



encounter



Guardians of the stolen portrait

From India, with love

Vol. 8 • Issue 4 • December 2012

SEC Youth & Teens 2012 Survey



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Purpose for **Encounter**, is to develop youth and youth leadership spiritually and motivationally in faith and in service.



Looking back over 2012 we have had a year of anniversary celebrations, medals, and sky-gazing.

This year, in the United Kingdom and some other parts of the world, we commemorated the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne on 5 February 1952 at the event of her father's death. She was crowned the following year.

In various parts of the UK (though mostly in London) the Olympic Games were hosted: a time to support athletes in their endeavours to do their best, maybe do better than others, and maybe even set new records of achievement.

Then in October, eyes were set on the sky, or at least our online devices, to see Felix Baumgartner – an Austrian skydiver, daredevil and BASE jumper – fall from his capsule 24 miles up in space to become the record holder for the highest parachute jump ever.

It's great to remember milestones, and celebrate achievements. As for gazing into the sky, I am looking forward to our God returning as He has promised: not with a parachute, but with the throng of angels and trumpets sounding!

As you plan for 2013, I hope what you read in this edition will help you consider how you can do your best for God, achieve great things for God, and be prepared for His return.

Read on, live now, and look up. Jesus is coming again.

**Nathan**





## WakaWaka



*'Hello, I am WakaWaka! I bring light to dark places. I suck up sunlight like no other and give back 16 hours of bright reading light. And . . . I have a lot more in store for you! I teach kids about solar light and other stuff. I "Shine Bright" when you need me to. I am the best and coolest solar LED lamp. Welcome to my home.'*

- 1.5 billion people live in darkness; with not enough light to read or study, they are heavily dependent on toxic, dangerous and expensive kerosene lamps.
- 6 million people are burned every year because of kerosene accidents.
- People using kerosene inhale the equivalent of 2 packs of cigarettes every day.
- Kerosene costs 20% of the family income.



• Bert Smit  
ADRA-UK

For most people in rural Africa daylight is precious – as, when darkness comes, access to artificial light is a challenge. Recently a kick-starter project delivered one of the best solar LED lamps in the world. The WakaWaka Solar Lamp uses high-tech sun-boost technology to give 8 hours of bright ambient light and up to 80 hours of night safety illumination: all on a one-day solar charge!

WakaWaka in Swahili means 'Shine Bright', or 'Let's Do It'. The opening song of the 2010 FIFA World Cup by Shakira, 'This Time For Africa' (commonly known as the 'WakaWaka song'), became the inspiration for this solar lamp.

Thanks to a donor ADRA-UK will be distributing 24 of these unique new WakaWaka solar lights to disadvantaged 'off-grid' families with children in Burkina Faso. This is a pilot project, and if it works well we want to roll this out on a larger scale. These state-of-the art solar lights will let children do their homework at night, and take away the cost and danger of kerosene lights.

Want to give one away to an 'off-grid' family? Donate £20 to ADRA and we will get this sorted!


 Check our website to donate:  
[www.adra.org.uk](http://www.adra.org.uk)



 Check our Facebook page for exciting updates on the WakaWaka lights for Burkina Faso: [www.facebook.com/adrauk](http://www.facebook.com/adrauk)



 For more information:  
[www.wakawakalight.com](http://www.wakawakalight.com)


## AVS experience

2013 is a year to focus on service. The Adventist Volunteer Service (AVS) programme is just one of the many ways you can serve, and we hope you'll visit our brand-new website for more information.



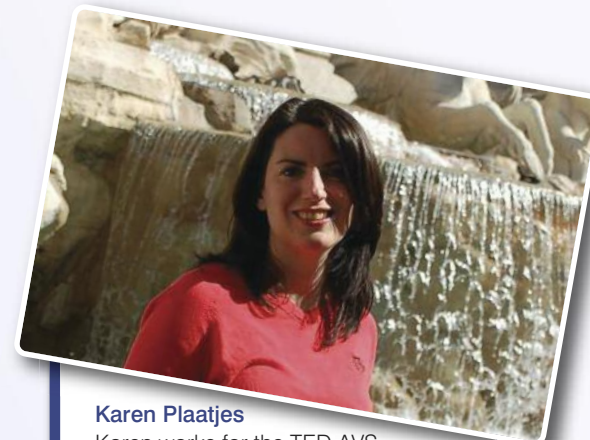
[www.tedadventistvolunteers.com](http://www.tedadventistvolunteers.com)



Check out:

- Our short-term mission project 2013
- International volunteer opportunities
- Volunteer stories
- Photos and videos
- How to apply and get involved

If you feel God calling you on an adventure with Him, I pray that you will consider AVS as an option and see where God takes you this year.



