



# BUC NEWS

## **Edition #809 (21 December 2012)** [FACEBOOK](#) & [TWITTER](#)

Email Newsletter of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland

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### **SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE** [Victor Hulbert]



BUC President Pastor Ian Sweeney's devotional message at the year-end Executive Committee, Thursday 13 December 2012, was so powerful that I asked him for permission to reproduce it in BUC News. It wasn't just that I identified with his fear when his wife says, "we need to talk!" It was because of open conversations that we really need to hold – at a leadership level, in our local churches, and in our own families.

That talking is reflected in this seasonal edition of BUC News with messages from all six Presidents of the Adventist Church at national and regional level. While you may be tempted just to read what your own President has to say – inspiration comes by seeing the bigger picture, including that from Division President, Bertil Wiklander and World Church President, Ted Wilson.

That bigger picture has demonstrated itself in growth figures. While many baptisms are still to be reported, trustees rejoiced in the 308 baptisms and 33 professions of faith recorded during the third quarter of 2012. Membership across the British Isles now stands at 33,878.

While the economy hit a double-dip recession during 2012, church members have nevertheless expressed their faithfulness in tithes and offerings. We publish these figures on a monthly basis and note that by [October](#) we had a tithe increase across the year of 2.4% with an underlying trend of around 4%. When we consider how many families have had to tighten their belts during hard economic times, tithe income really does demonstrate in a tangible way that members love their God and want to see the mission of the Church move forward.

That faithfulness has allowed trustees to vote a budget that focused strongly on evangelism – whether that is paying the salaries of our ministers (with a modest increase for the first time in three years), supporting media projects, training our faithful church members, or focusing on special initiatives like 'The Power of 34,000' and Mission to the Big Cities. A [PowerPoint](#) or [PDF](#) illustrating the main themes of the budget is available from the [Treasury pages](#) of the BUC website.



*Kevin Lynn makes a December decision for Jesus in Londonderry church. Baptisms are not just numbers. They are about individuals who make a choice for Jesus.*

Ultimately the Church is not about numbers, finance, or membership statistics. It is about individuals who make a choice for Jesus. Each baptism represents rejoicing in heaven. Each community programme reflects the love of Jesus in someone else's life.

As you read this year-end edition, may you rejoice with the Psalmist in saying, "I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, and Your truth unto the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth." [Psalm 57:9-11]

**WE NEED TO TALK** [Ian Sweeney, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland]



Nothing strikes me with a sense of panic and fear as when my wife of 25 years now, Jennifer, says to me, "Ian... we need to talk!"

Those 4 words "we need to talk!" are the harbinger of a conversation that I really do not want to conduct and for which I'm not sure when and how I will emotionally recover from the "talk!" I had thought that I was alone in being frightened witless by "we need to talk" until sometime in 2011 I heard a radio news feature that revealed other men were just like me!

When Jennifer states that "we need to talk" I know that I am being taken into a place where an uncomfortable conversation is about to be conducted. Uncomfortable conversations are not where I want to be because they have a way of exposing my deficiencies, inadequacies and

need for reform.

Having just watched the children of the Stanborough Primary and Secondary School put on a most wonderful and inspiring nativity musical, my mind was drawn to an uncomfortable conversation that the Nativity story records in Matthew 1:18:-

"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit." [Matthew 1:18 NIV]



I can imagine the scene when Mary announced to her fiancé in what must have been an extremely serious and solemn tone "Joseph, we need to talk!" For Joseph hearing that his fiancée is pregnant, he most certainly knew that the child was not his. I know how I would have reacted to the revelation in this uncomfortable conversation, "and just who is the father?" Incredulity would not adequately describe my reaction to her answer, "the father is the Holy Ghost."

I have no desire to engage in uncomfortable conversations and yet not only are they at the heart of the Christmas story but the Bible cites a number of uncomfortable conversations such as the one that Jeremiah had with God in Jeremiah 15, where after complaining about his terrible lot as a prophet,

God effectively told the prophet to stop talking nonsense and repent or else he was sacked from the prophetic ministry (15:19).

In the book of Acts, Peter had to conduct an uncomfortable conversation with a husband and wife whose secret actions showed them to be liars and thieves (chapter 5). In Acts 6, an uncomfortable conversation was conducted regarding issues of prejudice and discrimination. In Acts 15 an uncomfortable conversation needed to be had regarding issues of theology and religious practice. In Galatians 2, Paul recounted that he had a most uncomfortable conversation with Peter whom he accused of being weak and a hypocrite.

These uncomfortable conversations were necessary because their outcome related to God's mission that His message be shared.



