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# In Touch Newsletter

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A British Union Conference Newsletter shared between Retired Church Employees

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This month we have offerings to amuse, inspire and cogitate upon. Michael Walker on the lighter side of the 6x8x2 hole. Siegfried Edwards on the life-saving skills of modern medicine and the grace of God. Pastor Don McFarlane sends an interesting report on his new life. Ted Pettit's ready pen contributes an interesting and humorous reflection on his part in the collapse of world Communism. It's rather long but readable, and provides some insight on National Service. Pithy wisdom from Jan Pearce dotted about, while David Markham provides some pictures of Newbold's finest. Apologies to Vera Lindsay for failing to identify her as the author of the poem *Titanic* in last month's issue.

The get-together at Newbold saw over 70 of us enjoy the College's food and hospitality. Dr Phil Brown, the principal, told us some interesting details about his forebears, none of which have criminal associations. He showed us the refurbishing of Keough House which is long overdue. The cost of this for each room is £2500. He noted that if 25 of us contributed £100 each there would be one room identified as The BUC Retirees Room. I think about eleven of us indicated we would contribute. It's open to all of us to support this worthy endeavour. Be sure to indicate your £100 is for the Retirees Room. I am committed because Newbold did a lot for me for which I am grateful.

It's a real pleasure cobbling together *In Touch*, but your contributions are its life blood. As they write on many invoices, E&OE.

Blessings, *Patrick*

***PS Advance Notice – our next get-together is on October 28.***

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I trust you can all relate to this amusing little ditty!

I have a little Satnav  
It sits there in my car  
A Satnav is a driver's friend  
It tells you where you are

It tells me when a light is red  
And when it goes to green  
It seems to know instinctively  
Just when to intervene

I have a little Satnav  
I've had it all my life  
It does more than the normal one  
My Satnav is my wife

I'm sure no other driver  
Has so helpful a device  
For when we leave and lock the car  
It still gives its advice

It gives me full instructions  
On exactly how to drive  
"It's thirty miles an hour" it says  
"And you're doing thirty five"

It fills me up with counselling  
Each journey's pretty fraught  
So why don't I exchange it  
And get a quieter sort?

It tells me when to stop and start  
And when to use the brake  
And tells me that it's never ever  
Safe to overtake

Ah well, you see, it cleans the house  
Makes sure I'm properly fed  
It washes all my shirts and things  
And – keeps me warm in bed!

# An update on life in the New World

by Pastor Don McFarlane

Mary and I are enjoying our ministry in Washington DC. We have been here for months now and are loving every minute. I am able to combine my administrative and pastoral skills in my work. Giving Bible studies on a regular basis, visiting the sick and hospitalised, counselling young people who are preparing for marriage are all elements of my work that I would not exchange for anything.

The other side of my responsibilities is managing the church office of approximately 20 employees and volunteers, and caring for all the day-to-day management matters at the church. The church office is the former Columbia Union office, which is behind the Sligo Church. In addition to the seven pastors and minister for music, there are seven other employees, including the church treasurer, clerk, facilities manager, database manager. The volunteers are all retirees, who come in on a Monday morning to assist with counting the tithe and offerings from the Sabbath before.

Sligo Church is operated as a conference. With a membership of 3000 and an annual turnover of 5 million dollars, it is a major operation. My role in the whole set-up is similar to that of a conference secretary who also pastors a church.

Nothing is left to chance as far as the weekly Sabbath worship services are concerned. The entire office staff, excluding volunteers, meet each Tuesday to review the services of the weekend before and plan the services for the forthcoming Sabbaths, with emphasis on the Sabbath that follows immediately. The worship leader for a given Sabbath is required to produce a run sheet that itemises every aspect of the service, including equipment that would be required, the timing of each item, the placement of microphones. The output is usually an inspiring worship service.

One drawback with the pastoral setup at Sligo Church is that each pastor is not able to exercise the entire scope of his or her giftedness. For example, preaching is the preserve of the senior pastor. Some pastors on the team do not

get the opportunity to preach. I am fortunate in that I have preached six times in six months.

The Church benefits from being on a campus that hosts a university and a hospital. Washington Adventist University, formerly Columbia Union College, occupies most of the campus. Interestingly, the current president of the University, Dr Weymouth Spence, was a room-mate of mine when I was at West Indies College in the early 1970s. Washington Adventist Hospital was established over 100 years ago and was the first hospital to have been established in the Montgomery County. There is a rich symbiotic relationship between the church, hospital and university.

