ADRA appeal tops £150,000

The generosity of ADRA’s UK supporters was again demonstrated in the response to the Typhoon Haiyan appeal.

‘Thank you ADRA! Thank you so much! What you did for us was a big, big help.’

Mary Rose Figuran opens the door, beaming. How different she looks from ten days earlier, when, weary and tired, she accepted an ADRA jerrycan and a hygiene kit from aid workers. Then she was at the end of her tether. The typhoon that hit the Philippines had destroyed most of her livelihood and she didn’t know where to turn. Fortunately, the basic emergency supplies she received from ADRA made a world of difference.

Now ADRA staff were back to check how she was. Mary Rose was particularly excited about the ‘malong’ she had received, a cloth garment, similar to a sleeping bag (especially for women). The malong can be used as a changing space to give some privacy when changing clothes, but also as a robe for those who’ve lost all their clothing, as well as a sleeping bag. Appreciative of ADRA’s help, Mary Rose said: ‘We are so thankful to ADRA, we will not remove the logo stickers from our items.’

With your help ADRA-UK has received over £150,000 in donations towards the Typhoon Haiyan Emergency Appeal. These funds are making a significant difference and ADRA-UK would like to thank all of you who generously supported the appeal across the length and breadth of the British Isles. It is because of your generosity, creativity and sacrifice that we have been able to raise this amount to help those suffering.

Someone said that ‘the reach of the Adventist Church is ADRA’s greatest asset’ and it proved true in the Philippines. Through the combined strengths of Adventist Community Services and ADRA, amazing work was accomplished. Where other NGOs were struggling to get started, Seventh-day Adventist churches and members, many of whom were themselves victims of the disaster, assisted ADRA in providing essential relief.

In total ADRA has positively impacted the lives of more than 34,000 people since the early response began! ADRA’s Emergency Response Team (ERT) continues to play a significant role in the co-ordinated follow-up to this disaster.

As well as meeting the immediate needs of the people during the emergency phase, ADRA is currently working to help people rebuild their livelihoods.

ADRA continues to provide emergency food and water where needed, but is extending the response to the provision of shelter and cash for work programmes. A programme to assist in the repair of boats and the provision of fishing equipment will help re-establish the livelihood opportunities associated with the fishing industry. Disaster risk-reduction activities are also now in place.

Future ongoing projects in the Philippines, with funding from across the globe, will ensure that thousands more will also benefit. To contribute and help sustain the work that ADRA is doing right now, please visit our Just Giving page – http://www.justgiving.com/ADRA-UK-Haiyan – or visit our website at adra.org.uk.

ADRA also provides regular news updates on Facebook (facebook.com/adrauk).

Our website is also a good source of inspirational stories, and ideal to find out more about other ADRA projects.
Albert and Jackie were subsequently sent to the largest of all monkeys. This is how a... hobbled around trying to complete his task, reluctant to be carried to safety. This is how a... They did, but Jackie lost part of his leg.

Not all medics agree. Dr Victoria Burley, a senior lecturer in Nutritional Epidemiology at Leeds University, says their claims are alarmist and misleading. ‘There is certainly evidence that obesity is linked to cancer and coronary heart disease, but there is little evidence that there is a causal link between sugar and obesity.’

Professor Capewell, however, presses the argument: ‘Everywhere, sugary drinks and junk foods are now pressed on unsuspecting parents and children by a cynical industry focused on profit, not health. The obesity epidemic is generating a huge burden of disease and death.’

Obesity and diabetes already cost the UK over £5 billion a year. Without regulation, these costs will exceed £50 billion by 2050.’

So, how sweet are our foods? Action On Sugar’s study found high levels of sugar in several foods, including some reportedly ‘healthy options’, such as: Heinz tomato soup – 4 teaspoons Crunch Corner strawberry shortcake yoghurt – 6 teaspoons Yeo Valley Family Farm 0% fat vanilla yoghurt – 5 teaspoons.

Bearing this in mind, you can imagine my delight when I discovered Pte Jackie of the 3rd South African Infantry regiment. Let me tell you his fascinating story.

Not a mascot

Jackie was more than a mascot. Before reaching France, both he and Pte Marr saw action in Egypt. Marr took a bullet in the right shoulder and Jackie did what he could to comfort the prostrate soldier, licking his wound until help arrived.

Elsewhere, the ‘war was fought by the old and the young’ and ‘the privations of the ordinary soldier in the muddy shell holes and trenches of the Western front’.

