



**2009**  
**Year of Shining**



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## Next edition of @ncounter

The next edition of @ncounter (published in June) is looking at the idea of cultural integration. If you or your youth group are working on a project to reach out to culturally different persons or groups within your church, community or even your own friends and family, we would really like to hear from you. Or if you would like some advice on this subject, feel free to contact us. **deadline 30 April**

You can either call the Youth dept on 01923 672251, email [encounter@adventist.org.uk](mailto:encounter@adventist.org.uk) or write to:  
Encounter, BUC, Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JZ.

September's @ncounter is all about ecological and environmental issues. If you or your youth group are working on a community project based around this theme, we'd love to hear about it!

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## Photo competition



We are running a photo competition based on the Ecology and Environment theme – the deadline for entries is **10 August 2009**. The shortlisted entries from each category below will be published online after this date and you will be given the chance to vote for the best one. Overall winning photos from each category will be published in the September edition of @ncounter and a special gallery online. Email your entries to [encounter@adventist.org.uk](mailto:encounter@adventist.org.uk)

### Categories:

- **Preserving our environment** – photos of the way you and your friends or youth group are working to preserve and improve your local environment.
- **UK and Ireland wildlife** – photos of native animals, birds, plants and creatures in their natural habitats. Domestic animals and pets are not included in this category.
- **Earth, sea and sky** – showcasing your best landscape photographs of the UK and Ireland.

Go to [www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/youth.php](http://www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/youth.php) for terms and conditions and a full list of prizes.

We have entered another year! Can you believe that 2009 is here already?

I began last year with a broken leg in a hospital in Taiwan. Thank God, this year began on the top of Primrose Hill in North London with my children and friends. I took my 6-year-old daughter, Arianne, to see the fireworks on the Embankment in London from this vantage point. My, it was cold, but amazing!

This year our church leaders have designated that we emphasise evangelism and particularly 'shining' or witnessing, as we know it. The world Church will be focusing on the joys and benefits of Renewing through Discipleship, Leadership, Evangelism and Service. There are resources available to each of you from our website which can be used in your group discussions and for practical implementation.

Our feature articles come from some of our church youth leaders; Baraka Muganda – World Youth Director; Paul Tompkins – TED Youth Director; Eglan Brooks – BUC Personal Ministries Director, and me.

@ncounter has undergone a facelift for 2009! We thought it was time for a change and hope you like the new look. We'd love to know what you think, so send us an email – [encounter@adventist.org.uk](mailto:encounter@adventist.org.uk). Inside the magazine there are some new features: a **music review**, a **money matters** column and an **agony aunt**; we also have a new page called 'Youth across the world' where a Youth director from another part of the world Church shares what is happening in his territory in the hope that it may inspire and give a different or new perspective to Youth ministry. Our guest for this issue is Pastor Cyril Millett, director for Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Ontario Conference in Canada.

I trust that you will do your part in spreading the good news of God's love in this Year of Evangelism. So go on, let your light shine!

• Des

## CONGRATULATIONS

Well done to Valencia Riley, the winner of the iPod nano. She correctly guessed that there were 22 @ symbols hidden in the last edition (plus the one on the competition page itself). Her choice of iPod nano should be on its way to her by the time you are reading this.

Our thanks to all of you who responded to the survey and entered the competition. Sorry you could not be the one to receive the gift, but have a stab at our 'Ecology and Environment' photo competition – details on the previous page.



**‘There must be something very right about them,’** so said C. S. Lewis in one of his letters to an American lady. More about that later.

Looking at the global economic story over the last six months, it’s parachuted from the reasonably gloomy, to the increasingly concerned, to the nightmare of despair. Even the joy experienced by millions of people globally at the election of Barack Obama is tempered by the reality that this President comes to office with unprecedented problems to solve. The apostle Paul accurately sums up the fragility of the planet in Romans 8:18-20, where he describes a world that groans for divine intervention and renewal. Once again, the question deep in the Adventist psyche asks, ‘Could the Lord’s return be sooner than we expect?’

Those in London will have seen the bus advert: ‘There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.’ Sure, the average man may not believe in God, but right now he could do with a little divine intervention to sort a few problems out.

In all this doom and gloom, it just happens to be the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin. The timing of this anniversary couldn’t be worse. Didn’t the evolutionary theory suggest that things get better and better with the survival of the fittest? Sadly, in the world of global economics, it would seem that the very fittest exploited the lot of us, dropping us all in a big mess, and we have no idea of how to get out of it.

Was it coincidence or providence that Darwin’s theories arose at around the same time as the rediscovery of the truth about God in the early 1800s? Could it be that the Lord raised the Adventist movement to be an authoritative and authentic answer to the challenge of Darwinism?

The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are foundational to the ‘relevancy’ of the Adventist message. Its identity as a prophetic movement is shaped around the verses of Daniel 8:14 and Revelation 14:6-12. They suggest, in summary, that world history is at journey’s end and that the key issue during that end time will be *authentic worship*. When it would seem that most inhabitants of planet Earth forget about their Creator, a faithful few ‘remember’ and give true worship to the One who is not at his wits’ end about planet Earth, but who, unlike Gordon Brown, actually has ‘saved the world’ through his Son, Jesus Christ.

And so what will our witness be? There is no doubt Adventists have a message to share. Matthew records the message to ‘Go’ (Matthew 28:19) and Paul exhorts us to share the message about

## ▫ Pastor David Neal

President of the Irish Mission

Jesus in both word and deed (Galatians 2:20). Adventists should share Jesus first, last and in between. In these troubled times, I want to share the truth about the calming influence of a Saviour who ‘invites us to stop worrying and truly enjoy life’ – yes, even in troubled times.

Back in the 1960s in the USA, the angels of Heaven rejoiced over one Adventist who shared the love of Christ in word and deed, which for me goes to the very essence of who we should be. This side of Heaven, we will probably never find out who it was who made such an impression on a lady called Mary and subsequently her cross-Atlantic correspondent, C. S. Lewis. It seems that Mary had been going through some personal difficulties and among her letters to Lewis (published in the book, *Letters to an American Lady*) she asked him if he had ever encountered Adventists. Lewis responded in his letter of 2 October 1962:

**‘I never could find out what the VIIIth Day Adventists believe, tho’ I had a long talk with one the other day, a professor of electrical engineering from your country. I fear it is very mixed up with attempts to interpret the prophecies in the Book of Daniel – not, to my mind, a very profitable undertaking. But he was a grand young chap, sweet as a nut and absolutely sincere. No fool either.**

**Prayers as usual!  
Yours Jack’**

On 26 October 1962, Lewis replied further:

**‘What you say about the VII Day Adventists interests me extremely. If they have so much charity there must be something very right about them. . . . Yours Jack’**

For me, these two letters bring it all together. Call it an X-factor moment if you like.

It’s my prayer that Adventists will continue to be ‘very right’, for one reason and one reason alone, to live and share the truth as it is in Jesus.

*Friends, this world is not your home, so don’t make yourselves cosy in it. Don’t indulge your ego at the expense of your soul. Live an exemplary life among the [people] so that your actions will refute their prejudices. Then they’ll be won over to God’s side and be there to join in the celebration when he arrives. 1 Peter 2:11-12, The Message.*

## ASI YOUTH FOR JESUS UK ’09 18 JUNE – 12 JULY 2009

= Charlotte Bramble

Do you want to be more excited about the Gospel? Do you want to cause others to be excited about the Gospel? Do you wish that you could share it more effectively and confidently? Do you want to be used to carry the three angels’ messages to the world and hasten Jesus’ coming?