Ten years ago the university, then a college, had less than 300 students. There was much talk regarding its future and whether it had to be closed. Today, as a result of rebranding, aggressive promotion and opening up to the surrounding community, there are now 1500 students. Newbold could learn from them.

The church in the USA faces more or less the same challenges we face in the UK. The church is growing among the immigrant population, especially the Hispanics. The impact of this fact on the church at large is not as great as in the UK due to the size of the country and the diversity of the population. The form of outreach that seems to work best at Sligo is media ministry.

I think often of the church in the UK and the challenges there. My heart is still there. I still believe that God is going to break through in the UK in a big way.

The hope of the second coming of Jesus is still the motivation that gets me out of bed in the morning and gives me a reason for facing the challenges of each new day.

“Live a good and honourable life, then when you get older and think back, you’ll enjoy it a second time.”

# The Lighter Side of Death! by Michael Walker

I recently saw a cartoon of a committee. At one end of the table the chairman commented, "I see our church's biggest problems as communication and procrastination." Someone else responded, "Let's not talk about it till later!"

Death is also one of those subjects folk often try to avoid. I guess this is because, among other reasons, it tends to convey a sense of morbidity. After all, who wants to dote on death when there are brighter topics to muse over! However there is a lighter side if ever there is the appropriate moment to mention it ...

An aged father had his children gathered around him, as his life was slowly drawing to an end. He gave his eldest son some helpful advice, "If you want to live a long and prolific life, remember to sprinkle a little gunpowder on your porridge every morning!" After the old man had gone to his rest, his son remembered his dad's advice and so faithfully sprinkled a little gunpowder on his porridge every morning. He too eventually died at the ripe old age of 117. They had him cremated. He left behind 32 children, 178 grandchildren, 320 great-grandchildren and a 30-foot hole in the wall of the crematorium!

Speaking of cremations, a widow kept her hubby's ashes on the mantelpiece and would often talk to him as she hurriedly dusted around. Her thoughtless and lazy son, who had often been told off for dropping his cigarette ashes in the hearth, resorted to tapping the ash in the urn when she wasn't looking. This went on for a few weeks; and one day as she was flapping around with the duster and humming a cheerful tune, she lifted the lid of the urn and absent-mindedly commented: "Uh, putting on weight I see!"

Shamus was on his deathbed and the priest came to give him the last rites. Said the priest:

"Shamus, do yer renounce the devil an' all his works?"

"No father, no I don't!"

"Shamus, I don't think I heard yer right – do yer renounce the devil an' all his works?"

"No father, no!"

"Shamus, don't yer understand what I am sayin' to yer? This is serious, yer about t' meet yer Maker – do yer renounce the devil an' all his works?"

"No, no father, I won't, I can't! No, no father!"

"Why not Shamus? Why won't yer renounce the devil an' all his works?"

"Oh no father, this is not the time to be making enemies!"

A five-year old daughter and her mum often walked through the local cemetery on their way to the park. On one particular day, they saw someone push a stick into the ground beside the gravestone and hang a wreath on it.

"Mummy, why did that man put a wreath on that stick?" asked the child.

"Well dear, he wanted to remember the person who died."

"Well mummy, will someone do that for me when I die?"

"Oh, I'm sure they will, dear," she responded as she mentally prepared herself for the next question.

They walked in silence for a few minutes until the child piped up: "It won't be fair!"

"Why is that, dear?" asked her mother.

"All I'll see is the stick!"

Just to show that even though the subject of death has its sombre moments, we can sometimes smile at its lighter side! Have a good day!

## A Motorist's Highway to Heaven

by Maurice Musgrave

*Speed Singing as we Journey*

45 Freeways are happy ways

55 I'm lonely here – heaven is my home

65 Nearer my God to Thee

75 When the roll is called up yonder  
I'll be there

85 Lord I'm coming home

# THE COLLAPSE OF WORLD COMMUNISM —

After the Second World War conscription remained in place, as it was feared that The Soviet Union could launch an attack upon Europe. All males aged 18 had to 'Sign On' at the local Labour Exchange and choose between the Army, Navy or Airforce, for two years of service.

As a theological student at Newbold I had so far been passed over. But in my second year I found I was unable to pay the fees which had gone up to the unprecedented level of 250 pounds! It was suggested that I became a Literature Evangelist in South Wales. MC Roe was the publishing Secretary for Wales and had offered this position. Not only did it look promising from the financial side, so that I could get back to Newbold, and as such I could keep my exemption from Military Service.

