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POLICE SAY 'SORRY', CHURCH FAMILY FORGIVE

It was a tale of two front doors. Four years ago Mr and Mrs Richardson found themselves faced by angry police officers at their front door after calling for their assistance when bailiffs wrongly came to clamp Mr Richardson's car.

On Saturday, 7 January 2012, they were at a different front door, that of Greenwich Seventh-day Adventist church, London, again to meet a policeman, this time Detective Sergeant Nick Westwood. As a representative of the Professional Standards Department for the Metropolitan Police he was there to make a public apology to the couple during a morning church service that opened with a wonderful display from the Greenwich Pathfinders.

Det. Sergeant Westwood took this unusual step following bridge-building meetings between the couple, the church and the Metropolitan Police. In explaining his reasons for coming to the church to apologise he stated, "It was quite apparent in our contact with Alison and Clive that they were deeply a part of this church; it's because of this that we decided today to come to this church and apologise in front of the congregation and their friends." In his apology, on behalf of the London Metropolitan Police, Westwood admitted, "We've looked at this and it's quite apparent that the police made a mistake. It has been a humbling experience being here today and I hope the apology goes some way to putting things right with Alison and Clive."

During the dispute with the bailiffs four years ago, Mr Richardson called the police to help resolve the situation but, on arrival, officers treated both he and his wife badly, roughly handling them in their own home and eventually arresting Alison. Mrs Richardson was fined and sentenced to 150 hours of community service, 80 of which she served before the judgment against her was overthrown on appeal. For Alison, the apology brought positive closure: "Being vindicated was the icing on the cake…even for ourselves and our children [it] shows there is a true, living God. I feel relieved but,
even though it was a punishment, it was also a blessing. I got to speak to a few individuals about Christ."

One female officer, who previously claimed Mrs Richardson had punched her in the face, later amended her statement claiming she had instead been hit in the chest after medics could not find evidence of the former accusation. The couple described how they did not raise a hand to the police during the exchange and was perplexed as to why they were being mistreated. Mr Richardson expressed, "It was a difficult situation. However, we found that the church has been so supportive; prayer works! I want to recommend to anyone who's having problems just to allow the church to be part of their problem and I'm sure that through constant prayer the God we serve will work things out for us."

Regarding the continued bridge-building, Mr Richardson stressed, "We want to continue to work with the police to keep crime down and build our community." Representing the wider church, Greenwich's pastor Hamilton Williams also confirmed that helping build relations between the Met Police and Afro-Caribbean communities is something they are fully committed to, especially showing support for the police in the difficulties they face on a daily basis.

For more on this story watch the BUC News video report. This story was also reported in the Evening Standard, The Telegraph, the Daily Mail and via the Press Association with a myriad of other newspapers. The full video recording of the apology is available on the SEC Media YouTube.

GLOBAL PRAYER REIGNS ACROSS BRITISH ISLES

The Operation Global Rain initiative climaxes this weekend as Seventh-day Adventists commit themselves and their church to Mission and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Many churches have had special prayer times in addition to members praying together or individually in their own homes. The South England Conference office family chose to take the whole of Wednesday, 11 January as a day of fasting and special prayer within the office. Heather Haworth, Prayer Ministries coordinator at the British Union Conference tastefully arranged the office board room with prayer stations and suggestions for mediation. The electronic noticeboard in the lobby also highlighted each day's Prayer Focus – as also outlined on a special website that many members have been following. Many members have been following the ten days in the Upper Room video series as part of their revival experience while in Ireland members have had the added bonus of a daily devotional message from various Irish pastors. Both the Irish and BUC Communication teams have kept members informed of the daily prayer focus via Facebook and Twitter feeds. With an emphasis on 'The Blessed Hope' this Sabbath the Prayer Focus concludes on this joyful note as members pray about the hope of Jesus' soon return. The year has started with prayer. This is undoubtedly an initiative that will continue in many lives on a daily basis throughout 2012 and until Jesus comes.
CHRISTIAN GRACE AND ADVENTISTS IN THE MEDIA

Three stories – all in the secular media. An Adventist pastor in a BBC1 'God slot' debate; a police officer working with a wronged family to build bridges between police, church and community; and a church member highlighted for her modest dress code in a number of newspapers. Which story got the highest profile this week?