Enter ASI YOUTH FOR JESUS UK ’09

ASI YOUTH FOR JESUS UK ’09 is a project that aims to actively engage young people in practical evangelism, and provides short-term training that will equip and inspire them to reach the souls of men and women in the UK with the three angels’ messages. This year it will be taking place in Nottingham. It is largely sponsored by ASI Europe (Adventist Laymen’s services and Industries), an organisation that embodies the mission of ‘sharing the Gospel.’

As a model, the project involves a number of different parts in order to create the biggest impact on the community in which it is conducted and on the young people who participate.

- There are presently five Youth volunteer Bible workers in the Nottingham district doing door-to-door work, conducting Bible studies and training within the community and the church. This lays the foundation for those who want short-term practical evangelism training who will come in June.

- YFJ UK students come to Nottingham from 18 June – 12 July for the three-week intensive course. In the mornings there will be classes on topics such as: effective Bible study, giving your personal testimony, the evangelism cycle, and more.

- In the afternoons youth will gain outreach experience as they work alongside the Bible workers conducting Bible studies and other activities, such as street witnessing and literature distribution.

- Youth will play integral roles in the running of an evangelistic series in the evenings, from being greeters at the door to sharing musical items. By completing the course, they will not only have gained practical experience and training but will also have materials and tools to take back to their churches and use in

communities.

I believe that all young people have a desire to live with purpose and meaning; to know what they believe and in whom they believe; to have a reason for doing

what they do, and to be proud of who they are because of who their Creator is. Here is what God says about our purpose. **‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ (Matt. 28:18, NIV)**

From personal experience, I have recognised the two-fold effect of being actively involved in practical evangelism. The most obvious impact is on those with whom God has used me share his message of salvation. I have witnessed others come to know that

their life has meaning and purpose from their study of the Word of God. But seeing this has transformed me! I became bold about the Gospel and its power, and came to love more deeply the Gospel’s author – Jesus Christ. When we are co-workers with Christ, our hearts beat in time with his heart.

It is when Christ is lifted up that he draws all men to himself. (John 12:32.) Including ourselves!

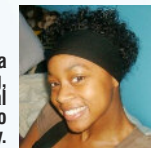
**‘The ASI motto is: “Sharing Christ in the Marketplace” and ASI members are passionate about evangelism in all its forms. We are delighted to support Charlotte Bramble who has taken up the challenge of launching the exciting “Youth for Jesus” programme in the UK.’**

Audrey Balderstone, President of ASI UK and former president of ASI Europe

**‘Young people are great at sharing what they are passionate about. “Youth for Jesus UK ’09” is a passionate and unique way of engaging our youth in contemporary and meaningful community evangelism. Youth ministry has failed if it has not encouraged and placed our youth to the work of preaching the Gospel. This is why we have embraced this project at this time.’**

Alan Hush, NEC Youth director

**Charlotte Bramble, aged 20, works at a special needs college. She loves singing, playing guitar, and reading spiritual books. This September she hopes to study Primary Education at university.**





Most young people will come into contact with drugs at some stage in their lives. **Vanessa Rogers\*** provides ideas for activities to enable them to make healthy choices.

## CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

**Aim:** This warm-up exercise enables young people to consider stereotypes and assumptions about drug use/misuse.

### You will need

Flipchart paper  
Markers  
Blu-Tack  
Pieces of card labelled: cannabis user, alcohol user, amphetamine user, ecstasy user, aerosol user, heroin user, cocaine user and person who does not use drugs.

### How to do it

Divide into small groups and allocate one card to each group. Ask them to draw what they think the person using the drug on the card looks like.

Stick the drawings on a wall and then ask the young people to guess from each other's drawings which drug the person uses. Next, ask how they made these decisions, what information or knowledge it was based on, and if their assumption was correct.

Introduce the idea of stereotypes. Discuss what it means and offer the following definition: 'A stereotype might be defined as a generalisation and assumption that, together, portray the reputation of a group.'

Now start a group discussion that considers:

- Are the drawings stereotypes? Do most users of that drug really look like that?
- How are gender, age and ethnicity represented in the drawings?
- Can you tell who might use/not use different drugs, just by looking at them?
- What can happen if incorrect assumptions are made about people?

Finally, invite the young people to share their own experiences of being stereotyped and conclude that you cannot always tell if a person is using/misusing drugs, just by their appearance, the music they listen to or the friends they have.

## ACCEPTABLE/UNACCEPTABLE

**Aim:** The aim of the session is to open up a discussion around personal values.

### You will need

A set of the cards depicting situations involving drugs (see p. 11)  
A card marked 'Acceptable' and a card marked 'Unacceptable'

### How to do it

Hand each young person a situation card and ask them to read it, but not show anyone else.

Mark two opposing poles on the floor with the 'Acceptable' and 'Unacceptable' cards. Ask the young people to rate the cards as acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Stress that there is not always a right or wrong answer, although there are legal implications for some choices. Some responses are based on cultural or social acceptance, which may differ within the group.

For each card, agreement needs to be reached within the group before it is placed in a zone. Once all the cards are placed down, review the process. How easy was it to reach consensus? What influenced decisions?

## PROBLEMS AND BENEFITS

**Aim:** This activity reinforces that not all drugs are 'bad' and looks at the positive use of drugs and medicines as well as the negative.

### You will need

Flipchart and markers

### How to do it

Explain that you want each young person in turn to suggest a problem that they think drugs cause and a benefit that they think drugs can have.

For example, a problem is that if you buy illegal drugs, you don't

know exactly what is in them; a benefit of some drugs prescribed for people with diabetes is that they are vital for maintaining that person's health.

Once everyone has shared their ideas, discuss the points, making sure that you challenge any incorrect statements and reinforce good points. Divide the sheet into pros and cons, and list the points made under each heading.

Reflect on the findings, reinforcing the important role that prescribed and over-the-counter drugs have played in the fight against disease and illness.

## DRUGS IN SPORTS

**Aim:** This is a discussion activity to look at the issue of drugs in sports and explore values and attitudes within the group.

### You will need

A red, yellow and green card for each person

A copy of the Drugs in sports warm-up list (see p. 11)

### How to do it

Give each young person a red, yellow and a green card. Explain that you are going to read a series of statements and you want the young people to raise the card that corresponds with their opinion.

**RED = No, I disagree**

**YELLOW = I want to say something about this**

**GREEN = Yes, I agree**

Allow time for people to ask questions or make comments about the statements. If no one uses a yellow card, you can ask questions or challenge red and green cards yourself.

Highlight group agreement and where people feel the most differently.

## INFORMATION EXERCISE

**Aim:** To encourage young people to think about the many sources of accurate and inaccurate information and identify accurate ways they can learn about drugs.

### You will need

5 pieces of flipchart paper  
Blu-Tack, Pictures (optional)  
6 different colour packs of Post-it notes

### How to do it

In advance, take the pieces of flipchart paper and label them: friends, adult you live with, youth worker, school and media and stick them up around the room. To make these more visual, either draw simple pictures or cut out pictures to stick on.

To start the session, ask the young people to think about something they once thought was true and later found out was not true. For example, the Tooth Fairy or Father Christmas. Now ask them to share:

- How they found out the truth
- What it was like to discover the truth
- Who they learned the truth from
- How knowing the truth changed their behaviour, attitudes or feelings

Conclude that we all learn things in different ways. This includes information about drugs available from a range of reliable and not-so-reliable sources.

Divide up the Post-it notes so that each member of the group has a small wad and hand out pens. Invite the young people to think about the information that they have received about drugs from each of the different sources on the flipchart sheets. They should then write comments, facts and any messages they received about drugs onto the Post-it notes and stick them under the appropriate headings.