To cut to the chase I was not the best Literature Evangelist Wales ever had, and after about a year I gave it up and went back to London. The 'Authorities' soon caught up with me and I had to sign on for National Service. MC Roe, who had been a Sergeant Major in the First World War, gave me a word of advice. In his Yorkshire accent he said, 'Now then Lad, don't term yourself a Conscientious Objector when you sign on. Call yourself a Conscientious Co-Operator.'

I went to the local Labour Exchange to sign on. A bald bumptious official gave me a disparaging look, probably due to my long hair. He peremptorily said, 'Right, what's it going to be, Army, Navy or Airforce?'

I replied, 'Neither'.

His bald head began to go slightly pink.

'What do you mean, neither? It's got to be one or the other mate!' he expostulated.

In those days I was not renowned for a calm disposition. In fact I was becoming infuriated with this officious oaf bawling me out. Who did he think he was? He was just some jumped up clerk, a nonentity.

I managed to keep cool. 'I wish to sign on as a Conscientious Co-Operator'.

The bald head was now turning a bright red. 'There is no such thing!' he snapped.

I said I was a pacifist.

That did it! 'You mean a Conchie,' he replied, giving me a look as if I was something that had crawled out from under a rock.

Everything had now gone quiet in the Labour Exchange. Conchies were not held in high repute.

My calm disposition disappeared. 'Listen Mate', I gave out in my best Cockney, 'I did not come down here to be insulted by you! Just do your job and sign me on as a Conscientious Objector then!'

He was speechless. Turning his back he marched to the rear of the office, rummaged through some books and papers, and returned bearing a large ledger.

'Name?' I gave it. 'Address?' I gave that too. 'You will have to appear before the West London Magistrates Court. You will be notified as to when. Sign here'. I signed. Without further ado I was dismissed. Out on the pavement I thought, well, that was a promising start!

Very soon an official-looking envelope arrived marked OHMS. I was summoned to appear at the Civil Court in Chelsea to give reasons for signing on as a Conscientious Objector. They had still not got the message, I was a Conscientious Co-Operator!

Walter Emmerson, Editor of the Stanborough Press was assigned by the British Union to be in charge of us 'Conchies'. He told me to inform my local Pastor so he could accompany me to the Court, Emmerson said this was very important. My Pastor's name was Ivor Kinnersley, who said he would meet me at the Court that Friday at 10 am.

On the Friday I was half an hour late due to getting mixed up on the buses! I ran breathlessly into the Court. To my huge relief the good Pastor was already there. No need to worry about being late, another 'Conchie' had already been called. I went up into the balcony where I could lean over and watch the proceedings.

There were three Magistrates. In the centre sat the chairman, a typical looking ex-army retired Colonel type, with a military moustache and speaking in a plummy upper-crust accent. To his left sat a thin cadaverous fellow with a monocle in his eye. To the Colonel's right sat a waspish acerbic looking female wearing horned-rim glasses.

In front of them stood a long haired bearded hippie type who claimed to be, an atheist, an International Marxist, and a pacifist,

# MY PART IN ITS DOWNFALL BY TED PETTIT

and he would have nothing to do with wars inspired by war mongering Capitalist Hyenas. The Colonel calmly asked him whether he had read the works of Bertrand Russell? Long hair said he had read all of Russell's books. All three magistrates then proceeded to absolutely grill him on the most arcane of Russell's statements, and other pacifist writers like HG Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Mahatma Ghandi and other authors I had never even heard of. The long haired one had been reduced to sputtering silence.

There followed a conference between the Colonel and his associates. He then turned and addressed the Pacifist.

'Well Mr er ...er Johnson isn't it?'

'Yes,' Mr Johnson replied. (Notice, no your honour etc, just Yes. He was an International Marxist after all. These magistrates only represented the decadent, doomed Capitalist hyenas. They would soon be swept away by the invincible Proletariat.)

The Colonel seemed unperturbed about the peril he was in. 'Well Mr Johnson, I am afraid you have not convinced us of your position. Your request to avoid Military Service is denied. You will report at the nearest recruiting office to you and sign on within two weeks.' Bang went the gavel. Long hair was led sputtering and expostulating from the Court. Soon he would have a bellicose sergeant bellowing two inches from his face, 'You! 'Aircut - you 'orrible little man!'