I believe that we must engage in uncomfortable conversations when we understand that the objective is MISSION... that is reaching people with the love and message of Jesus Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland has to engage in many uncomfortable conversations and questions of which one is, "how does our Church, whose membership is largely made up of ethnic minority people, become able to effectively reach the majority ethnic population with the love and message of Jesus Christ?"

Our local churches need to engage in uncomfortable conversations such as "is our congregation serving as salt and light (Matthew 5) in our local community or are we only known in our community by car parking issues on a Saturday?"

Uncomfortable conversations are about listening to one another and finding ways to be more effective in our witness.

After Mary and Joseph's uncomfortable conversation from which he decided he would break it off with Mary, an angel appeared to him and reassured him that Mary's story was true and that she would "give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel" – which means, "God with us."

We need to talk, however, I truly pray Immanuel "God with us!" as we talk.

[RELATED ARTICLE: Looking back at 2012 and forward into the New Year Pastor Sweeney reflects his vision and concerns in a recent [BUC News video report.](#)]

**BEYOND THE 'SEASON OF GOODWILL'** [Lorance Johnson, North England Conference President]



Again we find ourselves upon the threshold of a New Year. Time has indeed progressed very quickly leading many of us to enquire where time has actually gone. As we reflect over the past several months, we may recall events and personal encounters that have positively or negatively affected us – things that people have either said or done that provoked a reaction. While we ponder over these things the question arises whether in our words, thoughts and actions we have represented the beautiful name and character of God.

Jesus came to this world to reconcile every man, woman, boy and girl to Himself. In Romans 5:8 Paul says, "But God commendeth His love towards us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Again Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." [King James Version]

This time of the year is regarded as the season of goodwill to all men. Seasons come and go and unfortunately this virtue of goodwill often passes with the season and we all return to life as usual. Jesus came to set us all an example of authentic goodwill not just for a season but throughout our lives.

The goodwill described here exemplifies itself in the virtues described in James 3:17 "...the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, willing to yield, full of compassion and good deeds, and without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy." [International Standard Version]

His light cannot effectively shine out if it has not first penetrated deep within – working out a transformation. We should seek to be channels of light to someone – not only during this season, but throughout every season of every year. To be instruments of reconciliation – instruments of light.

We approach the New Year with great expectancy – knowing that the return of Jesus Christ is closer. Let us determine without reservation to commit ourselves to God – endeavouring to be better instruments in His hands for the coming year.

[RELATED ARTICLES: Review Pastor Johnson's commitment of mission is a highly viewed post-election [BUC News video report](#), and a recent [NEC Communication department interview](#).]

**BEYOND THE OLYMPICS** [Sam Davis, South England Conference President] Also a [SECmedia video report](#).



I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members God's richest blessing at Christmas and every success for 2013. Truly God has blessed us in 2012 and we are thankful that we have been able to make it to the end of another year.

As we close this year let us think about the families of Sandy Hook, Connecticut in the States who suffered such tragic loss at the hands of a lone gunman. In 2012 we have experienced much sorrow as we have seen many saints laid to rest including at least five pastoral families experiencing the loss of a loved one. We look forward to 2013 being a much better year and yet we are cognisant of the fact that we live in the closing period of earth's history, when things will

get worse not better.

I would like to give God thanks for the hundreds of souls won to the Kingdom in 2012. Evangelism continues to be at the forefront of all that we do. The various ministries are all focused on one thing, bringing and retaining members to the Kingdom.

Next year we will be focussing on the Mission to the Big Cities with our attention expressly on London. However, London is only one part of the Conference and so we encourage all our pastors and elders in their respective areas to keep the flame of evangelism alive.

Health is a very important part of what we do as Seventh-day Adventists. It is the most valuable asset that God has given to us. Without it we cease to function. Let us plan to do something to improve our health in 2013. A little more exercise maybe, drinking more water, becoming a vegetarian, becoming a vegan, or just getting more rest. I have come to realise through painful encounters this year, that if we lose our health we lose everything.

May the blessing of the good Lord be with all our pastors, elders and members and may He richly bless you in 2013.

[For a fuller reflection and vision by Pastor Davis, watch his [SECmedia video report](#). Related story: Reflect back to the summer and enjoy a 28-minute review of [Adventist witness during the 2012 London Olympics](#).]

### **GREETINGS FROM IRELAND** [David Neal, Irish Mission President]



Do-it-yourself religion doesn't work and always ends in failure. Because we've tried it repeatedly so many times, you'd think that we'd have given it up by now.

