest. It is no good being like the ostrich and putting our heads in the sand and pretending 'it' is not there.

There are two things we would like to start with that might begin to address this situation. Firstly, we know from past experience that the distribution of Bible cards does bring in replies from people who are interested in learning more about spiritual matters. The plan is, therefore, to distribute half a million, divided between twenty churches, which would give them twenty-five thousand cards per church. This should yield *at least* fifty people for each church to visit. Fifty people with whom to make friends and share the Gospel. The visitation is something that the members and ministers can share together. People need the Gospel, and we need to take it to them.

The second plan is to address the question, Where are all those members who used to worship with us? Some have died, some have emigrated, but many are still where they always were, and have just been forgotten because they no longer worship with us. In many cases the pastor does not know these people because he has only been in the area a comparatively short time. Many members have been in the local church for a lifetime, and know so much more about its history.

We want your help. Real missionary work from your armchair! Together with this article

This was your life . . .

They came out in large numbers to express their appreciation of a man who had spent most of his life helping others. For most who sat through the 'This is Your Life, Alf Kelly' programme in Stanborough Park church that Sabbath afternoon (13 April) it was to be the last time that they would see Alf alive. As his elder daughter, Margaret, observed privately at the time, it was as though this programme was to be the final chapter in the book of his life. Alf died on 24 April.

The idea for the programme was conceived several months earlier by mistress of ceremonies, Audrey Balderstone, to celebrate Alf's eightieth birthday. However, with the award of Alf's MBE earlier this year the whole thing began to take on epic proportions.

Looking frail and in a wheelchair, Alf was released 'on parole' from the local hospital, supposedly to attend an ADRA meeting. He was overwhelmed when he found out the real reason for the meeting and was confronted with so many familiar faces, some of which he had not seen for a long time.

Those giving a testimonial to Alf's work over the years included the current and former Mayors of Watford, the current and former

General Secretaries of Watford Council for Voluntary Services and its Vice-president and representatives from the Hertfordshire Association for the Disabled and local social services. Many who were unable to attend sent letters, videos or taped messages which were featured in the programme — including the Australian branch of the Kelly family.

Representatives of local organizations spoke of Alf's impressive catalogue of achievements over the years. Probably the most lasting ones will be the establishment of the Watford 'good neighbours' scheme, the hostels for the homeless, and permanent funding for the Watford Council for Voluntary Services.

By the end of the programme it was clear that had it not been for Alf's efforts over the years Watford would have been a poorer place. As the Editor of the *Watford Observer* wrote in his editorial column after Alf's death had been reported on the front page: 'Watford should be proud that a man with such a big heart and dedication should have lived in this town.'

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE CO-ORDINATOR FOR WHITE EVANGELISM RECLAMATION OF FORMER MEMBERS

Name _____ Contact Person _____

Address _____ Address _____

Postcode _____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Telephone _____

What was their connection with the Church? _____

Which Church? _____ How long since they attended? _____

Why do you think they stopped attending? _____

Who would be the best person to visit them? _____

If you do not know the answers to all the questions, please do not worry. Just let us have as much information as possible. Thank you very much for your help. Now pray for this person.

Return to: Co-ordinator for White Evangelism, 23 Brooks Wyld Green, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1HP. Tel/Fax (0121) 354 1551.

is a coupon on which you can record the name and address of someone who has dropped out of your church. Please try to record as much information as you possibly can. Even if you don't know the address, put the name, somebody else might know where the person lives. What sort of people should you include? (You might need to use a separate piece of paper or photostat the coupon to cover the number of names you would like to record.)

- People who were baptized members of the church at one time.
- The children of members who used to attend Sabbath school, and are perhaps grown up with families of their own.
- People who have moved away from your town, and perhaps do not attend church in their new area.
- People who had contact with the church through an evangelistic outreach but do not attend any more.
- Anybody who has ever had contact with the church in any way. (It does not matter how far back in time.)

