

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE: NOT A CHALLENGE [Kenwyn Richins/BUC News #620
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I was reading a devotional online sometime in 2006, entitled "Understanding the Bible". The writer, a pastor, asked the question at the beginning of this devotional "How well do you know the Bible?" My personal response to that question at the time would have been "fairly well", but upon reflection was I really making the effort to get to know and understand it? During my teenage life, back in Trinidad, in Pathfinders, the Bible was fun and in fact still is, but for some reason or the other I may have lost my way in relation to the emphasis I needed to place in the Word. Trying to rationalise an excuse is unnecessary, as finding time for the Word is not hard, given the fact I might find time for other things which are of less importance.

In August 2007, the Area 6A (North London) churches hosted an evangelistic event entitled Impact London. This proved to be the catalyst for The Bible Challenge in 2008. During the campaign mainly the young evangelists from the Caribbean and the young people of North London undertook the initial planning and promotional witnessing activities and the actual nightly programmes. One thing that fascinated the teens and youth here was the passion, understanding and knowledge the visiting evangelists had for the Bible. This was mentioned at the post-campaign meeting I held with the teens and youth and it was decided that The Bible Challenge would be undertaken. The Bible Challenge itself was not a replacement for an evangelistic campaign but a medium to encourage teens and youth to study the Bible as well as provide another dimension to AYS meetings. Non-members would also be invited to attend and even possibly join church teams, thereby making The Bible Challenge a witnessing tool without the perception of an imposed conversion initiative. It would be challenging by nature but with the focal point being the study of God's Word and showing how the Bible can be exciting.



Planning and promotional activities were undertaken during the first two months of 2008. Funding was secured from the 6A Pastoral Advisory and sponsorship was attained from the Stanborough Press Limited through study materials. The lecturers of the Newbold College Theological Studies department facilitated the preparation of the questions and where available to act as official judges during the events. The SEC Media Centre also produced individual audio Bible Study CDs to aid each participant in studying the particular book each quarter. The Bible Challenge didn't only focus on the Bible itself but on Adventist History (mainly European), Ellen G White, Fundamental Beliefs and General Knowledge. This was included so that the roots of our church were not forgotten.

In Quarter 1 the 13-19 and 20+ age groups studied Luke whilst the under 12s were given the Life of Christ board game to study. The finals were held at the Holloway Adventist church with Edmonton Central being successful in the under 12 category whilst Barnet were successful in the 13-19 and 20+ categories. More churches registered for the second quarter including Greenwich from South London. Due to the increased number of participating churches two simultaneous semi-final events were held at the Holloway and Tottenham West Green Road churches,



to reduce the numbers for the final. Studying Acts and the life of Paul, once again Barnet dominated the 13-19 and 20+ categories whilst Greenwich under 12s only lost out to Edmonton Central during a tie-break. The Quarter 3 event was postponed due to holiday commitments hence in Quarter 4 the

book of study was Genesis and the Egypt to Canaan board game. The successful churches were Edmonton Central in the under 12 and 13-19 categories with Barnet once again winning the 20+ category.

As 2009 is the Year of Evangelism we aim to focus on the Books of Daniel and Revelation whilst promoting "a book" of the quarter to be studied in relation to evangelism. The Bible Challenge will definitely be undertaken in North London with the aim for the other areas in London to participate. Churches as far as Birmingham have already registered their interest and we hope to conclude the Year of Evangelism with a joint South and North England event.

Keep a look out for the dates of The Bible Challenge happening in your area and pray for the continued success of the project in Jesus' name.

A selection of pictures from the final can be seen at <www.adventistpictures.org.uk>.