

Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland

Messenger

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ASI-UK convention

The ASI-UK spring weekend convention was a great success, well-attended by a variety of BUC members, eighty-four in all, who met over March 25-27 at the Hunton Park Conference Centre, Hertfordshire.

Their programme was well planned and full of spiritual nourishment. There was lively praise singing, supported by a very competent band from Newbold College, and some excellent sermons.

It was the period of presentations and testimonies of ASI members, however, which turned out to be one of the most inspiring parts of the convention. Some of these will be featured separately in future issues of *Messenger*, but the following three deserve special mention here:

REACH International UK

Alvira Pearson spoke passionately about REACH (Render Effective Aid to Children), telling of the organisation's work in Africa and Eastern Europe, of which she has first-hand experience. During the past thirty-seven years this lay-driven organisation has helped countless children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve far beyond their wildest dreams. REACH owns and manages schools, orphanages, hostels and feeding and day-care centres around the world, and its 'primary purpose is to free children from hunger and illiteracy.' (For more information about REACH and its goals, contact Alvira at rpelvira@aol.com.)

STOP International

Kish Poddar was there to represent STOP International, a registered charity that has been operating since 2000 for the 'relief of poverty, sickness and distress of orphans [and abandoned children], resulting from the effects of war, famine or any other natural or man-made disaster anywhere in the world.' (See information@stop-intl.org.uk): in addition to which, they offer educational assistance to these children until age 16.

Special Needs Camp

Joy Bussey, who co-ordinates the annual Special Needs Camp at Aberdaron, was there to represent this worthy initiative. The camp is held each July for a week, and most of the campers are not Adventists. This ministry emulates the concern that Jesus had for the disabled of his day, giving them a safe, caring and fun-filled week, along with some appropriate spiritual food. It also gives their regular caregivers a brief and well-deserved respite. According to Joy, through the years, a number of staff members have found their inspiration to train as caring professionals at Aberdaron. If you want to know more about this initiative contact her at: js.bussey@ntlworld.com.

Have you thought about joining ASI?

Adventist Services and Industries provides an opportunity for Adventist business and professional people to meet regularly and inspire each other to witness in *their* workplaces, and take on projects that make a difference in the community. Have you thought about joining? For more information please contact Jim Cunningham (j.cunningham.323@btinternet.com) or Christine (Manners-Smith manners-smith@ntlworld.com).



Registration was a professionally run affair.



Good food – good fellowship – a great combination!



Megapixels of creation

MESSENGER will run a four-part series during the next twelve months entitled *Megapixels of Creation*, offering our photographers the opportunity to have their nature photography published in the magazine.

Whether you are a 'casual snapper' or a 'budding pro', it matters not (and neither does your age). All you need to do is send us your finest-quality nature photos – landscapes, wildlife, cloud formations, close-ups – anything in the UK that you think shows God's creation at its best. Please tell us where your picture was taken, and what equipment you have used. If your submission is really good, it might even appear in our devotional calendar.

This is not a competition, and the only reward will be to see your photography in print! Please send your photography to me at: dbell@stanboroughpress.co.uk. Happy snapping!



Lady Mary's Walk, Crieff, Scotland, taken by Pastor Martin Bell.

Canon G9.

DAVID BELL, MESSENGER DESIGNER

Enhancing Health

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

Knowing your body – part 3a

Detoxification and elimination

Have you ever wondered how your body copes with the abundance of products that you put into it each day? What happens to all the food, drink and varied medication we take from time to time? This article gives a synopsis of the seven body systems which enable us to detoxify harmful substances and eliminate unwanted products in order to maintain good health.

When your body confronts a toxic substance, a foreign body or even an excess of good products, the following systems come into play:

Blood – this is the key liquid which transports substances throughout the body. It delivers the needed nutrition to areas that require it, and assists the body in eliminating waste by transporting it to the organs that will expel it.

Colon – the colon transports waste

outside of the body. Adequate hydration of the digestive system enables the colon to function efficiently. Inadequate fluid intake encourages the colon to hold on to waste products, which causes the body to accumulate toxins.

Kidneys – the kidneys produce urine from the waste products of the body. Adequate hydration enables the kidneys to produce urine, making the waste easier to expel. Poor diet and dehydration can negatively affect kidney health. A Department of Health report revealed that 33,059 hospital admissions in 2002-2003 were due to kidney disease.

Liver – this organ is sometimes referred to as the body's 'factory' and is one of the largest and most vital organs. Its multiple roles include: filtering toxins; metabolising foods; converting ingredients into specific substances for use across the body; storing fats, sugars and vitamins; producing natural chemicals; breaking down harmful substances; removing harmful products from the blood and balancing the body's chemical makeup.

Lungs – these control our breathing and are vital to life. When we exhale we breathe out waste carbon dioxide made by our cells. Deep breathing, therefore, is crucial in assisting this process.

Lymphatic system – this is the body's filter system which gets rid of bacteria and other foreign particles. It also supports the body's immune system. Exercise and hydration are key factors for its health.