The answer depends on whether or not you are an Adventist! In the secular media the most popular story by far was that of Detective Sergeant Nick Westwood offering a sincere and public apology at Greenwich Seventh-day Adventist church. By the last count, this story has appeared in over seventy newspapers. It is a positive story of wrongs being put right, of apology and of forgiveness. Yet within the Adventist social networks it seems to have received scant attention. A link to the article was posted on the BUC News Facebook page and gained five 'likes' and three comments. The editor has also received three emails highlighting the story.

Manchester pastor, Acquoi Karbah, appearing on BBC1's 'The Big Questions' was a passing blip on national TV but provoked a barrage of phone calls and emails from pastors and church members with mixtures of praise for his courage in going on the programme and generally concern for the way the church was portrayed in the midst of deep scepticism from a generally antagonistic audience. One correspondent perhaps sums up the views of many, "It is not easy to express your views in front of so much opposition, knowing that you are watched by the public across the country. Still the image of Adventism that was presented to thousands, may be millions of viewers is not one that I am happy with."

While the programme is called 'The Big Questions' and focuses on current ethical or religious questions currently in the news it is not aiming to find 'The Big Answers' and whoever goes on the programme has to be prepared to be harried – in this case by a very vocal atheist and a bishop who appears to be on the very edge of belief. In the midst of considerable antagonism, Pastor Karbah stayed calm and tranquil. For that he should be commended. He stated what Adventists believe about the end of the world. He was doctrinally and scripturally correct. On that he cannot be faulted. He was thrown a couple of 'curveballs' by the host, Nicky Campbell. These were on whether the antichrist is now with us and whether we should care about the environment if the world is going to burn anyway. In the pressure of the moment, and not having prepared for those questions his answers could probably have been better – but the armchair critics sitting at home might want to ponder how they would have reacted in a similar situation. SEC President, Pastor Sam Davis comments, "Let's not forget that the pastor was sharing an alien concept to people who did not believe and were not going to believe in that arena."

What is clear is that both church members and pastors need to be prayerfully and carefully prepared if they accept an invitation to appear on a programme such as this. This is the fourth time in the past year that there has been an Adventist representative on 'The Big Questions' and well as two Adventist appearances on Channel 4's '4thoughtTV'. It is the first time that the Communication department and Conference Presidents have had such a massive mail bag as a result. This is partly due to the subject but also due to media coaching and guidance given to the previous guests by the BUC Communication department either at local or national level. When Adventists are happy, they tend not to write!

This is clear from the third media article this week. Guildford member, Lillian La Mantia, found herself featured in the Femail section of the Daily Mail. A freelance journalist had noticed something she had written in a personal blog and followed up on it generating an article that asked, "Could this be the most modest women in Britain?" The article has since appeared in a few other papers and on numerous blogs linked to fashion. In Daily Mail style, they looked for the extreme in the story, including instructing...
the photographer to help her choose her 'most plain looking clothes' for the photo shoot. Interestingly, the majority of comments on the Daily Mail site seemed to generally support her call for modesty in the dress code – many readers recognising that the teenage dress code has gone much too far in the opposite direction. Naturally, there was a balance of viewpoint, some more extreme than others. Like the police forgiveness article, a link to this article was also placed on the BUC News Facebook page. Unlike the forgiveness article, this one received 23 comments and raised a debate not just on Christian modesty, but on how Adventists should be portrayed in the media. There have also been a number of emails on the subject.

Should we be upset that a modest, Adventist lady gets noticed by a national newspaper? In March 1996 the BUC Communication department commissioned outside consultants to look at the public profile of Seventh-day Adventists. One of the conclusions was that Adventists simply are not known in this country. The presence of an Adventist pastor on 'The Big Questions', a lay person in the fashion section of the Daily Mail, and the highlighting of Greenwich Seventh-day Adventist church as a place where reconciliation and bridge-building can happen all raise the profile of the Church. The articles will be forgotten tomorrow. 'The Big Questions' have moved on to the next programme (where our pastor briefly appears again), but the spirit in which the questions are answered, the statements made, the forgiveness expressed, – that spirit will last much longer.

There are always lessons to learn. Communication training and media awareness needs to continue, and perhaps increase. Those approached by the media need to think carefully about what they say. And those of us sitting on the sideline watching what others do need to continue to be filled with grace, appreciating those who have the courage to take a stand, allowing them a mistake or two, and knowing that God is using them, and us, to further His Kingdom.