Review the results and discuss with the group, particularly pulling out any sources which gave misleading, inaccurate information or wrong messages. As a whole group, continue the discussion, this time looking at sources of correct information and identifying places where young people could go if they want to know more or get support.

\*Vanessa Rogers is a youth work trainer, consultant and author. Her books are available from [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk). For training and consultancy, go to [www.vanessarogers.co.uk](http://www.vanessarogers.co.uk)  
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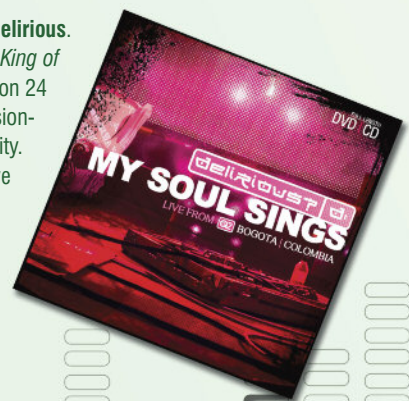
• Mark Walmsley

Hi, I'm Mark. I have been called by God to spread the Good News via his medium of music, an industry which is now vast and growing. Since about 1990 I have listened to, and purchased, all styles of music containing spiritual (as in Holy Spirit led) and godly lyrics. My favourite colour is green, hence the green look to our new music slot! My political stance on music is that genres and styles are like colours. For example, I don't like pink, but that doesn't mean that pink is evil or in any way wrong, or angry, or dark, or dull, or boring. I just happen to not really like it (although I know a few people who do!). Music is creative and it has as many armadillos and unattractive ducklings as it has fluffy bunnies and swans. I believe that God can, and does, reach people through the colour pink – despite my opinion or preference. As Larry Norman sang, 'Why should the Devil have all the good music?' and just to prove he doesn't, each issue I'll review three awesome Christian albums. This issue's unobvious theme is 'Bands in Blighty'!



At No. 3 we've got a group from 'up north' – Manchester, to be precise. **Thebandwithnoname**, and their album *Dying to be There*. This group is actually quite unique. Mixing hip hop, break beats, rap, and sometimes indie vocals all into one. With uncompromising lyrics, these guys know how to praise God within their scene. Standout song for me on this album is 'Shake it Down'. Biographical quote of the week goes to them for this from their God blog. 'God has strengthened my character, he has shown me I must sacrifice who I am for what I will become.'

At No. 2 we've got a band by the name of **Delirious**. This band is from Little Hampton in the UK and debuted in 1997 with the album *King of Fools*. Thirteen albums later they are set to release their 'Live at Bogota' album on 24 March entitled *My Soul Sings*. That is also the title of my standout song – a passion-filled song, singing to God with all their soul: 'We're standing still in a moment of eternity. Where worlds collide and I feel the breath of heaven over me. My soul sings. How I love you, oh, I love you.' And for these very lyrics they claim this week's lyrically awesome award. This band is reminiscent of the likes of U2 and Feeder, producing a mainstream pop rock sound mixed with praise and worship anthems and ballads.



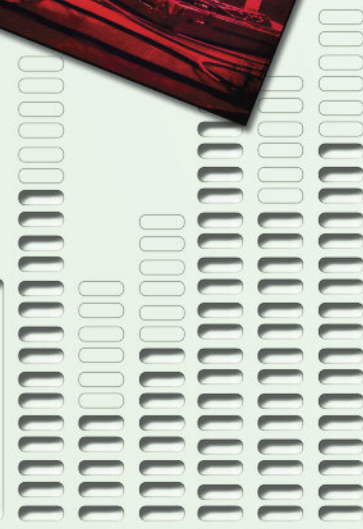
Finally, completing our theme of UK performers and artists, at No. 1 we have **Soulectric**, the debut album from **Four Kornerz**. Straight out of South London, this band of four brothers blends together a fine selection of genres throughout their album, including funk, R&B, soul and jazz, with a hint of Nigeria – their country of origin. I highly recommend the song 'Clap Clap'. You can't help but participate as they sing: 'Anybody wanna praise him with me, just clap, clap your hands.' Top slot goes to these guys for musical diversity and uncompromising lyrics.

Next time's unobvious theme – the compilations.



Mark Walmsley is youth leader at his local church, and hosts two Christian shows on local radio stations: Gravity FM and Boundary Sound. His shows Save Our Souls and The Upper Room, are available at: [www.gravityfm.net](http://www.gravityfm.net) and [www.boundariesound.co.uk](http://www.boundariesound.co.uk)

**Other British bands :**  
**LZ7 (hip hop)**  
**Superhero (reminiscent of Muse)**  
**Andy Hunter (dance)**  
**The Gentlemen (pop rock)**  
**29th Chapter (hip hop, R&B)**



• Herschel Santineer

Hearing reports of this current financial crisis, I think Christian beliefs have never been more relevant, not least because the Bible contains over 2,000 texts that are finance related. Ps. 24:1 and Deut. 8:18 make two vital points:

**The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth. (NIV)**

God wants us to be prosperous and we can take positive steps to make that a reality, no matter where our starting point! (Even my 3-year-old son has a financial plan for acquiring a steam engine and helping others in the process.)

- Your attitude to money and the way you handle it is the best indicator of how you deal with every area of your life, because it is a tangible expression of your choices and priorities. Try the 'Crown Money Map Personality ID' at [www.crown.org/Tools](http://www.crown.org/Tools).
- Assess where you are financially and set specific, written financial goals for the short, medium and long term.
- Budget, budget, budget! In Luke 14:28 Jesus said:

**Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? (NIV)**

Set a budget by basing it on available funds and the priorities in your life; prepare a cashflow of expected income and expenses over the year; account for all money in and out; regularly review all bank accounts and bank statements.

Although these are not Christian websites, there are excellent tips and tools at: [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com) and [www.moneybasics.co.uk](http://www.moneybasics.co.uk) and [www.themoneyrevolution.net](http://www.themoneyrevolution.net)

- Always tithe. Prov. 3:9-10 says:

**Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (NIV)**

In Matt. 23:23 Jesus told the Pharisee not to neglect tithing. John D. Rockefeller Sr said: 'I never would have been able to tithe the first million dollars I ever made if I had not tithed my first salary, which was \$1.50 per week.'

In these difficult times, it is our confidence in God and our attitude to our finances that will determine the future we can look forward to.

Herschel is a Chartered Tax Adviser and former tax lecturer who has run his own practice for 15 years. He has worked closely with the conference Youth and Family Ministries departments since he was 14 and continues to work closely with the Church whenever his expertise can be used.



Hey, Guys!  
 Welcome to our new *Agony Aunt* column. This is the section where you can have your say. Ask anything you like – I definitely want to hear from you. What issues or concerns do you have? Write to me at [encounter@adventist.org](mailto:encounter@adventist.org) and tell me about the most influential person in your life. Who has shown you or perhaps altered your perception of God as a Father? Why have you stayed in church? Why would you leave? Any unresolved matters? Do you feel as though you are represented or do you feel disappointed and let down? Have you got any questions that you would *never* ask in AYS? Those are especially the ones I want to hear from you! **Although we reserve the right to edit any letters, we will never alter your meaning. I cannot offer you all the answers but I do promise to listen, give you a fair opinion and advise. Look forward to hearing from you AND watch this space. . . . Trust me, it's gonna be a good one! See ya!**

Aunty @

cool stuff online || 5w337 (o.0)

**NEW** – [www.adventistinfo.org.uk/creation](http://www.adventistinfo.org.uk/creation) – A new web page with links to articles and interviews challenging the popular evolutionary theory. With input from eminent scientists and creationists, this is the page to turn to for information which will help cement your faith in God's creation. Includes MP3 downloads, presentations and an interview all about mud!

