



iPhones, BMWs & Spirituality ☺

Spirituality & Healing ☺

Speak to me Lord ☺

Vol. 3  
Issue 1  
March 2007



*Spirituality*



Greetings guys!

With all the negative stuff in the media about teenagers and young people in the UK, I hope this youth paper is a breath of fresh air in a pool of stagnant water!

This issue addresses the important and crucial issue of 'spirituality'.

In this environment of multiple and diverse approaches to spirituality, I believe that it is imperative for Adventist youth to know what spirituality is, how it is developed, and where to find the source of the kind of spirituality that will enable them to know and look forward to meeting their Father and Saviour.

Our contributors come from a wide and varied background. These include people working in PR, pastors, health professionals, and local AY leaders. The contributors have written on such topics as: 'How to Begin' and 'Maintain a Relationship with God', 'Listening to and Recognising the Voice of God', spirituality and its relationship to healing, and 'Can I remain spiritual without going to church?'

In this issue, there are additional sections. 'Outside the Box' is for those of you or your leaders who have tried something new in order to meet and befriend your non-churched friends. 'This We believe' will be a regular feature written by our guest spiritual counsellor, Pastor Sam Davis.

Finally, we are also introducing a section for those who have left these shores to serve the church in some far away places on this planet. In this issue we are hearing from Natasha Windsor from the SEC and Sonja Eikum from the Scottish Mission.

If you have any comments, please send them to the editor, the address is [dboldeau@adventist.org.uk](mailto:dboldeau@adventist.org.uk)  
Enjoy your ☺

Des G

In the next edition we'll be looking at the challenging topic of

### The Relevance of the Adventist Church to the Lives of Young People today – 100 Years on

Is church relevant to you, to your friends? Have you ever left the church and then returned? Are you (or do you know someone) still absent from church? Can you share the reasons why?

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of ☺, please email [dboldeau@adventist.org.uk](mailto:dboldeau@adventist.org.uk) or call on 01923 672251. Your views and feedback are appreciated and always welcomed.

- Members of the youth team throughout the BUC territory.
- The Irish Mission, **Adam Keough**, [adam@adventist.ie](mailto:adam@adventist.ie)
- The Scottish Mission, **Marcel Ghioalda**, [marcelg@onetel.com](mailto:marcelg@onetel.com)
- The Welsh Mission, **Ed Sammons**, [edsammons@hotmail.com](mailto:edsammons@hotmail.com)
- The SEC, **Colin Stewart**, [cstewart@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:cstewart@secadventist.org.uk)
- Nathan Stickland**, [nstickland@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:nstickland@secadventist.org.uk)
- Robert Hines**, [rhines@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:rhines@secadventist.org.uk)
- The NEC, **Alan Hush**, [ahush@necadventist.org.uk](mailto:ahush@necadventist.org.uk)
- Trevor Thomas**, [tthomas@necadventist.org.uk](mailto:tthomas@necadventist.org.uk)

## contacts

## contents

- Editorial .....2
- Adventists Believe .....3
- Love Don't Come Easy .....4
- Living Church .....5
- He Knows and Cares .....6
- Spirituality & Healing.....7**
- Speak to me, Lord .....8**
- Church without boundaries.....10
- Can I Stay Spiritual without the Church? .....11
- iPhones, BMWs & Spirituality .....12**
- Spirituality in the Desert .....14
- Play dough for God.....16
- Questionnaire .....17
- From Korea, with Love .....19
- More than Chocolates & Bunny Rabbits .....20
- 12 Creative way to share the meaning of Easter .....22

We are sorry to hear of the death of Pastor Michael Stickland on Friday 16th February 2007. Mike served as the Youth Director for the British Union Conference from 1985 – 1991.

We extend our sympathies and prayers to his family.

Vol. 3 Issue 1 **Editor** Des Boldeau  
**Co-Editor** Natalie Davison

Design Abigail Murphy  
Published by The Stanborough Press Ltd  
cover picture © istockphoto.com/characterdesign



# THIS WE BELIEVE

Thanks, Des, for inviting me to share answers with our youth on issues that are dear to their hearts. Islam is one of the items currently in the news around the world and one questioner asks: 'In these times of equality of all religious writings, why should I place more importance on the Bible rather than the Koran or other books of faith?'

This is a very important question because it goes to the heart of worship. Who we worship will be determined by the source that we decide contains the authoritative voice of God.

Many communities around the world are locked into a particular belief system based on culture. 'India is the birthplace of two great religions of the world, namely, Hinduism and Buddhism. It is also the birthplace of one of the oldest religions of the world, Zoroastrianism, and home to an ancient religion, Jainism.'<sup>1</sup> These people believe passionately that they are right in their practices and beliefs.

Another of the major religions of the world is Islam. Followers of this faith are extremely passionate about their religion and their belief system. We have seen recently that Muslims around the world get quite upset when anything is said that demeans or belittles their religion or way of life. In England we have become more and more sensitive to those of various religions, even accommodating. We call this pluralism. The dictionary defines pluralism as: 'the existence of different groups within society: the existence of groups with different ethnic, religious, or political backgrounds within one society.' All these different groups and religions are considered equal.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Charles, not too long ago, declared that when he becomes king of England he does not want to be known by the traditional title of 'Defender of the Faith' (meaning the Anglican – Christian – religion) but defender of faiths, 'signalling his intention to embrace all the major religious communities in Britain, not just the State's official religion.'

There is no doubt that we are living in a politically correct world where everyone and everything (legal) is equal. So, gays have the right to be gay and Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Judaism all occupy an equal standing with Christianity. How come we insist then, that the Bible is the one true Word of God more so than the Koran (Islam), the Tripitaka (Buddhism), or the guru Granth Sahib (Sikhism).

Most of these religions claim divine inspiration for their holy book. The Bible makes the same claim. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.'<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim 3:16, 17.

The apostle Peter makes the same claim in 2 Peter 1:21. 'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The claim is not unique, so what's so special about the Bible?

The Bible is God's revelation to man about himself. In it we find a picture of a holy God, who made us perfect, in his image. We get an insight into how far we have fallen and become sinful. In this book God reveals himself to be high, lofty, and majestic. He says clearly, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways.'<sup>4</sup> Isa 55:8.

In this book, like no other holy book, this God tells us how we ought to conduct ourselves towards him and that we should make no graven images of him, nor should we bow down to them or serve them.

'You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.' Ex 20:4-5.

Like no other holy book, the Bible tells us of a God who loves us and comes looking for us when we mess up. Like no other holy book it tells us of a God who finds us, covers up our nakedness, and makes atonement for our sin. Like no other book the Bible tells us about the enemy we're up against and right there in the opening chapters of the Bible, this God makes a promise that Satan will be defeated through his Son who would come through the lineage of the woman.

Like no other holy book, the Bible paints a picture of a God who cannot be appeased or placated by good works, only acceptance of his grace offered to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Like no other holy book, God outlines the future in the book of Daniel from the time when the prophet was living (6th century BC) right down to the end of time. Like no other holy book, God plots the time of the arrival of his Son, his death and his ascension, and the rejection of the nation of Israel like a time clock – deadly accurate, hundreds of years before it happens.

Like no other book, the Bible leaves us in no doubt about who the enemy is and what we need to do if we are to overcome him in this cosmic battle in which we are engaged. So, why do we place more importance on the Bible than the holy books of other faiths?

Like no other book, the Bible stands out as the divine Word of God. Written by forty plus writers from different walks of life, over 1600 years and on three continents (Asia, Africa, Europe), on a variety of controversial subjects and yet they all agree. This is an amazing testament to the fact that this is God's book to man. Even today if you were to ask ten intellectuals to write on a given controversial subject they would all have differing views, yet the Bible writers are all in agreement.

At the end of the day only you, the reader, can make that all-important choice. Is this really God speaking to me through the writings of this book? It is an act of faith to accept. But God invites us to try it; he says, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.'<sup>5</sup> Ps 34:8. It's my belief that once you've sampled the delights of this book and compared it with others, you will also declare with the psalmist, 'I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.'<sup>6</sup> Ps 119:162.

When you come to that conclusion then there is no doubt about whom you will worship. Thomas declared, 'My Lord and My God.'

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.webindia123.com/religion/index.htm>  
<sup>2</sup> [http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\\_1861738450/pluralism.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861738450/pluralism.html)  
<sup>3</sup> Andrew Morris, "Prince Charles, 'Defender of Faiths'" The Jewish News Weekly, Fri 2 May 2003

Sam Davis



Sam Davis is the minister of Holloway church and a previous youth director of the SEC



© Abigail Murphy

**LOVE** don't come easy!  
Garry Gordon

'Get on with it!' she said with her arms folded across her chest as if she were the schoolteacher and I the naughty child. 'Well . . . er . . . you know that I like you, so what are you saying? You wanna go out with me or what?' I know what you are thinking, but I was 15 years old and even back then romantic 'asking out' and street cred didn't go together. 'Yeah alright then, why not', she said, and there you had it. I was going out with prettiest and most popular girl in the school!

Chantelle Morgan, the love of my life . . . but as you probably guessed, I didn't marry my childhood sweetheart. I told friends it was because she wasn't in the church, but, truthfully, she dumped me for a guy who was driving at 17. Tall, dark and handsome I might have been, but a free bus pass can't compete with a car. As we used to say 'third class driving is better than first class walking'.

Joking aside, many people (like me back then) struggle even to start a relationship, let alone keep one going. Websites like [www.datingfast.com](http://www.datingfast.com) give detailed tips on how to 'ask out' the boy or girl of your dreams and how to keep things going if you get past first base. I'm sure you have heard pastors (maybe even me) say 'the foundation of strong Christian life is a personal relationship with God'. This is of course very true, but for many

the question is, how do I get to the point of starting such a relationship, let alone keeping it going. For some of you this may be somewhat basic. However, for those who are less self-assured, permit me to share a few thoughts on why and how to get started.