We are a caring people, and we show that by Ingathering, by what we do through ADRA, and in many other ways. Our greatest concern is that people can be brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, find Him as their Saviour, and be a part of the Church family. Because we do care, we care enough to visit, to remind them that the church is still here, we care enough to say that we still love them and so does Christ. Above all, we care enough to pray unceasingly for these individuals.

When you have searched your memory for every name possible, please post your information to: The Indigenous Co-ordinator, 23 Brooks Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1HP.



Victor Marley — searching for souls in Clacton.

Reaching out in Clacton

Working with the Church Growth Department, the writer is trying to build up a number of contacts in Clacton, in preparation for an evangelistic series in the spring of 1997. Early probing discovered that there was much suspicion with regard to God or the Christian Church. Therefore it was felt that barriers and hostility had to be broken down before there would be any kind of response to the Adventist Church. So a programme aimed at community needs was planned, with the first step being a Stress Seminar.

The prayers of many in area 8 were answered when this venture turned out to be a success, with thirty non-members faithfully attending the whole seminar. The majority of them also showed an interest in a follow-up 'New Start' seminar planned for June.

VICTOR MARLEY

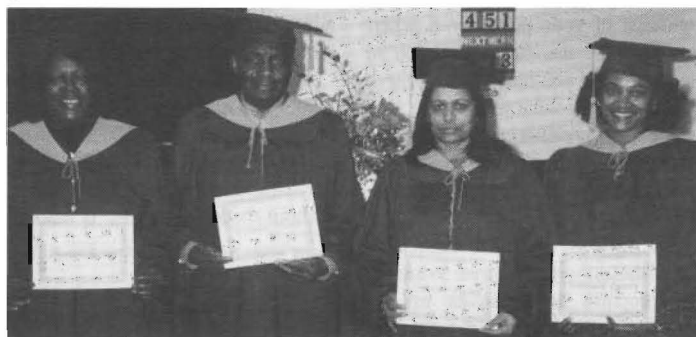
Baptism and graduation

Two new members were baptized at Tottenham West Green Road church by Pastor George Okumu on 3 February. They were Josiah Amarty and Lloyd Craig. Both were given Bible studies by faithful church members.

February the third was a big day too, because a graduation took place for those who had

completed the Revelation seminar. The students were, from left: Cynthia Ricketts, David Josiah, Ansuya Luchmum and Wendy Sargeant. Two students who were unable to attend the graduation were Frances Harding and Mrs D. McLean who also received certificates.

MRS LORRAINE OGUN



Family Life Weekend: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Twenty-nine of us gathered at Broomhill Conference Centre from Friday 15 March for what appeared to be a weekend packed with interesting topics aimed at Family Life leaders. We went with different expectations, in particular on how we could translate this experience in our local churches.

After an evening meal Pastor Des Boldeau introduced the first main topic of the session, giving all who were present an opportunity to 'Come Together'. Julia Smith dealt with the topic of 'How to know and minister to your church community', using group involvement and discussion.

The Sabbath programme saw a welcome deviation from the norm, with Claudette and Velvet Simon taking the early morning manna spot alfresco by the side of a meandering river surrounded by birdsong. What a start to a beautiful Sabbath day! Our guest speakers for the day shared with us a number of valuable insights into how to diagnose your own spiritual gifts. This was taken by Julia Smith, who also reminded the ladies present of their role in the church, through the channel of

women's ministries. Pastor Dalbert Elias explored with us the dynamics of leadership skills. David Divine's presentation on fathering and manhood in the church was thought provoking. Pastor Boldeau put at our disposal an excellent variety of resources in the form of videos, audio tapes, books, magazines, periodicals, learning and teaching packs that we could use for family life activities.

On Sunday the writer started the day with the early morning manna honouring mothers as it was mothers' day. Pastor Boldeau looked at dying and grief ministry, challenging us as leaders to assess how we dealt with this sensitive issue within our church and community. David Divine spoke on the subject of counselling and its role in the mission of the Church. We were reminded that Pastor Boldeau, with other SEC leaders, is now in the process of setting up a counselling service. Training in counselling will also be offered, accredited by a reputable awarding body.