Skin – this is the body's largest organ. By sweating naturally, we encourage the cleansing of the skin and help to maintain its elasticity and health. The skin also gets rid of some toxins.

In the next issue we will look at exercises and food products which encourage the body to cleanse itself and eliminate harmful substances.

Good health!

editorial

As a lad I was given a boomerang. Unfortunately, the gift did not have an 'operator's manual', and I was left to experiment with the oddly shaped device. Experimentation quickly became frustration, however, as the boomerang failed to do what the dictionary said it should – 'return to the thrower'!

That boomerang disillusioned me, and I soon tired of fetching the perverse thing from the neighbour's yard. I never mastered it.

The eggs came back!

I failed to get that stick to 'boomerang', but let me tell you about some eggs that did.

As a young teen, I remember slipping out of a church social one Saturday evening. There were three or four of us, and we were armed with eggs. Fresh, uncooked, large hens' eggs!

We circled the neighbourhood, flitting through the shadows, peering over gates, searching for targets. Then, to my shame, we threw those eggs . . . into post boxes, against front doors, onto verandas and at garage doors!

Four decades later those eggs 'boomeranged'. I found them splattered on my garage door!

Egg 'splat' eats paintwork

That morning I learnt the bitter lesson that I unwittingly inflicted on others: that the sulphur and amino acids in eggs harms paintwork!

Yes, Justin Timberlake's lyrics got this one right: *'What goes around, goes around, goes around, comes all the way back around!'*

When we deliberately injure, embarrass, humiliate, exploit or harm our fellow men in any way, we run a high risk that such things will return to haunt us, even hurt us! I have seen it come *'all the way back around'* for others, just as it did for me.

History provides countless examples of those who were beaten by the 'boomerang'. Adolf Hitler, author of immeasurable human

Lessons from the 'boomerang'



Julian Hibbert
Editor

misery, whose minions murdered many innocent people with a bullet to the head, died in his Berlin bunker from the same fate.

During one phase of the French Revolution it became a dictatorship run by Maximilien Robespierre, who used 'The Committee of Public Safety' to arrest and execute anyone suspected as a 'counter-revolutionary'. They fed thousands of innocent civilians to the guillotine in 1793 and 1794, in what became known as the 'Reign of Terror'.

Then the tide of revolution suddenly turned, and: *'In July 1794, he was arrested and executed in the same fashion as those whom he had condemned.'*² What goes around 'comes all the way back around'!

Ever heard of Haman?

The Bible tells 'boomerang' stories too. Ever heard of Haman? He plotted the genocide of God's people in Persia, and the death of Mordecai – the Jew who would not grovel before him. But he reckoned without Esther's inspired plan (Esther 5-7) that resulted in the following bizarre events:

'Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king."

'The king said, "Hang him on it!" So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai . . .' (Esther 7:9, 10, NIV.)

It doesn't make any sense

Doing things to hurt and harm others – or destroy their reputations – just doesn't make any sense, does it? Firstly, because life is already so full of what I call 'ambient' danger. That threat, pain and suffering that lurks in our surroundings – primed and ready to cause us harm when we least expect it. An invisible virus; the loose pavestone; slippery ice; a malignant cell; tired brakes; redundancy; that stray bullet!

Life's circumstances are potentially hostile. Why should we make it more difficult for others to cope with them by our meanness?

Secondly, the law of the 'boomerang' tells me that if you intentionally and maliciously inflict harm on others, it's just a matter of time before you get it back, with interest!

Pass it on – give someone else a push!

In the light of this, I am so glad that Jesus made this one of the rules of his earthly kingdom: *'Do to others as you would have them do to you.'* (Luke 6:31, NIV.) Here he takes us beyond the **avoidance of evil**, to the **commission of good**.

He urges us to do good wherever there is an opportunity for it. Not just any kind of 'good', mind you. Not half-hearted or begrudging 'good'. Not a carefully measured **well-that-is-good-enough-for-them** sort of 'good'. No, he wants us to practise the kind of good that would make us feel blessed, were we to receive it.

Dr Elton Wallace told this story during one of our college chapels. His car ran out of fuel on a US interstate highway, a few miles short of a service station. He sat for a minute or two, scolding himself and psyching himself up for the embarrassment that lay ahead. After all, no self-respecting man wants to be seen walking along a highway carrying an empty can!

Suddenly there was a shout from behind: *'Hi there! You git problems?'*

'Yeh! Run out of gas', was Elton's reply.

'Take it outa gear, an' I'll push you to the gas station.'

The man skillfully matched their bumper rubbers and began to push Elton's car down the interstate. One, two, three . . . just as many miles as it took to park him at a pump.

Elton leapt out and waved his wallet. *'Thanks! What do I owe you for your kindness?'*

'You owe me nothing, Mister. Just pass it on – give someone else a push!'



¹Collins Compact English Dictionary, New Edition, 1998. ²'Guillotine' in www.en.wikipedia.org.

The King's translation



by David Marshall

The King James Version of the Bible has been called the 'noblest monument to English prose'.¹

It is no accident that the works of literature most widely believed to have been defining influences on the English language – the King James Version and the works of Shakespeare – both date from the same period. That period was the late English Renaissance, when English was coming into its own as a language.