So to the smallest Adventist mention of the week! Up in Lincoln, the Adventist church building makes a surprise guest appearance in the BBC programme, "Homes Under the Hammer". While the house next door to the church was the focus of attention, local pastor, Peter Jeynes, says he was just happy that the church looked neat and tidy when the film crew unexpectedly turned up. The church appears just before the 3-minute mark but you'll have to be sharp-eyed to spot it!

**ADRA SHOEBOXES ARRIVE IN MALI** [Godwin Benjamin]

School children, church members and communities from across the UK generously donated over 7,500 shoeboxes to the 2011 ADRA-UK Shoebox Appeal. Filling a forty-foot container, the boxes left the ADRA-UK compound at Stanborough Park, Watford on 17 November 2011 for a two month journey to Mali in the Western Sahara.

ADRA Mali has confirmed that the ship arrived in Mali on Monday, 2 January 2012 and they have now begun the process to enable the container to clear customs so that distribution of the shoeboxes can begin.

This process will take a couple of weeks but there is a growing level of excitement as preparations can now be finalized for the distribution of the boxes. On behalf of the children of Mali, I would like to say a big 'thank you' to everybody who donated shoeboxes. Your response was overwhelming!

**WEDNESBURY ADVENTISTS’ NEW YEAR MESSAGE FOR ST GERARD’S CATHOLICS** [Dan Majaducon]

The members and the parish priest of St Gerard's Roman Catholic church in Castle Vale, Birmingham
were simply delighted when church members from Wednesbury Adventist church shared with them the First Advent message through a high quality musical production on New Year's Day.

"Words are not enough to say thank you for your performance last night. It touched us a lot. Your musical production was a complete sermon and I will now book you to perform again next Christmas in my other parish," said the thankful priest.

Pastor Dan Majaducon who led the Wednesbury group and one of the actors of the production commented, "I am humbled by the whole membership who really sacrificed a lot of time, effort and their resources in making the production a possibility. They united together doing their best in order to bring out a wonderful performance for God for the community." Pastor Dan added, "It is quite challenging because it isn't just singing. It involves movements and acting with a story to tell. The Lord blessed their unselfish efforts and dedication by granting them confidence and a superb delivery."

This was the climax of the performances. Earlier, they performed in Wednesbury, at the very place they are using for worship. This again involved the community with invitations going out around the area. On Sabbath, 24 December they also presented at Camp Hill Adventist church. The group utilized lights, created props, wore brilliant Ancient Near East costumes, directed choreography for themselves, acted a number of plots, and sang harmoniously as they portrayed the wonderful Advent story.

**A CELEBRATION OF GIVING AT GRANTHAM** [Elisabeth Carnell]

For over 40 years the Toy Service has been an annual highlight in the Grantham Seventh-day Adventist church calendar. This year a brightly coloured display of toys, hats, blankets and food parcels in shiny gift bags adorned the front of the church.

The toys, a mixture of new, nearly new and knitted, were received by Sarah High and Sarah Patel of Home Start and more will be delivered to the Kingfisher (children's) Ward at Grantham Hospital.

178 hats and 13 blankets, knitted by both men and ladies of the church, are to be donated to the Premature Baby Units of Lincoln and Nottingham hospitals. This was achieved in just a few weeks after Wendy Walmsley promoted the project at the church.

It wasn't just toys. There was also money. Cheques representing sums raised through gifts and fundraising events throughout the year were presented on Sabbath, 10 December to Robert Holland who received a £100 cheque on behalf of the RNLI, Duncan Andrew received a £150 cheque on behalf of Macmillan nurses, Tina Dingley who received a £250 cheque on behalf of Grantham's St Barnabas Hospice and Dr John Ferguson received a gift for his Street Pastor's team as a 'thank you' for the work they do in Grantham on Saturday nights. This was all organised by the Community Services team, led by Pam Davies.

The food parcels were delivered by members to their neighbours and people in need. One recipient, an elderly gentleman who struggles to walk, was so moved that he struggled across the road to his Adventist neighbour to say thank you. Another neighbour commented that they didn't think anyone did caring things like this today. Another couple who attend a local group for people with disabilities also expressed their appreciation.
In his address at the Toy Service, Dr John Ferguson used the 2011 John Lewis TV ad as a starting point to remind us of the joy of giving, along with a devotional video clip based on a popular Westlife song to remind us of the best gift ever given, the Christ Child who became our Saviour on the cross. We hope the images seen and the giving witnessed, along with the warm welcome, will remain in the minds of our visitors, a number of whom had not been inside our church previously. We pray that just as they received our gifts to their charities, they will also joyfully accept the precious gift of God in their lives.