**Karen Platjes**

Karen works for the TED AVS department. She served as a volunteer in South Korea through the AVS programme for 22 months, and had the time of her life! She highly recommends volunteering, and would love to talk to you about it.

**Jessie Michelo**

*'Volunteering is an indescribable experience. It's hard to find the words to explain how wonderful serving God truly is. This experience touched every part of my being; my only regret is that I didn't do it sooner. The Bible says the harvest is plenty but the workers are few, so if you hear God calling you to serve, just go! You'll have the time of your life!'*

Jessie Michelo, from the UK, has been serving as a volunteer in Brazil since October 2011. She likes it so much she has just extended for another year, and plans to stay till November 2013.





LIFEconnect is a unique online community where people can explore life together. It is a place where stories are shared, conversations are started, ideas are explored and people inspired to grow.

LIFEconnect isn't just about exploring life; it is also a way to discover new friends and to share your faith online.

There are two sides to LIFEconnect: the website, and our Digital Missionaries.

On the LIFEconnect website we post stories, upload videos, engage in discussion and explore our lives and the world we live in. If it matters to you, you'll find it on LIFEconnect. We have posts about every stage of life's journey; everything from relationships to the world around us, from the little things to the big questions. The website is a place to share the best of the web and to discover something new. Come for the content; stay for the conversation!

Our Digital Missionaries are the heart and soul of LIFEconnect. They help create the website content by uploading videos, sharing great stories and posting eye-popping pictures. They use their Facebook, Google+, Twitter and personal blogs to share their favourite LIFEconnect posts with their friends across social media. They start conversations and chat with visitors. Maybe you've just discovered

your own mission field!

Our world is increasingly multicultural, and LIFEconnect reflects this – as an international project, the English website is one of over 20 different language versions. If English isn't your first language, maybe you will find an online home on LIFEconnect.

As part of our ongoing development we are adding live streaming to the LIFEconnect website. This will give us the chance to host live events that we can ask our friends and contacts to view online, or even invite them to be part of the live audience. Next year we will start to organise a series of streamed meetings across Europe. Why not plan to be part of the English audience or invite your friends to this life-changing programme?

We want to make LIFEconnect a safe, inviting online community: a place where anyone will be welcomed, and all can grow and explore life.

We are looking for people to join us. We are looking for people who wish to be part of something special. We are looking for people who want to use social media to connect and share.

We are looking for Digital Missionaries. We want you to be part of this unique and exciting community.

Why not join us and make LIFEconnect your virtual home!



## *Making SDA education more affordable* - Vanesa Pizzuto Stanborough School

The *Alumni and Friends of the School* did it again! After last year's success, the fundraising committee worked really hard to ensure a second wave of scholarships and bursaries could be awarded for students enrolling in 2013. Their goal is to make sure that more students across the British Union can benefit from the good educational programme that Stanborough offers, and they are doing a great job!

Last year 13 scholarships and bursaries were issued following an examination, interview and means testing for bursaries. On Sunday 25 November of this year, the examination will have been held at Stanborough School for entry in 2013. The list of awardees will soon be published and the successful candidates will receive multi-annual funding worth up to 50% off their tuition fees. Seventh-day Adventist parents of successful candidates will obtain this reduction in addition to the 30% denominational discount.

Stanborough School would like to thank the *Alumni and Friends of the School* for making this support possible. If you benefited from SDA education or feel that God is impressing you to help make Adventist education more accessible, please contact the BUC Treasury department and ask how to support the Stanborough Secondary School Scholarships and Bursaries Fund.

If you would like to receive information about future scholarships and bursaries that may be available at Stanborough School, please contact Mrs Sonia Poddar at [registrar@spsch.org](mailto:registrar@spsch.org) or call 01923 673 268 or contact the BUC Treasury department 01923 672 251.



