

Messenger

News to the churches • 8 February 2013 • Volume 118 • 03



‘Mission to the Cities’ launched at SEC Evangelism Expo

by Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist



‘We need to mingle with people who don’t look like us,’ challenged Pastor Ian Sweeney, British Union Conference president. His ‘straight talking’ message was heard by 800 people attending the South England Conference Evangelism Expo at Newbold College on Sunday, 13 January 2013.

The focus of the day, and what drew leaders to the Trans-European Division office, was the launch of ‘Mission to the Cities’, an initiative originating from the General Conference. London has been chosen to be the TED city of focus for this mission thrust during October 2013.

This evangelistic programme is a combined effort of the Division, the Union, and the local Conference, but rooted in the local community.

With plans being made for a variety of evangelism initiatives across London, Pastor Janos Kovacs-Biro, TED Evangelism director, presented the initiative and was thrilled to see members excited and willing to participate in Mission to the Cities.

Recognising that this was the initiative’s launch, and for many the first they heard about it, Pastor Janos conceded that members would need more training at local church level to crystallise the programme and make it as relevant as possible for each local community.

The day was packed with an impressive diversity of workshops and presentations aimed at motivating members to become involved in evangelism and witness. Pastoral intern, Anthony Fuller, found it refreshing to learn from ministries such as the Watering Hole in the Southampton area.



Pastor Sam Ouadjo had arranged coach transportation for his churches because he recognised the importance of the event to help his members catch the vision of taking the Gospel to London – especially for his newly elected leaders.

Pastor Maureen Rock was thrilled to see her members catching the vision for Mission to the Cities. Mani Cudjoe from Reading found the expo an eye-opening experience: both in how passionate people were about evangelism, and about the opportunities available to share the Gospel.

Pastor Simon Martin set the bar high with his morning sermon, recognising that ‘God may be missing in our culture today, but we are to make Him known.’ He emphasised, ‘We make God known when we move out of our comfort zones.’ Pastor Martin really challenged the congregation,

and throughout the day you could hear the challenge become a consistently repeated catchphrase: ‘We need to make God known.’

To see video recordings of the main presentations, visit the Mission to the Cities vimeo page at: vimeo.com/user15807630.



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editorial

16 January, 2013



Julian Hibbert
Editor

Two different perspectives

Now let me make it clear that I am not discussing the question of why bad things happen to some and not to others. Neither am I suggesting that faith will always protect us against the actions of evil men, accidents, random natural causes or our own foolishness.

My point is this: that these two events starkly contrast two perspectives on life. Firstly, for Alan Wright, throughout the telling of his story there is no mention of God's protection or intervention. While for Richard and Leanna there is the distinct possibility that God had a hand in the crane drivers' protection.

The secular worldview actually has no place for God. He has been squeezed out of modern life – and has no influence over it. Perhaps that is why Alan Wright could see no 'divine fingerprints' on the circumstances that led to his freedom.

Richard and Leanna, on the other hand, live in a world that still has space for 'divine intervention' and guardian angels – a world where God can, and does at times, manipulate events and circumstances to the benefit of believers.

The centurion

Matthew 8:5-13 (NIV) records how a high-ranking military officer made space for such 'divine intervention' in the life of his desperately ill servant.

"When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

"The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

This dialogue highlights one of the critical differences between the secular mind and that of the believer. The believer makes space for God to manoeuvre in his life. He doesn't limit God.

"When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus was amazed. His own people had become secular. They had amassed a vast 'religious' knowledge, littered with burdensome duties and unhelpful detail, but they had left Him little space to be the Almighty! They had left Him no room to do the things that God does best: forgive hopeless sinners; transform twisted lives; reconcile enemies; perform miracles; prick consciences . . . and practise 'divine intervention'!

They had lost what the centurion had found – faith!

"Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.'

Is there space for God to manoeuvre in our lives – or are we just 'secular' Adventists?

¹<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/aviation/9807614/Helicopter-crash-Vauxhall-crane-workmen-escape-death-because-they-overslept.html>. ²ibid.
³<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2263615/Vauxhall-helicopter-crash-Lucky-Richard-Moule-Nicki-Biagioni-overslept-missed-death-minutes.html>.

16 January – In Amenas gas field, Algeria
I sat fascinated. Alan Wright, a British survivor of the recent Algerian hostage crisis, was telling his story on TV.

Now back at home in Aberdeen, he described how he avoided capture after terrorists stormed the *In Amenas* gas field in Algeria and started shooting hostages. With the help of some Algerian workmates he ended up among a group hiding from the ruthless extremists.

While intermittent gun and mortar fire suggested that other expatriates were dying nearby, Alan waited, fearful but safe.

Then a terrorist entered the office block, rattling door handles and calling politely for the workers to reveal themselves. They didn't.

It would have been easy for his Algerian colleagues to slip away from the danger, but they stayed until they were able to cut through the perimeter fences and lead Alan to safety.

At least eighty-one people died in this hostage debacle and many are still missing . . . but for me, something else was missing . . . throughout that long interview Alan Wright never used the terms 'God', 'a higher power', 'Providence', 'prayer', 'faith' or 'miraculous circumstances' – nothing suggesting that his safe return was anything but pure chance.

16 January – St George Wharf tower, London

Just after 8am on the day the Algerian hostage crisis started, a helicopter, piloted by Captain Pete Barnes of Berkshire, clattered across a misty London skyline. Suddenly, it crashed into a high-rise crane at The Tower, One St George Wharf, one of Europe's largest skyscrapers.

The helicopter plunged into the street below, killing its pilot and a passing pedestrian, Mr Matthew Wood. Twelve others were injured by falling debris.