**Remember that God has already, 'asked you out'**  
You often hear people say, 'I'm not going to make the first move just in case he says no.' Well, the good news is that God has already made the first move. The apostle Paul, writing to the church in Rome, states: 'But God has made clear his love to us, in that, when we were still sinners, Christ gave his life for us'. Romans 5:8, BBE. The death of Jesus on the cross testifies to the world of the love God has for us. It also shows just how much God wants for us to have a saving relationship with him. Rejection is not an issue, for Jesus himself declares 'I will not send away anyone who comes to me'. John 6:37, BBE. Many young people say to me 'Pastor I have been too bad for God to love me', or 'If you only knew the things I have done in my life'. I try to remind these people that God's love is not based on our goodness or on what we have but on who he is. 'And this is love, not that we had love for God, but that He had love for us, and sent His Son to be an offering for our sins'. 1 John 4:10, BBE.

### Commit yourself to getting to know God

One of my favourite texts in the Bible is, 'And Enoch walked habitually with God, and he is not for God has taken him'. Gen. 5:24, BBE. Enoch committed himself to getting to know God daily so that by the time he came to the end of his days on earth God couldn't bear for them to be separated. Wow! Now that's what I called tight! Every relationship that blossoms and grows takes time and the more you put in (generally speaking) the more you will get out. With the Christian life this is especially so; long distance relationships with God don't last. Sometimes when couples break up, one or both of them will say something like 'looking back, I hardly knew them'. Jesus, commenting on the fate of lost people at the end of time states: 'Then I will tell them, "I never knew you." ' Matthew 7:23 (first part), ASV. Good Christian relationships are established on commitment and fortified by spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study and witnessing, but it all starts with that initial commitment. I did pass my test while still in my teens, but Chantelle was long gone.

### Accept an Absolute need for God

Friday 23 March 2007 will see the much-anticipated European launch of the PlayStation 3 games console. When it was launched in the US last November there were near riots at stores up and down the country with new consoles trading on eBay at Christmastime for thousands of dollars. When Book 6 in the Harry Potter series was released at midnight in 2005, thousands queued up at bookstores around the country to be amongst the first of the many millions to get a copy. Why are people so fanatical about stuff as insignificant as toys, gadgets, gizmos and books?

For many people, especially in the western world, getting 'things' has become a futile attempt at filling a void in their lives. This void, however, can only be filled through an interpersonal relationship with Life-giver and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Sometimes when a relationship breaks up people say things like; 'I don't need you' or 'I'm fine all by myself', and when it comes down to it, this may well be the case. However, when it comes to a relationship with the Creator and Redeemer God, this will never be true. We were created to be in relationship with God, as Jesus himself said, 'This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.' John 17:3 WEB

### IGot Over It!

A few years later at the age of 18, I made a long-term commitment to someone who is simply out of this world. Some people said that I was too young to make this sort of commitment and that I should go out into the world and sample what it had to offer and then make my decision. After almost twenty years, I can say that despite some difficulties, we are still together and growing stronger. At the core of our relationship is unconditional love, commitment and a determination to be together for eternity. I can honestly say that building a personal relationship with God is the best thing I ever did in my life. You see, Jesus has never stood me up, let me down or dumped me. When sometimes I don't treat him right, he doesn't give up on me but works to keep the relationship together. This love produces a security and hope that cannot come from man or material things but from one who is bigger than all these things and has promised to be with us always.

I've never seen Chantelle again after the sad summer of '88. However, if I saw her today I would try and 'hook her up' with my best friend, Jesus. I'm sure if she really got to know him it would be one relationship she would find very hard to break off.

Garry Gordon currently pastors in the West Midlands. He enjoys reading, listening to gospel music and playing golf. He describes himself as having three churches, two children and one wife.

## The Living Church

Let us, the living Church, with Jesus as the head,  
Give youth the challenge – let the Word be spread  
To all the world,  
Until that day when Jesus comes to take us home  
And Satan, hurled  
From his bold claims to have the power  
To accuse and shout from every lofty tower  
That we are his – even in this final hour.

Let us, the Church which claims to follow Jesus,  
Who extends His mercy and sends many gifts to please us,  
Encourage all our youth.  
Don't say "It doesn't work. We've done it all before."  
But let them spread the truth.  
Have confidence that as you give them space  
They will strive, struggle and increase the pace  
And grow in wisdom as they run life's race.

Let us, the Church which reads the Holy Word of God,  
Be wise and humble so we do not think it odd  
That youth our future is.  
May we support and help in every way we can,  
Give them their place  
As, stepping lightly to God's rhythm like a dancer,  
They remember prayer – life's solace and enhancer –  
And feel the Spirit's wind rush forth to answer.

Violet L. Buchan





## He Knows and Cares

Have you a broken heart that needs to be mended?

From a friend you may have parted  
From your spouse you may have separated  
Are you alone and you feel isolated?  
From a disease are you afflicted?  
Are you in debt and scared of being evicted?  
Does your life seem so complicated  
And you feel frustrated  
Perhaps your problem I have not highlighted.

Jesus knows every pain you have been afflicted.

All your sorrows he has tasted.  
With every one of them he is acquainted.  
For your transgressions he was wounded.  
He bore them all on the cross for you to be acquitted  
Remember Jesus loves and he cares for you  
On the cross his love was perfectly demonstrated.

But the story has not ended.  
On the third day he was resurrected.  
Into heaven he ascended.  
He now sits at the Father's side highly exalted.  
He is coming soon for the elected,  
When we will be reunited  
With those faithful ones from who we have parted  
And God's grace and mercy will be forever celebrated.

*Carlisle Clarke, the Remnant Poet*

WWW.MASTERGUIDECAMP.EU  
APPLY AT YOUR LOCAL UNION OR CONFERENCE



## THE FUTURE TOGETHER



25 - 28 May 2007  
The Netherlands

A camp, only for leaders and Master Guides, where you can share your Master Guide experience with others, discuss relevant issues to pathfinding in Europe and learn new leadership skills.



# Spirituality and Healing

## Is there a link?

Sharon Platt-McDonald  
BUC Health Ministries Director



### Overview

The latest research in health psychology reveals that one's spiritual beliefs can affect one's health. The evidence does not necessarily point to the fact that being actively spiritual *guarantees* healing. What it does demonstrate is that practising Christians and those enjoying a positive experience within their faith have a more positive outcome to their illness. Some survive their illness longer than others of no faith, others go on to experience quicker recovery or even reversal of their illness. Yet others, even as they approach death, do so with a calm, peaceful reassurance and unreserved trust in God.

The question of equating spirituality and healing is both profound and complex.

By its very nature it implies that for healing to take place, something of a spiritual nature within oneself, or externally, needs to take place.

We need to qualify what we mean by healing. It is fair to say that healing is not just physical. We tend to look for the physical manifestation; for example the shrinking of a tumour or the reversal of a disorder. But what about the emotional and spiritual healing that takes place when you resign yourself to the leading of a mighty God who stands beside you in good times and bad, in sickness and health; realising that He will never leave or forsake you?

Then there is the question of what happens when healing does not take place. Who is to blame? Should there *be* blame? Where is God's will in all of this?

It is a fact; not everybody receives healing. We don't understand why, but that is not our place to know. If we knew and understood that, we would be divine. What we do know is that 'God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts'.

How we deal with those who suffer can also impact the healing process. Benevolence and compassion are part of the package when we think about spirituality and healing. The loving, caring, non-judgemental and positive response of the spiritually minded onlooker will go a long way to enhancing the healing of the soul of the person battling an illness.

### Diverse views

It has been stated that God allows illness. If your health has been adversely affected, that is your lot; you just accept it as God's will. You resign unquestioningly to the fact and leave the outcome to God. I know people who have developed cancer and firmly believed that it was God's will for them to go through that experience. They

saw suffering as a way back to God or a necessity to keep them close to God and build their faith.

Those opposing this theory feel that this belief perpetuates the view of a draconian God who delights in the suffering of humans and tortures them in order to get their attention. It points an accusing finger that God is unfair and biased, choosing to heal some and not others. They state that being pious and stoical through suffering, rather than bringing encouragement to others, isolates other sufferers, increases guilt and self-hate, and prevents them from being real about their pain and struggles.

On the other side of the argument are those who view sickness as the plan of the enemy. They believe that it is God's will that everyone is healed and that suffering is not the portion for the Christian. Therefore, if you declare healing in the name of Jesus and claim it for your life and loved ones, it has to happen. If it does not, the blame lies with you.

Critics feel this viewpoint is flawed, as these demanding individuals see God as a grocery store where they go with a shopping list of demands and expect to come away with all their wishes granted.

Somewhere between these polarised views is the belief that it is neither one nor the other but a subtle blend of both, concluding that because sin exists suffering also exists, affecting the godly and ungodly alike. The blame should neither rest with the individual or with God but with the wider issue of a fallen world and its repercussions. Therefore, for the person experiencing illness the advice would be to pursue the desire to be healed through fervent prayer and fasting but be open to God having the final word. His will is paramount.

### Healing as a gift

I recently spoke to a young lady whose healing from cancer was hailed as a miracle by doctors. She felt that as a result of that experience God was using her in the ministry of healing for others. She recounted to me an experience she had through the ministry of prayer for the healing of a young lady in her church. One morning whilst she was in prayer, the Lord impressed on her the need to pray urgently for a particular young lady. She did not know what the issue was but felt impressed she needed healing of some kind. Not long after, the young lady she prayed for came to her and confided that she was very ill and needed healing and that the Lord had revealed to her that they should join in prayer for healing. They entered a period of fasting, prayer and thanksgiving together; she was anointed and believed God for healing. She was healed.

John 10:1 states "He gave them power... to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease." Prayer, fasting and praise are powerful elements in the gift of healing that God chooses to bestow on particular individuals.

### Belief and healing

In Matthew 9:22 Jesus said to the woman with a 12 year bleeding disorder "...your faith has made you whole..." In many biblical accounts, Jesus granted healing based on the faith of the individual. Following the theme of faith and healing it is recorded in Matthew 13:58: "Now He did not do many

miracles there because of unbelief."

It is clear that faith is a key component of healing. However, it is not the only element that determines whether healing occurs or not.

I hear frequent comments like "you need to pray more!", "you don't have enough faith!" said to individuals battling long-term illnesses. These judgemental and hostile attitudes reinforce the negative mindsets and misconceptions about healing.