No one disputes the elegance

of the King James translation. Nevertheless, that elegance was achieved by accident.

The fifty-four translators appointed by the King and Archbishop Richard Bancroft following the Hampton Court Conference (1604) were instructed to follow strict rules of translation: fifteen in all. What these amounted to were:

Accuracy. Most of the translators appointed were experts in biblical languages. James wanted the 'best-learned'

in both universities, and directed that their work should be 'reviewed by the bishops and the chief learned [men] of the Church.'

The past. The translators were made aware that they were standing on the shoulders of giants. The 'rules' made it clear that full weight should be given to previous English translations in the new work. They were mentioned specifically: Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's (actually the work of Tyndale and his

disciple John Rogers), the Great Bible, Whitchurch's Geneva Bible and the Bishops' Bible (1568).

The King's translators set out to achieve the best rendering of God's great revelation to man. Accuracy was what they aimed for. Later translations would deliberately set out to achieve literary merit. The King James translators did not, but achieved it.

So where did this stylistic elegance come from?

Of the earlier English translations

– which the KJV translators were told to use, but, if possible, improve on – only the Tyndale translations were the work of one man. Tyndale's translation of Genesis to 2 Chronicles, the whole of the New Testament, and, according to Tyndale's biographer,² certain other Old Testament passages were used with minimal amendment in each of the subsequent versions. Nine tenths of the Tyndale New Testament of 1534 is used in the KJV of 1611. So, was the elegance Tyndale's? Some, apparently, but by no means all. Pre-KJV translators, other than Tyndale, must share the credit. And so must the King's translators themselves.

A major contributing factor to the KJV's elegance of style was a decision taken early on by the King's translators and mentioned explicitly in the preface to the 1611 Bible. They chose to abandon the purely mechanical approach to translating biblical languages. That approach would have woodenly translated Hebrew

and Greek words by the use of the same English term throughout. Instead, the King's translators harnessed the richness of the English language by translating Greek and Hebrew words with differing English words and expressions according to context. The resultant vocabulary and turns of phrase enhanced the text, and avoided awkward 'translator's English'.

The six groups of translators – two at Westminster, two at Oxford, two at Cambridge – and the smaller groups that reviewed and revised their work must be given credit:

- For choosing the best in the work of their predecessors;
- For taking full advantage of more recent developments in the art of translation and in the better understanding of Hebrew.

Can the King take any of the credit for the translation that bears his name?

The suggestion by the Hampton Court Conference that a new

translation of the Bible be undertaken came from John Reynolds, one of the few Puritans permitted to attend, who was Master of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and subsequently became one of the translators. The King latched onto the suggestion for political reasons and was involved in some initial planning. However, aside from occasional expressions of impatience, the King would appear to have 'lost interest'. He put no money into the project. It was paid for by what we would call 'the private sector'. Though it must be said that, while the translators were not paid, most of them subsequently received lucrative promotions. The suggestion that the dilettante King took any part in the translation process is absurd. The fact that he lent his name to the project did not ensure its success either. The generally recognised quality of the King James Version did that, but not until decades after the King was dead. Initial post-1611 attitudes were apt to enlarge on its faults.

After four centuries, the faults we might highlight would be quite different. Though translated when the language was coming into its own, the KJV was not 'cutting edge' in its use of English. Professor David Daniell, in his biography of Tyndale, and his monumental work *The Bible in English* (Yale University Press), argues that, in many places, Tyndale's phrasing feels 'modern' and, by comparison, the KJV feels 'archaic'. 'Tyndale's genius,' says Daniell, 'is that his ear for how people spoke was so good . . . ; it really was, at base, the spoken language of the people.'³

Only rarely can we fault the KJV's elegance, but it was not close to the language of the people – even in 1611. To some it seemed 'unnatural, artificial and stilted'⁴ – and that in spite of its preference for 'native English, rather than Latinisms'.⁵

Some blame the fact that the KJV was 'already a bit archaic in 1611' on its 'conservative mandate': 'not to make a new translation but to revise the old'. That 'restrained [the translators] . . . from modernising the English of it, even up to the usage of their own time'.⁶ They still used 'ye' in 'ye cannot serve God and mammon', even though very few people said 'ye' in common speech. They used 'thou' for 'you', 'gat' for 'got', 'spake' for 'spoke', and so on, all of which were archaisms by 1611.⁷

Professor McGrath believes that part of the reason why the King's translators used archaic forms like 'Thee', 'Thou', 'Thy' and 'Thine', and verb endings such as *sayest/sayeth, givest/giveth, hast/hath*, was that almost all of them came from the South-East of England. Studies of linguistic usages elsewhere in England indicate that these forms had been out of date for half a century further north and west.⁸

Translators have a responsibility to the languages from which they are translating; and the responsibility to render the messages of inspired books with especial care. However, they also have a responsibility of the language into which they are translating those inspired books; and to use words and thought forms comprehensible to potential readers. What is at stake is the Good News which is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). That being the case, the responsibility to both sets of languages (biblical and vernacular) is, arguably, a responsibility to God, as well as to readers.