Then in April 1918 their brigade came under heavy shelling and Jackie was severely injured by shrapnel. He had been ‘frantically trying to build a wall of stones about himself’, copying what others were doing to protect themselves against the exploding shells.

As He slumped, ‘bleeding’ beneath the garden’s olive trees, with the pain of accumulated evil pressing in upon Him, Jesus needed a devoted Jackie . . . but He had to make do with a snoring Peter!

I am a sucker for stories of courage and devotion. They have the power to inspire us to better things. Bearing this in mind, you can imagine my delight when I discovered Pte Jackie of the 3rd South African Infantry regiment. Let me tell you his fascinating story.

Jackie, a chimp baboon, grew up in South Africa. He was the pet of the Marr family, but when their son, Albert, signed up to serve in France twice on 25 August 1915, Jackie’s circumstances changed dramatically. Against all odds, Albert’s request for Jackie to join up with him was granted.

Jackie was well behaved and had such an ‘impressive bearing’ that he was adopted as the regimental mascot and taken on strength so he could draw rations – which he ate sitting at a mess table using a ‘knife and fork in a proper manner’.

Once Pte Jackie reached England he was given a specially tailored uniform, complete with cap, buttons and regimental badges. He marched and drilled with his company, saluted the officers and would respond to the ‘stand easy’ command like any other soldier – body erect, hind legs apart, and ‘hands behind his back’.

Not just a mascot

So are the reported dangers of excessive sugar a new revelation? It seems not. In 1995 Ellen G. White wrote about the dangerous effect of excess sugar, or ‘toxin’ and about its combination with milk being more injurious than meat in large quantities.

Sweet tooth? Beware. The outcome may not be so ‘sweet’ after all!
As Paul the apostle stood before King Agrippa (Acts 26:2-16), he spoke eloquently about the crucified yet risen Lord. Festus responded, “You are out of your mind, Paul! . . . Your great learning is driving you insane.” Undaunted, Paul replied, “What I am saying is true and reasonable.” Then, turning to Agrippa, he said: “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do!” (Acts 26:24, 25). Agrippa replied: “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” (vv. 28, 29)

What makes a £50 note genuine? I attended a wedding recently and was interested to see the serviettes overprinted with £50 note images. Interesting, but not nearly good enough even to be “almost” a £50 note. Photocopies, even photos of £50 note images aren’t going to become ‘almost’ genuine £50 notes. Something to be ‘almost’ must be very similar to the original. Ever since Christianity began there have been many who were “almost persuaded” to be Christians. So what is an “almost” Christian like?

Firstly, they are honest and they expect people to be fair. They won’t cheat each other or oppress the under-privileged. They are also prepared to help others, as long as it doesn’t cause them trouble or inconvenience. They are charity-shop Christians – they generously give away what they don’t need.

Secondly, “almost” Christians are known to have an appearance of godliness. As 2 Timothy 3:3 says, they have “a form of godliness” but deny its power (NIV). And so the “almost” Christians will not do anything that the Bible: – as far as they understand it – doesn’t allow. They don’t swear or use foul language. They observe a rest day, and encourage others to do the same.

They avoid immorality, gossip, and anything that might offend the Holy Spirit. “Almost” Christians do everything in moderation. They avoid argument as far as possible, and try to live at peace with everyone. They don’t take revenge. They don’t make fun of anyone’s faults and failures. In fact, whatever they do is governed by the “golden rule” – ‘Do unto others as you would that they do unto you.’ They are never idle – they keep busy doing good works. They even encourage others to be saved through faith and set a good Christian example.

True Christians, with their strong emphasis on outward appearance – the form of godliness – use all the various ways of getting God’s blessing and attention. They attend church meetings, usually every week and listen intently to the sermons. They don’t look around at the rest of the congregation or talk to each other, or slouch in their seats to find the most comfortable position for a good nap.

Not ‘Almost’ Christians look like godly people who are serious and attentive about their worship. Like the sinner in Luke 18:13 they say: “God be merciful to me a sinner.” (KJV). And if we add regular family worship and times of private meditation on the Word to this list, then those who practise this outward religion have a convincing appearance of godliness.

Motive

They need only one more ingredient to make the picture complete, and that is motive – that inward force that should produce these outward actions. An ancient Epicurean poet wrote that: “Good men avoid sin through love of virtue; Wicked men avoid sin from fear of punishment.” In other words, if we simply avoid doing evil just to avoid being caught, our reward will be that we escape punishment. But this is really a very low standard to set for ourselves. And if in avoiding evil we actually do some good, but our only motive is just to avoid losing such things as our reputation, or our respect in the eyes of others, then we can’t even call ourselves “almost” Christians.