**UPDATED** – the General Conference Youth Website has had a facelift, too. Their new website features Youth, Pathfinder and Ambassador resources, Grace Notes devotionals ('tell it like it is' short reads), Youth director blogs, World Church youth news and a facility to accept prayer requests online. Visit <http://gcyouthministries.org> to take a tour.









## Just shine - Baraka G. Muganda

World Youth Director

One of the challenges faced by all those who work with this 'new' generation of young people is to find ways to involve them in volunteering and serving others, especially when they are surrounded by huge shopping malls of plenty. The first thing is to move them away from the 'mall' mentality and lead them to become compassionate, caring people. *Mission must become the lifestyle of every Seventh-day Adventist youth.*

The General Conference Youth Ministries department has declared 2009 the *Year of Shining*, the year when our focus will be on witnessing, caring and sharing. In the midst of hopelessness and despair, anxiety and hatred, we need to challenge our youth to shine for Jesus, to become his witnesses for all the world to see.

For more than three years Jesus' disciples experienced him personally – they bathed in his light, they walked in it day after day, they were so close to it, they touched it. It did not burn them but, instead, filled them with its warmth.

Ellen G. White reminds us that the three Hebrew boys, although exiled, did not hide their mission. **'Three times a day, as was his wont, he sought this Lord in his chamber with his window open toward Jerusalem. God delivered Daniel.'** (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 71.) Mrs White continues, **'These youth were not ashamed to display their true colours. Even in the court of the king, in their words, their habits, their practices, they confessed their faith in the Lord God of Heaven.'** (*Messages to Young People*, p. 27.) Every youth should be equipped with the love of God. The youth, through their lives, should stand up and shine for Jesus Christ.

Throughout history we see examples of people who were beacons of hope in their communities. They changed history, they shone brightly, and they made a difference. Men and women like Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, and many, many more. These are people who stood up for what they believed in. In this year we want our youth to witness for Jesus. We want our youth to change lives. We want our youth to stand up for Jesus.

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples, who, disappointed by his death, were mired in despair, hopelessness, and darkness. When all seemed lost, he returned, if only for a short time, and rekindled their candles. He shielded them with the Holy Spirit. Now their candles could not be blown out. He

commissioned them to become the light of the world. He sent them out with a great commission – to light other candles. And they did! They lit thousands of others, and it came down through the ages and now the candle has been passed until someone lit your candle and mine.

The power of this shining light is visible around the world. As you travel, you can witness this power shining among our youth. In South America I saw young people who had purchased about 3,000 trees, planted them, and gave them as a free gift to the mayor of a large city. In Australia, the youth-led Stormco programme runs a bus ministry around the country, stopping in cities and shining for Jesus through service projects. In Africa I have seen hundreds of youth participating in evangelistic projects. Youth all over the world are shining through evangelism. So far, every division has taken part in the General Conference Elijah Project evangelistic programme that started in 2005. So far the Elijah Project has had over 120,000 baptisms.

In Matthew 5:16 Jesus challenges every youth, **'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.'** Jesus is calling each one of us to shine, to be visible and attractive, like the colours of the rainbow, and we do this not for our own benefit but to bring people to him.

There is no place for secret discipleship. We must shine! Youth Ministry must introduce Jesus, the bright Morning Star, to young people, and provide ways to let this light shine through. Just as a light bulb by itself is no use – it needs to be connected to a generating plant – young men and young women must be taught that they must remain in his presence, they must stay connected to him, the source of their strength, to be able to witness his truth to a dying world.

Today I challenge every Seventh-day Adventist youth to shine in the world through witnessing. Everywhere you look there are opportunities to shine: MySpace, Facebook, Hi5, workplaces, churches and shopping malls.

Young people are ready to paint the world with the love of Jesus. This is your opportunity to shine!



## Let your light shine for Jesus

## Paul Tompkins

TED Youth Director

**'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognise and honour and praise and glorify your Father who is in heaven.'** (Matthew 5:16, KJV – Amplified.)

In the dark of night even one small candle can be seen from a great distance. That same candle can share its flame with another, and together they are brighter and light up a larger area. But if the candle tried to hide so that it wouldn't be so easily seen, then it would never have the opportunity to share its flame. We are called to be the light of the world, but too often we only allow ourselves to fully shine when we are together. This year (2009 – The Year of Shining [Witnessing]), our goal is to challenge our youth to shine all the time and to spread out and share the flame of hope and love of God with others.

I'd like to talk about candles – to be more precise, my candle and yours. I think there is a great temptation to think that Christianity is about doing the big thing, being part of a major programme, turning the world upside down. Maybe that is part of it, but I firmly believe that the bigger picture is made up of our individual candles, shining as brightly as possible in the corners of our sphere of influence.

I remember the story of the beacons that used to be lit throughout the country to warn of impending danger (pre-electronic technology). This system was used at the time of the Armada and worked via a system of watchmen. When ships were sighted off the coast, the watchman in that area would light his beacon. The flame would then be seen by the next lookout, who would do likewise, and subsequently a series of beacons would blaze through the country until the message reached the capital.

For this to work, each watchman had to be awake and also have a beacon to light, otherwise everything would break down. It's the same with candles! We need to have ours alight and

shining so that others can see the light. Individually we make a difference and united we blaze for Jesus.

I also remember the end of the last European Youth Congress (Poland 2004) where in the last meeting the house lights went down and every participant used the light stick they had been given. First a few

lights flickered in the darkness and then gradually the whole auditorium was ablaze with light as each person activated theirs. I found it a very moving and exhilarating experience. (By the way, there is another Pan-European Youth Congress in Munich this year. See you there!) The thing was that when all the lights were shining in the hall, you couldn't actually pick out any individuals – but each was vital to the overall effect.

Letting our lights shine practically means sharing Jesus with our friends by word, action and deed. Often it is the small things that speak the loudest. Being there when needed, being willing to listen and, most of all, living a consistent Christian life. Also there is a fresh opportunity to do this each and every day.

A friend and colleague starts each day with a simple prayer; 'Jesus, I'm available for you today.' Being available means individually having our candle ready, with the wick trimmed and a match to hand. Being ready and willing for action and allowing God to lead our actions. That's actually a very exciting way to live.

Last year we started a TED Relay Institute of Youth Evangelism and it has been really exciting to see the enthusiasm of the young people taking part. Part of the course involves each person finding his/her own biblical style of evangelism that is best suited to their God-given gifts and personality, and then being available and willing to be part of practical outreach projects. This year we will revisit the first participating countries, and I am looking forward to hearing the stories and learning what Jesus has done in their lives. More and more candles are being lit, and together we can all be part of the light.

This is not an empty statement, as this year the world Church has chosen to use this theme for all Adventist youth groups, societies and clubs. Imagine that all throughout the world candles are already alight. Together we will be focusing on the joys and benefits of service to others and have the opportunity to be one of those everlasting candles that never go out.





## Shining, what! • Des Boldeau

BUC Youth Director

As a child, do you remember going on a journey with your parents and the rest of your siblings, which you really did not want to go on?