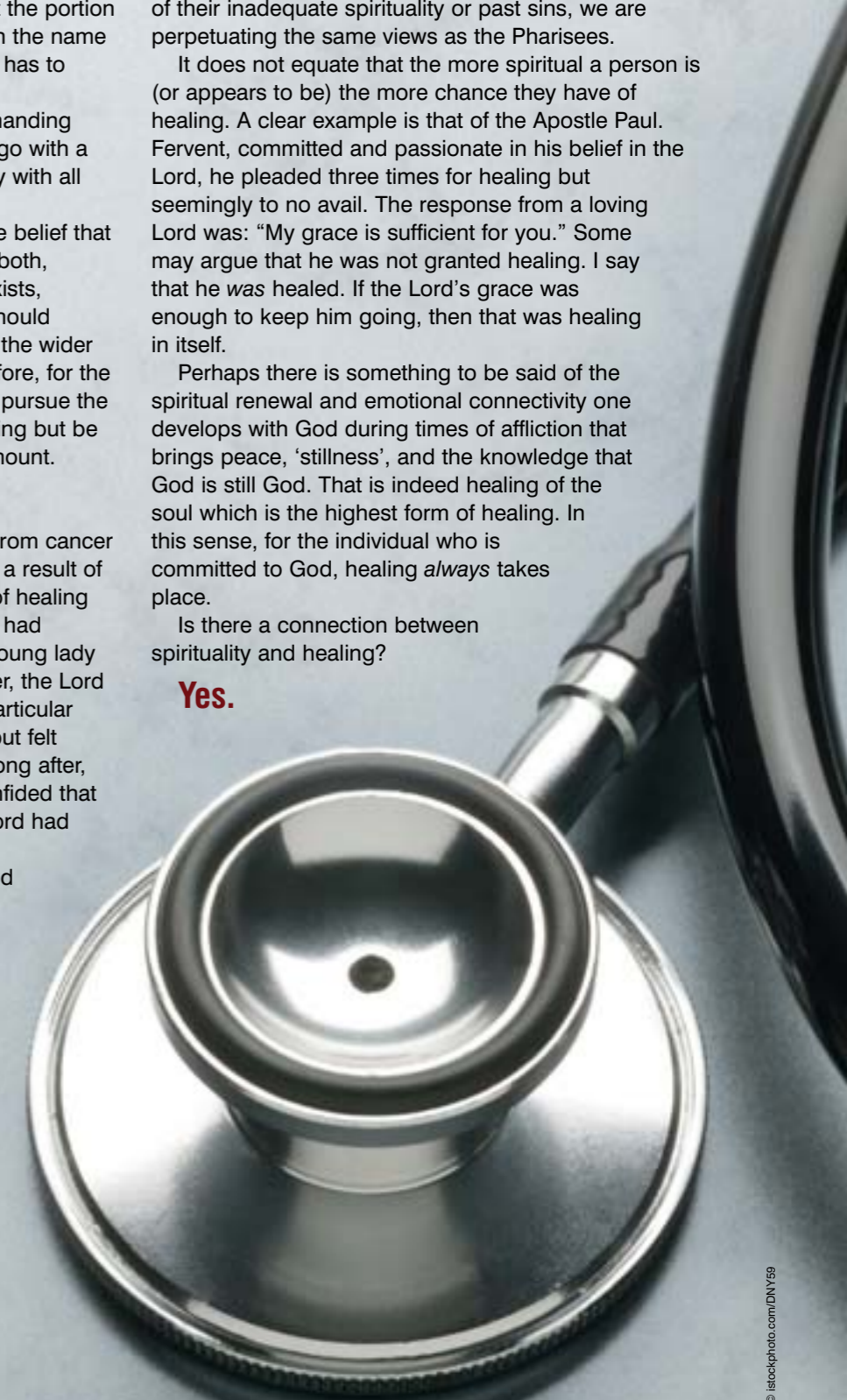
We criticise the Pharisees for their legalism and piety and reprimand them for their views that people's sins brought them illness and suffering. Yet when we hold to the view that people are not healed because of lack of faith, or because of their inadequate spirituality or past sins, we are perpetuating the same views as the Pharisees.

It does not equate that the more spiritual a person is (or appears to be) the more chance they have of healing. A clear example is that of the Apostle Paul. Fervent, committed and passionate in his belief in the Lord, he pleaded three times for healing but seemingly to no avail. The response from a loving Lord was: "My grace is sufficient for you." Some may argue that he was not granted healing. I say that he was healed. If the Lord's grace was enough to keep him going, then that was healing in itself.

Perhaps there is something to be said of the spiritual renewal and emotional connectivity one develops with God during times of affliction that brings peace, 'stillness', and the knowledge that God is still God. That is indeed healing of the soul which is the highest form of healing. In this sense, for the individual who is committed to God, healing *always* takes place.

Is there a connection between spirituality and healing?

**Yes.**



Enoch walked with God. Moses, Aaron and a number of elders saw God and literally ate and drank at his feet (Exodus 24:9-11). Samuel heard his voice. Gideon received a sign. An angel spoke to Mary. Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration and John had a vision. I get the feeling I might be missing out on something here!

I often wonder whether it's still possible for me to have the same 'special' encounters with God that countless Bible characters have had. No doubt I have grown up with the stories and testimonies of those who have had their share of vivid dreams and visions, or heard the audible voice of the Lord provide them with some word of instruction, not to mention the countless mission reports where it appears to be an everyday occurrence!

So why does God talk to some people through dreams and visions and others through his still small voice? I've almost felt inferior to those people who regularly seem to have these supernatural encounters with God. Could they really be on a 'higher plane' than maybe you and me? Or is there a danger in exalting one form of communication over another?

### GET IN TIME

I must admit I can recall moments in my life when I experienced the 'silent treatment' from God. Those were some of the most agonising periods of my Christian experience. On those occasions I was convinced that if God were audible rather than a mere mental impression, I might be able to get through the situation a bit better. And so I found myself directing God as to how I wanted him to communicate with me.

Some time ago one of my relatives shared with me an experience he had when he felt that God was calling him into the ministry. However, he was a little hesitant, so he asked God for a sign — let it rain. Now this was back in the West Indies, so you can imagine people aren't accustomed to experiencing the four seasons in one day like over here in England. Nevertheless, in answer to his prayer it rained! And the rest is history. But didn't Jesus himself caution us against relying on signs and wonders? Arguably it is unsafe to try and direct God as to how and when he must answer our prayers: 'Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' John 4:48; 20:29.

If we are the sheep and the Lord is the Shepherd, we should recognise his voice and respond to his call for us to go this way or that. But if you are experiencing difficulty hearing God's voice, this is probably an indication that there is trouble at the core of your Christian experience.

I might as well tell you from the outset that the bottom line to hearing God's voice is an intimate relationship with him. This will be of no surprise to many of us by now. Despite much searching, there is no formula or glossy pre-packed 10-step plan. However the Bible has provided us with a few essentials:

### FROM QUICK FIX TO QUALITY TIME

Prayer is how we experience intimacy with God. Whatever you do in your prayer life, try not to treat it as a means to an end otherwise you'll have missed the point. You know the 'I want to know who to marry and I wanna know now!' type of prayers. Intimacy has long left the building once prayer becomes about what I want instead of me getting to know who God is (John 15:5). Prayer, like any other conversation, is a two-way thing.

**Ranette Prime**

Assistant Youth Leader- Holloway Church

### THERE IS A QUIET PLACE

It's interesting how I manage to cram my day with work, study, entertainment, travel, shopping, eating, sleeping and sheer idleness, then expect God to reveal his plan for my life between the film credits and me dozing off to sleep on the couch. I wouldn't dare give that time to anyone else — so why should I offer that to the God of heaven? Elijah can testify to the fact that it's just impossible to recognise God's voice through the noise and disturbances that often surround us. God will make no attempt to shout above them. Unlike much of this western culture God is not of the persuasion that we are validated by what we do'. You need to be *still* to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to you (Psalm 46:10). Sacrifice some quality time and try to find a place where you can just meet with God on a one-to-one basis. It could be a certain chair, sitting by a window, in your car, somewhere at work or even your college library. Then the Holy Spirit will be free to tell you whatever messages the Father has for you (John 16:13-14).

### SO WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?

Dr Ron Raunkiner suggests that there are distinct characteristics between the voice of God and that of Satan which should help us recognise which one is talking to us<sup>2</sup>.

For example, God's voice is gentle, patient and persistent — "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice . . . I will come in to him" Revelation 3:20. Satan on the other hand, will ask you to act rashly, immediately, with no regard for the ramifications because he knows that if we back off, we may think and pray long enough to reconsider. Satan cannot force you to sin, nor can he control your mind, but every point where we fail to yield to God's will is an open door for him to enter in<sup>3</sup>. If God's voice seems to 'frighten' you, this is not his intention, it only frightens those who may be unfamiliar with his voice or who are caught in the act of disobedience. (Daniel 5:5-7).