In all honesty, if dodging bad consequences is the only motive we have to avoid doing evil, we are simply hypocrites. In order to move beyond being “almost” Christians we must really attend to serve God and His will, for His sake and not our own. In order to be genuine Christians we must sincerely want to please God in every way, every word and every deed – in the things we do and the things that we intend to do. The aim of pleasing God must be the guiding motive for everything we do if we want to escape being ‘almost’ Christians.

There is nothing wrong with all the good things that ‘almost’ Christians do, but they must be done for the right reasons. Isn’t that exactly what Jesus means when He says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments”? John 14:15, KJV.

Love for Him must be the driving motive for our obedience, our good deeds and our fine words. Without that love for Him and the passion to do His will we are exactly what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13:1 (NIV): “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.”

All those wedding serviettes printed with £50 images on them were worthless. They didn’t fool anyone. “Almost” Christians are no different.

This end – our salvation, through faith in Him – is so vital for us, and yet only temporary, so desirable for Him, that He prefers to allow even His closest friends to experience the temporary sleep of death, if by that means others may believe and be saved (John 11:3-15). But that ‘sleep’ really is temporary, for He has the power to raise them again – He has done so in the past, and will do so again in the future, if, while living, they trusted that He would (John 11:21-27, 43, 44). We who believe will be reunited with Him, some in New Jerusalem, some in heaven, in order to be genuine Christians we must sincerely want to please God in every way, every word and every deed – in the things we do and the things that we intend to do. The aim of pleasing God must be the guiding motive for everything we do if we want to escape being ‘almost’ Christians.

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So, you think you are a man?

by Pastor Andrew Rashford-Hewitt

can still hear those words, in my father’s resonant voice, His Protestant upbringing having impressed the language of a proud man from Clarendon, Jamaica. Yes, I still hear those words, but I can still see myself, at 5 feet 11 inches of me, in my slim 15-year-old frame. I tried to square up my shoulders and stand tall, as my father, who was 5 feet 10 inches, just looked at me. His firm gaze shrunk me to this size of 6 years old with a Vanity nose and knobby knees. It reminded me that I wasn’t ready to square up to my father’s broad frame – I dared not challenge his knowledge with my limited youthful ignorance. Those words made me feel small. Even when I recall them today, I still bow in deference to the man who asked that single question, ‘So, you think you are a man?’

In my haste to become a man, I sought to shun and challenge my father. But his mild, firm manner awakened the fear of God within me. I realised that it was God’s mercy that restrained my father allowing me to smite about things today. What on earth was I thinking? Was I crazy? Thank God for mercy!

Indeed, I look back and smile, yet at the same time I ponder the probing probing of my father’s question. It is just as relevant today, when many of us think we are men, but the evidence doesn’t always weigh up in our favour. The fact that the majority of marriages that end in divorce are initiated by women who have reached the end of the road, the fact that in most domestic abuse cases it is the women who are the victims, the fact that most single-parent families are led by women, the fact that many men in our churches tend to run from leadership responsibilities – these things suggest that while many of us are men in years and gender, sadly, some of us have not matured emotionally, spiritually, or socially as the men that God intended us to be. Sadly, some of us are men in gender but still boys in our hearts, our lives, our relationships, an absence of sense identity.

Nowhere has this been more clearly demonstrated to me than within the context of my own marriage and parenting. For instance, in the early years of marriage to my wonderful wife Andrea, during one of our rare but heated exchanges I determined to make Andrea feel the wrath of my displeasure by not talking to her for two days. I felt that my silence would make her feel how upset I was and thus make her suffer! Or when my children had ignored me at school in front of other children and friends, causing me shameful embarrassment and making me feel unwanted. To this day, I shudder to think about her the next hour. In each case I failed to articulate my feeling, I didn’t show understanding or forgiveness. I was being emotionally immature. Sadly, I was not a man – I was a man acting like a child.

The reality is that emotional maturity is not something that develops overnight or without effort. Emotional maturity is not something that only affects men. It affects women too. However, our emotional maturity we become, the more likely we are to experience inner peace, a better understanding of ourselves, and better relationships with others. Now, emotional maturity is nothing new; Paul spoke of this when he wrote the words in 1 Corinthians 13:11 (KJV): ‘When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things.’ Simply put, emotional maturity is a process where we learn to live out the principles of God’s love within our own lives, including our relationships with others. Thus, when we do as God’s Word teaches us we cease blaming others and accept our own responsibility. To this end Albert Schweitzer wrote, ‘Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment, and learn again to exercise his will – his personal responsibility in the realm of faith and morals.’