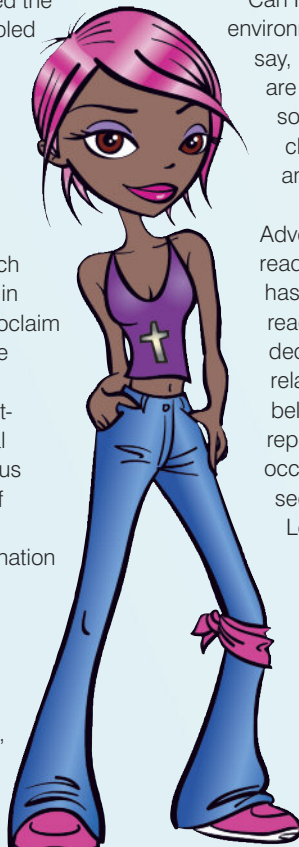
As a pastor, I would like to believe that when I took my children on a journey, they actually wanted to go and became excited about the travel and the fun things we could and sometimes did do along the way. We would cook special foods and make fruit punch and other goodies to make the journey more fun and exciting. I hope that being in youth work brought some interesting and exciting experiences for my children. However, I am sure that there must have been some negative experiences, too, especially if we as parents did not make the necessary preparations to help the time pass in a fun and interesting way. If you've enjoyed the journey, you don't have to be persuaded and cajoled into telling your friends (shining), do you?

I believe that evangelism and, by extension, 'shining' is nicely and most aptly summed up in the 'coined expression': 'one beggar telling another beggar where to find food' from the account in the book of Kings. (2 Kings 7.)

The authority for evangelism, which is confirmed by our lifestyles, is the belief and search for the ideals contained in the great commission in Matt. 28:19-20 – to go and live, show and tell, proclaim and teach, attract, lead and baptise people to the Christ of Christianity.

Youth live in what may be referred to as a post-modern, post-Christian environment. This cultural landscape is vastly different from those of previous generations in that at the very heart of this way of seeing the world is the belief that there are no absolutes, there are many gods, faith is a combination of many belief systems, and values are relative.

Where once Christianity was the heart of the influence of values and standards, it has been relegated to the sidelines and in its place are the philosophies of materialism, atheism, individualism, secularism, spiritualism, occultism, and so on. In our western societies, these philosophies are forming our value systems.



It is against this background that you find yourselves in a cross-cultural tension, stuck between your desire to follow the Church and the youth culture of our society at large. There would not need to be a tension if Christianity had a more respectable face, like some other institutions in society. Maybe it would be easier to have a voice and stand up for our Christian roots if we really knew and passionately believed in the Christian faith tradition.

You may be struggling with life and the challenges of the twenty-first century, wondering about the relevance of Christianity to your daily life, battling with some health or addiction issue, having some conflicts about the influences of this post-Christian, post-modern environment. You might even be wrestling with the idea of shining for Jesus this year.

Can I justly expect you guys to be shining for Jesus in this environment and with your baggage? Without question, I can say, 'Yes!' I don't believe for one minute that any of you (us) are unable to shine for Jesus this or any year. Shining is something that comes as naturally as smiling, chatting, clubbing, socialising with friends, going on a date or eating and drinking.

The Youth department of the General Conference of Adventists is encouraging, and has published a daily Bible reading guide to nurture our relationship with God. The BUC has also publicised and printed thousands of guides for reading the Bible through in a year. Whichever plan you decide to follow, may I urge you to take your spirituality and relationship with God a little more seriously this year. If we believe everything we hear and read in the various electronic reports that circulate, there are some interesting things occurring in world politics. If that is the case, we can safely see these things as indicators of the imminent return of our Lord.

There are also other resources available online. Why not browse through them to find the one best suited to your needs and really use it? Let us know how effective or not they prove to be so that we can share your perspective with others. Yep – shine to them!

You guys, let's 'get with the programme' and allow God to shine through us, and in the process he'll more than likely get us ready to meet him at his return.

See <http://www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/youth.php>

## I just want to stay in bed!

• Eglan Brooks

BUC Personal Ministries Director

### Happy Year of Evangelism!

In case you don't know by now, 2009 has been designated as the Year of Evangelism! I'm not sure if I like that idea really, because every day should be a day of evangelism and every year we should be fulfilling the gospel commission in Matthew 28:18-20 to go in to the world and tell everyone about the Good News of salvation.

I have the privilege every Sabbath of attending churches up and down the country, in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. And as I listen to the members in a variety of churches, I note that there are a number of things that are preventing us as a people from accomplishing God's purpose for his Church.

It is my belief that unless we make some radical changes in these areas, then the Seventh-day Adventist Church will struggle to be at the cutting edge of evangelism. Our efforts to witness for Christ and help keep alive the amazing truth, so unique to us, will be frustrated, and we'll find ourselves floating in a sea of mediocrity.

One of the reasons why the Church isn't really making the impact that it could is because most of us just want to stay in bed. I recently saw a cartoon about evangelism. A man was sitting down and enthusing about evangelism. He said, 'This year I'm going to tell 10 people about Jesus Christ. I'm going to be a witness wherever I go. I will go out on the streets and preach the Gospel, but I want to do this all from my bed.'

Many of us want to do evangelism, but from our bed – from our comfort zone. For too many, it's evangelism on *our* terms, not God's. If I can do it without moving out of my house or being inconvenienced in any way, then that's fine! BUT if it means I actually have to do something that I don't quite feel able to do, or that will embarrass me, or force me to go out in the rain, it ain't happenin'!

And the truth is, it doesn't happen. We don't evangelise, and every day more and more souls are going to their graves without hearing about the salvation that is offered to them.

Can you live with that responsibility? I can't! So this year, I will be making every effort, with the help of God, to win at least one person for Jesus Christ!

Come on, get out of your bed and join me!





## Special Needs Camp = Joy Bussey Special Needs Camp coordinator

What is your perception of evangelism? Do you usually think of a proper campaign with an evangelist, Daniel and Revelation, and a baptism at the end? Or is it simpler than that – sharing the love of Jesus and showing others what he means to us?

For the past thirty years I have been involved in evangelism to a group of people who are usually overlooked, even if they attend church every week. It is exciting and fun, and one of the best parts is helping people realise that evangelism takes many forms and does not require a theological degree or specialist skills. It happens in an informal setting – so no shirt and tie! There is plenty of participation, and most people don't just sit in their seats listening to one speaker.

I'm talking about Special Needs Camp which takes place on the Aberdaron camp site for one week each year. We take a mix of campers from both Seventh-day Adventist families and outside the Church. It's the same with staff – we have people from outside the Church working alongside regular church members. Sharing faith becomes easier when working together to meet the needs of others. In 1997, James McElhinney, the manager of a care home considering sending some of its residents to camp, said that he would also attend that summer. Afterwards he wrote an article for the *Messenger* from his professional point of view, and from his personal stance as a Roman Catholic. He said in the article that he believes that people with special needs are very close to God and concluded by saying, 'I gained a lot of experience on a spiritual level.'

There are three worship sessions a day, two for the whole group and one for staff alone. During the group worships the camp drama group bring the theme of the day to life, with some interesting interpretations! It is so rewarding when non Adventist campers we have worked with for several years are able to express their love for Jesus and their understanding that

Jesus loved them so much he died to save them. They will probably never understand the ins and out of Daniel and Revelation, but they have a faith at their level of understanding:

Jesus said in Mark 10:15: **'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.'** (KJV)

Do we have baptisms? Two of our campers were baptised in the sea at Aberdaron. Their baptism was witnessed by onlookers who asked many questions about what was happening. I am sure, however, that there will be many more in Heaven. Several years ago when there were no facilities on site to meet the needs of those with physical disabilities, one camper was a young woman with a life-limiting disease. It was very hard physical work caring for her and her friend as there was no chalet with a hoist as there is today – just a tent with a mattress on the floor. After camp I received a letter thanking us for showing Jesus to her. She said that she talked to him every day and that knowing him had made a huge difference in her life. A few months later, she died. Although she was never baptised, I'm sure we'll meet in Heaven.