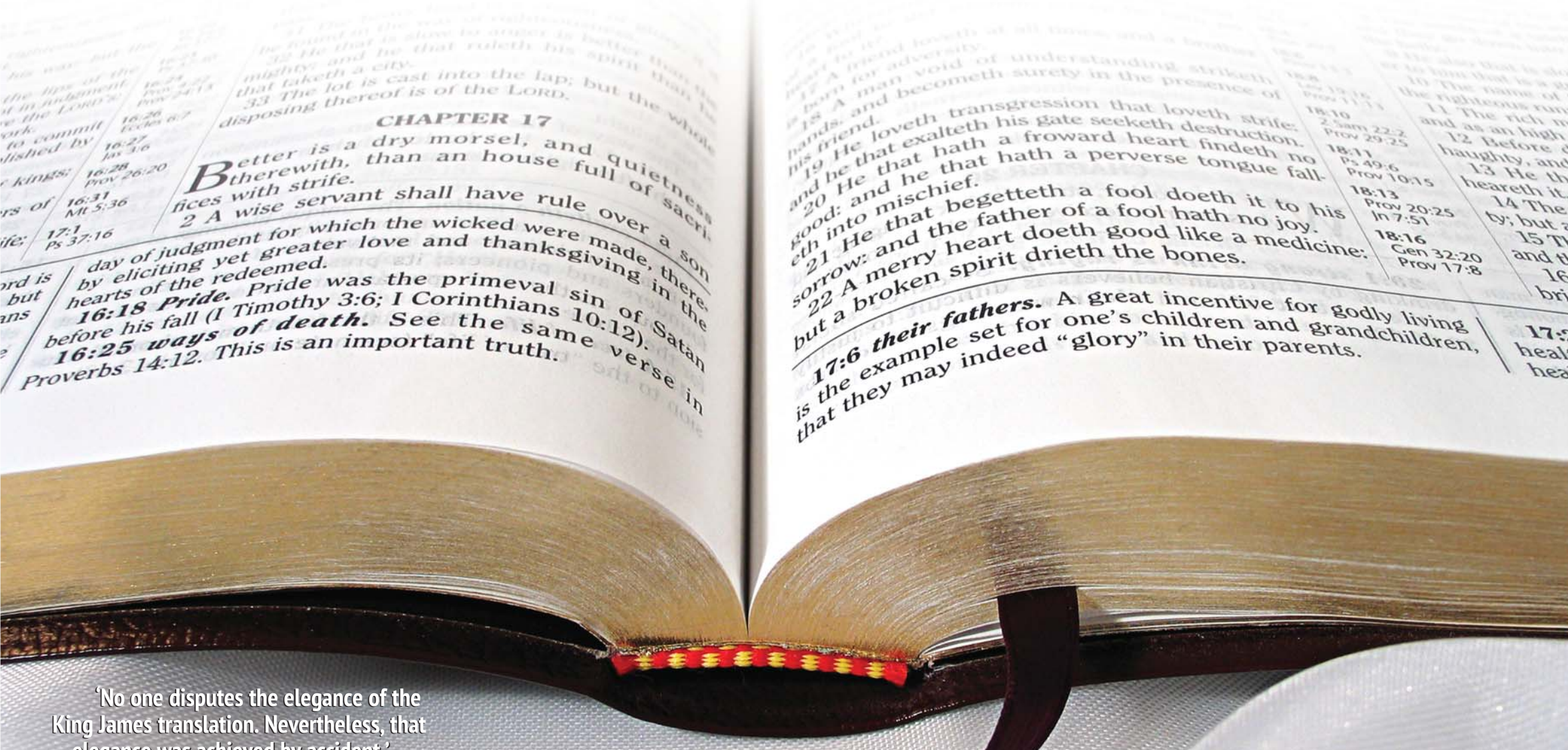
Hence a nineteenth-century bishop could – correctly – state that the King James Bible raised the English language to new heights. Hence an eighteenth-century evangelist, John Wesley, could – equally properly – yearn for Scripture cast in language that the ordinary man could understand. The latter was most akin to the vision Tyndale had, to make the Good News as clear to the ploughboy as to the bishop.

While, today, we are right to exult in 'the noblest monument to English prose' and four hundred years of 'the most influential book in the English language',⁹ do we also have a responsibility to reach the twenty-first century with the Good News in clear, comprehensible language – as Tyndale did to the sixteenth?

Translation involves aiming at a moving target. The speed of that movement has accelerated with the centuries.

¹'King James Bible Turns 400', *tothesource*, 16 September 2010. ²David Daniell, *William Tyndale, A Biography* (Yale University Press), p. 333 et seq. ³*Ibid.*, p. 356. See also pp. 303, 312. ⁴Alister McGrath, *In the beginning: The Story of the King James Bible* (Hodder), p. 258. ⁵McGrath, *op cit.*, p. 262. ⁶Benson Bobrick, *The Making of the English Bible* (Phoenix), p. 264. ⁷Melvyn Bragg, *The Adventure of English: The Biography of a Language* (Sceptre), p. 114. ⁸McGrath, *op cit.*, pp. 269-276, 301-310. ⁹Adam Nicolson, at the launch of King James Bible exhibition at Cambridge University Library.