PROGRAMMES TO WATCH THIS WEEK

A choice of UK produced Adventist programmes are available for you to watch this coming week.

On Revelation TV (Sky 581 or Freesat 692) watch the following two programmes:

**Searching for a God to Love**, Monday, 16 January, 8:30 pm. Part 3 of a series of presentations by Dr Chris Blake during the Newbold Week of Prayer. This week's title: 'Living on the Edge'.

'Adventists In Conversation', Thursday 19 January, 8:30 pm.

From his poor and humble upbringing in a windmill in his native Holland, Reinder Bruinsma went on to become a writer, author, school principal, church pastor and experienced church commentator and leader who is open to be challenged by those of other faiths and points of view.

On Hope TV you can watch a wide variety of programmes on the satellite and website. Next week's schedule is not yet released for the Hope Channel but here are the times for some of the UK produced programmes:

Friday 13 January: 8:00 pm: Viewpoint: *Is Violence ever acceptable?*
Sabbath 14 January: 12:00 am, 9:00 am & 8:00 pm: Viewpoint: Is Violence ever acceptable?
Monday 16 January: 12:30 and 9:30 pm: In Conversation from Series 2
Wednesday 18 January: 8:00 am: In Conversation from Series 3
12:00 midnight: In Conversation from Series 3
Friday 20 January: 8:00 pm: Viewpoint: *What is Truth?*
Sabbath 21 January: 12:00 am, 9:00 am & 8:00 pm: Viewpoint: What is Truth?

COMING EVENTS

OPERATION GLOBAL RAIN. Continuing to Sabbath, 14 January. Operation Global Rain is a worldwide lay-led initiative to start the New Year intentionally involved in prayer. To find out more and get involved visit http://adventistinfo.org.uk/globalrain/. For a video message from BUC President, Pastor Ian Sweeney visit http://www.hopetv.org.uk/content/media-library/media-story/ml/buc-news-media-archive/new-year-call-to-prayer/ Contact: Victor Hulbert <vhulbert@adventist.org.uk>. Phone: 01923 672251.

NOTTINGHAM CENTRAL BRICKS & MORTAR FUND PROMO DAY. Sabbath, 14 January. Calling Friends and Families of Nottingham Central Seventh-day Adventist church and surrounding regions. We are serious about raising funds for refurbishment or relocation. Come to our 2nd Bricks & Mortar Fund Promotion Day on Sabbath, 14 January and help us raise funds with your sacrificial offerings. On our 1st Bricks and Mortar Fund Promotion Day in September, we raised £10,600. Together we can do Better! Contact: Pastoral Team <pastoral_team@nottinghamadventist.org.uk>. Phone: 0115 7270271.
SEC EVANGELISM EXPO. Sunday, 15 January. Pastors and members from all South England Conference churches are invited to this special ONE DAY ONLY training event at Newbold College, St Mark's Road, Binfield, Berks, RG42 4AN. Great choice of materials and ideas to explore and purchase! Contact: Ruth Stewart <rstewart@secadventist.org.uk>. Phone: 01923 232728.

HEATH LECTURE. Thursday 26 January. Come and join us for an informative health talk on a subject affecting many of us today - "CANCER; WHAT ARE THE FACTS?" presented by Dr Huguette Comerasamy. A light supper will be served at 7pm. Stanborough Centre, Stanborough Park Church, 609 St Albans Rd, Watford, WD25 9JL. Contact: Pat Walton <walton@groats.co.uk>. Phone: 01923 672500.

THE MEANING OF LIFE. Sabbath, 21 January & Sabbath 28, January. The Discourse on Life, Meaning and Purpose through the Book of Ecclesiastes presented by Radisa Antic PhD. This is not just for Seventh-day Adventists. It is your chance to bring along that person at work who you have never been able to invite, the neighbour you have always been meaning to ask, the clever friend who knows it all, the lost Christian or church member. You bring them, God will do the rest. Time: 3:00 pm, 21 & 28 January. Where? Guilford Friends Meeting House, 3 Ward Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LH. 15 minute walk from Guildford main train station and 5 minutes from London Road Guildford train station. Head towards the market in North Street and opposite the library and to the left next to the public toilet block will be our North Street entrance. Light refreshments provided. Contact: Paul <paulanthonymccconkey@hotmail.com>. Phone: 07817324070.