#### GOD'S VOICE

Is *Still*  
It *Leads* You  
It *Reassures* You  
It *Enlightens* You  
It *Encourages* You  
It *Comforts* You  
It *Calms* You  
It *Convicts* You

#### SATAN'S VOICE

Is *Rash*  
It *Urges* You  
It *Frightens* You  
It *Confuses* You  
It *Discourages* You  
It *Worries* You  
It *Obsesses* You  
It *Condemns* You

### DON'T ASK UNLESS YOU'RE PREPARED FOR THE ANSWER

God knows the plans he has for my life and how he wishes to bless me (Jeremiah 29:11). However, he is not about to reveal his will if all I'm going to do is pick and choose the bits that I want to follow. How many times have I come to God with a request saying with my head that I surrender all and yet my heart has some secret reservations or has already played out like a film trailer how I want God to answer my prayer? It makes no sense to ask God for guidance unless I am prepared to obey God's will in its entirety. God has no obligation to disclose anything, but he is willing to draw back

part of the veil, once I'm prepared for the answer. First, I must learn to trust in the Lord with ALL my heart and lean not on my own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

### CLEAR THE DEBRIS

Another reason why God may have given me the silent treatment is because there was some debris in the way. By debris I'm referring to unconfessed sin: passive or open rebellion against God in some area of my life — otherwise known as quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19). God cannot reveal *more* of himself to me if I'm going through life believing that He owes me something for the apparent 'raw deal' he's given me! How can he take me to greater heights when I have not obeyed the things he has already shown me to do? (Luke 16:10). Unconfessed sin is another reason why God's voice may appear to be growing dim. Believe me, it will show up like a red flag whenever you approach God. 'But your iniquities have separated you from God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.' Isa. 59:2. Thank God we can still seek his forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

### BE A FOOL FOR GOD

God says that his ways are not our ways, neither are his thoughts like our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). And what may be foolish in the eyes of the world is wise in God's eyes — 1 Corinthians 2:14. So expect God to ask you to swim against the current from time to time and be willing to follow. This really is the acid test for me, when the Holy Spirit has prompted me to share my faith with someone, or even offer to help a person I did not entirely get on with. Peter who walked on water can testify that those who are willing to be fools for God also experience his power and greatness.

### GIVE ME THE BIBLE

If you hear a voice telling you to do something which is contrary to the Word of God, then it's not God who is speaking to you. God's guidance will *never* contradict the Bible, for his will is expressly revealed in his Word. If you were to rely on the spirit or your circumstances alone to guide you, without referring to the Bible, you would open yourself up to deception. So always check the Word of God and seek the counsel of other believers to clarify the direction in which you feel God is leading you.

Be encouraged to meditate on the Word of God like a cow chewing the cud: take the time to work a passage of Scripture over and over, breaking it down into more digestible components and apply it to your situation. That's when you'll see a glimpse of things from God's perspective and, eventually, what pleases God will please you. Have you ever found yourself at the point of temptation when a scripture just pops into your head — I know I have? You *know* that's God talking to you and so you know that you know better!

It's a privilege to know that the God of heaven wants to remain in touch with me and has unlimited means at his disposal: a spiritual song, a fellow Christian and nature to name just a few more. I sincerely hope and pray that the longer I walk with him and seek the counsel of the 'older sheep' who have walked with him a little longer, the more I will become acquainted with his ways.

<sup>1</sup> Get Over It & On With It! How to Get Up When Life Knocks You Down.

Michelle McKinney Hammond. Chapter 4: Build Your House page 26

<sup>2</sup> Choosing God's Best- Wisdom for lifelong Romance- Dr Don Raunkiner Chapter 8 Recognizing God's Voice page 162

<sup>3</sup> The Desire of Ages page 103- Ellen G White

It started off as a vain attempt to stop our two teenage boys hanging out on the streets with their friends on a Friday night. We had seen some of these friends before, and would have called the police if any of them were caught in our house. You know the type; trousers halfway down their legs, hoodies, loud talk and even louder music coming from their mobiles. The type of guys whom you would give a wide berth to if you saw them at the end of your street. But these boys were our sons' friends and we had to do something.

One night we saw our youngest son with these boys standing on the street corner. As his father, I approached him and with parental indignation I asked him how could you do this to us? Our pride was injured, what would people think of us as parents, churchgoers? Then our son replied, "Well, you don't want my friends in our house, where else can we go?" Then it came to us; we would have to leave our comfort zone, swallow our pride and invite them into our home.

We approached these young men and invited them home. I was surprised to find myself inviting them and they were equally surprised to see me speaking to them much less asking them in.

On the first evening, we asked them what they would like to talk about and we would try to find a biblical perspective. We were very, very apprehensive. While we knew a few of them, the others were complete strangers, and to be honest, we feared for our possessions! But God has a way of 'enlarging your territory' in the strangest of ways.

Our boys spread the word amongst their friends, resulting in an attendance of about five to six young people, including a young lady from Milton Keynes. No, we didn't start with prayer, and no we didn't have a scripture reading. Remember, these kids were not church-ed and from dysfunctional backgrounds. This was "come as you are", church without boundaries. We decided to spend the first few minutes letting them decide the topics that they wanted to discuss over the coming weeks. We were really surprised at the subjects they chose; parents, relationships, money, music, video games, religion, peer pressure, education, just to name a few.

Our first topic would be about parents. We were completely taken aback at how articulate these young folk were, who were aged between 15 and 19, and how likeable they were. More and more we saw less 'thug' and more young people looking for validation, advice and guidance. We heard some very personal stories that night, and we were able to show them texts relating to relations between parents and children. They were impressed that they were not being asked to join our faith or our church and promised to come again the following week. We emptied our kitchen of refreshments (you know how those teens can eat!) and they left, promising to return.

We sat down to talk about the evening's events, pretty

pleased that the first meeting had gone so well, but also a little apprehensive about next week's turnout.

We needn't have worried, because the following Friday night, about ten of them turned up all eager to get in on the discussion. They had so many problems, so many questions that at times we felt a little overwhelmed, but all the time we could see that God was blessing. Could this be the ministry we had been praying for? We believed it was, and all it took was the courage to open our home, our hearts and more importantly our God to a group of young people who would probably never set foot inside a church.

And now, when we see these young men in the street, we don't cross over to avoid them, we cross over to greet them. They carry my wife's shopping; they make sure that she's ok when she's out at night. We even gave one shelter for the night when his parents had put him out after an argument. The next morning, he had washed all the dishes and replaced the milk he had drunk. We even encouraged him to try and work it out with his parents.

The point we are trying to make is that sometimes, church can be a daunting place for young people, but that should not stop us reaching out to them. They need our help and our wisdom. Most of them are fatherless; their mothers are trying to be both parents. Some of them are the man in the house and so have no respect for authority because they have never been shown how.

There is a reason why they behave the way they do. They are lost and don't know how to ask for help. This was also a big learning curve not only for us as parents, but also for our sons, who realised that we were not the tyrants they had told their friends about; that we were loving Christian parents, trying to do our best.

I think a comment made to one of our sons spoke volumes to both our sons and to us.

"I don't know why you complain about your parents. At least they live in the same house. At least you know who your father is if you passed him on the street. If you want to leave home, I'll gladly take your place! Your folks are alright still."

Remember, church has no boundaries. Let them come as they are and God will do the rest.

The ministry is still going strong. We are adding to our numbers as the word spreads that there is somewhere where they can go to find the answers to some of their problems. Please continue to pray for this ministry and the young people God allowed us to minister to.

## Church without boundaries

outside the box

## Can I stay spiritual without the church?



The distance learning Christian or the Correspondence Course Adventist

By Susanne Kirlaw

Can I stay spiritual without the church? This is a question that can be answered with the short and to the point answer - yes. But the question to follow is; to *what extent* can I stay spiritual without going to church and *how easy* is it to do this?

I spoke to some people who *are* Christians but don't attend church and these are the reasons they give for not attending:

- 'As long as I pray that's enough, going to church is not really necessary.'
- 'As long as you have God in your heart, that's all that matters.'
- 'As long as you're a good person, that's all that matters. I help my neighbours, I donate to charity, I recycle to help the environment and I'm vegetarian; that makes me spiritual.'
- A lot of church people are hypocrites so I don't want to mix with them.'
- 'Going to church doesn't fit in with my lifestyle.'
- 'I find that going to church dictates your lifestyle too much.'
- 'I don't believe in organised religions.'
- 'Going to church is too restricting.'

I think that not going to church and still trying to maintain a level of spirituality in your life is like the difference between doing a degree at university or doing a course at home via correspondence (distance learning). It is achievable, but not the easiest way to do it and has some pros and cons.

Correspondence courses have a high rate of drop-outs. A high percentage (sometimes as high as 80%) of people who begin these types of courses never complete them.

Before looking at the cause for this problem and reviewing the possible remedies, it's worth getting the whole thing in perspective. First, before the whole *not-going-to-church* option is tarred with the same brush, it must be made clear that many people who choose not to go to church are sincere Christians in their own right and do a lot for the community and can have a strong relationship with

Susanne Kirlaw is a PR consultant who manages her own business

God. Second, it is clear that people who attend church regularly also have a drop-out problem. For example, for every 1,000 people baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK, around 200 people leave the church. (Please note these figures quoted are approximate.)

All forms of distance learning have suffered similarly, from the days of the first correspondence course. How many of you, if you were to look in your loft or cellar, would find an unopened course book, or something similar? You can sometimes wonder why they bother developing anything beyond lesson 1, because a significant number of people never get that far! (Relatively speaking.)

The situation is not that much different with adult education courses. A survey of 3,000 evening course students in 1987 found a 21% drop-out by the end of the first term, followed by a massive 58% failing to re-enrol subsequently.<sup>1</sup> You also have to wonder how great the drop-out would be for conventional classroom training, if it became socially acceptable to get up and walk out when the subject matter was no longer holding your attention. The fact is, however good our intentions, many of us lack the motivation to see a course through to the end.

It is the same with trying to be spiritual without going to church. My question would be 'how do you keep focused in this option that seems very isolated?'. Also 'How much fun is it when there are no obvious people to speak to and to share your Christian trials and triumphs with?'

In conclusion, I would say this: You can stay spiritual without the church because ultimately the most important part is your relationship with God. However, for me, over time, I have benefited greatly from attending church. I love the whole community of the church family. I love the camp meetings, concerts, AYS, Youth Days, Days of Fellowship and all of the social events as well. These are not the core of my Christian experience, but they certainly are a major contribution.

<sup>1</sup> *E-Learning's Greatest Hits*, by Clive Shepherd

## Parent of Teens Conference

Friday 30th November – Sunday 2nd December 2007

Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry, Northamptonshire

Tensions between you and your parents?

Are your parents struggling to understand the youth scene?

Is the law for or against you and your parents?

If any of these issues sound familiar, you'll want to encourage your parents to attend this weekend conference being organised by the BUC Youth Department. All these topics and more will be discussed and hopefully your parents will come back rejuvenated, refreshed and ready to cross the age and culture gap. Your lives might never be the same again!