## From India, with love

Dear friends, if curry does not entertain your palate, read no further: but if a taste of Indian life appeals, bon appétit! I look forward to sharing with you all my stories when home, and perhaps, after seeing my mountain of photos, it might seem like you too have lived here! If only my words could be soaked in spice before being printed, then you would truly 'taste' India!

Back in October 2011, a desire to do more with my life was burning. Through constant prayer, months of saving and fundraising, recording and selling my second album, quitting my jobs and selling my car, India welcomed my Estonian friend Andres Ploompuu and I on 22 June, 2012! Arriving at the Ibrahimpatnam SDA Higher Secondary School, some 250km from Andhra Pradesh's capital city of Hyderabad, we were greeted by 49°C of humid heat and some very happy and sweaty little kids!

Since then, we have witnessed chaos on a completely new level, eaten food spicier than I have ever known and experienced

### • Yvonne Bauwens

hospitality from genuinely kind people. Each has given us a chance to witness real Indian life. The only tourist aspect of our life is that we are the local tourist attractions, as this area rarely sees white people! People stare, but only out of curiosity. Seatbelts fastened, are you ready to join me? Oops, there are no seatbelts . . . well . . . this is the real India!

A land of extremes, parts of the culture seem completely backward and the pace of life somewhat inefficient to a Westerner. People struggle to survive in the most desperate of conditions, yet brightly coloured clothes are worn, as, for the majority of the population who are Hindu, colour represents happiness. Even in a place of terrible poverty, people express themselves through colour. Waking hours are spent outside, as one would melt indoors due to the intense heat! Personal appearance over making homes welcoming is priority, but not in a vain way like in our society. Make-up or cosmetics are

unaffordable, and some even struggle to wash every day. Most women have long hair that is kept tied back. Frequent haircuts or expensive styling are out of the question. They instead decorate their hair with plaits and attach sweet-smelling jasmine flowers. Against jet-black hair and tanned skin, beautifully designed sarees and flowers only enhance natural beauty!

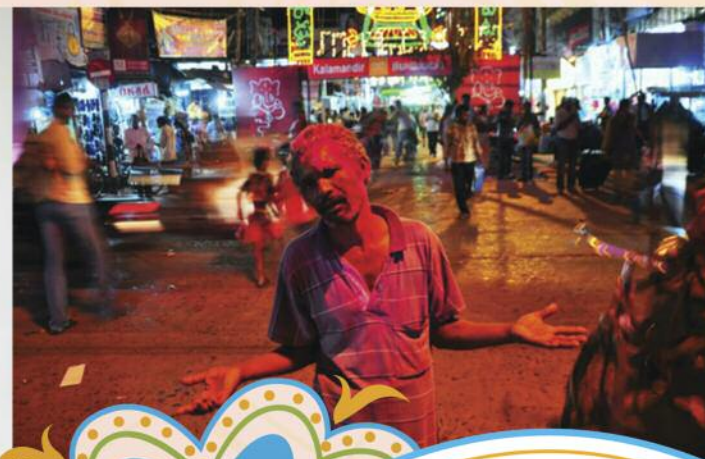
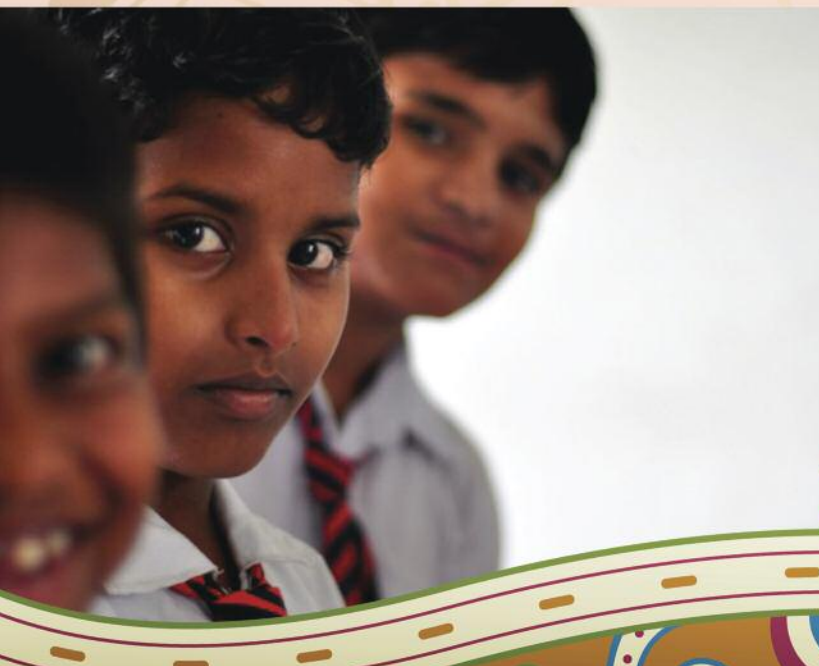
Wherever I go, the countless begging hands that reach out for money guilt-trip my existence. Imagine waking up each day and having to beg for food just to stay alive. It saddens me to be unable to help everyone, but I have chosen to help a few around me.