'No one disputes the elegance of the King James translation. Nevertheless, that elegance was achieved by accident.'



God is only a call away

by Steve Holden



'We are affirming that *the final victory will go to love, not to despair.*'

So reads a newspaper article in *The Telegraph*, reporting on the wedding of Emma Howard – a survivor of the recent Christchurch earthquake.¹

Miss Howard, we are told, was rescued from the wreckage of a shopping centre in the early hours of the morning after the earthquake, which measured 6.3 in magnitude, hit New Zealand.

The uplifting account tells of how, only three days later, she was able to walk down the aisle to marry the man she thought she would never see again.

The emotionally charged wedding took place as previously planned – along with assembled relatives and friends, many bearing injuries sustained during the quake.

Emma was trapped in the dark, beneath a collapsed slab of concrete and steel, with little room to move. 'For about five hours I thought I was going to die', she said. 'I was panicking and experienced uncontrollable crying fits.' Fortunately she managed to retrieve her mobile phone and, discovering she had a signal, was able to contact Chris Greenslade, her husband-to-be, who was able to direct rescuers to her location.

Before setting off for the church (one that was still intact), Emma was re-united with Carl Stockton, a British volunteer who had pulled her from the pile of metal and concrete – thereby saving her life.

She had been so, so fortunate to survive the disaster, he said. The quake killed her manager and put another workmate in hospital in a serious condition. At the time of writing some fourteen other persons were still unaccounted for, buried under the debris of the same building.

The minister who conducted the ceremony acknowledged the 'extraordinary circumstances' in which this wedding was taking place. At the same time a meeting for the families of people still missing was held at a school hall just across the road.

'We are a city in suffering', he said, 'which makes what happens here this afternoon all the more poignant.'

'We are affirming that *the final victory will go to love – not to despair.*'

What a powerful statement that is. It echoes many such statements of faith and trust recorded in the Bible, in the face of difficulty and danger.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:8 (NIV), paints a word picture like this:

'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.'

Our journey through life is not always a smooth one. Most of us have to face difficulties and perhaps moments of despair. Events may suddenly, and without warning, have an unwelcome impact on us – well-made plans may be dashed. We may feel buried at times, as Emma was, beneath a heavy load that seems insurmountable (or immovable) – we may feel trapped and helpless!

If we find ourselves in such a place, let's remember that help, rescue, and hope for the future are only a call away. If our batteries remain charged, we will have reception to the One who can help.

In Romans 8:28 (NIV) Paul affirms that '*... in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*'

He questions: '*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*'²

'No,' he concludes – '*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us!*'³

'*If God is for us,*' Paul says, '*who can be against us?*'⁴

The psalmist says, '*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*' '*Therefore,*' we are told, '*we will not fear, though the earth give way [as in Christchurch], and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*'⁵

Our God is an *ever-present* help in time of trouble.

In verse 10 of Psalm 46 he gives sound advice: at times like these, '*Be still,*' it says, '*and know that I am God.*'

¹Christchurch earthquake: earthquake survivor weds three days after she was pulled from debris', *The Telegraph*, 25 February 2011, emphasis supplied. ²Romans 8:35 (NIV). ³Romans 8:37 (NIV). ⁴Romans 8:31 (NIV). ⁵Psalms 46:1-3 (NIV).

To the moon and back!

Dear David

I have recently arrived home, after a wonderful and awe-inspiring Communion Sabbath service, to be greeted, when turning down my street, by the most amazing and enormous full moon I have seen this side of the M40.

I rushed to pull the Samsung Galaxy mobile phone out of my bag to take a few scenic shots, but after recalling your excellent feature in *MESSENGER* (4 March 2011, pages 10-11) I feared my camera was not up to the job.

I really do hope someone has taken some good-quality (well over 1mb) photos of it and sent them to you. I don't believe in coincidences – simply in God's divine timing.

Nice job on the feature, by the way, to both you and Victor.

Please also send my regards to Dr Marshall. His 'nurture. . .' article on page 4 of the same issue was a great read.

ANGELA HUNTER

As yet Angela, no photos of the moon have appeared in my inbox, but you never know – maybe someone will respond to our request for photos for 'Megapixels of creation', and send me the moon. Thanks for your response. Don't be totally put off using your phone-camera; if that's all you have to hand, then use it.

DAVID BELL, MESSENGER DESIGNER

Restructuring

Dear Editor

Pastor John Arthur's interesting letter (*MESSENGER*, 18 February) on the possible restructuring of the British Union is challenging. It requires reflection.

Restructuring is not new in the history of the British Union. It has been tried in the past with no major reversal of fortune.

Is it not more important to have a clear vision and picture of intentionality as to what any restructuring is intended to achieve before embarking on such an exercise? Change of any kind, without measured and well-thought-out intention as to what it will achieve, is an unsure path to tread.