It manifests itself in three ways:

1. When it becomes a performance, a keeping of rules.
2. When we think we are right with God without daily listening to His Word and talking with Him in prayer.
3. When we allow popular culture and people around us to determine what is true.

God invaded our world from heaven. 'The Word was made flesh' and 'lived among us'. Jesus is the Saviour who has 'ransomed, healed, restored and forgiven' us. While most people this season will 'admire' the Jesus of the Advent story from a distance, the call of a faithful people is to come to Bethlehem, behold and adore Him, because He is Christ, the Lord! He not only invaded our world, but offers to invade our lives. The Advent story is nothing less than the antidote to do-it-yourself religion.

A very happy Christmas from Irish Mission members and ministers.

### **AIMING HIGH IN SCOTLAND** [Bernie Holford, Scottish Mission President]



God is blessing our Church in so many ways. The faithfulness of our members is a reflection of what God is doing – and we praise Him. However, when I look at what I have done in 2012, I confess that, despite my best intentions, I have not done everything as well as I had hoped.

In October, Karen and I visited Florence for a couple of days. The wonderful statues fascinated us, including the famous 'David' by Michelangelo. I was reminded of the comment he made about working on his most famous sculpture. "I saw the angel in the stone and carved until I set him free."

When Jesus died on the cross, He took the punishment for our sin and sees a potential 'angel' in every human being. Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27), is God's dream for each one of us, and our Church, as we grow together in love and peace.

Michelangelo also said, "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aims too high and in falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark."

As I look ahead to 2013 I invite each one of us to set our aim at even higher levels of love for God, our families, and those who live in our communities. As we experience the grace of God in our own lives, we will see His grace being revealed in those we minister to. I wonder how many 'angels' we will recognise in those around us this year, and how God will help us to reveal them?

## WALES: LAND OF CHALLENGES AND BLESSINGS [John Surridge, Welsh Mission President]



This has been an exciting year for the Welsh Mission. A major building project is underway in Swansea, with the planning stage coming to completion and the groundwork scheduled to start in the spring. Generous donations and the assignment of legacy money mean that we should be able to fund the work fully. By this time next year we hope to be able to report on a substantially completed church building.

We have seen baptisms and transfers into the Mission, meaning that where we just had small groups a couple of years ago we now have viable companies ready to be organised into churches. People movements and growth both bring their challenges however, and it's not always easy to find leaders or ministers for these new church plants. In the next few years we could probably start two or three such groups, but we need to balance our enthusiasm with financial prudence.

A new worker has joined our ministerial team. Malcolm Turner, a member of the Rhyl church, is now working for us in the north of Wales as a non-stipendiary minister. We are also very proud of Pastor Roger Neal who, although officially retired, has continued working for us in the Newtown area. These two dedicated men work with the seven other ministers who are employed in the Welsh Mission to bring the Adventist message to a country where many still know little about us.

One evangelistic enterprise that we are particularly proud of is our web-based Free Bible project. Pioneered here in the Welsh Mission some two years ago, it has now grown too big for us and is being run across the whole of the UK by the Adventist Discovery Centre. So far this year nearly 5,000 people have registered on the site and more than 1,800 Bibles have been given away.

Please remember Wales in your prayers. We have challenges but these are always outweighed by the blessings we receive through God's grace.

### MORE GREETINGS

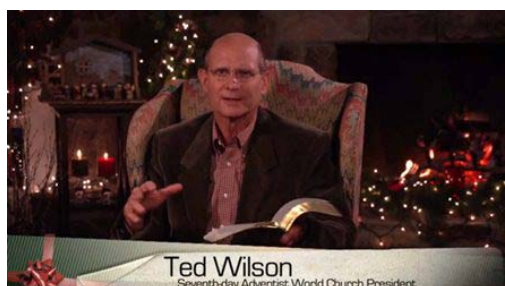


*Instruments from around the world are featured in "God's Gifts," a music video highlighting music from each of the Adventist Church's international regions. The video appears in Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson's Christmas message. [Photo: ANN]*

Seventh-day Adventist World Church President Ted N C Wilson offers a message of reconciliation between God and humanity during his Christmas appeal to church and community members worldwide.

In the half-hour 'Revival for Mission: Christmas Special' video – available [online](#) – Wilson tells of a loving God pursuing a relationship with humanity.

Wilson is also joined by his wife Nancy, who tells the original Christmas story through the eyes of a young shepherd.



The President's message also features the new music video 'God's Gifts'. The video is a Christmas music medley with dozens of performers and instruments from around the world. Featured instruments include a Trinidadian steel drum, a Peruvian pan flute, an Indian sitar, a Chinese guzheng and an American banjo.