One of these is a little girl called Rebecca, who lives on the streets of the local market. I meet her whenever I buy vegetables. She is grubby and unwashed, has matted hair, and wears rags, but the twinkle in her dark brown eyes and the smile she always boasts reflect the radiant Indian sun! Whenever I see her, we make our way to the drinks stall and enjoy a cup of juice. I cannot afford to give her lots of money, but if a little drink and some food from a funny-looking white lady gives her something to look forward to, then my day has meaning. Her friends now know to

meet me at the drinks stall too . . . all seven of them! If I could afford to, I would love to pay for Rebecca's schooling. Instead she will continue to study for her PhD in Life on the Street, along with the thousands of other orphaned children. Why I was not born in India, and don't have to beg like Rebecca, I will never know. What I do know is that this street urchin is my sister in God's eyes, and it is my duty as a child of God to care for my family in whatever way I can. With so much poverty, the best thing that could happen is for Jesus to return tomorrow.

During a recent trip to the market, a lady approached me and gave me a little red rose. Poverty-stricken, she had gone out of her way to buy me this beautiful flower. Sometimes the biggest heart is hidden under rags.

Living on the school campus, kids bang my door using a rock (!?), wait a few seconds, then bang again, yelling until I come to the door! Tough if I am in the shower or anywhere else! So at 6.45am one Sabbath morning, my beauty sleep was rudely interrupted and I almost wet the bed when someone attempted to break down my door! Sleepy-eyed, I opened the door to find two





little 'innocent', puppy-eyed faces staring up at me. 'Give Bible,' they uttered in their broken English. With no Bible to give, I closed the door, but it made me think. This would never happen at home. These boys had summoned up the courage, albeit at stupid-o'clock on a Saturday morning, to ask me for a Bible. I took the opportunity to buy second-hand Bibles later that week, spending £100 of donated money, and now those boys – along with twenty-eight other children – own a much-desired Bible.

So far from home, moments of desperate loneliness have often clouded my motivation. One particular day, I longed just to hug God. I was invited to preach at a village church, and, although having learned how to ride a motorbike here, our friend Sam was driving. A few kilometres from the destination, as we turned off the main road, another bike crashed into us! A split second would have meant either my leg or Sam's leg being crushed by the other bike's front wheel. Instead, the wheel smashed between both of us, hitting the plastic shield of our petrol tank. I have a little scar on my left leg which will continue to remind me that although I cannot see God, His hand is ever protecting me!

During a trip to the one-million-populated city of Vijayawada,

Andres and I witnessed how Hindus celebrate their god, Ganesh. While I was capturing the incredible atmosphere through my lens, a man, blotto drunk and covered in pink powdered paint, stood in front of my camera with his hands held out. Oblivious to the chaos around him, his dilated eyes expressed a look of complete hopelessness.

Steve Green's song 'People Need the Lord' states:

*'We are called to take His light,  
To a world where wrong seems right.  
What could be too great a cost  
For sharing life with one who's lost?'*

From my observation of Indian religions, Hindus are wealthy. They spend a colossal amount on idols of their many gods. Christians are broke in comparison. Why? Think of the story in Mark (10:17-22) about the rich man who asks Jesus how to obtain eternal life. The reply: 'Give away your wealth and follow Me.' Hats off to the Hindus for their devotion, but what are you willing to sacrifice in order to serve and share the love of God with those around you? Of course, one does not need to walk the

streets of India to witness adverse poverty, but it certainly has bluntly reminded me of life's injustices.