For more details and an application form, please call 01923 672251 or email Natalie on [ndavison@adventist.org.uk](mailto:ndavison@adventist.org.uk)

# iPhones & BMWs & Spirituality



Courtesy of Apple

I suppose that every respectable gadgeteer greeted the launch of the latest Mac prototype with a lot of excitement: the inimitable, the one and only, the long talked about – iPhone. This, arguably, represents a big step forward in many technological aspects. Some even said that it brought about the beginning of a new era in the world of telecommunication \ entertainment \ media \ technology \ portable internet and so on. In actual fact, I am sure that a phone can no longer be just that – it has to provide much more, especially if it wants to catch my attention: it has to provide me with an experience, rather than just be a device which facilitates communication. I have to be able to get a buzz just looking at it, to get goose bumps when I touch it and to feel an electric current going right through me when I listen to the music playing on it, or the person on the other end of the line. When I have this experience, you will never stop me talking about it!

No matter what you think about cars (and there is the likelihood that a self-respecting gadgeteer will also enjoy a quality car), some are better than others; e.g. arguably, an Alfa Romeo is better looking than an Audi TT (see the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art experts on *Top Gear's* challenge<sup>1</sup>), a Mercedes Benz will help you 'discover the passion', a Volvo will give you 'space to be yourself', while a Toyota claims that 'it all starts here'. Though I have a lot to say about cars, this is not the place to do it. However, I will go out on a limb and say that I agree with the claim made by BMW which alleges that it is 'The ultimate driving machine'. After driving quite a number of cars and only owning a handful, I can

say with a lot of certainty that 'the ultimate driving machine' delivers everything I ever wanted in a car. There is a feeling of reassurance I get whenever I pester the dealer to let me drive my ultimate car, which makes me take the corners with more confidence, cruise the long stretches of road in a very relaxed manner and gives me another reason proudly to invite folks to catch a lift in my ride.

Whatever choice you make in terms of phones or cars, you will belong to one club or another. On the one hand you get posh, cool, nifty, wow, while on the other you get dull, boring, daft, yuk (forgive me, but I am not up to date with any other contemporary adjectives). I suppose, these are the ups and downs of making a choice. So, no matter what you choose, you will pick your label with it as well. As for me, I am pretty sure of what community I will belong to with an iPhone in one hand and the keys for the BMW in the other. Just don't let this dream come to an end, please!

I don't know about you, but I also enjoy watching a holy man being lost for words. If you read 1 John 1:1-4 you will see what I am talking about. Here John (an old man by now) tries his hardest to talk about his experience and certainty in life and the group he belongs to, but is struggling to find words to describe it accurately.

Hearing, seeing, touching – such an incredible experience that he runs out of words and is forced to repeat himself. There is something wonderful about him having seen, heard and even touched Jesus himself that makes John bubble up with inexpressible joy. This was a

life changing experience for him – literally! This experience marked the beginning of a new era for him and the rest of Jesus' followers. It was tangible in so many ways, that people around them could do nothing else but wonder, when they witnessed what was happening.

This first-hand experience of Jesus Christ gave John and the other apostles the confidence to do whatever it took to tell as many as they could about it. They faced criticism, ridicule, danger, torture, isolation and death, from those who either couldn't understand what was happening, or were simply jealous of it. But no matter what came their way, the power of this experience was so strong that they refused to reconsider. One can even say that their lives were full of it – the experience of Jesus Christ. I wonder, looking back, if we can say that they lived exciting lives? Lives lived to the full? In a certain way, all those who experienced Jesus belonged to the same fellowship with him, his Father, and one another. After all, what they were encountering now, Jesus experienced before them (the hearing, touching and seeing his Father; the communion with him; the 'no matter what you bring on I will never

1-2 From the very first day, we were there, taking it all in – we *heard* it with our own ears, *saw* it with our own eyes, *verified (touched)* it with our own hands. The *Word of Life* appeared right before our eyes; we *saw* it happen! And now we're *telling* you in most sober prose that what we witnessed was, *incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us.*

3-4 *We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!*

<sup>1</sup> John 1:1-4, *The Message* (Italics ours)

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/topgear/show/episodes/series9episode2.shtml>

reconsider' attitude which lifted him up on a lonely cross).

This is the argument I submit to you: just as much as an iPhone has the potential to offer you an out-of-this-world communication experience, or a BMW provide you with the certainty only an ultimate machine can offer, John's experience of the person of Jesus Christ can change your life and offer you such an out-of-this-worldly experience, that when Christ comes again, you will feel at home with him and his saints in his Kingdom. Therefore, I'd argue that spirituality is, in a nut shell, the first-hand experience of Jesus Christ. This will give you such a certainty that you will face anything life throws at you, and by this virtue, belong to an élite fellowship which includes Jesus himself, his Father, the apostles, the rest of the Christians you know and don't know – all citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Just in case you consider this experience seriously it's as simple as accepting his offer: 'Come to me!' Pray this: 'Lord, please come into my life, and offer me the experience of a lifetime with you – here and now, as well as when you *will* come again!'



## Marcel Ghioalda

is the minister of Dundee Church and the Scottish Mission Youth Sponsor.





I've always been amazed by hermits. People who choose to live their lives in solitude and silence. They know how to pick beautiful spots, full of nature and far from stress and man-made madness. When we see people like this characterised on TV or in the movies they are often paranoid, schizophrenic madmen. But there was a time when being a hermit was something admirable. In the time before Judge Judy, Dr Phil and Oprah these were the people whose opinions mattered. These were the super-holy heroes of the church.

Henri Nouwen describes in great detail the lives of men who chose to live in the desert, away from humanity and its effect. Their lives were summarised by three directives, flee, be silent and pray. Nouwen explains, 'Solitude is the place of great struggle – the struggle against the compulsions of the false self, and the encounter with the loving God who offers himself as the substance of the new life.'

One story is told of an Archbishop visiting Abba Pambo in the desert. Abba Pambo did not speak to him and remained in silence. Everyone was very embarrassed and one of Abba Pambo's brothers said, 'Please say something to the bishop so he can be blessed and go home.' Abba Pambo replied, 'If he is not blessed by my silence, how can he be blessed by my speech?'

The desire of the Desert Fathers, as they are now called, was to be shaped in God's way and not in the way of the world. So they went to remote places and spent time alone and in silence listening to God speak to them, showing them their out-of-kilter beliefs and teaching them to love better.

The great hermit was often joined by others who came to learn spirituality from him. But silence, solitude and continual prayer was always maintained, even if the hermitage eventually began to resemble a small town.

Another story is told of three hermits who went to visit the great Abba Anthony each year. Two of them discussed their thoughts on salvation with the Abba, but the third one remained silent. After a few years Anthony asked the third monk why he never asked him anything. The monk replied, 'It is enough to see you, Father.'

Over time, hermitages were replaced by universities all around Europe. And the new spirituals became the professors and the students, blinded from reading under candle light, squintingly debating the philosophy of God. In fact, in the late Middle Ages it was considered a suitable hobby for gentlemen to discuss theology (the character of God) together.

Interestingly, the Bible did not play a large role in Christian spirituality until long after the Reformation. In other words, during most of Christian history the Bible had little influence in the daily life. Bibles were rare, they were beautiful books, copied as an act of worship, but seldom read.

There are many different definitions for what spirituality means. As a Christian you have to believe that being spiritual means living life the way God made you to live it. Spirituality has to be a connection or vibrant relationship with Jesus. And where do you learn about Jesus? That's right; in the Bible.

But does reading the Bible make you a better person, or does it change your life? The truth is that the Bible seldom

makes you a more loving person, or more honest in your prayer, or a better singer, although in some cases it does. What does make the difference then?

The reality is that 'book learnin' seldom changes your character. It may change your mind but not your heart. Paul says that you can be tossed around, confused and misled by teachings and doctrines alone, but with the help of spiritual gifts you should seek to 'grow up into all things into... Christ.'

True spirituality is letting your heart, your emotions and feelings be changed by God, and by His Word. The Bible is God's Word and all we know about God you find there. Sometimes you can be tricked into knowing so much about God that you don't really know God. J. I. Packer states the problem like this, 'One can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of Him... One can know a great deal about godliness without much knowledge of God.'

You can be a great student, eloquent in speech and write wonderful articles, yet you may still have problems when you see a WWJD bracelet, because you don't know God really at all, so how would you know how Jesus would respond to a given situation. Go to any bookshop or library and you'll find hundreds of books on how to pray, how to be a young Christian, a happy Christian, a single Christian, a single Christian looking for a partner, etc. But you seldom look like the person described in the book. Your life is seldom changed, and even if you try to change, it is only the outside layer of your life and tends to last a short time.

I don't think you can have a spirituality with God without the Bible, but sometimes you need to put the Bible back on its shelf, find a desert and pray for the words of Scripture to become real and Jesus himself to help you live life the way you were created to live. Meditate on how you would feel if Jesus told you, 'Man, your sins are forgiven,' rather than knowing why the Pharisees reacted as they did. Walk through Galilee and down to Jerusalem with Jesus, ask Him your questions and listen for the answers.



Steve Wilson is a Pastor of the Galway district of churches, in Southern Ireland

© istockphoto.com/Luso

# Spirituality in the Desert

Steve Wilson

Just a face?  
www.adra.org.uk

### Five ways ADRA makes a world of difference!

- Food security
- Economic development
- Primary health
- Emergency management
- Basic education

Make a  
difference



ADRA-UK, Stanborough Park, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25 9JZ  
Tel: 01923 681 725; Telefax: 01923 681 744  
Email: info@adra.org.uk; Website: http://www.adra.org.uk

125 countries | 24 million people helped | ADRA responds to disasters every day!

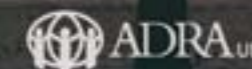
Want to do something worthwhile next summer?

## Kenya Mission Project Summer 2007

The BUC Youth Department in partnership with ADRA-UK is organising for a group to travel to Kajiado near Nairobi, Kenya to build an extension to a school which provides education for young girls. The 20-day trip will take place 28 June – 17 July this year and is open to all aged 18 or over. A doctor, nurses, an electrician and enthusiastic volunteers still required!