Over the years I have begun my own move towards deeper emotional maturity, through reflection, therapy, reading, sharing, the blessings of others, my own move towards deeper emotional maturity, through reflection, therapy, reading, sharing, the blessings of others, the loving patience of my darling wife and, most of all, the amazing grace of God. I have thus come to notice the childish, immature tendencies of my emotionally tender heart. I am still on this journey, but this is not something I can achieve by myself. No, I need God’s Holy Spirit at work in my tattering faith and I need the counsel of trusted others.

Since I have been on this journey, I realise that many other men might benefit from such a personal journey. A journey of self-exploration, of ownership, of no more excuses, of accepting the truth – the whole truth and nothing but the truth – in regard to our own frail self-esteem and self-loathing. A journey into the deep waters of the heart (Proverbs 20:5) where we may gain understanding and accept the realities we have created and our responsibilities. A journey of healing and divine grace that will propel us forwards with mercy in our hearts, kindness on our tongue, our spirits, love in our eyes, healed emotions in our voices. I am not a clearer, refined view of who we are as men: made in the image of God.

Ultimately, I believe, there comes a time when every man must choose to put away the cycle of childish contemplations that he has cherished and replaced to himself over and over, and make a conscious choice to move towards maturity and manhood. He must either do this or choose to remain with his self-centred self pity and self talk, and so forever remain a child. So, what will you choose? If you choose to make the wise decision, here are a few pointers that might help:

• Accept the biblical injunction that wisdom and understanding may only be gained by first accepting the Holiness of God (Psalm 119:66) and changing your own self-view.
• Seek good Christian counselling to assist you. You deserve to make this time to yourself for your growth (Proverbs 15:22). Here are two options: NEC Rainbow Christian counselling (01617403602) or SEC Cornerstone (02077239025).
• Pray that God will teach you how to love yourself. Many men need to become more emotionally secure in his love, thereby enabling you to invest emotional warmth in others.
• Try reading The Secret of Marriage by Everett FitzMaurice (third edition) or other related material.
• Ask your local church, your pastor, your Ministry /Women’s Ministry leader for material, or speak to your pastor, your local Family Life director.
• Thankfully, there are many emotional maturity courses run by the Church, so seek them out and associate with them. It is a great privilege to make friends with them and pray with them.
• Today, seek to live a life more made complete by the love of Christ and the power that His love brings to heal our own emotional inadequacies. Today I seek to be more emotionally attuned to the world, more openly, more committed to God’s love and less preoccupied with ‘my’ worlds. Today I seek to encourage every man reading this article to do the same. May God bless us all as we strive to become more emotionally secure men He created us to be.

1\ The training consists of three core modules (Foundations of Adventist Youth Outreach, Foundations of Discipleship and Leadership) and one elective subject chosen locally. Each module has 30 hours of teaching content plus the practical outreach. They have been well received by the participants and have proved to be very effective. Participants receive completion certificates after each module and a graduation certificate at the end of the whole course. Most importantly, they also receive an invitation to submit Relay project applications.

The Relay project programmes are both introduced and seed funded, and most importantly, set into operation. There is now a file of many excellent projects taking place throughout the Division territory, some of which are also linked to the Mission to the Cities campaigns in those countries. The most recent of these projects have resulted from the Relay course held in Albania at the end of 2013. Upon returning home the Relay participants from Albania submitted project applications for five local churches. In addition to this, in some countries Relay associations or clubs have been formed, with Serbia being very active in this regard and with great effect.

As from 2014 a new phase of the Relay story has taken effect. Firstly, one session of the training will be held at Newbold College, which is relatively accessible to all. This will take place from 22 June through to 4 July and will include the Adventist Beliefs and Discipleship modules for new applicants. Those who missed a module in their own country can take this opportunity to complete the course. Additionally, a useful refresher course will also be offered at the same time for returning graduates. Application forms and other details are available from local Union Youth departments or the TED office. Further details can be found on the Relay website: www.relay.org

It has also been a long-cherished dream to run Relay mission projects, and in both 2014 and 2015 these will take place – initially in Albania, in partnership with AGRA and AVS. These mission programmes will be open to both Relay graduates and new participants.