GILLIAN HARRISON

Victory for Teens at Prayer Conference

A historical first was set at Stanborough School during the Easter Break when 185 teens from South England and the United States met for a Prayer Conference. In what turned out to be one long 'Squash Meeting' at the school, the week ended with fifty teens committing themselves to God and many requesting baptism. The focus of the week was on the 'Dynamics of Prayer, Bible Study and Witness'. Not all teens who came at the beginning of the week realized the spiritual dimension that the conference would take. Many came with the assumption that the week was to be a recreational holiday. Adjustments and expectations were made and it was not long before they began to realize that Bible study and prayer is not a boring and mundane activity but communication with a 'Living God'. Helped along and supported by our visiting American friends, the teens quickly learned new study and prayer dynamics. For prayer they were encouraged to approach God as friends talking in conversation. For Bible study the

principle study method used was 'who, what, where, when, why?' Lecturers at Plenary Sessions for the week included David McQueen and Pastor Richard DeLisser from London, Pastor Gary Parkes from Paradise Academy in California, and Pastor Gary Burns from North Dakota Adventist Academy. These gentlemen gave superb presentations on the dynamics at work. A certain amount of cultural adaptation took place in order to help our teens appreciate communication with God.

The inspiration behind the Prayer Conference was Mrs Ruthie Jacobsen, Prayer Ministries Co-ordinator for the North American Division. While our prayer conference was in progress she would meet daily with a group of teenagers and pray for the success of the conference. Her vision is that we cannot expect God to support our mission unless prayer is a priority in our lives. She believes very strongly that adults must let teenagers lead and be given opportunities for leading in worship and church life.

DAVID NEAL

HUMPHREY WALTERS* believes there's a right and wrong way to resolve our differences . . .

CHURCH UNITY



The late twentieth century seems destined to become a time of major review and reorganization for the British Adventist Church. An assortment of differing opinions on issues of Church governance are up for grabs. From the church pews right up to executive committees, Adventists are voicing their views on some hot topics.

Is it wrong that a diversity of opinion should exist among us on matters not central to our faith? Not a bit. Is it improper for opposing ideas to be vigorously debated? Not at all.

Nevertheless, a word of caution might be in order. Without due caution we may unintentionally inflict grievous wounds upon the body of Christ.

Not that hurt feelings and anguish will be entirely avoidable. We cannot always be sheltered against the painful fall-out from a rendezvous with reality.

The important thing, though, is how we regard fellow members whose views differ from ours. For one thing, Church unity is at stake. It's no exaggeration to say that unity in the Church is of paramount importance to Christ. Indeed, Jesus pinpoints this issue as the basis upon which the world is to decide upon the credibility of the Gospel.¹

Much to our shame, however, we know only too well of the thousands who greatly respect Christian values and who nevertheless hold the Church in disdain. In part, this is due to the rivalry, polarized groupings and associated rancour that is all too frequently found in Church circles.

Currently there are a number of sensitive and painful issues being discussed within our British Church. This discussion is necessary. Our internal racial politics seem to be one major interlinking theme in many of these deliberations. These discussions will prove most helpful only if they are conducted within certain clearly defined parameters.

In my opinion, Romans 14 provides us with the necessary framework within which to address our present concerns. If we remind ourselves of Paul's counsel in this

chapter, we gain an important benefit. We will be able to achieve the twofold goal of securing openness of expression for all shades of opinion while also 'maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'²

In Romans 14 Paul's main emphasis is that mature Christians will do their best to promote Church unity. They will do this by having loving respect and responsible consideration for fellow believers with whom they disagree.

Briefly here is the background for Paul's admonition. The first-century church in Rome comprised both Jews and Gentiles. Due to differences in religious and cultural heritage, there arose among members dissension over the matter of diet and holy days. The result was inconsistency in beliefs and practices within one church community.