Those of us who have been involved in Special Needs Camp find it addictive. It is a part of our summer we cannot miss! If you would like to join in this evangelistic campaign with a difference, please contact me on 01923 461044 or at [js.bussey@ntlworld.com](mailto:js.bussey@ntlworld.com). Or check out our emerging website: [www.specialneedscamp.co.uk/new](http://www.specialneedscamp.co.uk/new)

**Joy** is married to Colin and is step-mum to Claire and Joanne and grandma to Daniel, Hannah and Nicola. She has worked as a Bible instructor, teacher/trainer, social worker/manager. Her interest in working with people with special needs started as a child in Colchester via the Red Cross, Missionary Volunteers and, along with four siblings, helping a class mate with a learning disability do his homework. Music and gardening also take up a large part of her life.



## Vitamin B1 = Yvonne Bauwens

Having, on occasion, had to use a wheelchair when I was at school, I began to realise that, as a result, people treat you differently. I do not know if it is intentional, but when they speak to you, they shout and speak slow-er. The fact that I was in a wheelchair because my legs did not always work, not my ears or brain, did not seem to come into the matter! Just because I was in a wheelchair did not make me stupid.

I don't know if you've ever spoken to a person with a pronounced disfigurement. Deep inside, remember they are just like any other person looking for friendship. Who knows, it may be they who are nervous about the way you are thinking and judging them.

There is an old lady, known as Auntie Marjory, who came to my church. She loved to talk and keep up to date with the youth of the church, despite being nearly 100 years old! But due to an illness in her 70s, Auntie Marjory's tongue became very swollen, making it difficult for her to speak and be understood. I remember visiting her once and doing my best to understand what she was saying. She had to repeat herself for me and I could see her frustration. But she persisted until I understood and we laughed and shared funny experiences like any other friends!

For the past eight months, I have passed a young man who sold *The Big Issue* magazine. I didn't particularly find the magazine very interesting, and at £2 I could not afford to buy one from him every day. Instead, I sometimes bought him a little cake or pastry when I passed by. I learned that he was from Romania, but as his English was as good as my Romanian, we usually just exchanged smiles each day.

A friend recently told me that a lot of these people are criminals and that they may be using the money to buy drugs.

I disagree. Maybe he has had a rough background and has made some mistakes in his life, but I am the last person to point the finger at anyone. I'm definitely not perfect and have made plenty of mistakes in the eighteen years of my life! Instead of pointing my finger, I choose to reach out. A nasty comment can tear lives apart, but a gift of kindness can heal broken wounds. I hope that because of my kindness, he can wake up in

the morning, knowing that there is a greater hope for this life. Sometimes my Romanian friend is not there and someone else is selling the magazines, so I share my smile with him or her instead.

I remember one day in particular. It was a cold winter's morning and there was an older lady standing there. She was wrapped up in what looked like every piece of blanket and material she could find. I stopped by at Greggs and bought a hot chocolate and a Danish pastry. Approaching her, I could see how cold and miserable she looked. I smiled as I handed her the cup of hot chocolate and pastry. At first she looked at me in disbelief, but then a warm smile spread across her wrinkled face. She took the drink and cake and laid her magazines down. Standing up and looking me in the eye, she uttered in her broken English, 'Thank you,' and then wrapped her arms around me. I felt like a lost child in her grandmother's arms. Tears welled up in my eyes as I hugged my new friend. I didn't even know her name.

I've never seen that lady again, but I will never forget her. There are many things I cannot explain. Was God using me to reach out to that lady on that freezing cold morning? Or was she there to reach out to me, letting me experience a stranger's hug that filled me with a happiness I cannot explain.

I'm sad to say that some people in our world are very judgemental of one another. Jesus, on the other hand, doesn't look at the way we dress or how much money we earn. He's not embarrassed if we are in a wheelchair or have a prosthetic limb. Jesus is interested in our hearts. He sees right through the outer layers and sees what is inside.

**'People judge others by what they look like, but the Lord judges people by what's in their hearts.'** (1 Samuel 16:7, *Contemporary English Version*.) Let God be the judge and you be the friend.

An interesting thought I read recently was: **'The best vitamin for a Christian is B1.'**



**Yvonne** is a member of Crief Seventh-day Adventist Church, Scottish Mission



## Go the Distance! • Pastor Cyril Millett

Youth Director, Ontario Conference, Canada

Over the past year, Brian Wahl, the Youth Director of the British Columbia Conference in Canada, has been praying for ways the youth of his conference can get involved in outreach during the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

Pastor Wahl wanted youth involvement that helped create new Kingdom-building relations with their communities. He wanted to provide training that offered long-term ministry skills. His prayers were answered after conversations with members of More Than Gold, an international Christian network designed to help churches serve their communities and visitors during the Olympics.

The Christian community around the world has a long history of service and outreach during the Olympic Games. Since 1970 Christians have been officially engaged with the Olympic movement. Most notable among the outreach efforts of Seventh-day Adventists was that of our members during the Sydney 2000 Olympics in Australia. The Church was involved with water distribution, food service and the Australian *Signs* magazine was the official More Than Gold Olympic communiqué.

At the same time that Pastor Wahl was dreaming, there was discussion among the conference Youth directors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada on having another in a series of youth summits for the senior youth of Canada. With that conversation, the idea of involving all the youth of the country was quickly merged into Go the Distance, the Adventist youth initiative to impact lives for Jesus before, during and after the Olympics. These directors hope to rally the Adventist youth of Canada in the service of Christ in numbers not seen before.

From involvement in the torch relay to the warming stations to ward off the bitter cold, from street performances to supporting other volunteers who help at the Olympic venues, Adventist youth will join with other Christians in a grand work of sharing the love of Jesus.

One particular project that has already gathered momentum is the scarf ministry. You may ask, 'What is that?' In Vancouver's damp, cold climate the youth will be distributing scarves to people trying to keep warm, be they people living on the street or visitors to the city. The aim is to have over 10,000 hand-knitted scarves ready by the start of the games. Pathfinders and church members from all over Canada and North America are invited to contribute to this ministry.

A scarf pattern is being distributed to those who are knitting these scarves and a label will be affixed, stating that the scarf is a gift, 'From your Friends the Seventh-day Adventists.' Ava, a young adult in Winnipeg, Canada, has already asked her grandmother to teach her how to knit. She looks forward to taking part in this ministry and says, 'It's a great way to quietly witness to the warmth that Jesus offers.'

Another ministry approach that is being planned is a series of biblical presentations in cafés. These café settings will allow young people to present the simple truth of the Gospel in relevant ways to others in a relaxed environment. Conference funding is being offered to every team of youth who conduct a café series.

At the centre of the Go the Distance outreach will be the Canadian Adventist Youth Summit (CAYS). Pastor Wahl states, 'Every follower of Jesus knows there is more to life than silver and gold. We want our youth to have an ongoing experience of service and to have a deeper devotion to Christ as a result of being his hands and his smile in a cold world. The Youth Summit is our Union Youth Ministry event to train and deploy youth in service.'

This summit, if it is anything like the last three, will be filled with joyful worship, fun networking activities, training in service techniques and instruction in methods of leading others to Jesus. Before being deployed to the streets around the Olympic sites, the youth will be commissioned to use their gifts and skills, not only during the summit service events, but wherever God plants them.

Even after the summit, Go the Distance continues with opportunities for mission teams to stay on and join a new group of young adults coming in to continue the work of service for the rest of the games. There will even be service opportunities after the Olympics and during the time of the Paralympics. Lives will be blessed by the incredible stories and testimonies as Adventist youth schedule their vacations to come together from across Canada and the world in service.