So the Relay story continues to grow. To date there have been hundreds of Relay participants in the various countries, many of whom have now graduated from all four modules. But there is room and opportunity for many more. The next exciting step is to re-run the training so that a new generation of Adventist youth can also receive the Gospel baton and share their faith with twenty-first-century Europeans in creative and effective ways.

Young people witnessing in the city.

... a clearer, refined view of who we are as men: made in the image of God.

The Relay story

by Pastor Paul Tampkins, TED Youth director

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he Relay Institute of Youth Evangelism is a youth outreach training programme of the Trans-European Division. It is unique in that the practical modules are taken on the road and held in situ within participating countries, making it relatively accessible to all. This will take place from 22 June through to 4 July and will include the Adventist Beliefs and Discipleship modules for new applicants.

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22 June – 4 July 2014

Newbold College, UK

Ages 18–55 & 490 per week

Week 1 Foundations of Adventist Beliefs & Relay plus Week 2 Foundations of Discipleship & Leadership

RELAY & RELAY

TED INSTITUTE OF YOUTH EVANGELISM 2014

SEEKING 50: Encourage, Enrich & Equip

FOR A LIFE OF SHARING THE SAVING POWER OF CHRIST
Scratch building

The Adventist Church is blessed with creative members. Among them there are those who demonstrate an instinctive ability to compose beautiful music, write compelling prose, or draw, paint and sculpt evocative images. But today creativity’s boundaries spread far beyond these traditional categories. We now see innate ability and acquired skill excelling in so many other areas of potential creativity. In this issue we look at the work of Austin James, a well-respected ‘scratch builder’.

**Editor:** Austin, I understand that you grew up in an Adventist home – let us a little about that, please.

**Austin:** Yes, Julian. I had an Adventist upbringing. My parents are loyal members of the Loughborough church and they did their best to pass on their faith to us.

**Editor:** It’s quite common for young people to question the relevance of their faith, the Church – even God. Did that happen to you?

**Austin:** No – like everyone, I have had my ups and downs in life, but I have never questioned whether God exists. The first text in my Bible says, ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ (Genesis 1:1, NKJV), and when I am out walking in nature or standing at the top of a mountain, I can’t deny that His work is exactly what He called it – very good!

Julian, there is one sentence from Joshua 24:15 (NKJV) that sums things up for me, even during life’s low moments – ‘But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.’

**Editor:** Julian, the world in which so many of our children grow up today is a ‘virtual’ one. The things they ‘create’ or ‘make’ are often just computer simulations of reality. Their fingers don’t actually make contact with real building materials or components. They don’t need to measure and cut, glue or paste. They don’t have to have patience. They don’t end up with something real to display and be proud of. Hands-on hobbies and skills let us experience the thrill of making something out of nothing; of thinking outside the box; of using our intelligence in a way that builds our self-confidence and tells us that we can do almost anything if we are willing to just have a go.

**Austin:** Julian, I understand that you grew up in an Adventist home – tell us a little about that, please.

**Editor:** Yes, Julian. I had an Adventist upbringing. My parents are loyal members of the Loughborough church and they did their best to pass on their faith to us.

**Austin:** I started making and altering models from around 9 years of age into my teens, then virtually stopped in my twenties. I started doing it again in my thirties, mainly in the winter. I now construct models from scratch.

**Editor:** You wanted to farm, but ended up taking over the family business from your dad.

**Austin:** Yes, Julian, there is no kit. These are totally unique models. I start by measuring the real machine if possible, after which I convert but to a side and front drawing done to 1:24 scale. Then I start building. Depending upon the intricacy of the equipment, it takes between 150 and 250 hours to build the model. I don’t sit at a computer or really watch TV much, so this takes the place of that.

**Editor:** What do you do very different, isn’t it?

**Austin:** Yes, Julian, there is no kit. These are totally unique models. I start by measuring the real machine if possible, after which I convert but to a side and front drawing done to 1:24 scale. Then I start building. Depending upon the intricacy of the equipment, it takes between 150 and 250 hours to build the model. I don’t sit at a computer or really watch TV much, so this takes the place of that.

**Editor:** Wheels are the hardest. I make them from car body filler that I cast into a block and turn on a lathe. Next, I glue on each tread individually. Some wheels have up to 150 parts, and a model can have over 2,000 parts. I think it should all be as precise as possible, even down to the smallest detail.

**Editor:** I even notice that detail in the photographs you take for publication. Even those of your models are minuscule in comparison with the real equipment, the settings in which you place them make them appear so realistic.