Note, both Jews and Gentiles agreed on the essentials of Christianity and were themselves genuine Christians. However, each group believed it alone was right in the stance that it took. Eventually their opposing beliefs and practices provoked such sharp internal conflict that something needed to be said to bring their feuding to an end.

What is Paul's solution? He submits eight principles which are designed to defuse the potentially volatile situation. Given our own current circumstances we neglect these principles at our peril.

• Accept those who disagree with you on matters left unresolved by the Bible.³ Romans 14:1-4; (See 15:7).

At the present time, how should the British Adventist Church be structured? How should it be administered? What changes, if any, ought there to be in leadership? What leadership roles ought to be assigned to blacks/whites? What major considerations should hold sway when making such assignments? Among our members there are different views on any and all of these questions. Even if some of these variant views are wrong, in your eyes, Christian commitment insists that you embrace the *individuals* holding points of view with which you differ. *Can you honestly say that you wholeheartedly welcome those whose opinions you find unacceptable?*

• Make it your practice to have proper regard and esteem for those with whom you disagree. Romans 14:3.

The member who wants a London Conference must not look down on the member who doesn't. The member who's bullish about a Department of In-

digenous Evangelism must not condemn the member who isn't. After all, God accepts both members, if both are committed to Him. That's Paul speaking. *How much lampooning and caricaturing of rival viewpoints is acceptable for Adventists?*

• Don't try to take over from God and set yourself up as the judge of a fellow member's motives. Romans 14:3, 4, 10, 13.

You are confronted by a disagreeable point of view on, for example, the need for administrative changes. Admit it: you are only able to deal with outward appearances; God alone knows the motives of the one advocating the unpalatable point of view. You do not know the complex life experiences that have shaped the system of thoughts of the member in question. Unless you have compelling reasons to do otherwise, you might as well start out with this assumption: *Adventist X who holds 'disagreeable' opinions is just as intent on obeying God as I am.* (Assuming, of course, the real motive is to obey God!)

• Everyone must accept personal responsibility for his or her own stance. Romans 14:5, 12.

One member considers a given set of proposals more hallowed than rival proposals. Another member considers most proposals much of a muchness. Each member must be fully satisfied in his own mind. Why? In Christianity each one must himself answer for his conduct before God. *If necessary, would you be prepared to argue the case in favour of your current views — right up to the very judgement bar of God?*

• You must be true to your conscience. Romans 14:14, 20, 22, 23.

You may subscribe to perfectly sound views on how blacks and whites together can best administer the Union and Conferences, and yet lamentably still be in error. How? It all depends on whether you hold what you believe in sincerity, or you are simply cutting the cloth of your conviction to fit the opinions of your peers. Even when you've voted the 'right' way, you've done wrong if you really didn't believe you were doing what was best.

• The Lordship of Christ must be acknowledged in all that we do. Romans 14:7-11.

The British Adventist Church is under the authority of Christ. So are the departmental arrangements of the Church, the operating policies, the duly

elected and appointed personnel, the assets programmes and ministries. All these exist at Christ's bidding. Therefore, whatever proposals we advance in relation to any of the foregoing, must always be only Christ's glory in view. The true SDA Christian seeks to please Jesus first and foremost. His primary loyalty is not to his class, cultural or ethnic group, but to the Lord Jesus Christ.

• Our internal arguments must never cause us to have a blurred view of the liberating Gospel. Romans 14:14, 17, 20.

For the kingdom of God is not Executive committee actions, departmental budgets, organizational schemes or racial power struggles, 'but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'. Since we were already saved long before we ever ascended the noble heights of Church politicking, it remains highly unlikely that our earnest debates will ever avail to win us acceptance with God. There is no saving merit in any one of our fondly-held views.

• Love must be the basis of all our actions. Romans 14:15, 19-21 (See 13:8-10).