The Church changed Home Missionary to Lay Activities to Personal Ministries – to what end? We had a strong MV movement which was supported by the *MV Kit Magazine* and the *Youth's Instructor*. They have disappeared. The result?

In Acts 6 there is recorded the first structural response to internal conflict in the early Church. The

apostles' reflections and response are instructive. They established the non-negotiable imperative of the work of the ministry. They involved the people who had the problem in working out a solution. The result was progress.

If the work of God in the British Union is to be restructured, would it be correct to say that all those it will affect should be involved for it to have any hope of success? Without their involvement an effective outcome could be put in jeopardy.

PATRICK BOYLE

Another look at Islamic virtues?

Dear Editor

I read with interest and concern the 18 March issue on 'Why Adventists convert to Islam'. Firstly, it should be noted that Muslims do not generally use the term *conversion*. They talk about *return*, for to them all people are born Muslims, but are 'deceived' by parents to leave the 'true faith'.

Statistics on Islam and Muslims vary quite a bit from source to source. Exact figures are hard to get. However, it is a fact that, among Islamic converts, a majority are Christian women who marry Muslim men. They are not required to accept Islam, but they will be put under tremendous pressure from the new family, the group and even co-wives to join the mosque. Muslim women have no right to marry Christian men. However, there are interesting motives for 'reversions', where the man in love with a girl can get permission for a wedding just by saying the few words in the *Shahada* in Arabic, in front of witnesses. Those converting to Islam are not always taught that their later return to Christianity could mean execution.

Negative Christian 'baggage' is mentioned – there is much for us to be ashamed of. Among the arguments the author mentions are 'failures and inconsistencies of historic, mainstream Christianity', colonialism and crusades. Terrible things have taken place and are reported with the word 'Christianity' attached to them.

The article seems to suggest, however, that some people in the West, even Christians, read about the deplorable injustices of centuries ago and therefore contemptuously turn their backs on Christianity to join Islam.

Surely these good people also read the daily newspapers. Daily there are new reports about Muslims at war with each other; Muslims killing government ministers who believe in religious freedom; and innocent aid workers executed in the name of Allah because a deranged minister in the USA burns a *Quran*. In some Islamic nations churches are burned

down and members killed. There are stories of women being 'honour-killed' just because they have been with Christian men. All this is done with the words '*Allah is the Greatest*' on their lips. Why would Christians leave their churches because of past excesses to join Islam, where many Muslims commit religious atrocities today?

Despite all the mistakes made by the Church, Christianity has developed a strong culture of human rights; respect for other religions; individual freedom and brotherly love: so much so that our 'culture of hospitality' has reached the point where Muslims persecuted by other Muslims will cross the borders to 'Christian' nations to find shelter and safety.

Perhaps we should share these facts with any who may consider joining Islam?

BORGE SCHANTZ

A Cheshire surprise

Dear Editor

In December 2009 our daughter invited us to a Christmas concert in Cheshire. It would be held in what used to be a huge farm barn, and is now known as the Clonter Opera Theatre. The theatre provides a centre where young singers are trained and encouraged, and many well-known artists of national renown have first sung on that stage. The farm trust also invites professionals of various persuasions to perform in this venue, which holds around 500 in an intimate seating arrangement.

Imagine my surprise once we were seated and I discovered that the programme was to be presented by Ken Burton and the London Adventist Chorale. We sat there for the three hours, spell-bound by one of the best concerts I have ever heard anywhere. We were not the only ones held in awe by the chorale. These 500 tough Cheshire inhabitants enjoyed each item – spirituals, carols and Adventist hymns – stamping, clapping and even whistling after each!

That was in 2009. Eileen took us back again this past Christmas, for Ken was back with his chorale to thrill Cheshire, and the result was the same. I believe that they have been coming for several years already. I do not know how many of the audience profess Christianity, but they surely profess a total commitment to the chorale and its music!

Ken and the chorale have a lovely little custom of coming back at the end of the programme to chat with the audience, and that was where I asked him if he would mind if I told the Adventist world about their witness for our Maker. This is now what was one of the best-kept secrets blown wide open!

DEREK BEARDSSELL

with Andrew Puckering



Not now, Amaziah!

Amaziah the king of Judah was squaring off against Jehoash king of Israel, ready for battle (2 Kings 14:8). No reason is given for this posturing, but Amaziah had at least taken counsel (2 Chronicles 25:17); during the reign of Jehoahaz, Jehoash's father (2 Kings 13:10) the Israelite army had suffered severe losses in manpower at the hand of the Syrians under Hazael, from whom Israel had only barely escaped with the LORD's help (2 Kings 13:3-7). This compounded the losses which Israel had suffered under Jehu, Jehoahaz's father (2 Kings 10:32-35). Suffice it to say that, by the time Jehoash (also spelled Joash) came to the throne, Israel was in bad shape.

Amaziah therefore had grounds for optimism in the coming battle, and, however imperfectly, he served the LORD (2 Kings 14:3; 2 Chronicles 25:2). Jehoash, by contrast, did evil in the sight of the LORD, just like his father Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:1, 2, 10, 11). Amaziah should have wiped the floor with Jehoash, right?