Despite being exposed to challenges, I am grateful to God for each one. Aware that my character is vastly different to that of the Master Designer, my weaknesses have been revealed during the loneliest of nights, but He is re-shaping my life in the ways according to His plan, as I am learning to trust Him. Perhaps I needed to be plucked from my comfort-zone of Scottish life to realise just how much I need a true God in my life.

My friends, what are you prepared to give up in order to share the hope of Jesus' soon return with those who hunger not just for physical food? Wherever you are, I pray your mission will be to reach out. First Timothy 4:12 speaks perfectly my thoughts: 'Don't let anyone make fun of you, just because you are young. Set an example for others by what you say and do, as well as by your love, faith, and purity.' (CEV.)

Until we meet again, may the Giver of life bless you and keep you; may the light of His love ever shine upon you, and fill you with peace.



# BUC Calendar 2012 & 2013

**December**

14-16	Youth and Pathfinder Leadership Training, Level 1	NEC
30	Young Adventist Leaders' Awards	SEC

**January**

12-13	Level 2 Leadership Training	NEC
18	SEC Youth Day of Fellowship	SEC
14-3 March	Overseas Mission Trip: India	NEC
18-20	Pathfinder Leaders' Conference	SEC
25-27	Pathfinder Winter Camp Experience	NEC
27	Training Day, Crieff	SM

**YOUTH & PATHFINDER LEADERSHIP TRAINING LEVEL 1**

THE NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE YOUTH & PATHFINDER DEPARTMENTS PRESENT  
**LEVEL 1 YOUTH & PATHFINDER LEADERSHIP TRAINING**  
 FRIDAY, 14 DECEMBER - SUNDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2012  
 VENUE: SHALWOOD MANOR SCHOOL, ETTINGTON, CV35 9EF, CV35 9EF, CV35 9EF  
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 FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [WWW.SECADVENTIST.ORG.UK](http://www.secadventist.org.uk)

**SKI TRIP 2013**

THE NORTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE YOUTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTS  
**SKI TRIP 2013**  
 FRIDAY, 1 FEBRUARY - SUNDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2013  
 VENUE: HAVER, FRANCE  
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 ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD (WEEKENDS INCL)  
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 FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [WWW.SECADVENTIST.ORG.UK](http://www.secadventist.org.uk)

IM - Irish Mission  
 NEC - North England Conference  
 SM - Scottish Mission  
 SEC - South England Conference  
 WM - Welsh Mission

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**March**

16	Global Youth Day	ALL
16-23	Youth Week of Prayer	ALL
29 March-1 April	3 Missions Easter Retreat, Ireland	ALL
29-10 April	Youth Leadership Conference	SEC

**eXtreme TEENS CAMP**

19<sup>TH</sup> - 25<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2013  
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 Email: [dejan@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:dejan@secadventist.org.uk)  
 Phone: 01923 232 728

PAN-EUROPEAN ADVENTIST YOUTH CONGRESS  
 SERBIA

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**NOVI SAD 2013**

[aycongress.org](http://aycongress.org)

**February**

1-9	Ski Trip 2013	NEC
15-18	NEC Drilling & Drumming Boot Camp	NEC
18-22	Prayer and Faith Conference	SEC

SEC TEENS MINISTRIES PRESENTS

**Prayer and Faith CONFERENCE**

18<sup>TH</sup> - 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2013

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 Fulfilling God's Will (Matthew 28:1)

For Application Forms, please contact your Union leader. The deadline for registration is MAY 01, 2013. All areas have an online questionnaire for accommodation availability.

SEC TEENS  
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## Guardians of the stolen portrait

The Mona Lisa is widely recognised as the most famous painting in the history of art. It has become so famous because there is something mysterious in that portrait that we cannot understand. In 1911, however, the portrait was stolen! A painter, Louis Bérard, turned the corner where it had hung for five years, and in place of the world-class painting he found four iron pegs. The guards concluded that the painting must be with photographers, and consequently did nothing. The greatest picture in the world had been stolen, and those entrusted with its care did nothing!



If you have ever heard the phrase 'Yada yada yada' before, you will know that it means 'blah blah blah'! Yet I have discovered that this word is not as boring as it sounds. In Genesis 4:1 the Bible says (KJV) 'Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain'. This was the first love story in the world, and all the Bible says is 'Adam knew Eve'! If we look up the Hebrew word for 'know' in this context, we find that word is *yada*! It means 'to know, to recognise, to understand, to respect'. How different to the image of sex that we are bombarded with today! We are relentlessly fed a message through the media that all sex is the same, that what we see in Hollywood is similar to the union that God intends us to have with our spouses. Yet His plan is so much bigger than this.

