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.
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 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 of the latest data from Cancer Research UK on cancer statistics in the UK that 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).

Cancer Research UK is a cancer research and awareness charity. It is identified as the world’s largest independent cancer research charity undertaking 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 British Against Cancer Conference, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt stated: ‘It is simply unacceptable that our cancer survival rates lag behind those of our European neighbours. I want to make sure that our survival is among the best and NHS patients receive the best treatment available.’

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devotional

Must first impressions always be the lasting ones?

by Associate Pastor Sam Gardner

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 fall 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 4:1-2). 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 out of 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 things that this woman 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 land.

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 makes 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?

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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.

Ana: Filimoni, in the light of the dangers our servicemen face . . . do you ever worry that you will one day be visited by a CNO?*
Filimoni: 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: Ana, you for that sobering insight into the life of a soldier. Ana, in the light of the dangers our servicemen face . . . do you ever worry that you will one day be visited by a CNO?*
Ana: 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: Ana, in the light of the dangers our servicemen face . . . do you ever worry that you will one day be visited by a CNO?*
Ana: 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.
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’.

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

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))
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.

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.

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 glory in 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.

A unique Advent calendar

On 22 December last year the Hemel Hempstead church held a 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.

‘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, ... second option. They were willing to put their lives on hold because of their faith, and that’s the real story here to me!’

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
New year . . . new life!
On 12 January 2013 three women at Central London Church experi-
enced new life. Minyuen Ho decided to get baptised after experiencing
the healing hand of Jesus. Sarah Umururu 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.’

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.

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.

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

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 Haimbol, ‘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.’

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.’
Izett Fabian Brooks was born 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 1946 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 1956, 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, Lay Activities 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 Inauguration. 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 items in the church no sew projects. 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 grand-children, a son-in-law, his sister Beverley and other relatives and many close friends.

MANDY BYFIELD (DAUGHTER)

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

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. She was a very talented dressmaker, and after 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 Byfield transferred her membership to the West Bromwich church in Dartmouth Street where she held many positions over the years: Pathfinder leader, Lay Activities leader, Sabbath School superintendent, Lay Activities leader, deacon, elder and caretaker.

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MANDY BYFIELD (DAUGHTER)
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

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

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

Ever considered becoming a missionary?

Have you ever considered becoming a missionary in this country? The statistics show that only 59.3% of people in England and Wales consider themselves Christian, with 25.1% reporting no religion* – so there is a lot of work to do!

The Watering Hole church-plant is looking for someone who is passionate about God, has an enthusiastic personality, and has leadership qualities and skills in some or all of the following: working with children and youth, music, or sports. We need someone like this to help us among the indigenous majority population of approximately 20,000 people in a location where there are no established Seventh-day Adventist churches.

Housing and a stipend are available for the right candidate. Start as soon as possible in a role lasting between one and two years. Contact Pastor Rosemary Lethbridge at rosyl@thewateringhole.org.uk or phone 02380 661781.