Fortunately, the men who were scheduled to operate the crane that day, *'Richard Moule, 31, and Nicki Biagioni, 30, were late for work and hurrying to climb the crane . . . when the helicopter clipped the structure and plunged 700ft to the ground.'*¹

Richard, from Harlow, Essex, was due to start work at 7am with his colleague, *'but both were late for the first time anyone could remember.'* According to Richard it *'was the first time I've been late since starting this job three years ago. I just woke up late. Call it divine intervention if you like.'*²

Mr Biagioni's wife, Leanna, told reporters that her husband, a father of three, had also overslept that morning, *'something he never does, and was late for work. He was not up the crane when it hit. I thank his guardian angel.'*³

Richard Moule and Leanna Biagioni clearly mention what Alan Wright seemed to miss – that there may be times when God intervenes in our lives.



Enhancing Health

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

Cancer: the facts – part 1

Overview

In this issue we commence a series focusing on cancer. Recently, I was asked whether cancer is on the increase within our church community, or whether people are being more open about their diagnosis, thereby bringing it under the spotlight. What is clear globally is that some cancers appear to be on the increase while others have better survival rates now than they did ten years ago. In the forthcoming issues we will look at cancer rates for various cancers and examine evidence-based research relating to prevention, treatment and recovery.

The latest data from Cancer Research UK on cancer statistics in the UK reveal that, in 2010, 324,579 people in the UK were diagnosed with cancer. This equates to around 521 cases for every 100,000 people, but was found to be significantly higher in males (426 per 100,000) than in females (374 per 100,000).¹

Cancer Research UK is a cancer research and awareness charity. It is identified as the world's largest independent cancer research charity conducting research into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease. A key aim of Cancer Research UK is to reduce the number of

deaths from cancer. In this series we will be drawing on data from Cancer Research UK and analysing some comparative studies from organisations such as the American Institute for Cancer Research.

Some good news published on 11 December 2012 by the Department of Health in its document entitled *Improving Outcomes: A Strategy for Cancer* is that cancer survival rates in the UK are improving. However, there is no room for complacency as the UK cancer survival rates are quite low compared to other European countries. Speaking at the Britain Against Cancer Conference, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt stated:

*'It is simply unacceptable that our cancer survival rates lag behind that of our European neighbours. I want to make sure that our survival is among the best and NHS patients receive the best treatment available.'*²

This year the BUC Health Ministries department will host a National Cancer Symposium on 14 July. Invited guests include NHS personnel specialising in cancer care and research, and the National Cancer Action Team (NCAT) who worked in partnership with our BUC Health Ministries department to improve the religious and cultural aspects of patient care for cancer patients. Keynote speaker Professor Paul Gyles (PhD), associate vice-president of academic administration, graduate studies and research at Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica, will present a paper on his cancer research work.

Good health!

¹www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/incidence/
²www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/12/2nd-cancer-annual-report/

They had lost what the centurion had found - faith!





Must first impressions always be the lasting ones?

by Associate Pastor Sam Gardner



It has often been said that first impressions are the most lasting ones, and nearly impossible to erase. But I have discovered that last impressions can be just as powerful. In customer industry services they say that it is the last impression that leaves the aftertaste, such as the smiling and friendly teller at the supermarket.

Someone in public office who initially serves well but then messes up will mostly be remembered for the negative last impression.

Lance Armstrong is a classic example of the effect of the negative last impression. His involvement in the doping scandal has neutralised his seven yellow jersey 'successes' in the Tour de France.

During the sixteenth century Dr Edward Crome preached against the false Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation and was ordered to recant. Instead of recanting he reasserted his views of the mass and the papacy. His sermon set off a wave of persecution and many were arrested, even for talking about it in the street. However, to the horror of his supporters, Crome eventually did recant rather than burn at the stake.¹

So we see, then, that final impressions can be just as powerful as first impressions.

Remember Naaman?

If you remember the story of Naaman, the commander of the army of Aram who had leprosy and came to Elisha to be cured (2 Kings 5), you will recall that he was so grateful for his miraculous cure that he wanted to reward Elisha for his kindness. However, to the disappointment of Gehazi, Elisha refused to accept any rewards from Naaman.

Have you ever tried to imagine what went through Gehazi's mind at that moment? 'No! You can't be serious, Elisha! For this great miracle you can't let this man off so easily . . . and if you don't want anything for yourself, consider me. I have served you all these years with no wage increases, no year-end bonuses, no annual leave, no benefits . . . and here is a perfect opportunity to enjoy the blessing that comes from our labour – and you refuse!'

Overcome by discontent and driven by greed, Gehazi runs after the chariot of Naaman, stops him and says: 'My master has sent me to say, two members of a company of prophets have just come from the hill country of Ephraim and are in desperate need, my lord. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes, my lord' (verse 22, paraphrased).

Out of the generosity of his heart Naaman gives him two talents of silver and two changes of clothes, which he hides, hoping to avoid discovery.

He should have known that very little escaped Elisha's notice. His lies and deception are swiftly exposed and a dreadful judgement falls upon him: 'Because of this the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever' (verse 27, paraphrased).

So because of his greed Gehazi leaves the presence of Elisha as white as snow. Marked forever for his sin! That's my first impression of Gehazi – but should it be my last?

Curiously, unlike so many who fail God, Gehazi doesn't just fade away. Just three chapters later, he again pops into the narrative, under the most bizarre circumstances.

Gehazi testifies

We all remember the Shunamite woman whose son had been brought back to life by Elisha, and the prophet's advice that she go into exile for seven years because of a forthcoming famine (2 Kings 8:1, 2).