Want to participate? Call Pastor Des Boldeau on 01923 672251 or email [ndavison@adventist.org.uk](mailto:ndavison@adventist.org.uk) for full details and an application form.



World Conference on Youth & Community Service

### What is the World Conference on Youth & Community Service?

The World Conference on Youth and Community Service is sponsored by the General Conference Youth Ministries Department. Its aim is to involve young people 16-35 years old in evangelism. During this event, Taiwan will be saturated with service projects like construction, classroom improvements, health expos, sports training, and evangelistic meetings which will be all carried out by participating groups prior to arriving at the Conference site for a full-packed celebration of God's doing in the lives of the youth.

### Who can attend?

All divisions, unions, conferences, churches, and schools are urged to send young people and their leaders to this exciting event. *Age limit does not apply to leaders.*

### Conference Options

#### Option 1 December 24–29, 2007

Five-day Community Projects. Some youth and their leaders may be interested in coming earlier to participate in community projects and stay through the conference. After working on the projects, participants will then join the Conference, January 1–5, 2008.

#### Option 2 January 1–5, 2008

Arrival in Taipei on December 31, 2007 for the Youth Conference. Some youth may wish to come only for the conference. Celebrating what God has done through the lives of young people who participated in Option 1. All youth are encouraged to attend the Conference. This will be the final event of the Impact 10/40 project.

### For more information:

Website: [gc.youth.adventist.org](http://gc.youth.adventist.org) E-mail: [impact@gc.adventist.org](mailto:impact@gc.adventist.org)  
Or: contact your local Conference or Mission Youth Department

REGISTERED CHARITY: 1074937

### The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is a humanitarian organisation providing assistance without regard to ethnic, political or religious association.

#### Funds raised through the ADRA-UK Annual Appeal support projects that will:

- Provide new water bore holes for Togo
- Promote girls education in South Sudan
- Improve drinking water in Mali
- Build a primary school in Sudan
- Support women's rights in Peru
- Train rice farmers in Madagascar
- Teach adults to read and write in Papua New Guinea
- Build an orphanage in Kenya
- Help people with special needs in the UK
- Provide start-up grants for community projects in the UK
- Bring children back to school in Peru

Annual Appeal 2007: 31 March-15 April (extends to 22 April in London). Dates may vary in Scotland. All funds are collected by volunteers. For online donations using Gift Aid see our website at [www.adra.org.uk](http://www.adra.org.uk)



As I write this, I have been in Palau for 10 weeks, and I feel so blessed to be serving at Palau SDA Elementary school. Here, I have running water (your whites will never be white again) electricity and connection to the internet. However, they are frequently turned off without a warning. My first 2 months in Palau we had about 5 hours electricity a day due to the island having only one generator for a period of time. I am now accustomed to such incidents; however, I thank man for the invention of the flashlight and electricity. I personally believe God was testing all the SMs (Student Missionaries) and preparing them for His service and work to be done here in Palau for 2006/2007.

You may be wondering how and why I chose Palau. Late one night back at home, I was browsing the internet and realised I was very much stuck in a life I didn't enjoy or want. I ended up on the AVS website and before I knew it I had applied for three positions. Now here I am in Palau, Micronesia. The island has a population of 20,000 Palauan and 10,000 foreigners which includes around 500 Seventh-day Adventists.

Currently, I am serving as a primary school teacher. Each day as I walk into my classroom and see my students' little desks and the pictures they have drawn hanging on the wall, I feel blessed and proud. To have the privilege to take ten months out of the rat race and do what I feel God wants me to do: working with children, sharing my faith in Jesus and setting the foundations of their life.

When you are here you're not only a teacher in a class room, you also become a parental figure and a counsellor to many of the children that you interact with. There are days when I am discouraged and I ask myself why on earth I am in Palau. Why did I leave Scotland to serve as a teacher? There are frustrations I am faced with at times: lack of patience, lack of willing parents and living in close quarters to the other SMs. When I feel like this I look into my heart and into the eyes of each of my students. I know straight away that I am here to serve the Lord and make some little difference in each of these children's lives.

If you asked me what I do as student missionary primary teacher, I would reply 'I am Play dough for God.' This is the opportunity for God to mould, stretch and create me into a useful and willing servant.

I would like to highlight that being an SM Elementary teacher is not a 9-5 job. It is everything else you do; of course there is the lesson planning, grading and preparing. Yet it is spending time outside the classroom with the child that makes them a better student. An example of this was Palau's Independence Day and the opening of the new Capital building on the 1st and 2nd October 2006. In the space of those two days I had the opportunity to interact with my students and their families. This allowed them to see me for who I really am and also for the students to introduce me to their families; the students get so excited to share the teacher with their families! This allows me as a teacher to find a common ground with them and build a relationship with them which is part of being a servant to God.

When I am not working I have had the opportunity to enjoy breathtaking scenery, the beauty of what God has created here in Palau, snorkelling, swimming in the Pacific ocean, enjoying waterfalls and interacting with the Palauan people.

When stepping onto the runway in Palau it was evident that my time here would be warm, not by the warmth of the sun, because it is blistering, but because of the warmth of the Palauan people. This is something I have never experienced before. I took it first as a friendly gesture, but time and again I receive the same warmth from them. Every time I go and see the office lady at Koror Adventist church to borrow the photocopier for Pathfinder materials there is a smile on her face and a warm hug that I appreciate every time.

When I chat with Palauans regarding the warmth I receive from their culture they simply respond, 'It's the Palauan way.' You will never go hungry in Palau. The only way you will go



hungry here is if you're lazy. Sabbath potlucks amaze me, how sometimes so little food can feed so many people. It reminds me of the story of how Jesus fed the 5000 using only 5 loaves and 2 fish. It's the same way in Palau. Food can go for miles here. Where there is food there is always a large number of people with smiles on their faces. They are never in a hurry because it only leads to worry. As Christians we can learn a lot from this. We have time to work but we forget to put away our worry and give it to the Lord.

When I was back home I always took my family for granted for being there, but the Palauans have given me a true meaning of family. When a Palauan calls you family, you are a true member of the family. They have a deeper understanding of what family is than I knew before, where perhaps your best friend would call your mum 'Mum' and they are just playing around.

As a student missionary support is a big deal. Having a support structure of people back home is very important. They may not be there in body to share your experience with you but they are there in prayer. I have been blessed with an amazing mother and a wonderful best friend who both get excited in putting together the occasional moving box of goodies. Along with post cards and email I receive I feel it's a blessing each time I hear from those 'back home'.

Most importantly, your main support network no matter where you are is God. He is your support always. At times I can be so busy working for Him I forget actually to spend time with Him. Spending time in prayer, understanding Him and communicating with Him will bring Him glory. Be real with Him and He will be real with you. Try looking back and seeing how God has been working in all our lives from the beginning. It amazes me.

As a closing thought, why not step out of your boat and be a servant for God. It may only be for a short period of time or for the rest of your life. I know already that the experience that I am gaining here in Palau as a servant for Him is allowing me to develop my relationship with Him and preparing me for my eternal future.

Why not apply to be a Student Missionary?



**Play Dough for God**  
Sonja Eikum



Sonja Eikum is serving in Palau, Micronesia as a Primary School teacher. She is from the Scottish Mission.

# Questionnaire

Age (Please tick relevant box)

12-16  17-20  21-25  25+

Gender  male  female

Baptised?  yes  no

How often do you attend an Adventist church?

weekly  monthly  not often  never

Do you find what goes on in your church meaningful?

yes  no  sometimes  never

Based on your knowledge and experience, do the teachings of the church have any relevance to how you live your life?

yes  no  sometimes  never

Do the church programmes meet your needs?

yes  no  sometimes  never

Why do you come to church?

Friends  nurture faith  parents  tradition

Is the lifestyle the church encourages, a good thing?

yes  no  don't know  peer pressure

What one thing do you believe would make the church more relevant?

Do you believe that your church values and affirms young people?

yes  no

In your opinion and experience, does your church understand youth issues?

yes  no  not sure  no way!

Does your church need to change to meet the needs of twenty-first century youth? If so please state how:

Simply send this form to: The BUC Youth Dept. British Union Conference, Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts., WD25 9JZ. This survey is also available online at [www.adventist.org.uk](http://www.adventist.org.uk)



## Who • What • Where • When • Why

### What?

The Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) plan is designed to assist the Seventh-day Adventist Church in proclaiming the gospel to people everywhere through the ministry of Adventist Volunteers, matching their talents, skills, resources and professional expertise with defined needs.

### Who?

- Seventh-day Adventists who are between 18 and 79 years of age
- Baptized church members in regular standing for at least one year
- Singles
- Couples, preferably when both spouses can work. (Married volunteers may not serve without their spouse beyond three months.) Opportunities for families with children are limited.
- Financially able to serve without reward or compensation
- Do not usually receive employee benefits such as service credit or retirement benefits

### When?

- Adventist volunteers serve full time
- Short-term assignments up to two months
- Long-term assignments up to two years, or more
- Project groups, usually 2-4 weeks

### Where?

Everywhere – particularly in Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America, and the South Pacific.

### Why?

Because the Holy Spirit has called them.

### Is this for you?

If you have been inspired by the stories from Natasha and Sonja and you are interested in spending some time abroad as a missionary please visit [www.adventistvolunteers.org](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org) to look through the positions currently available.