The next lamb to the slaughter was a Plymouth Brother. 'Mr Robinson, we understand you claim to worship with the Plymouth Brethren Church?'

'Yes, your Honour'. (Notice the more respectful tone, Your Honour. I thought I would have to remember that - I mentally rehearsed.) But they were going on with Mr ah Robinson. He was getting absolutely grilled by all three again, but this time on the Bible! They were quoting Bible verses I had never heard of. 'My Kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight.' Where on earth was that passage, John's Gospel? Mark, Luke? I don't know.

The Colonel was talking. The Plymouth Brother had been unable to answer many Bible questions. He too was denied and was led away, ashen-faced, to his National Service doom.

I was up next. I thought, I Have Had It! I will never get through this. Plan B for me was to join the RAF, the Brylcream Boys. Word on the street was it was a bit more cushy there. I might be able to keep my DA haircut. Well, I did have my O Levels, and I did a bit of College at Newbold, that had to count for something. Maybe I could get a soft billet on a radar station, well back from enemy lines, deep underground...

The Colonel was looking at me.

'Ah ... Mr Pettit.'

'Yes Your Honour,' I lisped glibly.

'Hm, I understand you are a ... er Seventh-Day Adventist?'

I thought, well here goes, frantically trying to remember some Bible verses.

'Have you anyone here that can vouch that you are a member in good and regular standing?'

Ah, my trump card, all or nothing. 'Yes, Your Honour, my church Pastor Kinnersley is present.'

The Colonel looked up, 'Is Pastor Kinnersley present?'

The Pastor stood up, 'Yes, Your Honour'. (I thought, thank goodness he said Your Honour).

'Is Mr Pettit a member of your congregation?'

'Yes, Your Honour'.

Whispered asides to the cadaverous monocle, and to the Dame, nodding of heads.

'Very well Mr Pettit, the Colonel smiled, 'you are excused from Military Service. Instead you will do two years work of national importance, like working in the mines, farming, in a hospital or in building.'

I was through! All I had said was, Yes Your Honour. I walked out into the sunshine a free man. I already had a job with a builder. This was a home run.

What had happened? Walter Emerson explained the story to me. In the 1914-18 war some young men who were SDAs had been put in the Army. They had flatly refused to bear arms. This was seen in a very dim light in the British Army of that era.

To break them down they were put in solitary confinement, yelled at, squirted with ice cold water, put on bread and water, and told they were going to be shot. They would not budge.

Word of their predicament reached a Member of Parliament. Questions were raised in the House of Commons. 'This is an outrage!', shouted Socialist MPs. A resolution was quickly passed that Seventh-day Adventists in good and regular standing, would be excused military service and instead do their 'bit' on a farm, down a mine, building, or in a hospital.

I have always thought that this experience illustrated the Doctrine of Justification. When I entered the Court the battle had already been won years before by those young heroes. Just so, when we appear before the Heavenly Court

the battle has already been won by the Lord Jesus Christ. All we will have to do is answer one question, Are you a follower of Jesus and do you have him as your Saviour? To answer yes to those questions will mean that Heaven's door will swing open.

PS I did my bit! I got a job in a hospital as a Ward Orderly. It is about the lowest job you can have in a hospital. One of my jobs was to empty bed pans. What other reason could explain the collapse of the Soviet Union than this?

## TEAM GB 1950s!



All left to right. **Back row** John Arthur, Bruce Colbourn, Stanley Hensman, Paul Smith, \_\_\_\_\_?, Michael Waller, Les Wood, Reg Burgess, Cyril Wilmott, Ted Pettit, Harry Wilby. **Middle row** David Markham, Michael White, John Down, Ted Bartter, \_\_\_\_\_?, Bob Rodd, Colin Anthony, Martin Anthony, John Shaw, Rex Riches, Jim Huzzey, \_\_\_\_\_? Malcolm Taylor. **Girls row** Vera Watson, .....? .....? Elaine Bunker, Shirley Stocking, Margaret Dutton, .....?.....? Brenda Hawkins, .....?.....? Angela? **Front row** Viv Llewellyn, .....? Ross Kennedy, .....? Billy Munn, Patrick Horgan, George Sisson

# DOUBLY SPARED by Siegfried Edwards

From my mid-teens I had suffered from abdominal pain, severe at times, attributed by my GP to a duodenal ulcer, caused by the stresses of school life, particularly exams. I had several internal bleeds over the next 15 years or so, until the surgeon I was referred to thought it advisable to operate to cut the nerve to the stomach, to reduce acid production, and widen the outlet from the stomach which had become constricted due to scarring from the ulcer.