Well, 2 Kings 14:12-14 and 2 Chronicles 25:21-24 say that's not quite how events transpired – far from being easy prey, Jehoash captured Amaziah, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures of the Temple. How could this have happened?

Jehoash had given Amaziah fair warning, but Amaziah refused to back off (2 Kings 14:9-11; 2 Chronicles 25:18, 19). God had also given Amaziah warning after he had started worshipping captured Edomite idols, but Amaziah ignored that as well (2 Chronicles 25:14-16) – and now he suffered for it (2 Chronicles 25:20).

So Amaziah had ignored good advice, both from his enemy and from his Maker; but that wasn't all he'd ignored. God had promised Jehu that his sons would rule Israel to the fourth generation, even though the ungrateful Jehu continued leading Israel into sin (2 Kings 10:30, 31) – and, as we've seen, Jehoash was only Jehu's grandson. Jeroboam II and Zechariah were still to reign (2 Kings 14:23; 15:8), so any hope Amaziah might have had about terminating Jehoash's lineage and uniting the kingdom would have been misplaced.

Furthermore, the LORD had plans for Jehoash – he visited Elisha when the prophet was on his deathbed, and his cry, '*... the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!*' (2 Kings 13:14, NKJV) suggests that he was worried about the military legacy passed down to him from his father Jehoahaz. Elisha had good news for him – he would beat the Syrians, although he could have had the chance to destroy them completely (2 Kings 13:17-19).

Hang on a minute though – Jehoash did evil, as Jehoahaz had done, and his offspring Jeroboam II and Zechariah would too (2 Kings 14:24; 2 Kings 15:9)! Why was the LORD being gracious to Israel? Well, they were being raided by Moabites (2 Kings 13:20) and oppressed by Syrians (2 Kings 13:22), and the LORD had compassion on them, remembering his promise to their forefathers (2 Kings 13:23).

Yes, they seemed determined to do evil – but they were still his people, and he still loved them. He still had plans for them, and Amaziah, who didn't serve the LORD perfectly himself, was opposing those plans by thinking he could defeat them. It was Amaziah who ended up being taught a lesson.

- Who told Jehu to take the throne of Israel? (2 Kings 9)
- From whom did this command originate? (1 Kings 19)
- What proverb did Jehoash use to rebuke Amaziah, and what did it mean?
- How many times was Hazael, Ben-Hadad's son, defeated by Jehoash?
- How did Amaziah's reign end?

from the president

Dear fellow believers

Current events tell us that 'our redemption draws near'. The general unrest in our world; the inability of world leaders to solve our economic problems; the seeming escalation of natural disasters and the wickedness in the hearts of men – the Bible claims these as part of the fabric of world occurrences and experiences as we get closer to the coming of our Lord. We are living in momentous times, but also times of great opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel. Those opportunities must be embraced as we seek to advance the Kingdom of God, and most of our resources should be channelled into the fulfilment of our mission. I, and many others, are of the view that we can restructure the Church in the British Union so as to save very large sums of money, which can then be used for evangelism and outreach.

On 10 March the British Union executive committee took an action to support the start of a dialogue on the future structure of the Church in the British Isles, based on the proposal that follows. Placing the proposal in the *MESSENGER* is part of that dialogue process. I want to ensure that major decisions, such as the restructuring of our Church, are not based on the views of a few individuals only, but on the views of members in general.

We have sought, in the proposal, to explain why there is a need for change, and what the benefits to the Church are likely to be. I would welcome feedback from you on the proposal document. Such feedback can be in the form of 'letters to the editor' or letters written to the Union president. We also plan to meet with members in various settings to discuss the proposal. All feedback will be recorded in an attempt to gauge the general views of members on the subject. I must stress that, at this point, the document is merely for discussion. No decision has been taken by anyone to restructure the Union.

At the British Union field leaders' committee (quarterly meeting between Conference and Mission presidents and the BUC officers) the SEC president shared with us a discussion that he had with his directors regarding the restructuring of the Church in the British Union for greater efficiency and effectiveness. He stated that he and his directors would support any system that reduces the large sums being spent on administration, and that would provide more

resources for direct mission fulfilment. The support from all eight leaders was remarkable, given the knowledge that all of us could lose our current jobs in the process. I must also add that, when I discussed the idea of restructuring with the BUC directors, they also gave overwhelming support to it.

I was tasked with the job of formulating a proposal based on the discussion at the field leaders' meeting. The attached document is the result of that particular undertaking. I had already prepared much of the background material as part of a project I had been working on, so the job was not as onerous as it might otherwise have been.

My fellow leaders in the Union office, and in the conferences and missions, are all aware that restructuring cannot be imposed on the Church. It will happen on the basis of consultation and widespread agreement. Should we sense that there is not an appetite among the members for change, then change will not take place.

For as long as I can recall, during my thirty-three-year sojourn in the British Union, members have been calling for restructuring. Just recently, former BUC president, John Arthur, made an appeal for restructuring in the *MESSENGER* (issue 4, 18 February). I was unaware that he had written such an article until I read it, but it articulates what many have been saying for years.