She followed his advice, but upon her return she finds her house and land in the hands of someone else. This is what happened next:

'It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done." Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." And when the king asked the woman, she told him.' (2 Kings 8:3-6, NKJV.)

Gehazi, the greedy and deceitful servant – now a leper – is in the king's court, and the king trusts him to tell the truth. He does, and because it matches the woman's story, the king does something good for her:

'So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now."' (2 Kings 8:6, NKJV.)

A fascinating story. A story of restitution, based on the true and detailed report of a man once condemned to a life of leprosy for his shameful deceit!

This all begs the question: are first impressions always the ones to remember? Or do the Gehazis, Samsons and Mary Magdalenes of the Bible suggest something different? Can life and honour still be found in the shadow of abysmal failure?

If first impressions needn't be the lasting ones, then there is still hope for many of us!

¹The English Reformation, by Norman Jones

Footnote: Adapted from a sermon preached at the Grantham church, Sabbath, 19 January 2013.

with Andrew Puckering



A lowly bleating

'Wail, shepherds, and cry!' said the LORD to the leaders of His people through Jeremiah the prophet. 'For the days of your slaughter . . . are fulfilled . . . And the shepherds will have no way to flee, Nor the leaders of the flock to escape. . . . For the LORD has plundered their pasture . . . because of His fierce anger.' (Jeremiah 25:34-38, NKJV.) Clearly, Israel's leaders in Jeremiah's time had incurred the wrath of God! What had they done to merit His anger?

The LORD has always loved His people, and He has always seen them as His sheep (Genesis 49:24; Numbers 27:17; Isaiah 63:11). The patriarchs were shepherds by occupation, and would have recognised the analogy immediately (Genesis 30:31-43; 47:3). Moses lived as a shepherd before 'shepherding' the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3:1-3). David was a shepherd when anointed to 'shepherd' the Israelites as king – and the Israelites knew it (1 Samuel 16:11-13; 2 Samuel 5:2, NKJV). From the time of the judges (1 Chronicles 17:6) through to the time of Solomon (Ecclesiastes 12:11), God expected His leaders to shepherd His flock carefully.

By the time of King Ahab, however, the 'shepherds' were not leading their flocks into pastures green anymore. As the LORD showed Micaiah: 'I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd' (2 Chronicles 18:16, NKJV). By the time of Isaiah, they were sleeping on the job; the 'shepherds' whom God had appointed to guide His people were ignorant, dumb, greedy and lazy, and getting drunk (Isaiah 56:9-12).

By Jeremiah's time things had not improved – God's shepherds were dull-hearted (Jeremiah 10:21); negligent and destructive (Jeremiah 23:1, 2); and horribly cruel (Ezekiel 34:1-5). God saw His poor sheep, alone and lost, and had pity on them – as well as anger towards His negligent shepherds (Ezekiel 34:6-10)!

God's people needed better shepherds than that – shepherds who would feed them with knowledge and understanding – and God was going to appoint them (Jeremiah 3:15): including Cyrus, who wasn't even an Israelite (Isaiah 44:28). By far the greatest promise God made, though, was to come for His sheep Himself (Isaiah 40:10, 11). God Himself was coming to look for His lost sheep, and feed them, and judge the wicked shepherds (Ezekiel 34:11-31).

God fulfilled His promise, and came to His sheep – and saw them lost, and had pity on them (Matthew 9:36). He illustrated His mission with stories of lost sheep who needed saving (Luke 15:4-7). He warned them against hungry wolves disguising themselves as sheep (Matthew 7:15). He revealed Himself to be the Good Shepherd, who intended to give His life for them (John 10:1-18) – and when the time came, the Shepherd was struck for His wandering sheep (Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 26:31).

His care didn't end there, though – after He was raised from the dead, our Good Shepherd appointed more shepherds to guide His flock on Earth (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28), and when the time came for them to lay down their lives they appointed others, until the Chief Shepherd returns (1 Peter 5:1-4). We were like sheep who went astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd of our souls (1 Peter 2:25) – and praise God for the Shepherd who became a Lamb (Revelation 7:17)! He will shepherd us forevermore.

- Which two chapters in Zechariah speak about bad shepherds?
- What punishments does God have in store for them?
- Which Shepherd is described in Zechariah 13?
- When was this prophecy fulfilled? (Mark 14)
- Which psalm begins: 'The LORD is my shepherd'?