**Austin:** That’s what scratch building is all about – authenticity. The model has to be accurate in every detail.

**Editor:** As I listen to you, Julian, I catch a little glimpse of what happened in Genesis 1: ‘What happened there is a bit like what you do. God created this world ‘from scratch’, with the superb attention to detail that only an omniscient being would be capable of.

**Austin:** Yes, Julian. I understand that you are often asked to exhibit your models at agricultural shows and other such events. How does this work, as most of them are held on Saturdays?

**Editor:** Yes, you’re right, a lot of the shows are held over Saturday and Sunday, but I always tell the organisers that they will not see me on Saturday and they expect that.

**Austin:** I built the truck with a card base. For this interview. You are a prominent model maker – what’s called a ‘scratch builder’. Please tell our readers about this hobby.

**Editor:** Yes, Julian. I had an Adventist upbringing. My parents are loyal members of the Loughborough church and they did their best to pass on their faith to us. This means everything is made from basic materials. I use flat plastic card, which is like cardboard. This is cut and shaped, then welded with glue to form whatever part I am constructing. I started out modelling trucks but have recently gone back to my first interest, agricultural machinery.

**Austin:** I understand that you are often asked to exhibit your models at agricultural shows and other such events. How does this work, as most of them are held on Saturdays?

**Editor:** Yes, I suppose you could say that He built from scratch, but for me, that’s where the comparison ends. I build miniature copies. He made originals. I use the materials made by others . . . He made His own. I enjoy creating and creating, but in God’s case in creating our world is just . . . wow . . . and there is more to come!

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The baptism at Romford

On Sabbath, 21 December 2013, the members, family and friends of Romford Community Fellowship witnessed the baptism of Thandebele Shebele and 11-year-old cousins, Tia and Malachi Semper, whose parents were bursting with pride as they told the congregation of their delight that their children had decided to follow Jesus. Resident pastor, Elliot Williams, who conducted the service, was also beaming with obvious delight as he baptised the youth.

Romford Fellowship, which started back in 2007 as a small group of seven, is now a thriving company of thirty-three! And they look forward to winning more souls for the Kingdom in the year ahead.

'One determined guy'

The baptism at Ladywood Church of Ashnell Scott on 30 November last year was unusual. Several weeks after he made his decision to be baptised he became very ill and was eventually hospitalised just days before the event.

Despite this setback, Ashnell was adamant that he wanted to be baptised that day, along with Verity Scott and Anastasia Williams – and he was. Still frail from his recent illness, he sat while the other candidates took their vows standing. Then he was assisted into the baptistry, where he sat on a chair during the actual baptism.

Pastor Palmer summed up this man's courage with these words: 'Brother Scott is one determined guy.'

Southport baptism

It was on a wet, cold and windy Sabbath afternoon that the heavens rang out in glorious song over the baptism at Southport Church.

The journey to the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a rocky one for 21-year-old Loyd McDonald. He had spent time learning about spiritualism and conspiracy theories that only left him confused and wary. It was a simple flyer titled 'Prophecies of Hope', however, that attracted him to evangelistic seminars in a local hotel that transformed his life.

The PEACE centre of evangelism staff and students conducted the seminars, assisted by Southport's church members. The seminars took place at the prestigious Vincent Hotel and were presented by PEACE co-ordinator Craig Gooden and hosted by Pastor Ian Philipps and Matthew James. Loyd attended all of the presentations, and the truths presented had an immediate impact on him, sparking his zeal to learn more.

He began attending Southport Church on Sabbaths, where he encountered an overwhelming sense of loving acceptance from the members. He was soon made to feel part of the church family.

On the day of his baptism Southport welcomed Loyd’s family and friends and other visitors from Liverpool. Pastor Alan Husk presented a heart-stirring message. Pastor Mike Simpson and Craig Gooden were also present, but it was Southport’s pastor, Ian Philipps, who had the honour of baptising Loyd: his very first baptism. Loyd’s testimony, full of emotion and energy, had a profound effect on the audience.

To celebrate the wonderful occasion many of those who attended the baptism enjoyed a meal at a local restaurant, after which they gathered for a Southport social evening full of bonding and laughter. This is the fourth baptism in less than two months for this growing congregation, with more to come.

Pastor's son among his 'firstfruits'

On 30 November 2013, Sam Gardner, assistant pastor of Grantham Church, was overjoyed that the first baptism he conducted was that of his own son, Jemaine, under the watchful eye of the district pastor, Solon Kyraoucos. Jemaine is a pupil at the local church school, Dudley House School, and is already active in the church in various capacities.