Pastor Bertil Wiklander, President of the Adventist Church across the Trans-European Division in his New Year address states, "By God's grace we see progress and growth in the Church when we seek Him first. May the conclusion of this year and the beginning of the new bring us closer to God and in the fellowship of family and friends."

You can read his full New Year address on the [TED website](#).



*Pastor Bertil Wiklander*

### **SABBATH WITNESS ON BBC RADIO** [Peter Jeynes]



The Middlesbrough Seventh-day Adventist church is known for its good relationship with the community and with the local media. They are developing their skills as a community oriented church.

With the Christmas season well upon us, Judy Hamilton-Johansson helped create an opportunity for some of the church singers to sing in both the town centre and at local residential homes. In addition they took the opportunity to raise funds for a good cause.

Judy, the local church communication secretary reflects that "We all like listening to carols at Christmas but we need to remember that not everyone in the community has something to rejoice about, so we decided not only to book the church choir in to sing and give out booklets in the town centre of Middlesbrough but to use the opportunity to raise money for local people in need."

The choir sang on three dates raising money for a men's hostel, a women's refuge and an 'In out of the Cold' event for the homeless run by the local council.

Because of excellent relationships created with the church and the local radio station Judy was contacted by BBC Radio Tees and asked to talk live on air about the work the church does in the community.



In the event, Head Elder, Jill Geldart, went along. She not only talked about the work the church is doing in Middlesbrough but invited all the listeners to the Adventist church Carol Service on Sabbath, 22 December.

### **DRUMMING UP A WELCOME AT NORTH WEMBLEY** [Rita Skinner-Thom]



Wembley High Street was ablaze with chatter as the drumming of the Pathfinders from North Wembley community Adventist church lit up the High Street on the chilly Sabbath morning of 8 December 2012.

The Personal Ministries department spearheaded by Rita Skinner-Thom and accompanied by willing church members arranged to meet the community to share the love of God through singing. Shoppers stopped and talked with members and took literature which resulted in 250 books including 'Help In Daily Living' being accepted by shoppers.



Although the day was cold our presence and smiles were greeted with warmth and many shoppers stood to watch the Pathfinders and joined in as carols were sung.

Rita was especially encouraged as, Camilla, one of our most recently baptized members also participated. Camilla said, "I did not know what to expect. It was an inspiring demonstration of reaching our community. I will definitely be going on the next occasion. God has been so good."



### **SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE COMMUNICATOR** [Kirsten Øster-Lundqvist]

In this special issue of the Communicator, the South England Conference presents an overview of what different departments have been working on throughout 2012; an unforgettable year of Jubilee celebrations, Olympic cheer, and countless opportunities to be witnesses for God in our local communities. Keep up with the South England Conference by [reading the online SEC Communicator on their website.](#)

### **NORTH ENGLAND COMMUNICATOR REVAMPED** [Peter Jeynes]



The [NEC Communicator](#) has been revamped after several years of excellent work by Pastor Jeff Nicholson.

The electronic journal of Seventh-day Adventists in the North of England, now takes a spiritual look at news and events from the churches in the North as well as local secular newspapers.

Video clips and sound clips often feature to illustrate the journal. If you would like to subscribe please contact NEC Communication director Pastor Peter Jeynes

<[pjeynes@necadventist.org.uk](mailto:pjeynes@necadventist.org.uk)>.

### **INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER AT YOUR CHURCH?** [Paul Lockham, BUC Executive Secretary]



Churches throughout the British Isles have been richly blessed by a variety of international speakers who have preached and led evangelism over the years. Their breath of experience and the richness of their diverse experience undoubtedly is an asset to mission.

However, in order to protect the speaker and the local church, it is essential that regular church protocol is followed. An official service request must be submitted to your Conference or Mission office at least three months in advance of an appointment. This will allow for appropriate invitations, permission from the speaker's employer, and insurance cover. On very rare occasions it may also protect the church from those who might undermine rather than build the mission of the Church.

At least one World Division has notified BUC Secretariat that late service requests will be automatically refused. 'Timeliness' may be the best motto to get the speaker you need for 2013.



## INFORM, ENGAGE, INSPIRE

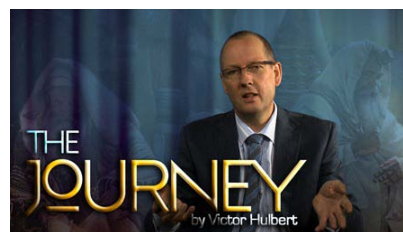


With this, the final edition of BUC News for 2012, the whole Communication and Media team would like to take this opportunity to wish you God's richest blessings both for the Christmas period and for the year ahead.