God's intention for *yada* is so big that He has yet another use for this word in the Old Testament. So we know that *yada* is used to describe a husband and wife being in a sexual relationship; however, the word is also used nearly 900 times in the Old Testament for someone being in deep fellowship with God. It is as though God looked down on the earth and said, 'How can I let these people know just how intensely passionate I am about them?' Then He chose the ultimate human intimacy and said, 'This shall be a portrait of how intimately close I want to fellowship with My bride, the Church.'

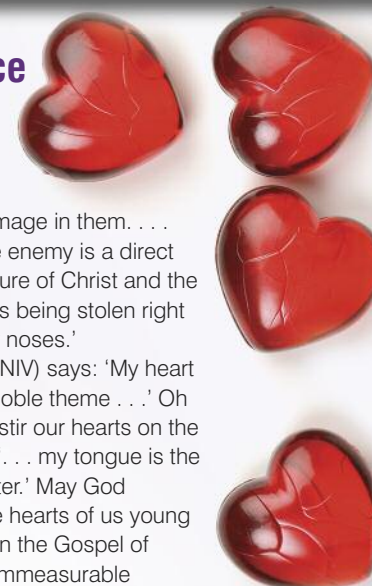
In Ephesians 5:31, 32 the apostle Paul begins to unveil this mysterious portrait. He says (KJV): 'For



this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.' Baptist pastor, John Piper, on evaluating this mystery, concluded that the ultimate reason why we are sexual beings is 'to make God more deeply knowable'. Through this mysterious portrait of sexual intimacy between a husband and wife, God has provided us an opportunity to begin discovering His heart of passionate love towards us.

Is it any wonder, then, that the enemy is working tirelessly to destroy God's image of *yada* in our lives and to offer us a cheap, casualised counterfeit image of sex? Dannah Gresh, author of *What Are You Waiting For? The One Thing No One Ever Tells You About Sex*, says, 'We must plant in our children the desire to carry forward the Gospel in the picture of a holy marriage bed and relationship. The