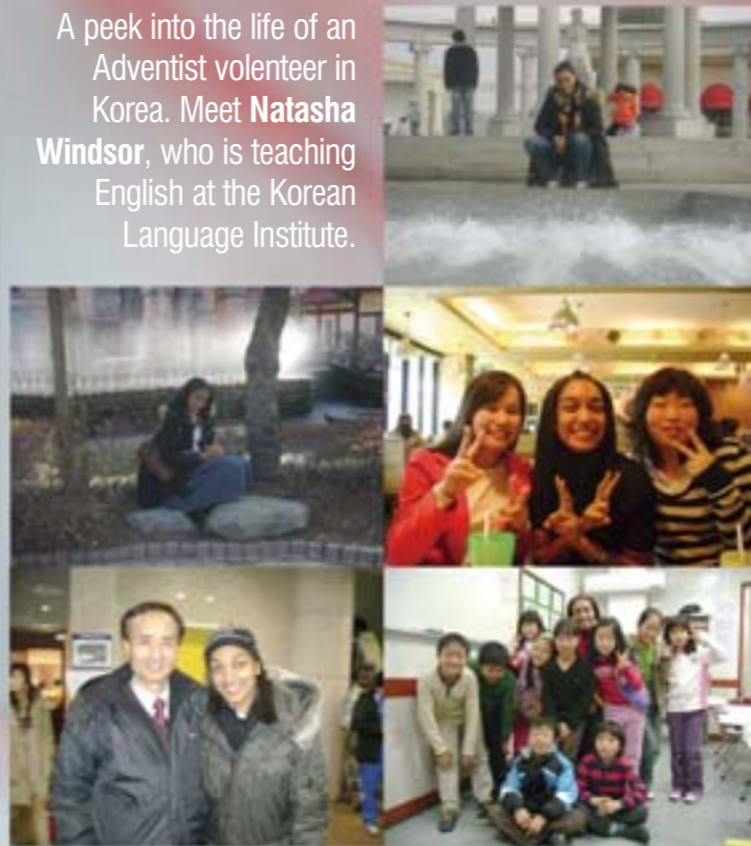
Download an application form from the website and submit it to your local mission or conference youth department.



# From Korea, with Love

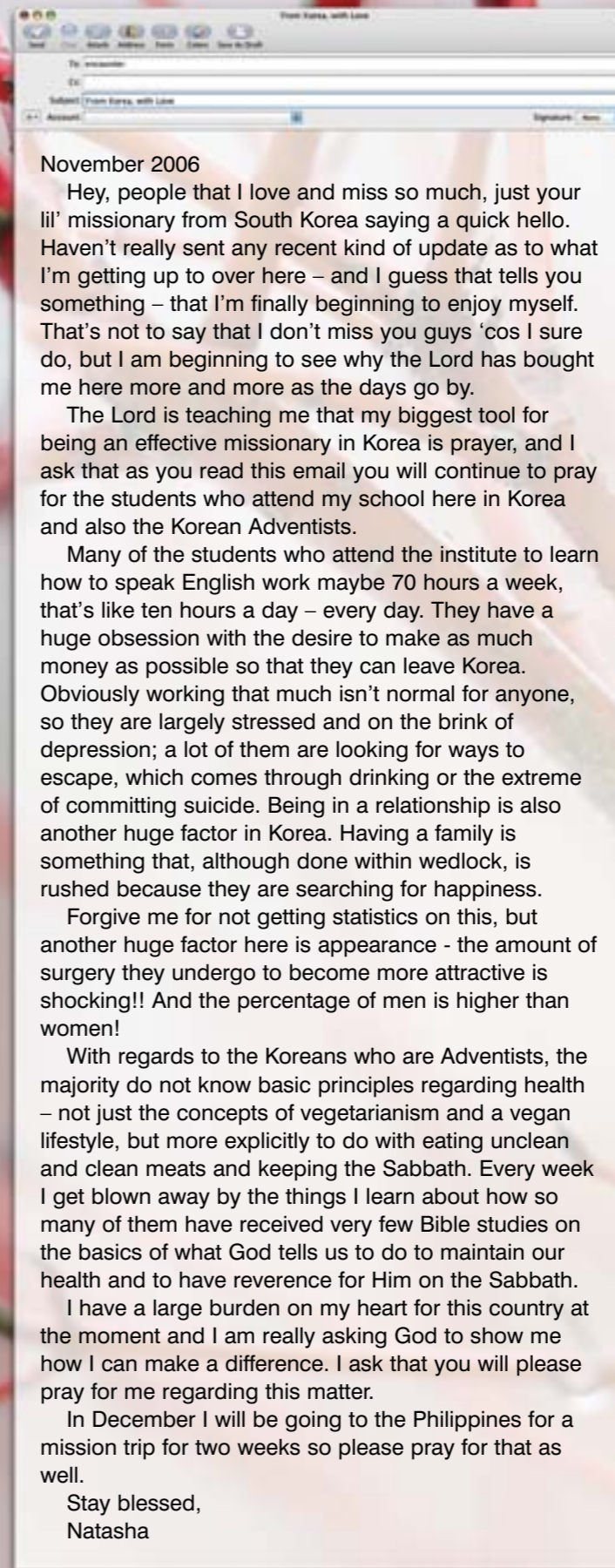
Natasha Windor

A peek into the life of an Adventist volunteer in Korea. Meet **Natasha Windor**, who is teaching English at the Korean Language Institute.



Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV)



And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Romans 13:11-14 (NIV)



Memories of childhood are somewhat random in my mind. When it comes to childhood and Easter, the only thing that stands out is an incident that happened when I was about eight years old. To say that I never got Easter eggs could be a total lie, I just can't remember. But what stands out is this one Easter, being out in the garden scoffing on newly-made chocolate eggshells, barely cool enough to be brittle.

Whether I ever got any other chocolate eggs I cannot remember, but when my Dad produced this chocolate egg mould, and what seemed to be about 10 lbs (that is 4.5359237 kilograms for the uninitiated) of chocolate, he had my full interest. At least I think it was my dad. The specific details were unimportant to an eight year old.

Did I know what the real meaning of Easter was then? This eight year old was not bothered until he had his chocolate.

My next random memory of encountering Easter eggs was when I was studying at Newbold College. I would love to say that during a raid from the occupants of the girls' dormitory we boys all got Easter eggs, but no such luck. Rather, it was while working to earn money for college fees that I came across cages of Easter eggs.

I had, prior to going to college, got my truck licence and worked for ADRA-UK for six months. With that qualification on my licence, I sought to do some agency driving during my Christmas break. Arriving at work at 5.30am on freezing December mornings, I would drive articulated lorries across East Anglia to Woolworth shops, delivering the goods on trolley cages. Can you imagine my surprise when, just days before Christmas, I was offloading cages of Easter eggs to shops? This has similarities with the intolerable insistence of shops to have Christmas decorations on sale in September. What a Scrooge I am!

Well, if nothing else, this does show one thing; the consistent commercialisation of religious festivals. While some would question the validity of Christmas as being a religious festival, it is a time, irrespective of its origin, when we can celebrate Jesus' arrival on earth as a baby. While the date has links with pagan worship, why can't the Christian church claim it as a time of celebration?

But the sad thing is, while Christians may recognise the opportunity for commemorating the birth of Christ, the majority of earth is ignorant of this appointment. But then, the same is true of Easter.

Commercialism and  
apologetics  
have

obscured the true meaning of Easter. Now, instead of searching for the enigma of Jesus, people search for the egg of chocolate. While I am glad to chance on a nativity scene at Christmas, it is rare to see a depiction of an empty tomb. At best I might see an occupied cross. The gift of God as man in the form of a newborn baby is a thought adrift in the sea of boxes and wrapping paper. The gift of life through Jesus' experience on the cross is overrun by rampant rabbits and hot cross buns.

But why should I be surprised, when during Jesus' time, religious leaders permitted commercialisation of religious activities in the temple. 'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers.' (Matthew 21:13 NIV). In fact, two of the three gospels which mention this account place it just days before Jesus' death. Jesus was just about to portray the very thing that was acted out in the temple by the 'people of God' but they did not realise it. Instead, the devil had manipulated the place so as to distract from true worship. People had to partake in the commercialisation of religion in order to get a glimpse of spiritual meaning. This kind of puts fairy lights and tinsel in a different light.

Since the first two people walked this earth we seem to have an irritating ability to be distracted. Adam and Eve put self before God. A study on sin is needed here, but if you wish to accept my conclusions, I believe the Bible presents sin as anything that puts self before God. So we are distracted by self. This sounds controllable till we add the distraction of commercialism of religion, marketing to replace a manger, and fertility folklore to replace our heavenly Father's turning away from Jesus.

So what of Easter? What if we want to see beyond the bunny? What is the true meaning of Easter?

I have hinted at the origins. Eve quoted God as saying that even if they touched the forbidden fruit they would die. Satan speculated with Eve as to the motives of God. 'You won't really die' was the chide of Satan. And nor did they, not immediately. Upon turning to self and away from God, Adam and Eve sinned. Sin is selfishness. Selfishness cannot exist in the presence of God. The presence of God repels selfishness. Therefore, Adam and Eve could no longer live in the garden God frequented. They died.

They died in two ways. Physically their bodies deteriorated, as ours do. Also spiritually they experienced a separation from God. The communion with God, the intimate relationship they had with him was dead, or at least essentially so.

What selfishness demands is the total separation from God the Father. Adam and Eve very nearly experienced that to its maximum, but for the promise of God that He would provide a way back. God would provide a solution. It was God's love and desire that no one should experience the permanence of the separation – spiritual death as opposed to physical death – which kept mankind alive. While the statement that they would not surely die was

not immediately true, the potential was there if they did not accept the solution God promised.

Let's step back a moment. Sin is selfishness. Selfishness cannot exist in the presence of God. God, through his love, limited the impact of the total separation until he could provide a solution. That solution then needed to be offered to everyone.

To put details to these statements, Adam and Eve did die physically, as all mankind does. Moreover, what they deserved was a total spiritual separation, a spiritual death. God limited that death. The only thing that could revive that spiritual life was a substitution. The thing is, the substitute had to be undeserving of the consequence. It was only God himself who could satisfy this criterion. Only the person of God, Jesus, who was without sin, without selfishness, could offer himself to experience the total separation from the presence of God.

That is why it was in agony that Jesus convulsed and sweated blood in the garden of Gethsemane. He knew that within twenty-four hours he would experience total separation from God the Father. When Jesus said, 'If this cup can be taken from me.' He meant that he did not want to experience the total separation from his Father. And there on the cross he certainly experienced the physical death, but what agonised Jesus is embedded in his words on the cross. 'About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" – which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"' Matthew 27:46 (NIV).