It has been a privilege to serve both you and the wider community, to edit your reports of inspiring and encouraging activities in churches and communities across the whole of the British Isles and to see your witness making a difference. I never feel better than when my proofreader, says, "Victor, those were good, varied stories this week." It means that our Church is doing its mission.

Your feedback has also been important to us and has helped us formulate the content and look of both BUC News and the website. From your comments and suggestions a newer, fresher look will be coming early in 2013.

Week by week we also highlight UK based programmes that we air on Revelation TV and Hope Channel. Again, we have been listening. Your positive reactions to our latest series, The Journey, means that we will look to expand the series, including the use of other speakers, as part of our planning for 2013. The mix of storytelling, travelogue and Bible truth appears to be making an impact on many lives. [This week](#), we take a more relaxed approach to the Christmas story as we travel to northern Portugal, meet real shepherds, and discover what the angels meant by 'Peace on Earth'.



On behalf of myself, Victor Hulbert; my secretary, Mary Kapon; our IT team, Paula Carrillo and Thando Mlalazi; and our Media Centre team, Wes Kapon and Kofi Osei-Owusu, we leave you with the commendation of the Apostle Paul, to live 'truth as it is in Jesus' (Ephesians 4:21) and throughout 2013 make a difference for God by 'building others up according to their needs (verse 29) and being kind, compassionate and forgiving to each other (verse 32). That way we will all fit the motto of BUC News and the Communication department, to 'Inform, engage, inspire'.

Enjoy your Christmas break. Continue to share your good news with us. We will be back with you on Friday, 4 January 2013.

## PROGRAMMES TO WATCH THIS WEEK



Our programme highlights for the coming week include a Christmas special as 'The Journey' takes us to the mountains of northern Portugal where we meet shepherds and find ourselves introduced to the meaning of 'The Angels' Song'.

On [Revelation TV](#) (Sky 581 or Freesat 692): Two seasonal specials: **The Journey: [The Angels' Song](#)**. If the shepherds were surprised, so were the angels!: Thursday, 20 December, 8:30 pm repeated Sunday lunchtime 23 December, 1 pm. Next week: ViewPoint takes a look at the ['Many faces of Christmas'](#).

**On Hope TV** you can watch a wide variety of programmes on the satellite and [website](#). Next week's schedule includes the following UK produced programmes among its much larger international output including seasonal programming:

Friday 21 December: 8:00 pm: The Journey: [The Angels' Song](#),  
 8:30 pm: FaithTalks: [Is Christianity a straight jacket?](#)  
 Midnight: The Angels' Song  
 Sabbath 22 December: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm: The Angels' Song,  
 7:30 pm: FaithTalks: Is Christianity a straight jacket?  
 Monday 24 December: 12:30 pm: [Bill Kitchen](#) – Affable salesman, community motivator,  
 9:30 pm: Viewpoint: [The many faces of Christmas](#)  
 Wednesday 26 December: 8:00 am: Viewpoint: The many faces of Christmas,  
 11:00 pm: [James Shepley](#) – Learning to care  
 Friday 28 December: 8:00 pm: ViewPoint: The many faces of Christmas,  
 8:30 pm: [Olympic Witness 2012](#),  
 Midnight: ViewPoint: The many faces of Christmas  
 Sabbath 29 December: 9:00 am & 7:00 pm: ViewPoint: The many faces of Christmas,  
 7:30 pm: F Olympic Witness 2012

**COMING EVENTS** For a full listing of Coming Events please visit [www.adventistevents.org.uk](http://www.adventistevents.org.uk)

BUC News is a weekly news bulletin produced by the British Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and edited by the Communication Department. Victor Hulbert, director; Mary Kapon, secretary. Items for inclusion should be sent to <bucnews@adventist.org.uk and need to be received by 6.00 pm on Wednesday, preferably as simple email text. All unattributed stories written by the editorial team. Coming Events and Small Ads should be kept short and preferably be submitted via the on-line form at: <www.adventist.org.uk. The editor reserves the right to modify articles received to make them suitable for inclusion. The views expressed by individuals cited in this bulletin do not necessarily reflect the views of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though we try to ensure that they do. You are free to re-print any portion of this bulletin without the need for special permission. However, we kindly request that you identify BUC News or other sources whenever you publish these materials. Back issues and an RSS feed including photographs are available on our website at <www.adventist.org.uk.

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