If your fellow Adventist is distressed by your politicking, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your politicking destroy your fellow Adventist for whom Christ died. The British Adventist Church is the work of God. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of sectional interests. (Paraphrasing verses 15 and 20.) Rather than entrenchment, how about all of us, black and white, doing some sacrificing of our supposed rights and entitlements — for the sake of Christ's church?

Somewhere I've read that Satan has a hellish jubilee whenever he can divide brethren. The name of his game is still divide and conquer. No, this doesn't necessarily mean we've got to shelve our disputes. Indeed, we may well have to go on confronting painful subjects for a while longer. But we've got to go about it in the God-endorsed way, as Romans 14 advises. Otherwise British Adventism will be tragically divided and 'you know who' will be jubilating.

The question, then, is not only who's right and who's wrong. Equally important is *how* we go about resolving our disagreements. Don't be fooled: the terrifying possibility of being correct without being Christian is real. □

*Pastor Walters is minister of the Lewisham church in South London.

¹For example, John 17:23. ²See Eph. 4:3. ³I am indebted to Vernon C. Grounds for these eight exegetical heads.

MANSEL JONES

A corner of a foreign field — for ever Wales

They're driving a road through his paradise — tearing up his trees, smashing his greenhouses, bulldozing through his rose gardens — and the Welsh wizard of Halifax is powerless to do a thing about it!

Mansel Jones was born in the mountains above Aberdare nearly eight decades ago. His father had been a shepherd but was forced down the coal mines. Mansel himself went down the mines at 14. Through accidents and illness, mining took a terrible toll on the health and lives of his family.

At 16 Mansel was suffering from a miner's disease. But he was a fighter, believing that the plans of the Communist Party as set out in the *Daily Worker* contained the solutions to his and society's ills.

As chairman of the Young Communist League, Mansel travelled to Bristol and Exeter. In Exeter he was fascinated by a billboard advertising meetings titled 'Adam or Ape', speaker Leslie Hardinge. Mansel was 'inspired by the sincerity and logic' of Hardinge and, when Professor Baird came from the College to invite the young people to give their hearts to the Lord, Mansel swapped Karl Marx for Jesus Christ — and found new life.

Mansel Jones studied at Newbold Revel between 1940 and 1943. Miss Agnes Russell (now Mrs Kinman), N. H. Knight and E. B. Phillips were among the staff members who had a powerful influence for good on his life. Mansel found a life-long friend in Herbert Crocker.

Before Mansel moved to Leeds he was already interested in the Principal's glamorous secretary, Doreen. War had broken out and, as a conscientious objector, Mansel, having no intention of returning to the mines, moved into agriculture and horticulture in West Yorkshire. From Yorkshire he maintained his contact with Doreen. Fifty-four years ago, in a set of circumstances that could scarcely have been more romantic (though only in

retrospect!), Mansel and Doreen married in Coventry by special licence. Their daughter Marilyn and son Haydn were both born on 30 November — in different

years (the former is 51, the latter 47).

In Halifax, Mansel and Doreen built up a successful market gardening business. In

the church Mansel has given his energies to Pathfinder and youth. For nineteen years he helped lead the youth camps at Dinas Dinlle and Aberdaron, collaborating with Peter Reid in the adaptation of the Aberdaron camp site. Mansel was involved in countless retreats and reunions.

Today Halifax has a wonderful stone-built church in a setting somewhat reminiscent of Mansel's native valley. The church, of which Mansel has been elder for many years, was founded during the ministry of Pastor John Handysides in 1950. The tiny Halifax membership raised an amazing sum towards the purchase of the building. This sum was augmented by the 'Jones Family Singers', and gifts from the NEC and the USA.

Mansel sold his nurseries in 1972 and began work on the gardens and greenhouses now falling victim to insensitive planners. The church in Halifax is growing. Mansel's distinctive Welsh tones will be heard Sabbath by Sabbath. On 5 October the Halifax church will be the setting for the seventh annual *Cymanfa Ganu* (Welsh-style hymn-singing festival) at which the speaker will be Pastor Don McFarlane. Mansel is a well-known — and award-winning — public speaker. He brings his distinctive Welsh flavour to many august gatherings, frequently recognizing his features in the *Halifax Courier*.