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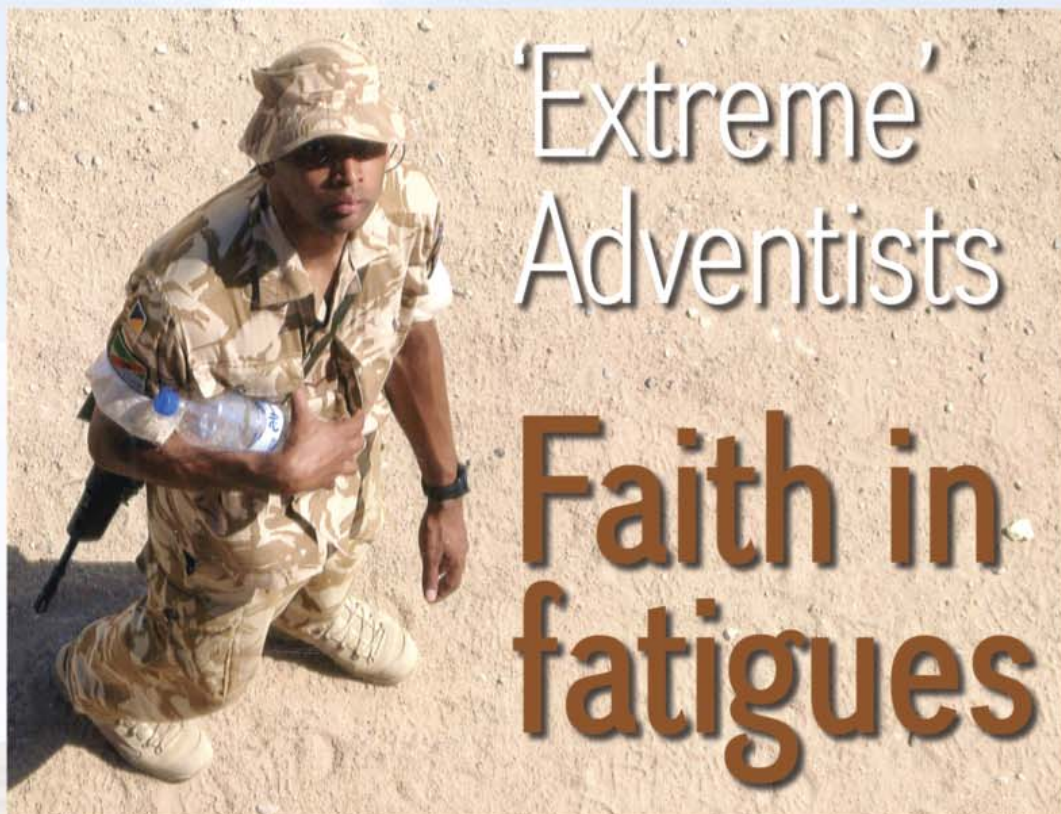
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This is our third in the series 'Extreme Adventists', and here we profile Cpl Filimoni Raceva, someone whose work sometimes places him in situations of extreme danger.



Editor: Filimoni and Anaseini, thank you for granting our readers a glimpse into the life of a serving soldier in our British armed forces. If there are any questions that you are not at liberty to answer because of the nature of Filimoni's work – please say so.
Anaseini, before we talk about Filimoni, please tell us briefly about your children . . .

Anaseini: Nanise, aged 6, was born in Fiji; Filimoni, aged 4, in Germany; and Rebekah, just 18 months old, in England. All three are very special to me . . . and they have some of their father's traits, which is good because they remind me of him when he is away.

Editor: You are both from Fiji – what brought you here?

Filimoni: I joined the British Army before completing high school in March 2000, aged 17. Finding jobs in Fiji is hard, even with good qualifications. So when I saw the opportunity, I knew it was a stepping stone to something better.

I met Ana in 2002, while she was at nursing college in Fiji. We got engaged in August 2005 and married on 10 January 2006, before she flew over to England the next year.

Editor: Filimoni, tell our readers about your spiritual journey.

Filimoni: It all started during a six-month tour of duty to the Falklands. I shared a room with a few fellow Fijians from a base in Germany.

A fellow Fijian, who had previously occupied our room,

had left a couple of Christian DVDs behind. As the first three months were over, and I was due for a two-week 'R'n'R' pass back home, I decided to take them home for Ana. She was more of a church-goer than I was, and I thought she might enjoy them.

After my return to the Falklands, Ana had time on her hands and began to listen to the DVDs. One of them contained a study on Revelation presented by Brother Rami of the Adventist Church in Fiji.

When I finally returned home, Ana couldn't wait to tell me all about it, and why Sabbath-keeping was a big deal, even today. I knew that she and the kids had been going to church on Saturdays – and that a retired pastor was giving her weekly Bible studies.

Editor: How did all this make you feel, Filimoni?

Filimoni: I was curious to find out why those DVDs had changed my wife's view of Sunday-keeping. Then, after a few weeks of listening and thorough Bible reading, I realised that I was sent to the deep South Atlantic, led to live in that particular room, and prompted not to throw away the discs, just so that we could learn this truth. It wasn't luck, but a miracle from God.

Editor: Filimoni and Ana – that is an incredible story! Now tell us about your work, which qualifies you as an 'extreme Adventist'.

Filimoni: I joined up as a gunner in the Royal Artillery, helping to operate a sophisticated air defence system that has round-the-clock, all-weather capabilities. After seven years of that I decided to transfer to the Royal Logistic Corps. Obtaining a trade with qualifications that would be helpful in civilian life was my main reason for the change.

I have had tours of duty in Cyprus with the UN (Operation Tosca 2002), Iraq (Operation Telic 2008), the Falklands (2009 and 2011) and Canada (2010). Of these, the most physically and spiritually demanding one was at the Contingency Operating Base at Basra Airport, Iraq. The insurgents launched indirect mortar fire at us at least twice a

day, sometimes three.

When the alarm went off, I often found myself under a desk or inside a shipping container, questioning my own mortality and asking: 'Is this one for me, Lord?' That's when you know that this saying is true: 'Yes, you may be tough, but you're not invincible.' By the end of that six-month tour, I started to appreciate the little things in life that God has blessed me with. Sadly, it was not so for the many who did not return home alive.

Editor: Thank you for that sobering insight into the life



of a soldier. Anaseini, in the light of the dangers our servicemen face . . . do you ever worry that you will one day be visited by a CNO?*

Anaseini: I have feared for Fili's life at times, especially when he was in Iraq, that I might get a sudden visit from the Welfare Officer – all the soldiers' wives dread that. But really, it's down to your faith – whether you believe that God will take care of your husband, and look after your family, no matter the circumstances.

Editor: Filimoni, please tell our readers how the MOD treats your Sabbath-keeping.