Pastor Sam Gardner then baptised husband and wife, Rob and Sheba Hughes, with whom he had been studying during the year. Rob came to know about Jesus and the Adventist faith through Sheba, who, although her own attendance at church had become intermittent, still brought Rob along to church. Rob and Sheba (née Mapiko) were married 18 months ago, and in January 2013 determined to attend church every week.

This baptism was the public witness of their ongoing commitment to Christ. Rob has lost no time in introducing Jesus to his friends and family, encouraging them to attend church; at his baptism, Rob’s mother responded to the appeal to follow Jesus too.

Cambridge baptises seven precious youth

On 28 December, during Cambridge Church’s final baptism for 2013, seven youth were baptised. Four of them were from the Burke family – all the children of Amos and Tessa: Rebecca, Daniel, Andrew and Kaydionne. Lynette is only staying for a short while before returning home, the members will continue to support her as if she were staying!

Pastor Palmer summed up this man's courage with these words: 'Brother Scott is one determined guy.'

The Preacher was Pastor Isaac Liburd of Bradford Central/Bradford Holmewood in West Yorkshire, and his message was simple: 'We must wake up from our slumber and move out of the closet into reality.'

For the past twelve months, these potential members received studies from Maude Murray and Don Parker (Tarsy), Clifford Lewis (Lynette) and Pastor Eric Lawrence (Kaydionne). Pastor Lawrence ministers to the Bread of Life/Community of Hope churches in Birmingham.

Tarsy’s mother, Margaret Bvundura, travelled all the way from Zimbabwe to witness her son’s baptism and was accompanied from London by his three sisters – Priscilla, Jennifer and Tsitsi – and his nephew, Taku.

Lynette was also accompanied by members of her family – Olivia, Joshua and Andrew. Kaydionne was accompanied by her husband, Frederick, and various other family and friends – one of whom, Iy Green, sang during her baptism.

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‘It can be your church too . . .’

These words, ‘It can be your church too, if you want it to,’ sparked a transitional moment in the life of retired head teacher Chris Corrie. They were uttered by the late Derek Beardsell, and planted a ‘fragile seed’ that began to grow in her life, eventually leading to what she calls ‘the best day of my life’ – her baptism in the Ringway Life Building on 16 December last year.

Chris was led to this bold step by a series of small events, which included a session of physiotherapy from one of the members who wasn’t shy to share her faith. This was followed by her attendance at a Healthy Living programme and several church services, during which the warmth and friendship of Ringway’s members nurtured that ‘fragile seed’.

Pastor Geoff Smith’s Bible studies helped too, but, ‘Above all, it was learning to pray to ask Jesus to come into my life as my Saviour and My Friend, and to forgive my sins. A far cry from my upbringing, where religion was a taboo topic!’

JOHN OSEI-BEMPONG

PHOTOS: MOSES JAMANDA
Ladywood Church opening

For more than twenty-five years Ladywood Church have worshipped in the youth hall of St John’s Church in Ladywood, Birmingham. The group started when some members left their home church. Steve Winsitt, leader of the Kidderminster church plant, said, “This was a wonderful day, to see our new friend John give his life to Jesus after experiencing a difficult life until he met Jesus.’ What’s more, John’s parents, who also came to support him, have observed a positive change in his son’s life, so much so that his mother responded to a call to consider baptism in the future.

The year ended on a high with another five young people proclaiming their love for Jesus by being baptised on Saturday, 13 December. The family and friends of Iannah Lynelle Guevarra, David Hall, DeJesus Sank, and Sarah Mai Sanchez will be baptised in the coming year. The church has initiated a baptismal service, and the members continued to work with a group of twelve to complete the renovation. The church is already planning a baptismal service for the coming year.

KENDREA LEWIS

Baptisms at Northfield, Bourneville and Halesowen

The Northfield, Bourneville and Halesowen churches were blessed with a number of baptisms during the last six months of 2013.

On Saturday, 13 July, Kyle Flores, Stephanie Flores, Annette Ong’era, and Joshua and John Tadjo from the Halesowen church plant were baptised. Then Saturday, 17 August, another five were baptised: John Lester (Kidderminster), husband and wife Courtland and Christine Brown (Bourneville), Norma Anglin (Bourneville) and Mardona Phillips (Halesowen). John Lester marked this special occasion by walking the 15 miles from Kidderminster to Halesowen to start his baptism, not because of the lack of transport, but to show how seriously committed he is to walking with God for the rest of his life. Steve Winsitt, leader of the Kidderminster church plant, said, “This was a wonderful day, to see our new friend John give his life to Jesus after experiencing a difficult life until he met Jesus.’ What’s more, John’s parents, who also came to support him, have observed a positive change in his son’s life, so much so that his mother responded to a call to consider baptism in the future.

