Church of God in England's National Youth Convention April 26th, 2008

I count it a great privilege to be able to share with our internet guests the awesome blessings which our Lord bestowed upon us during our Youth convention. The theme was **"The Finish Line, Racing to Glory"** and the convention left us all raring to go! The presence of the Lord was undeniably with us from the first prayer until the benediction. It was clear that much prayer had been offered up to the Lord in anticipation of the gathering as the speakers; the prayers and the songs were anointed. The programme was jam-packed and we thank the Lord that under his leading, the convention was a huge success. Saints had come to the sanctuary with a mind to worship. There was no need for 'praise pumping' as our brethren lifted up holy hands and worshipped God freely. Despite it being a 'youth' convention, we had a taster of that ol' time religion, and it was more than 'good enough for me'! Praise God!

The theme was explored through a variety of soul-stirring sermons and visual presentations. I thank the Lord for inspiring me to preach a message using the theme **"On Your Marks, Get Set, Go!"** - a theme which the Lord had laid heavily on my heart. I encouraged the youth to make the proper preparation in order to see the race through to the end. I also encouraged the youth not to stay 'on your marks' too long as the enemy will deter you from getting up and running. Bro. Joshua Anderson preached on **"The Race is not for the Swift"** highlighting that the race is an, 'endurance race' as opposed to a sprint and that we need to keep on going, all the way to the end.

Our National Overseer also preached on the theme, **"The Finish Line Racing to Glory."** He used the life of the Apostle Paul who after his conversion became a coach to young Timothy and other notable men of God. Paul encouraged them to be single minded, 2 Tim.2:3, 4, to have self-discipline, 1 Cor.9:24-27 and to persevere, Phil 3:13,14. In conclusion our Overseer stated that despite all that Paul endured he was able to run the race successfully and win the prize, 2 Tim. 4:7,8.

Bro Jason Prince preached on **"The Finish Line"** visually demonstrating the need for us to 'dip' towards the finish line as runners do in literal races. Spiritually speaking, we have to make that extra effort in these last days if we are going to make it in. The moderator, Sis. Angela Clarke preached a message about the responsibility of the elder members, or 'coaches' in the church. They are to lead by example and encourage the younger ones in their walk with Christ. Sis. Clarke used biblical examples and we thank the Lord for his anointing upon her sermon.

One of the highlights of the convention was a visual presentation where Coach Word and Coach Truth were instructing their runners how to make it to the finish line. One runner, Stuart paid heed to his Coach and dropped off all necessary weights in order to run the race. Runner Jason would not heed his Coach's advice and thought he would be able to run the race laden down with unnecessary excesses. Whilst Runner Stuart took his time and was refreshed by the watering of the Word, Runner Jason became sidetracked by the Deceiver (Satan) and came off track altogether. Runner Stuart who listened to the advice of his coach made it to the finish line whereas Runner Jason who did not listen could not be found at the end of the race. The visual play was humorous, with a poignant message.

We thank the Lord for the songs, which included **"We're marching to Zion"** and **"I'm running for my life"**. There was special singing from the local churches on the programme and we were blessed to be ministered to for the first time by the young men's group from Northfield Church. There is a lot of musical talent in the Church of God in England!

The convention concluded with a fiery altar call. To God be the glory for the showers of blessings, which he poured upon us as we tarried for one another at the altar.

At the end of the convention we were left wanting more! It was a marvellous day and we look forward to what the Lord has in store for the youth, and indeed the whole of the Church of God as we continue to serve Him!

Submitted by Claudine Brown – National Reporter