Filimoni: Pastor, they have an Equality and Diversity Policy within the armed forces. That policy helps us to get to know, understand, and respect the beliefs of our fellow Christians in uniform. In fact, many of the Commonwealth soldiers take the time to share their knowledge about the Bible and about God, and many of them respect our concept of Sabbath-keeping.

Editor: Anaseini, there is one last question for you: a very personal one. How do you handle the separation when Filimoni goes on these extended tours of duty?

Anaseini: Most times it is hard to cope, especially while taking care of three children. There are times when I break down in tears, and just wish that my close relatives were within arm's reach, but they are all in Fiji.

Fili and I communicate a lot while he's away, which seems to help the days pass quicker. But it does get lonely. There has never been a single year of our marriage in which we have spent more than six months together as a family. Makes us wonder how much worse it will become once all the MOD cuts have taken place. No matter though, we still pray for better days ahead!

Editor: And we do too – not just for your family – but also for all the thousands of others who serve to keep us safe.

*Casualty Notification Officer. Filimoni and Anaseini attend the Grantham church.

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Readers' gallery

Megapixels of creation

... Happy New Year!



1. **Hope.**
Yvonne Bauwens, Panasonic Lumix FZ20.
2. **Derwent Water, Lake District.**
Victor Hulbert, Nikon D300.
3. **Beach reflections.**
Jennie Hall, Sony DSC-TZ5.
4. **Hard frost.**
Alison Duncan, Sony HDR-XR500VE.
5. **Blackbird.**
David Bell, Fujifilm X-S1.
6. **Frosty spider's web.**
Brian Pilmoor, Canon.

Please visit: http://adventistwebministries-org-uk.adventist.eu/photo_albums/1661 for more pictures.

Happy New Year to you all!

What a winter so far. The snow has been lovely, despite the disruptions. But spring is just around the corner. We are already seeing evidence of this with bulbs starting to push through. So I hope you have been out with your cameras.

I still want your photos . . . scenes, flora and fauna, birds, animals, insects and close-ups – anything that you feel portrays the wonder of God's creation; and, if you can, add a bit of humour into the mix!

If you have enjoyed all these great pictures, how about sending in yours to: dbell@stanboroughpress.org.uk – just remember to keep them 'hi-res'.

DAVID BELL

'As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.' *Genesis 8:22 (GNT)*



Exam tests their faith

by Katie Ramharacksingh

Five days before their scheduled exam, two Adventist students reading Business Finance at the University of Sussex won their struggle to change a 9am exam on Sabbath, 12 January 2013, to a 5pm sitting on the same day.

Sharon Mensah, 20, took the lead in trying to rearrange her exam after she received her exam timetable in early December, 2012. 'It felt like a test,' she explained. 'But I kept saying to myself, I am not doing this exam on the Sabbath. I wouldn't change my mind. After talking to God about the situation, I knew that at the end of the day something good would come out of it.'

It wasn't until Monday, 7 January, five days before the exam was due to take place, that the university told them of the decision to permit the students to take their exam after sunset.

Following protocol, Sharon had notified the examination office in good time about the need for her, and fellow student Nnamdi Mgbenwelu, to change their exam to a more suitable time. After asking their local pastor, Jonathan Burnett, to send an official letter confirming they were Seventh-day Adventists, they were told they could rearrange their exam and would be notified of a new date in the new year.

Early in 2013, they were shocked when the university decided they would no longer allow the change, and were told that, if they didn't take the exam as scheduled, they would have to sit it in September 2013 – meaning they would both be forced to graduate a whole year later, in June 2014.

During this time, while it seemed the university would not change their stance, the Brighton and Hove church, along with family and friends of the two young people, prayed earnestly for them.

With this sudden reverse decision, Sharon again sought the help of Pastor Burnett of the Brighton and Hove Adventist church, and Pastor Sam Davis, president of the South England Conference and Religious Liberty director. Together, they researched the university's *Examination Handbook*, talked with the examination office, wrote letters and were eventually able to speak with the university's assistant registrar. This finally resulted in a positive response, and they were notified that the young people could sit the exam on the same day, but at 5pm, after sunset.

'I learnt two things through this situation,' said Pastor Burnett. 'The first is that being able to do a bit of research and find out what your rights are as an Adventist is important, especially as such a large percentage of our Church are students. The second is that at no point did the two students ever say they were going to sit the exam – they spoke of graduating in 2014 as a real second option. They were willing to put their lives on hold because of their faith, and that's the real story here to me!'

Further advice for Adventist students facing Sabbath problems can be found on the Religious Liberty page of the BUC website: www.adventistinfo.org.uk/departments/parl.php.



Adventist student's stunning double award

by Frazer Ansell and Katie Ramharacksingh

Former College of Law student, Serene Allen, has scooped two of the country's major law student awards.

Serene, a member of the Willesden Seventh-day Adventist church, won both the Roger Leyland Prize, awarded by leading international law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, and the Nigel Asquith Prize, which is awarded by top law firm Morgan Cole.

The Roger Leyland Prize recognises the highest overall mark achieved by a black or Asian student on the college's Legal Practice Course (LPC). The Nigel Asquith Prize is awarded to the student who obtains the highest overall mark in the Business Law part of the LPC.

As well as recently starting her training contract to become a solicitor at leading regional law firm Matthew Arnold & Baldwin LLP, Serene has also taken on teaching the Willesden Teens Sabbath School class – a volunteer task equally as challenging and rewarding as her law degree.

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Community outreach at Christmas

On Sabbath morning, 22 December last year, Great Yarmouth Church held its Christmas service, which was well attended with several visitors present to hear Pastor Rio Expulgar's stirring Christmas message.