There are three possible outcomes following the consultation process. One is that a decision will be made by the relevant bodies to accept the recommendation made for restructuring, with modifications; the second is that we remain as we are; and the third is that a different structure from that which is proposed be adopted. Whatever decision is finally made, may it serve to strengthen the work of God in the British Isles and sharpen our focus on the mission of the Church.

DON W. MCFARLANE



the proposal

A mission-driven structure for the British Union

Don W. McFarlane

The structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at times gives the impression that the Church is more like a multi-national corporation than the body of Christ that has been commissioned to take the Gospel to the world. Some have justified its structure by claiming that it was appointed by God and is necessary for global cohesion. However, others have concluded that the complex, layered and repetitive nature of the Church's structure has become a millstone around its neck and is consuming resources that ought to be used in the pursuit and fulfilment of its mission. Whatever the value in the past of the structure of the Church, it appears to have become burdensome and prohibitively expensive to maintain.

George Knight captured the essence of the need for structural changes in our Church when he wrote:

'Seventh-day Adventism in 1995 is something and somewhere that it never expected to be. It has passed its 150th birthday and is still on Earth. Those facts are realities that bring all other Adventist problems and tensions in their train, including problems in Church organisation. To large numbers of Adventists, reorganising the denomination's structures is past due. Many are calling for significant and responsible changes in a system that no longer seems to meet the needs of a Church and a world that have been radically transformed since the denomination last reorganised in 1901-03. . . . The reorganised structure has also become increasingly more rigid and bureaucratic. Some have even wondered aloud if Adventism hasn't "out-beasted the beast" in the area of hierarchical organisation. In 1995 it may be the most tightly knit worldwide ecclesiastical organisation in existence. Adventism has gone from one polar extreme to the other in the realm of organisation. And yet there are rumblings of a desire among some for more centralisation in order to keep things "under control". The reaction to these hierarchical tendencies on the part of many has been an inclination to revert to local control and congregationalism.'

The *British Union 2009 Statistical Report* shows that, of the non-institutional and educational workers, 165 employees were

engaged in frontline evangelistic and pastoral work while 103 were in administrative/promotional/office work. The statistical report also reveals that, of the 151 ordained pastors in the British Union, thirty-three are office-bound. Of course, those pastors who work in the office also make an important contribution to church life, but are not engaged on a daily basis with local churches and local communities.

Role of local congregations in Church organisation

It is widely accepted that the local church, in any Christian denomination, is the level at which the mission of the organisation is carried forward. However sophisticated the infrastructure of the organisation, its primary purpose is to aid the local church in its effort to respond to God's call and purpose. It is therefore appropriate to give space briefly in this proposal document to the role of the local church, as outlined by Scripture.

The word 'church' occurs 113 times in the New Testament (ESV). Ninety-six of the references pertain to local assemblies of believers. Though 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 speaks eloquently about the universal nature of the Church in terms of it being 'one body' (ESV), approximately nine tenths of the scriptural references see the local church as the unit that God uses in carrying forward the preaching of the Gospel.

In Acts 13 we find a demonstration of how the local church functioned in New Testament times:

'In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.'

From the above, and other references in the New Testament, it is clear that individual churches took the responsibility to provide missionaries to preach the Gospel in new places: 'Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers. . . . As they ministered to the Lord, and

fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.'

It is at the local church level that the Gospel is proclaimed, where hearts are reached for the Kingdom of our Lord, and where the nature of this Kingdom is demonstrated in the lives of members. If the Church is to be the dynamic force that it ought to be, it is imperative that the local congregation is resourced for that purpose. Consequently, any change in structure that is likely to have a significant impact on Gospel fulfilment must, of necessity, strengthen the local church by increasing the resources that are available to it.

The significance of the local church cannot be overstated. The work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not done in the quiet corridors of the GC headquarters or in Union and Conference offices dotted around the world. It is done by those who occupy the pews in our local churches, whose lives and words tell forth the praises of the One who has redeemed them from sin's bondage.

Brief history of the organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

For the first few years of Seventh-day Adventism, Church organisation was not a major issue. No one seriously considered it a necessity. In 1851, some in the movement concluded that a form of organisation was required, however basic. Initially, organisation was considered necessary in order to have unity in doctrine and to protect the Church from growing fanaticism.⁴ The variant doctrinal views in the Church led to the writing of the testimony entitled 'Gospel Order' in 1853. Commenting on the need for order, Ellen White wrote, in *Early Writings*, 'Formality should be shunned; but, in so doing, order should not be neglected.'⁵

Despite the obvious need for some kind of order, many leaders were extremely fearful about moving in that direction. Ellen White herself was seen as ambivalent on the matter. In 'Gospel Order', for example, we find the statement, 'We want no human creed; the Bible is sufficient. The divine order of the New Testament is sufficient to organise the church of Christ.'⁶

In addition to doctrinal unity, three other reasons arose for the Church to have some form of organisation. One was the need to