SEC TEENS DAY OF FELLOWSHIP. Sabbath, 28 January. I would like to encourage you to join our South England Conference Teens Day of Fellowship that will take place on 28 January 2012 at St Mary's Church, 245 Old Maryleborne Road, London, NW1 5QT. See you there. Contact: Dejan Stojkovic <dejan@secadventist.org.uk>. Phone: 07919172176.

SCOTTISH MISSION CHURCH OFFICERS' TRAINING DAY. Sunday, 29 January. 10:30 – 4:00 pm, at Crieff Adventist Church, Gwydyr Road, Crieff, PH7 4BS. Open to all church members, not just church officers, this is a day of workshops for everyone who is interested in the work of the church, and witnessing. Workshops planned so far include: Leadership, Prayer Ministries, Outreach, Children's Ministries, Family Ministries, Women's Ministries, Health Ministries and Communications. Guest trainers Pastor Eglan Brooks and Pastor Victor Hulbert. Lunch of soup, rolls and drinks provided. Please email Carole at office@sdascotland.com, or phone 01764 653257 if you plan to attend, so we have some idea of numbers attending, and can provide enough food.

ASI UK CONVENTION. Friday 10 – Sunday 12 February. 'EVANGELISING SECULARISED BRITAIN' Venue: Staverton Park Hotel, Daventry Road, Staverton, NN11 6JT. Whether you are a student, recent graduate, unemployed, self-supported ministry, entrepreneur, however you categorize yourself, come and learn from God's Word and from each other how we can reach the people around us. Be INSPIRED and EMPOWERED by the Holy Spirit as you hear how God has used people just like you and me to reach our secular community. Booking form and details on the website, http://www.asi-uk.info, or from Christine Manners Smith. Weekend or day rates available. Contact: Christine Manners Smith <christinemanners_smith@yahoo.com>. Phone: 07790 452920.

LOVE SAX AND ALL THAT JAZZ2 (DA MANS DEM). Saturday, 11 February to Sunday, 12 February. Focus Arts Promotions Presents 'Love Sax and all that Jazz 2' (Da Mans Dem), the sequel to the hit comedy play. Written by Alan Charles, Da Mans Dem takes an informative and humorous look at men and relationships exploring those age old questions of what do men want? Why do men cheat? And what defines a man? In chapter one the girls were explosive in chapter 2 Da Mans Dem will get their say. Valentine Special: Sat 11 & Sun 12 February, Doors 7 pm – Show 7.30 pm. Tickets £17.50 Adv or £20 at the door. Broadway Theatre - Rushey Green, Catford, London, SE6 4RU. Box Office 020 8690 0002 – www.broadwaytheatre.org.uk. More info 07989 574 066 or focusarts.co.uk. Contact: Alan <focusarts@yahoo.co.uk>.

SEC PRAYER & BIBLE CONFERENCE (TEENS MINISTRIES). Monday, 13 February to Friday, 17 February. Our Teens Prayer & Bible Conference is BACK! This is a life changing experience for
many teenagers from around the Conference and Europe. Come and join with your friends and experience the power of God's blessings through prayer, fellowship and socialising. Date: 13-17 February. Speaker: Pastor Ryan Simpson (Associate Youth Director, Southern New England Conference). Venue: Stanborough Park School, Watford, WD25 9JT. Price: £60.00 per person (places are limited so book early to secure your place). Application deadline closes on Friday, 20 January 2012. See website for more details. Contact: Dejan Stojkovic <dejan@secadventist.org.uk>. Phone: 07919172176. 

SMALL ADS

BIBLICAL GARMENTS NEEDED! Does your church have good quality, Bible costumes that look fairly authentic? If so, Crieff Adventist church would like to borrow them as soon as possible and to keep them until October. These will be used for an evangelistic event in Crieff town. If you have such garments that you would be willing to share with us, please can you email Karen Holford on karenholford@gmail.com with further details. Thank you so much!

JOB VACANCIES at Newbold College: Cashier, part-time; 2 Lecturers in Pastoral Studies; a College Chaplain; and College Relations Officer all needed to help the college thrive. Closing dates for all positions: 24 February 2012. At BUC Office: Receptionist/s needed, closing date, 31 January 2012. At John Loughborough School, D&T Technician required; At Stanborough Boarding School: Domestic Cleaner required. For full details visit: http://www.adventistnews.org.uk/vacancies.php.