We asked him for a message to the youth, still his first love:

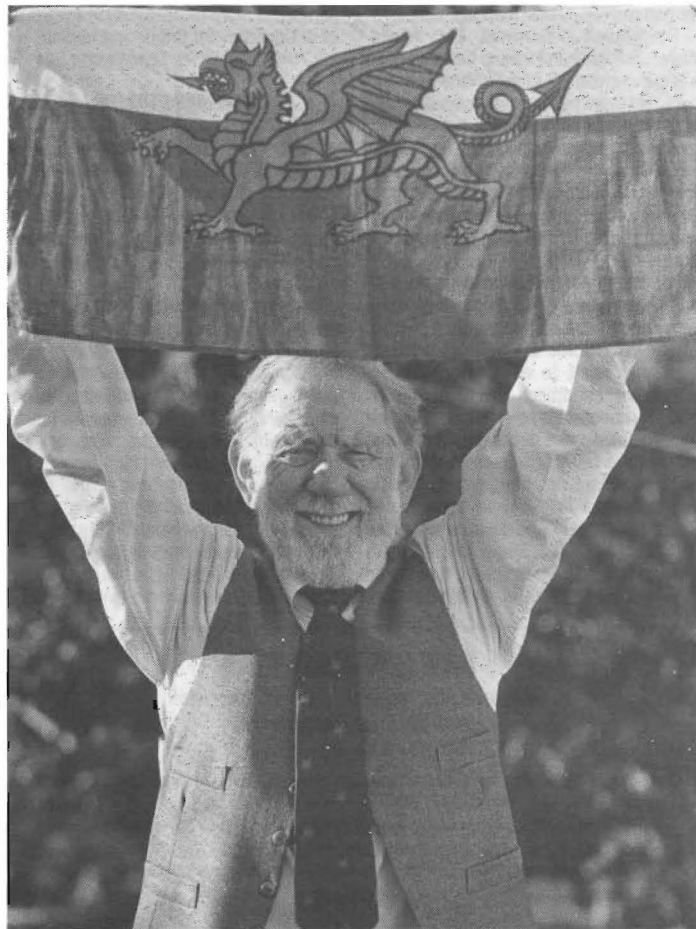
'Dear young people of the 60s, 70s and 80s — of camps at Dinas Dinlle and Aberdaron, of countless reunions and retreats, of camping weekends here and there — I loved you all then, and I still do in my old age. Make sure of heaven now. I do so want to talk to you about those wonderful days. Jesus is coming soon! To you young people of my younger days, and you young people of today is given the task of finishing the glorious work and heralding the Coming of Jesus.'

DAVID MARSHALL



Mansel and Doreen Jones. Below, Mansel, the patriotic Welshman. 'The dragon' is the national flag of Wales (in case you thought it was from Revelation!)

Halifax Evening Courier



God on the Internet. Two Seventh-day Adventist sites have received mention in *God on the Internet*, a complete guide to enhancing your spiritual life on the Internet. The book by Mark Kellner of the *Washington Times* draws attention to the Adventist Information Ministries and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists sites.

The AIM site rated fourth in the Kellner's top ten religious Web sites. 'AIM is a terrific example of what can be done by a denomination to make itself more accessible to the masses,' Kellner writes in his description of the site which includes brief historical and statistical information about the SDA Church. ANN

Thirty thousand attend Oakwood's homecoming. More than 30,000 alumni and friends gathered at the Church's Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, USA, to celebrate the school's 100th year in education and homecoming 1996. The gathering had an estimated economic impact of \$US9 million on the Huntsville area. 'Hotels in the Huntsville area were at capacity during the weekend, and the Oakwood event filled hotels in the surrounding area as well,' said Debbie Roderick, Director of Conventions for Huntsville.