That evening the church was filled again when eleven visitors from the community joined the congregation in a 'Candlelight and Carol Service' to glorify Jesus. A short message, entitled 'Music From Outer Space', was presented by the writer, along with special readings and music. At the close of the service, everyone received a lighted candle as the congregation sang 'Joy to the World'.

Hot drinks and warm mince pies were enjoyed after the service, and there is no doubt that a positive impact was made upon all who attended.

PASTOR MICHAEL I. WALKER, COMMUNICATION SECRETARY

PHOTO: MAYBELLE ESPULGAR



Eating to feed the homeless

On Sunday, 11 November, Middlesbrough members turned out in numbers to enjoy a special meal, the proceeds of which went to Hope North East. Members of this charity work among the homeless of their community, and also assist those coming off drugs and alcohol, and those leaving prison. The funds raised went to provide meals and care packages for Middlesbrough's homeless on Christmas day.

JUDY HAMILTON-JOHANSSON



A unique Advent calendar

On 22 December last year the Hemel Hempstead church held a unique Christingle service. They did all the normal things done during such events: carols were sung, Nativity costumes were worn, instruments were played, bells were rung . . . and the children paraded while carrying their Christingles.

Then it was time for the unique Advent calendar, created by Jane Butters from an idea by Andrea Forsyth. One by one, young and old came forward to place their 'gifts' in the pockets of a large quilted calendar . . . after all, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

The service was followed by a Christmas meal, and the many donated children's toys were then given to the local women's refuge.

JOHN BUTTERS





New year . . . new life!

On 12 January 2013 three women at Central London Church experienced new life. Minyuen Ho decided to get baptised after experiencing the healing hand of Jesus. Sarah Umurhurhu also took on a new life. 'I feel like a weight has been lifted; I am now at peace and harmony. I just want to go out there and do His work more than ever.' After years of feeling empty inside and longing for a church where she could feel at home, Alisha Collins said: 'I feel at peace; I always felt like something was missing. I now feel calm – it's indescribable.'

NANCY-JOSEE CIAKUDIA



First VBS

During August last year Great Brickkiln Street Church successfully ran their first Vacation Bible School. The main theme was 'The diversity of water' and the children went to Sea World as a special reward.

DELVA CAMPBELL



Annual charity toy and gift service

On 1 December last year the Grantham church held their annual toy service. The toys were received by Home Start and given to local children.

At the same service, John and his dog, Poppy, received a cheque of £200 on behalf of Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. They had been £150 short of the £10,000 required to train a dog for a young girl in Lincolnshire, and the donation helped them reach this goal.

Three other local charities also received donations from the church's Community Services team as part of the 2012 allocation: The Children's Air Ambulance; LIVES; and Grantham Poverty Concern.

COMMUNICATION SECRETARY



Baptism completes family circle

On the last Sabbath of 2012, 29 December, the Stanborough Park church was thrilled to see Stephen Allcock following the example of the rest of his family through baptism. His father, Pastor Graham Allcock, baptised him, his mother Pauline read the Scripture reading and his sister Lynette shared some of his favourite Bible verses.

Speaking from the baptistry for a full five minutes, Stephen explained the reason why as a pastor's son he had delayed baptism until, at 20, he felt mature enough to commit his life to God and accept whatever road lay ahead for him, finishing with a poem he had written about his spiritual journey.

'I have tried what the world has to offer, seen where it leads; that shiny box that life gets presented in – it's empty,' was his advice to other young people. 'Sure you may have fun for a while, but when it comes down to it, we all have a need of something far greater than one good night we can't remember. For me, what baptism truly meant was letting go. Stepping back and saying to God, "This time I want You to lead me."'

JUNE COOMBS

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Toda dinner

On Sabbath 8 December 2012, Central London Church held a Toda (Hebrew for 'Thanks') dinner to raise funds for 'The Water Tap Foundation', an international charity that provides clean drinking water to poor areas of the world, starting with a small village in Malawi. According to Linda Haimbodi, 'The main aim of the dinner was to say thank you to the Lord for what He has done for us, and to remember our brothers and sisters in Malawi who don't have clean water.'

NANCY-JOSEE CIAKUDIA



Mayor of Derby and Camellia Bran, Pastor Emanuel Bran's wife

'It made my Christmas'

'It made my Christmas!' That was the sentiment of Councillor Frank Harwood after he had enjoyed the Chester Green church's 2012 carol service – and some good mince pies that were served afterwards. The Mayor of Derby, Councillor Lisa Higginbottom, was there too, and her smile suggested that she had also enjoyed the event! This was the first time that a Derby mayor had visited our church for such a service. Our sister churches of Bethel and Burton supported the event too, and we hope to make this year's event even better!

RICHARD SHAW

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For an application form, contact Mrs L. McDonald at info@hbsda.bham.sch.uk or call 0121 693 7742. **Closing date for applications: Friday 22 February 2013, 4pm.**

The successful candidate for this job will be working with children, and will therefore be subject to a disclosure check through the confidential process administered by the Criminal Records Bureau. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its children and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Concert raises £1,000

A well-attended concert by a professional trio of Adventist musicians at Stanborough Park Church on the evening of 24 November last year raised almost £1,000 for the church's development fund. Such is the trio's reputation that concert-goers came from as far away as Chiswick in West London.

The concert, entitled 'Amazing Grace', consisted of hymns and sacred music performed by the talented J. Ahn Trio and narrated by the church's associate pastor, Karin Wiecezorek. It was the first of a series of winter concerts to raise funds for an ambitious plan to adapt the church's sanctuary to current needs.