The youth of Canada are looking forward to Going the Distance during the 2010 Olympic Games for Christ. They are planning to do an outstanding work for the Master. It is their intention to pass a brightly lit torch to the youth of the British Union Conference as you host the Summer Olympic Games in 2012.

For more information contact: Brian Wahl at [bwahl@bcadventist.ca](mailto:bwahl@bcadventist.ca) or [info@gothedistance.org](mailto:info@gothedistance.org), [www.GoTheDistance.org](http://www.GoTheDistance.org)

## outgoing

Volunteer's name	Going from	Location	Volunteering at	Position	Returning
Shannon Alexander	Chiswick, SEC	Majuro, Marshall Islands	Delap SDA School	Teacher (1st Grade)	June 2009
Liam Cartledge	South Shields, NEC	Majuro, Marshall Islands	Laura SDA Elementary School	Teacher (2nd-4th Grade)	May 2009
Nixon (Niki) De Vera	SEC	Okinawa, Japan	Okinawa International Church	Pastor/Youth Minister	April 2009
Leana Edwards	Peckham, SEC	Majuro, Marshall Islands	Delap SDA School	Teacher (2nd Grade)	May 2009
Adam Hegyi	Dundee, SM	FS of Micronesia	Yap SDA School	Teacher (8th Grade)	May 2009
Lahja Heinanen	Newbold College	Kazakhstan	Almaty English Language Centre	Teacher (English Lang)	June 2009
Joanna Jones	Clapton, SEC	Peru	Peruvian Union University	English Teacher	Feb 2010
Jacqueline Kelly	East Kilbride, SM	Madrid, Spain	Colegio Timon	Teacher (Primary English)	June 2009
Anna Emilia Rouhe	Newbold College	Saraburi, Thailand	(AIMS) Adventist Int Mission School	Teacher (Elementary)	July 2009
Rachel Sears	Watford Town, SEC	Seoul, South Korea	Korea SDA Language School	Teacher (English/Religion)	June 2009
Emese Szabo	Dundee, SM	FS of Micronesia	Yap SDA School	Teacher (1st Grade)	May 2009
Konrad Szalos Farkas	Dundee, SM	Koror, Palau	Palau Mission Academy	Teacher (ESL)	May 2009
Mark Szalos Farkas	Dundee, SM	Koror, Palau	Palau SDA Elementary School	General Duties	May 2009
Efraim Zakarias	Dundee, SM	FS of Micronesia	Yap SDA School	Teacher (2nd Grade)	May 2009

## incoming

Volunteer's name	Coming from	Location	Volunteering at	Position	Returning
Naomi Best	Andrews Uni, US	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Secondary School	Chaplain/Youth Worker	July 2009
Kelsey Curnutt	Andrews Uni, US	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Park Church	Youth Assistant	July 2009
Rocio Garfias	Mexico	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Primary School	Teacher's Assistant	July 2009
Justin Groff	Pacific Union College, US	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Secondary School	Assistant Boys' Dean	July 2009
Anita Kelman	Australia	Bracknell, SEC	Newbold College	Marketing Assistant	July 2009
Ivan Marsh	Southern Adventist Uni, US	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Secondary School	IT Assistant	July 2009
Liubov Milis	Moldova	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Secondary School	Librarian	July 2009
Kimberly Paulien	Andrews Uni, US	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Park Church	Youth Assistant	July 2009
Elizabeth Utz	Argentina	Watford, SEC	Stanborough Secondary School	Assistant Girls' Dean	July 2009

Please remember these volunteers in your prayers.





## A typical day and an extraordinary New Year weekend in Palau

by Mark & Konrad Szalos-Farkas

If you wondered what life can be like as a missionary volunteer, here is a typical working day in Palau as experienced by Mark Szalos-Farkas and an account of an extraordinary weekend brothers Mark and Konrad enjoyed over this past New Year:

06.00 – Wake up, get morning routine done.

06.30 – Wake up boys in the dorm and have worship with them.

06.45 – Read my Bible, have breakfast.

07.30 – Be up on campus for staff worship.

08.00 – Classes begin – I teach two Bible classes in a row and then go to the library and continue working there on grading or lesson plans. I also have to catalogue books when I have time.

12.05 – Lunch.

12.35 – Classes start again, a Bible study class, or art class, depending on which day it is.

15.10 – School ends.

After school we sometimes have staff meeting. This can last well over an hour usually, as there is plenty to discuss. It is also a good idea to clean the classrooms we work in. Students learn better in a tidy environment.

My afternoons are never dull, as there is always plenty to take care of. We are all responsible for our own cooking, washing, cleaning and so on. This takes time. I try to read a little each day, and get some exercise. There is an American army base with a good gym two miles away that is open for us to use.

19.00 – Evening dorm worship.

By 20.30 I am usually in my room reading my Bible and getting ready to sleep.

That's it for now, and if you are considering doing something like this next academic year, now is the time to start praying about it and planning for it. . . .

All the best,  
Mark

Twelve of us had rented the church boat from Wednesday until Friday over the New Year. We also rented an island called Ulong. It is the island where white man first met Palauans after crashing on a nearby reef a few hundred years ago.

Anyway, we had the island reserved, so we had a beautiful white beach and a camping house where we could cook and sleep. As we were on the beach talking, suddenly a sea turtle swam out of the water. Amazed, we watched as it started to pull itself up on the beach and go into the woods. It crawled around and then started to dig a hole to lay its eggs. In all it laid 138 eggs. Our boat driver must have been at least 50, and he said he had never seen a turtle laying eggs before, and there we were, on the last day of 2008, sitting on an island with a white sandy beach, watching a sea turtle laying its eggs – nothing short of fantastic!

On New Year's evening we then went out in the boat with our driver – he went to fish, and we went to swim. The ocean is so different at night. We had underwater torches and we swam; it is so different to have limited view and darkness everywhere else. But the most amazing things happened when you turned off the torches. There was some sort of plankton that when you touched it and made it move, it started glowing in the dark. It didn't glow otherwise, only when it was moved. So as we swam in the darkness thousands of these tiny glowing lights came off our bodies. Mark was swimming around me and as he swam it was as though electric lights were falling off his body and leaving a trail of light. It was literally like swimming through the universe, a myriad galaxies, stars and solar systems. It was as though you were parting stars with your hands and swimming in space – fantastic!

Well, I hope you are all well. Take care, and God bless you all.  
Konrad

Unfortunately there is not enough space in **Encounter** to include all the details of Konrad and Mark's amazing weekend on the island of Ulong, including details of Shark City, an encounter with a poisonous sea snake and bathing with thousands of jellyfish! But you can read the full story by visiting our new Facebook page: Adventist Volunteer Services (UK & Ireland). Here you can chat to volunteers who are currently serving abroad, pose them any questions you may have if you are thinking of volunteering, find useful links and discover some handy hints provided by volunteers themselves.

## Quick guide to Adventist Volunteer Services (AVS)

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.

So you're thinking of volunteering? What should you do next? Firstly, can you answer yes to all of these?

- **I'm a Seventh-day Adventist who is at least 18 years of age and no more than 79 years of age**
- **I've been a baptised church member in regular standing for at least one year**
- **I'm single or**
- **In a couple, preferably when both spouses can work (Married volunteers may not serve without their spouse beyond three months. Opportunities for families with children are limited)**
- **I am financially able to serve without expectation of reward or compensation**

Here's an idea of how long assignments usually last:

- **Adventist volunteers serve full time**
- **Short-term assignments of up to two months are available**
- **Long-term assignments can last one or two years, or more**
- **Project groups, usually 2-4 weeks**

Where might I end up?

- **Anywhere – particularly in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, South Pacific**

Why should I apply?