Highlighting the weekend was the installation of the historic marker which recognizes Oakwood College's role in United States history and places the school on the National Register. The marker, which sits on the Sparkman Drive and Adventist Boulevard entrance of the school, was unveiled by representatives of the Huntsville and Madison County Historical Society. ANN

First church in Nepal. The foundation was laid for the first SDA church building

ISLE OF WIGHT. When visiting the Adventist church on the island, please phone (01983) 405995 for venue of the services on Sabbaths.

NURSERY STAFF needed at the Sugar Plum Nursery, 255 West Green Road, Tottenham. The position is available immediately. Applicant should be qualified and have had some experience working with children aged 2-5. Please call (0181) 800 7560 between 9am-5.30pm, and ask for Sister Norma Taylor.

NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE YOUTH MINISTRIES

It's the return of Youth Day of Fellowship,
6 July, Octagon Centre (Western Bank)
Sheffield.

Full day's programme 9.30am to 9.30pm. Choirs featured from the NEC. This is a senior youth programme. All children under 16 should be supervised by parents at all times.

SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Hyland House Primary School (Waltham Forest, London)

A qualified primary school teacher is required for the Hyland House School to commence 1 September 1996. The appointee is expected to be committed to the principles and practices of Seventh-day Adventist Education Philosophy, competency in the delivery of the national curriculum and good classroom control and management skills. The post-holders will also be required to contribute appropriately to other curricula aspects of the school's programme. Closing date for applications: 24 May. Application forms are available from: The Education Department, South England Conference, 25 St John's Road, Watford, Herts., WD1 1PY. Tel: (01923) 232728.

in Nepal on 25 March. The church, which has a congregation of 72, is the fourth congregation to be organized in Nepal. Other congregations do not yet have their own building. On the day the foundation was laid, fifteen people joined the Church through baptism and fifteen through profession of faith. ANN

SDA workers evacuated from Liberia. Two Seventh-day Adventist auditors working in Monrovia when rival factions began fighting, were evacuated to Ghana after being trapped in their hotel for a week. G. Amanhwa Boateng and Matthew Aappiah were on their way to worship services on 6 April when they heard gunshots and saw people running

and looting. They were advised to return to their hotels as the fighting might spread, which it did. Shortly after, the hotel was surrounded by conflict.

The two men were rescued a week later, after things had calmed down, when soldiers escorted them to the American Embassy. From there they were transported to Sierra Leone by helicopter, then to Dakar in a military plane and finally to Ghana. According to reports, the Seventh-day Adventist Church mission office in Liberia has been looted, along with the house of at least one mission worker. To date there are no reports of deaths among the Adventist church members in that country. ANN

ADVANCE NOTICE

STANBOROUGH PRESS OPEN DAY

SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

GUEST SPEAKER

HYVETH WILLIAMS

PLAN NOW TO BE WITH US!

COVENTRY change of address.

Please note that the Coventry Cromwell Street church is now known as the Coventry Bell Green church, and meetings are held in the Bell Green Community Centre, Old Church Road, Bell Green, Coventry.

FEEDBACK

BRIDGES NOT BARRIERS

Dear Editor,

I have just read a report in *The Daily Telegraph* about the alleged re-emergence of racial tension within the Church in Britain, and an apparent desire on the part of some to have separate organizational structures based on colour. This saddens me greatly, and as a former president of the British Union I feel I must express some personal observations.

Doubtless both the black and white sections of our work are currently experiencing problems — mainly relating to the retention of young people in the case of the former and general numerical growth with the latter. In identifying these concerns it is essential to pin-point the major contributing factors. In both situations I venture to suggest that the prevailing external climate of secularism, materialism and indifference towards all religion is the root cause. These are the issues which we need to address. Tragically, some are dealing with the peripheral matters rather than the basics.

The Church in Cornwall, East Anglia, Wales, Scotland and Ireland has never had a large number of Afro-Caribbean members, yet there has been an overall decline in the membership over the past twenty-five years. It therefore seems illogical for whites to blame blacks (as some are doing) for the lack of growth in the white sector. In the inner cities obviously some new jointly-agreed strategies are called for in order to attract more whites.