The trio consists of South Korean-born professional musicians Ji-Eun (violin), Jiae (piano) and Ji Hee (cello) Ahn, three sisters who have been Stanborough Park members for some years.

JUNE COOMBS



Wolverhampton Central Community Services Day

Wolverhampton Central held a very successful Community Services Day on 22 September last year, under the theme, 'Help somebody today'.

Two of the high-profile guests who attended were Councillor Sandra Samuels and Anthony Walker, who spoke about the growing problem of homelessness in the community – an additional 600 persons per year.

Each of the local Adventist community services was promoted during the day, including the Aberdaron special needs camp in Wales. The closing challenge by Joy Green summarised the issue in this way: 'Preaching the Word of God is important, but we also must show love and friendship to our neighbours by helping to meet some of their basic needs.'

DOREEN BARRETT



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obituaries

Daphne Byfield (1929-2012) d. 13 June. Daphne

Byfield was born on 31 May 1929, in the parish of St Mary, Jamaica, to Bethel Jude Byfield and Amanda Murphy-Byfield. She was one of nine siblings and grew up in Kingston, Jamaica.

A fire destroyed the family home and forced their relocation to another part of Kingston where an evangelistic series was taking place, just up the road. For Daphne this was a life-changing move, for she accepted the message and was baptised at the age of 17 by Pastor W. A. Holgate, and became a member of the North Street church in Kingston, where she sang in the church choir.

Daphne earned her living as a very talented dressmaker, and then as a practice nurse, until she decided to emigrate to Birmingham, England, to train as a State Registered Nurse.

She was rebaptised by Pastor Rodd in Handsworth Church in July 1967. On 12 October 1974 Daphne transferred her membership to the West Bromwich church, where she was an active member until ill health prevented her from participating in church activities. She held many offices, including church registrar, Education director, Community Service leader, head deaconess, choir leader and Personal Ministries leader. She also worked with the Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School Education committee.

Having grown up as part of a large family, Daphne was a very sociable person, able to witness easily to passengers on the bus or at bus stops, and she always had a tract or two in her handbag to hand out.

Daphne was a loving mother and a lady with strong principles. She was also very talented, and over the years made beautiful hats and clothes and baked delicious cakes. The Sabbath day was the best day of the week for her, and she enjoyed the company of church members, both young and young at heart, around her dining table for Sabbath lunch.

Things became difficult for her when her health declined and she was unable to attend church on a regular basis, but she did her best to keep her spirits up and never let go of her faith. The



writer would like to personally thank Vincent Sinclair, Nola Alfred and Rita Dobson, who were faithful friends to Daphne over the years.

Unfortunately, Daphne was admitted into hospital in March and April 2012, then again into Sandwell Hospital for the final time in June 2012, where she fell asleep in Christ after a short illness. Daphne is sadly missed but is awaiting the return of her Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. She leaves behind her daughter, Mandy, her brother, Sydney, and many nephews and nieces.

MANDY BYFIELD (DAUGHTER)

Izett Fabian Brooks (1938-2012) d. 31 August. On 9 October family and friends of Izett Fabian Brooks gathered together to celebrate his life. His sister and her daughter and grandson were able to travel from America for the service. The officiating ministers were Pastors R. Brooks, C. Douglas and G. Gordon. Pastor Brooks reminded us that Izett was a faithful and tireless worker for God, and he left a legacy for us to carry on.

Izett Fabian Brooks was born to parents Etta Reid, fondly known as Mamma Etta, and John Brooks on 26 May 1938 in the district of Georges Valley in the parish of St Elizabeth, Jamaica. He was one of three children. He attended the Braes River Elementary School, and as a child

he was obedient, loving, cheerful and helpful to his mother and grandmother. He was also respectful to everyone in the district. After leaving school, Izett decided to become a tailor, and apprenticed himself to a master tailor who taught him the intricacies of the trade. In 1955, at age 17, he was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with his mother, Etta, and grandmother, Martha.

In 1962 he got the urge to travel. He emigrated to Bristol, England, where he stayed with the Thompson family. He was given the opportunity to become a welder and worked in various factories until he retired in 2003, although he still worked for various agencies after that.

In 1964 he moved to West Bromwich and attended the church in Oxford Street, Wolverhampton, until he heard there was a church at Lodge Road in West Bromwich.

In 1966, while visiting London, he met Dorothy Grant. He encouraged her to do the Voice of Prophecy Bible Study Course. This led to her baptism in London in 1967. They kept in touch and their friendship grew until they were married on 18 September 1977 in London. Their only child, Gwendolin, was born in July 1978. Izett was a devoted husband and father.

Izett was one of the founders of the West Bromwich church in Dartmouth Street where he held many positions over the years: Pathfinder leader, AY leader, Sabbath School superintendent, Lay Activities leader, deacon, elder and caretaker.

He is particularly well remembered for his hard work as Lay Activities leader. He would motivate the members to go out door-to-door on Sunday mornings selling magazines and making contacts for the Kingdom. He was always one of the top collectors during Ingathering. He never failed to point people to the Lord, and had a word of warning and encouragement for all with whom he came into contact. He had a soft spot for the elderly and shut-ins, often taking the youth with him on such visits. He was like a father to the youth, always asking about their school performance and their aspirations for their future.

Brother Brooks, Brother Izett, Uncle Izett, or by whatever name he was called, was a thoughtful, humorous and compassionate person. No one could really be sad or depressed when he was around. On the other hand, if something was wrong he would speak very strongly about it. He was dedicated to church activities no matter where he was. On visits to Jamaica he would even get involved in any programmes or projects that were being conducted at the church in Georges Valley, where his mother was a member.