- **Because I feel the Holy Spirit has called me to serve.**

If you answered yes to all the above, then visit the **Volunteer Services website at: [www.adventistvolunteers.org/index.htm](http://www.adventistvolunteers.org/index.htm)** Here you'll find lots more information which should help you in your search. By clicking on 'Find Positions' in the left hand menu, you can then run a search based on location, job type, length of service, and so on. Even if you only have a few weeks to spare, there may still be something available for you.

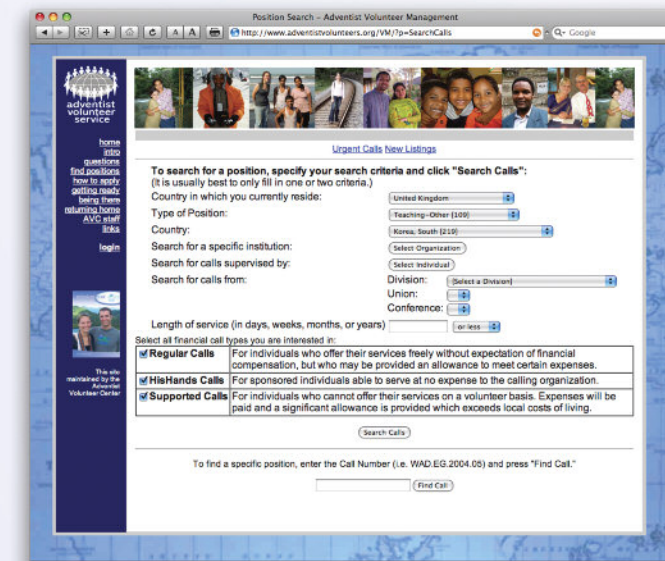
Once you find a job you think you would like to apply for, **add this to 'My Interests'** which will then prompt you to create a new account. You will need to complete an application form online which outlines details such as your interests, skills and current situation. You will also need to obtain various items of paperwork and references in order to begin processing your application. Short-term application forms can also be found on the website.

### Start raising money for your travel!

**Be prepared to wait** a month or two for the finalisation of an assignment – your application papers may need to be submitted to several institutions.

**DO NOT resign from your job** until your assignment has been confirmed by your AVS coordinator – (Mrs Karen Plaatjes at the Trans-European Division).

*Some great positions are waiting for enthusiastic, Spirit-filled volunteers who are not afraid of hard work and sheer fun! If you need any further assistance, please contact your local mission/conference Youth department.*





• 12 Oct 2008

## Dear Diary, Dear God,

I got an email this morning. Hmm. It's been on my mind all day. The letter was from Cleo, my best friend in high school. Well, we were best friends until she went off the rails. I didn't want someone like her as a friend. I was a Christian – I am a Christian. She had lost it and was uncontrollable – but now I guess I know why. Her email explained it all.

Hi Shaz,

Been a while, I know. I have thought about writing to you so many times but the way we left things had always left a bad taste in my mouth. I held such resentment towards you for the way I felt you forgot about me when I needed you most. I was lost, depressed and crying out for help. I needed so much for you to see it then. That has changed now, as has the purpose for my email.

My previous attempts to write to you have always started with blame. I wanted to let you know what a bad friend you had been, but this attempt is different – I want to take responsibility and to let you know what changed and why.

We started out as the best of friends from day one, remember? I remember meeting you in Applewood Park School the day I started. You were so friendly and funny. You were just what an 11 year old, having suddenly moved from Ohio to London, needed. Remember Mr Jenkins, always telling us to stop talking in class? Thinking back, we made his job hell. Brings smiles to my lips just thinking about it. . . . You made the transition easy for me. You were my best friend. Thank you!

Anyway, back to my explanation. I had been in London two years when things changed. It was around March, when we should have been revising for our Year 9 exams, that I got home and saw my Mum with another man, doing things that a 13 year old shouldn't see. I was confused and hurt. I didn't know where Dad was and Mum didn't seem bothered that I had caught her and her lover. She told me to keep quiet because it would break Dad's heart and she convinced me that I couldn't live with that guilt.

Mum knew that I loved Dad more than anything in this world and

would never hurt him, so as she became more confident in being able to trust me, the incidences became more regular and, by May, I would come home to find her with a different man each week. When Dad arrived home, she would be a picture of perfection and I would go to my room for fear of bringing up my dinner all over the kitchen table.

After a few months, I lost all respect for my father, wondering how he could not know. The woman who called herself my mother was endangering my way of life, his reputation, and had me questioning every aspect of the childhood I thought I had known.

Was this what real relationships were like? Was this how I was expected to act? Did she even love me? Was I her real daughter?

I went off the rails and wanted to ease the pain. As you know, I began to drink, smoke, stay out late and hang out with the wrong people, like Mickee, Farrow, Nutz and the rest. I failed in school, I failed in my friendships, I failed in life.

I know that looking back now, I should have just told you but I was jealous! You had such a supportive network with your family. You were perfect! Praying together, staying together. At the time I figured you

wouldn't understand and that you would just try to talk to me about your God. All I could think was, "What does he know?" Hindsight is

always a gem. Anyway, I met someone last year – Derek. He helped me get things into perspective. He is positive and encouraged me to see someone about the unhealthy way I viewed relationships. It's a long slog but I am getting there. Evening classes, rehab, church – you wouldn't recognise me now. Years of bad habits take years of practice to correct.

I am still close to Dad. Once he found out about Mum, we moved back to Ohio. But you know the funniest thing? He never did blame me – not once! Derek says that my Dad reminds him of God. I see his point. Dad was so forgiving, humble and never bitter, even though Mum had broken his heart.



Derek reminds me of you. So positive and funny. He lifts me up and has helped me to face my demons. You were the last issue I had to face and I wanted to make sure you knew that I held you very dear and our memories will last in my memory forever.

Sharon, I love you.

Your crazy, but on-the-right-track-now friend, Cleo.

I am stunned, shocked, hurt. . . . What am I meant to do with this information? Why did she feel the need to share this with me? She should have just said back when we were 13! We could still have been friends now. What kind of friend wouldn't have opened up? She was so selfish!

• 13 Oct 2008

## Dear Diary, Dear God,

I have been up all night thinking about Cleo. I feel bad for not having seen through her pain. I was so selfish. Even in my response last night. Hmmmm. I'm glad that you fill the gaps where I fall short.

I think I'll email her tomorrow. Not sure what to say yet, but I'll follow your lead.

Night x

• 14 Oct 2008

## Dear Diary, Dear God,

I wrote back to Cleo today. This is what I said:

Cleo

I missed you so much and I am glad that you now feel you have the strength to move on. I played my part in what you were going through and could have been a better friend. I blamed you for being weak and figured you should have known better, but that was a far from ideal judgement. It's not and never was my place to judge you. I'm sorry. I guess when I was 13 I was so self absorbed that I could only see how your actions were affecting me.

You are right, my family were good inasmuch as we prayed together, but we didn't stay together. Mum and Dad got divorced 5 years ago and that has left a lasting impression on all of us. I guess what I am trying to say is that nobody is perfect and under the surface we all have our issues.

I prayed for you often and I have a feeling Derek is the answer to that prayer. I will continue to pray for you and if you ever visit London

again I would love for you and Derek to come to church with me.

I miss you very much and hope to hear from you soon.

Your not-so-perfect friend, Shaz.

The rest I leave in your hands. Anything you need me to do from here on, just shout!

Night x

## • Samantha Wiggins

Samantha is currently a student, working part-time for the ITV Network. She lives in NW London but her home church is Luton Central.

# ADVANCE

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"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11



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