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KENDREA LEWIS

Longsight and Levenshulme

The Longsight and Levenshulme church is located in Manchester (near Stockport) and started out in 1988 as a branch Sabbath school of the Manchester South congregation. In 1992 it was officially organised as a church and now has a membership of twenty-eight, not counting children.

It is exciting to know that they also have around twenty-three adult non-members attending regularly! Pastor Geoff Smith is their pastor and they have been very active in their support of the Francis House Children’s Hospice.

The accompanying photos were taken during their youth and culture days last year.

OBI AND ELIZABETH IHEOMA

Special awards

The head teacher of the Eden Independent Adventist School, Mrs Laura Osei, has stressed the urgent need for Adventists to educate their children in our Adventist schools. This was done during last year’s Education Day at the London Ghana church. She was of the view that genuine education as provided in Adventist institutions not only imparts wisdom from above, but also provides what is needed for a successful life here and as preparation for the life to come.

Twenty-two members of the church were honoured for their various achievements on the education ladder: twelve of them for gaining admission to university, ten for obtaining master’s degrees in various fields, with one for starting a PhD degree programme. A number of members also received awards for pursuing various causes in healthcare, teaching, and craftsmanship.

Head of the congregation’s Education department, Richard Antwi, said the church has instilled the achievers’ awards to encourage members to aim high in education.

NANA GSA PROUD

Bristol Central celebrates

Bristol Central Church have a novel way of celebrating the birthdays of their women members. Their Women’s Ministries department holds four birthday parties a year – one each quarter, for the women born in those months. Above is a photo of all who were present for the December celebration.

AKAANYA MIRIA CASIA
Phyllis Coldwell (1919-2013) d. 6 November. After an uneventful childhood in Barnsley, Phyllis decided on a business career and started work as a shorthand typist. However, she soon got bored of this and, after working in the fashion industry for a while, she decided to become a missionary. She worked in Africa for several years and, after twenty-four years of service as a Bible worker, Phyllis decided that it really was time to retire. Her health during which she was ably cared for by members of the Grantham church, she moved to Kings Court Nursing Home. She passed away on 23 November. The funeral service took place at the Grantham Seventh-Day Adventists church, November, followed by committal at the Grantham crematorium. Many of the people she worked with took part in her funeral service.

Pat Allen (1922-2013) d. 8 December. Pat was born in Luton and went to live with her Aunt Annie in Watford at the age of 17. Pat met and married Pat as a young nurse at Grantham Foods on Stamford Park. She was eventually called to give more support to the Newark church, which she gladly did, helping them with their various programmes. In the 1990s she was asked to embark on a personal project to distribute 10,000 leaflets advertising Bible lessons – 5,000 in Grantham and 5,000 in Newark. This led to studies in those towns and further baptisms. In 1999 she was asked to give more support to the Newark church, which she gladly did, helping them with their various programmes. She passed away following a fall in August 2013, aged 95. Her daughter, John P. Coldwell, Phyllis's son, was ever the diligent student, an uneventful childhood in Barnsley, Phyllis decided on a business career and started work as a shorthand typist. However, she soon got bored of this and, after working in the fashion industry for a while, she decided to become a missionary. She worked in Africa for several years and, after twenty-four years of service as a Bible worker, Phyllis decided that it really was time to retire. Her health during which she was ably cared for by members of the Grantham church, she moved to Kings Court Nursing Home. She passed away on 23 November. The funeral service took place at the Grantham Seventh-Day Adventists church, November, followed by committal at the Grantham crematorium. Many of the people she worked with took part in her funeral service.
Toy Service

At the annual Toy Service, held at the Grantham church in December, a number of gifts of new toys and books were received by Sarah High and Sarah Patel of Home Start in Grantham. Brightly coloured cot blankets for premature babies were also on display.

Cheques were presented to Captain John Nowell, representing the Children’s Air Ambulance, and Terry Cocoran, representing the Lincolnshire Autistic Society. The £310, shared equally between the two charities, was raised at a concert featuring the Grantham Yukelele Band, supported by musicians and orators from the local congregation.

EUSABETH CARNELL