So, in March 1966, at the age of 34, I was taken into the operating theatre of Sheffield Royal Hospital and, in the words of the surgeon, as he told me a few days after the operation, when he opened me up he 'nearly passed out' from the shock at what he saw – a huge tumour on my liver! He told me it looked malignant, so to be on the safe side, he removed a large wedge of liver with the tumour, also the gall bladder, which was tangled up in the tumour, *and* to deal with the duodenal ulcer, he removed most of my stomach! He was greatly relieved to be told by the lab as he was sewing me up that the tumour was non-malignant.

When I was taken back to the ward I was put in a side room, and my first memory on awaking from the anesthetic was seeing, through a mist, several nurses and doctors around my bed. I heard someone say, 'Blood pressure 50/30' and another voice say, 'pulse feeble and fluttering', then I felt the foot of the bed being sharply raised, and lapsed into unconsciousness.

Some time later I awoke to see the Ward Sister at my bedside, who exclaimed, 'Thank God! We thought we had lost you!'

When I became mobile and was able to wander around the main ward, I was told by other patients that one of the surgeons was on the ward when a nurse came running with the news that my blood pressure had dropped. He ran to my room and as a result of their prompt action, by the grace of God I am alive today.

The surgeon later told me that the wall of the tumour was so thin in places that if I had exerted myself such as by lifting a heavy weight, it could have put enough strain on the tumour that it would have burst, and I would have bled to death internally in a matter of minutes. He didn't think I would have survived much more than six months if the tumour had not been removed.

When the realisation came to me that my life had been doubly spared, it made me think very seriously about the reason God had spared my life. A few days later, I was listening to one of my favourite radio programmes, 'Your Hundred Best Tunes'. They usually concluded with a sacred piece, and on this particular evening a choir sang very beautifully, 'O love that will not let me go.' When they came to the words, 'I give Thee back the life I owe' my feelings of gratitude to God were such that I determined then and there that I would go wherever God wanted me to.

I was teaching and doing research at Sheffield University School of Dentistry, but had applied for a research post at an American University, and a few days after my operation I received a letter offering me the post I had applied for. I had previously imagined that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to receive such a letter. But, on the contrary, it was as if a voice said to me, 'This is not what I want you to do. I have something better for you.' Sure enough, two days later, I had a letter from the Caribbean Union of SDA, where I had previously served for five years, asking me if I would be willing to return to fill a need in Trinidad. Immediately I knew that this was what the Lord wanted me to do.

Much as I enjoyed the teaching/research work I had been doing at Sheffield, and the prospect of the job offer in America, I felt that a call from the Lord took precedence. But I knew that I would have to pass a medical exam before I could take up the post in Trinidad, and wondered how I would fare after such major surgery, and its aftermath. Seven months later I passed a stringent medical exam with flying colours – A1!!

I knew that it is only by the grace of God that I recovered my health so completely, and so speedily, and was enabled to serve the Lord for another nine years in the Caribbean Islands.

And here I am at the age of 80, fit as a fiddle! A friend wrote in a Get Well card, back in 1966, that 'only the good die young!'. So what does that say about 'goodness'? Incidentally, that friend was Masie McCondichie (nee Beavon), who tragically died in a car accident about a year later. She was 'good' indeed – a wonderful Christian young lady.

# And Finally ...



I can't add much here. All the British students from the first picture seem to be here. In addition I can identify Fred Wolfram (Poland) 4th from left front row; Peter van Bemmelen (Holland) 3rd from left second row from front; Graham Keough (3rd from right second row from back), Samuel Bacchicchi 1st left back row

## From Sherard Wilson

*Maesia's Song* by Robert Greene (1558–1592)

SWEET are the thoughts that savour of content;  
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;  
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;  
The poor estate scorns Fortune's angry frown.  
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,  
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

## *From Jan Pearce*

"Don't judge folks by their relatives."

"Meanness don't just happen overnight."

"Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't bothering you none."

"Words that soak into your ears are whispered ... not yelled."

"Forgive your enemies, it messes up their heads."

"Work hard, play hard, love well and be thankful you can."

"Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment."

"Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer."

"Live simple, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God."