The cross was simply the means of physical death. The substitution, the love of God, the offer of life as God intended, is in the experience of Jesus. Jesus suffered total spiritual death, the separation from God the Father, so that by your choosing to accept this substitution, you may have life as God intended from the beginning. The only clause is you don't get it till Jesus' Second Coming. And that's not all. Before Jesus left this earth he instructed those who accept his substitution, his followers, that in their daily business they should invite people to become followers, to baptise them and teach them all he had commanded (Matthew 28:19-20).

The real meaning of Easter is that you have a choice. Accept what God has done for you in dealing with the sin problem, or go your own way; one has eventual benefits, the other has eternal consequence. Not a sight of a bunny or the sniff of chocolate anywhere. So the next time you revel in the frivolity of festivities at Christmas or Easter, consider the real meaning behind it all, and realise the words of Paul when he writes, 'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.' (1 Corinthians 1:18).

## More than chocolates & bunny rabbits

Nathan Stickland



Nathan Stickland is  
Pathfinder Director for the  
South England Conference.



# creative ways

to share the meaning of Easter



Karen Holford

Easter is approaching with its jumbled images of eggs, crosses, lilies, chocolate and rabbits. It is interesting to wonder how many people in our society today understand the significance of Easter.

As it's a time when we remember how Jesus died to save us, it's probably at least as important as celebrating Jesus' birth. Jesus' gift of our salvation is at the very heart of the Easter message. Here are some ideas to help you share your faith during this special season:

Buy some egg-sized Easter eggs and tie or stick a tag onto each one with an Easter message or a website address with a good presentation about Easter. Hide them in clean places, such as around an office or library, or a place where people could find them and be intrigued by their message. There are some short 'Flash' movies at [www.dayspring.com/movies](http://www.dayspring.com/movies) which you can email to friends, or send them the link so they can view the movie. Do view them first as some of them may not be appropriate for your friends. There is an Easter presentation at [www.reata.org](http://www.reata.org), as well as another presentation called 'Interview with God' which you can access from that site in different languages. Print off copies of 'The Father's Love Letter' from [www.fathersloveletter.com](http://www.fathersloveletter.com) and include them with your cards.

Organise an Easter egg hunt in your local area. Ask permission from the authorities managing the land where you plan to hold the hunt in case there are any restrictions. Advertise the event in shops, schools, newspapers and libraries, etc. You can hide lots of egg tokens, such as flat card egg shapes, which can be exchanged for chocolate eggs, so that the chocolate eggs don't melt in the sun or become contaminated. Include a few gold card egg tokens which will win special eggs. Make sure you have enough eggs to honour all the tokens. Give each person a bag in which to collect their egg tokens and include a leaflet explaining the meaning of Jesus' death. You could also charge £1 per child for the egg hunt to raise money for an ADRA project. You will find Easter tracts and special comics for children about Easter at [www.cpo-online.org.uk](http://www.cpo-online.org.uk)

Email your friends an e-card from a Christian website such as [www.dayspring.com](http://www.dayspring.com) or [www.crosscards.com](http://www.crosscards.com). Or collect together lots of art cards that depict Jesus on the cross, or the resurrection. Spread the cards on a table and ask people which picture is most like their idea of Jesus.

Host a showing of a movie like 'The Passion' and serve refreshments while people pair up afterwards to discuss their response to the film.

Go onto the streets as a group of young people and give away Easter eggs with a specially printed witness tag attached to them. There are some ready to print gift tags at <http://discipleshipideas.com/images/happy%20easter.pdf> but you may want to print and design your own.

Display well-designed witness posters in a key places, such as on your wall at work, or wherever you can find a place where you have permission to pin up a poster, such as in a library, or even on the inside of toilet doors. [www.cpo-online.org.uk](http://www.cpo-online.org.uk) creates excellent sets of outreach posters for Easter, Christmas, and Harvest, as well as for general outreach purposes.

Wear a witness t-shirt from [www.religioustshirts.co.uk](http://www.religioustshirts.co.uk), or get together as a group and design your own shirts using your computer graphics programme and special t-shirt printer paper. Don't forget to reverse your design before printing so that it will iron on your shirt the right way round.

Explore [www.rejesus.com](http://www.rejesus.com) which is a fascinating and contemporary website exploring Jesus and spirituality. New items are being posted all the time and special features are added for seasons like Christmas and Easter. Explore the site with a friend, or see if you can order cards to advertise the website and pop them in your Easter cards.

Print off small booklets from <http://discipleshipideas.com/images/jesus%20booklet.pdf>, or adapt the idea to create your own. Give the booklets out as Easter cards, or leave them in places where people will find them.

Make a large cross from light-coloured wood and construct a base for it so that it will stand unsupported. As a group, write on the cross, in large, clear handwriting, what Jesus' death and resurrection mean to you. Find a place to display the cross where people can pass by and read what has been written. Have someone standing near the cross to answer questions and to talk to people.

Plan a creative Easter service to which you could invite your friends. Use film clips, moving images, mime, and contemporary music to convey the message of Easter, or present a drama. Or explore what other churches are doing in your area to see if they are holding any creative services, concerts or dramas and invite your friends to go along with you.

If you are old enough this may be a good time to get together with a good friend and donate some blood. As you give blood, think about how Jesus shed His blood for you. If anything hurts a little bit, think about how much Jesus hurt for you. Thank God that you have life and health and can sacrifice some of your blood to help another person live. Tell your friends about your experience at the Blood Donor Clinic and use it as a way to open up a conversation about what it means to make sacrifices so that other people can live.

Whatever you do, remember the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection for you personally. The more real and significant it is to you, the more likely other people around you will catch your enthusiasm and become curious about the meaning of Easter.

Karen Holford is the Associate Director of the SEC Children's and Family Ministries Departments. She has two teenage sons and a daughter at University. She has written a series of books containing 100 creative ideas for prayers, worship and Sabbath activities.



Together we can make a difference

You can be a part of it on 1st July

Where were you for AYA Strollathon in 2006? Missed out? Well, that was unfortunate for you, because you missed out on being part of a great event and the opportunity to raise over £2500 for Sickle Cell research and Harper Bell Adventist school. Also on the chance to rub shoulders with the inventor and former West Indian test star Ron Headley who was on hand for the presentations.

Hey, but guess what? You have a chance to redeem yourself, because coming soon is the third annual AYA event. So prepare yourself for the church's biggest ever fund raising, fun-packed extravaganza in the shape of Advent Youth Aid 2007.

AYA is the event that gives young people the opportunity to raise lots of money for charity whilst having loads of fun in the process. This year's event will be held in Wolverhampton on 1st July with the Family Fun Day.

Activities will include: the annual 10k strollathon, singathon, packathon (young people packing shoppers' groceries) aerobathon (community aerobics), plus loads of sporty, fun type activities for the whole family, including rodeo, sumo and gladiator championship, Pathfinders 5-a-side football championships, lots and lots of stalls and a radio broadcast from venue, not forgetting all the health stuff such as health mot and sickle cell screening. Also this year for the first time, the event will conclude with a presentation banquet to be held at the prestigious Bethel Convention Centre in West Bromwich on 18th November.

Oh, and don't forget the added bonus: up to 20% of what you raise will go to your club or charity of your choice. So the more you raise, the more your club will benefit. We are anticipating record numbers of entrants for all the activities as well as the number of people attending the event. So register early to avoid disappointment.

It will be one not to be missed. For more information, sponsor forms and information pack please contact Trevor Davis 0121 377 6236 or 07989856810, Cislyn Morgan 07877286931, Lorna Harris 07739840947, or visit [www.camphilladventist.org.uk](http://www.camphilladventist.org.uk).

This year, 2007, the General Conference Youth Department has reached its 100th year of services and ministries to the World in general and to all Seventh-day Adventist young people all over the world in particular.

As we commemorate this great milestone, we want you to help us make this year a memorable one by creating a Seventh-day Adventist Youth Songbook.

**Guidelines for composing songs for the sda youth song book:**

- ⊕ The song should glorify GOD. 1 Cor. 10:31.
- ⊕ The song should employ lyrics that positively stimulate intellectual abilities as well as the emotions and the will power.
- ⊕ Good lyrics are creative, rich in content, and of good composition. They focus on the positive and reflect moral values; they educate and uplift; and they correspond with sound Biblical theology.
- ⊕ The song should foster our spiritual, psychological, and social sensitivity, and our intellectual growth. It is characterised by quality, balance, appropriateness, and authenticity.
- ⊕ The music should be holistic, appealing to both the intellect and the emotions and affecting the body in a positive way.
- ⊕ The music should reveal creativity rather than monotony and repetitiveness.
- ⊕ The song should be drawn from quality melodies, harmonies used in an interesting and artistic way, and rhythm that complements them.
- ⊕ We recognise and acknowledge the contribution of different cultures in worshipping God. Musical forms and instruments vary greatly in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family, and music drawn from one culture may sound strange to someone from a different culture. As members of a world family, we respect the music of our brothers and sisters in every land who worship God sincerely through music.

Adapted from: GC Music Guidelines

Thank you for your support in being a big part in making this *SDA Youth Song Book* a reality.

The deadline is September 2007. Send your entry to the BUC Youth Dept., Stanborough Park, Watford WD25 9JZ.

## SDA Youth Song Book





The BUC Youth Department in  
partnership with Hope UK

Are drugs an issue in  
your church?

Are you concerned  
and willing to make  
a difference?

## Train as a Drug Educator for free!

Be equipped to work with parents, youth workers, children  
and young people through interactive drug awareness sessions

The course will take place across a series of weekends in Watford, Hertfordshire  
on the following dates; attendance on all dates is required to complete the course.

**21-22 April 2007, 12-13 May 2007, 9-10 June 2007 & 14-15 July 2007**



## Accredited Training with Hope UK



Promoting drug-free lifestyles  
Preventing drug-related harm  
[www.hopeuk.org](http://www.hopeuk.org)

### LOCN Accredited Courses

- How to take a Drug Awareness Session
- Young People, Drugs and the Role of the Youth Worker
- Alcohol, Tobacco and Solvents (Distance learning only)
- Drug Awareness (Distance learning only)

In addition, there is a non-accredited course providing basic information on alcohol and other drugs  
Training is provided by personnel trained to London Open College Network standards.