He liked listening to recorded sermons and classical music, and played hymns on the piano. He kept up his sewing skills by making trousers and various other items for the many table-top sales that were held over the years. He loved being in his garden, whether it was planting his vegetables or enjoying the beauty of his flowers. He also enjoyed

cooking and baking cakes.

He was a person you could rely on to be at hand when you least expected it; he was selfless and he touched the lives of many people, and influenced them for the good.

In April 2012 his beloved Mamma Etta died, and he was able to go to Jamaica to organise her burial. He returned home ill on 6 August and was admitted to Sandwell Hospital on 30 August – he died the next day.

He leaves behind his wife Dorothy, daughter, two grandchildren, a son-in-law, his sister Beverly and other relatives and many close friends.

JENNY PENNICOTT

Minnie Harding (1913-2012) d. 31 October. Minnie

Harding was born in Great Bridge, West Bromwich, on 8 April 1913 to parents Ann and Charles Harding, who were hard-working and respected members of the local community.

Minnie, along with her three brothers and three sisters, had a happy childhood, in which they found simple ways to amuse and enjoy themselves. She left school at the age of 14 and her first job was 'in service', which only lasted three days because she became homesick.

The rest of Minnie's working life was spent in factory work. Like most things she did, it was done to the very best of her ability and she was proud of it.

The great joys of her life included music and dancing. In the 1940s she went to dances with her sister Gladys and friends at such places as Grant Hall, West

Bromwich Baths and the Conservative Club in Dudley.

About forty years ago a leaflet came through Minnie's door with an invitation to attend an evangelistic series at the West Bromwich town hall. She attended, and this is where her involvement with the Seventh-day Adventist Church began.

These meetings were held by the late Pastor Bryan. The topic of the first meeting she attended was entitled, 'Dead Men Do Tell Tales', and she attended the rest faithfully.

As a result, Minnie was baptised on 5 May 1973 at the West Bromwich Seventh-day Adventist church by Pastor Kenneth Clothier, who was the minister at the time. From that day onwards Minnie remained a faithful member until the end of her life, holding the following church positions at various times: church registrar, church clerk, Ingathering agent, deaconess and conference treasurer (for many years).

Minnie loved witnessing, enjoyed helping the older members in their homes, and had sweet fellowship with everyone.

She always thought of others, and this was made most evident by the fact that, when you asked her how she was, within seconds she would turn that around and say: 'Enough about me; how are you?'

She died on 31 October, 2012, at the age of 99, and was commemorated at the West Bromwich church on 8 November.

Minnie will be remembered and deeply missed for her love of laughter, fun, enjoyment, banter, knitting, music and her faith in God.

RAY AUGUSTINE



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We were not able to fit this photo of Pastor Bob Smart and his wife, Joyce, with their obituary published in the previous issue of MESSENGER. This was taken at their Golden Wedding in 2000.

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back page



Farewell

Dr Cyril Vesey, with his wife Monica and daughter Sarah, was presented with a farewell card by Dr Inger Karlman on behalf of his Sabbath School class on 24 November 2012. Cyril has regularly taught this class

at Newbold Church (Binfield) for thirty-one years! Some time ago he retired, and is now moving with his family to the Isle of Wight. Cyril was a shining example to be followed by all church members for his faithfulness in attending the Sabbath School and for the daily study of the Word of God.

Dr Vesey taught science at Stanborough Park School for eleven years, and will be remembered by many of his former students.

BRIAN PILMOOR

Garth and Janna Mansfield (Mansfield-Sasser)

On Friday 14 September last year, Garth, a long-time resident of Stoke-on-Trent and attendee of many Aberdaron camps, married Janna Lynn in a delightfully peaceful outdoor setting beside a lake near Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA. At present Janna is employed as a dental hygienist, and Garth is manager of the family business.

JEANNIE BAERG



Southern Asia carol service

On Sabbath, 22 December 2012, Manchester Southern Asia Church reached out to the public in Manchester City Centre through carol singing and a massive tract distribution.

One thousand tracts were handed out, each with an ADC invitation attached. *Steps to Christ* and *A Day to Remember* were also handed out to those who showed special interest. Some shoppers even joined the group for the carol singing.

SANJAY SATHE

Birthday party raises £1,500

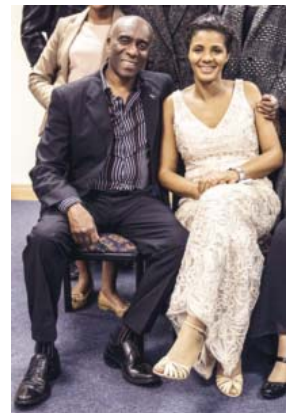
Joe and Jackie Lynton recently celebrated their birthdays by giving their guests a chance to give gifts to a good cause instead of to them! For this they chose the Adventist Special Needs Association (ASNA) set up a decade ago by Nigel and Sophia Nicholls.

According to Jackie they 'had no idea what people would pledge on the night. We had a few donations when the auction started – a holiday in Tenerife and our birthday cake – and both items went quickly and raised a fantastic starting figure of £400!'

Not only was the evening full of fun, but it raised a staggering £1,500 for ASNA!

For more information about the work ASNA do, visit: www.asna.info or email: info@asna.info.

SOPHIA NICHOLLS



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*www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/rpt-religion.html

Messenger

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Sunset

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	Lon	Card	Notf	Edin	Belf
Feb 8	5.03	5.15	5.03	5.02	5.17
15	5.16	5.28	5.17	5.17	5.32
22	5.29	5.41	5.30	5.32	5.46
Mar 1	5.41	5.53	5.43	5.47	6.00

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