For more than thirty-five years my wife and I have enjoyed marvellous hospitality with church families throughout the whole of the BUC. Some of our most precious memories relate to visits to our largely-immigrant churches. So many cross-cultural relationships have been established over the past three decades that it would surely be a retrograde step to introduce walls of separation. Moreover the media would have a field day in berating the Church for moving backwards while the rest of the world (like South Africa, etc.) is moving in a different direction. How tragic it would be if SDAs in Britain became

known as the 'apartheid Church'. The great need is to build more bridges, not barriers!
PASTOR JOHN ARTHUR

TOO EXCLUSIVE

Dear Editor,

The letter from D. and K. Burge (Kettering), hostile to the Council of Churches, highlights a serious problem within the SDA Church which concerns me considerably. We are very exclusive and, on the whole, lack the desire to mix with other Christians because 'we have the truth' and they do not. As a result we acquire a very negative reputation among the public at large and are, at best, misunderstood.

True, the beliefs of other denominations are different from ours. But if we are going to refuse to mix with other Christians we are denying ourselves an important avenue of influence at a time when we should be making a major impact on the religious scene and on society.

I support wholeheartedly the move to participate more meaningfully in the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland.

MICHAEL BEAMISH, *Leamington Spa*

BCC MEMBERSHIP

Dear Editor,

Pastor Denys Baildam made a plea that the Church move from 'observer status' to 'associate member status' of the British Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (MESSENGER 16 February). The reason given is that 'observer status' is being withdrawn.

However, participating membership is quite another thing. It spells unity with the thinking and objectives of the Council. The question is, Can we SDAs view their objective of denominational co-ordination as our objective in the light of our prophetic understanding of the three angels' messages and of Daniel and the Revelation in general? Ellen White, in her prophetic insight, writes of Protestantism reaching its hand across the gulf to clasp the hand of Romanism. Is this not precisely the intent of the BCC? Israel of old wanted to be like the nations round about; 'Let us have a king, they said.'

Are we not asking a similar sort of question in proposing affiliation with the BCC? We fear being called a cult. We want to be accepted as mainstream Christian. Does the specific job we have to do in the world brook entering into league with a council which seeks unity by compromise and declension.
PAUL BELTON, *Wolverhampton*

A MONOPOLY ON GOD?

Dear Editor,

It was with great sadness I read in a letter in MESSENGER (volume 101, number 7) someone's reaction to the suggestion that we move from 'observer status' to 'associate member status' of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland.

Are we so insecure in our beliefs that we feel we will be corrupted by association with other Christians? As a denomination we have isolated ourselves from other practising Christians for too long and, in consequence, many of our members are ignorant of what other Christians do believe. This isolationist attitude has created prejudice on both sides and has, in part, contributed to the accusation that SDAs are a cult. Do we, as a denomination, have a monopoly on God?

RAY MORRIS, *Hemel Hempstead*

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES: NO

Dear Editor,

Earth's last events are taking place. Do we want to affiliate with those who will soon become persecutors of the SDA Church?

Recently I read that Bishop Tutu, of the Anglican Church in South Africa, saw no problem in two male Anglican priests living together while ministering in that church. Roman Catholics are also co-affiliates of the CCBI. Catholic priests have been seen by TV crews visiting sex shops in Ireland. Can we afford to associate with such 'bed fellows'?

Should such an affiliation take place, I would personally have to very seriously consider my position as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I cannot conceive that this move could be the will of God at such a time as this.

STAN D. HENSMAN, *Manchester*

MESSENGER

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SUNSET

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	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
May	17 8.49	9.02	9.00	9.23	9.27
	24 8.59	9.11	9.10	9.35	9.38
	31 9.08	9.20	9.19	9.46	9.48
Jun	7 9.14	9.27	9.27	9.54	9.56

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