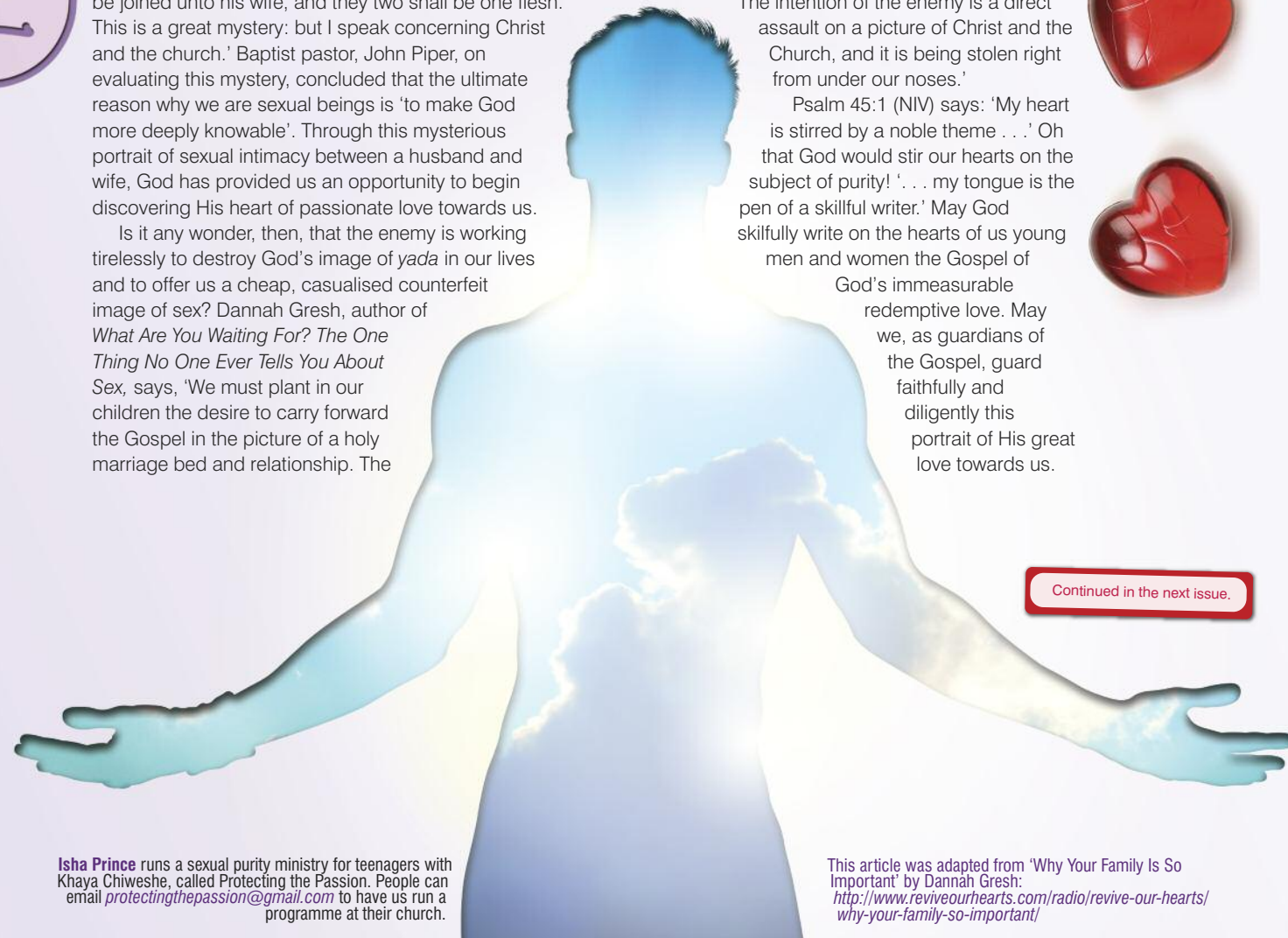
Adapted by Isha Prince



world is crucifying that image in them. . . . The intention of the enemy is a direct assault on a picture of Christ and the Church, and it is being stolen right from under our noses.'

Psalms 45:1 (NIV) says: 'My heart is stirred by a noble theme . . .' Oh that God would stir our hearts on the subject of purity! ' . . . my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.' May God skillfully write on the hearts of us young men and women the Gospel of God's immeasurable redemptive love. May we, as guardians of the Gospel, guard faithfully and diligently this portrait of His great love towards us.

Continued in the next issue.



Isha Prince runs a sexual purity ministry for teenagers with Khaya Chiweshe, called Protecting the Passion. People can email [protectingthepassion@gmail.com](mailto:protectingthepassion@gmail.com) to have us run a programme at their church.

This article was adapted from 'Why Your Family Is So Important' by Dannah Gresh: <http://www.reviveourhearts.com/radio/revive-our-hearts/why-your-family-so-important/>



## SEC Youth & Teens 2012 Survey

As church attendance continues to fall in the UK – the lowest it has been for fifty years – fewer than half of the population claim any belief in God. Many say that in the next two decades fewer than 20% of Britons will accept being called a Christian. Experts say four key aspects are the source of decline. The increasing average age (lack of young people), the fall in the number of men, the proportion of Christians who believe without belonging, and a tendency of those attending to be middle class.

Put them all together and the picture you get of the Church in the UK is one that fails to attract four distinct people groups:

- **Committed Christians**
- **Men**
- **Young people**
- **The poor.**

Amid the gloomy prediction of the religious landscape, Seventh-day Adventist youth in a recent South England 2012 summer survey present a different picture. Far from the decline of men, the poor and young people, a vibrant community of youths armed with the Gospel are silently equipping themselves, and they are ready for investment and to be mobilised.

In one of the most in-depth random youth and teens surveys carried out in the last ten years, 1,298 youth and teens paint a vivid, acrid picture of their experience of current church life. The evidence shows they are genuinely interested in the future, well-being and growth of the Church. For example, 77% of those surveyed believe that it is a good/great idea to redesign Sabbath services to make them more innovative and interesting, to help win new converts. In their view, without this, the Seventh-day Adventist Church will not achieve its true potential growth, which stems from its unique, differentiated message and strong health ethos.



### Paul Thompson SEC Youth Advisory



It also appears that the youth and teens are positioning themselves to take on key responsibilities and front-line leadership positions in the Church in South England. A convincing 74% would like real involvement – to lead out in worship services – and

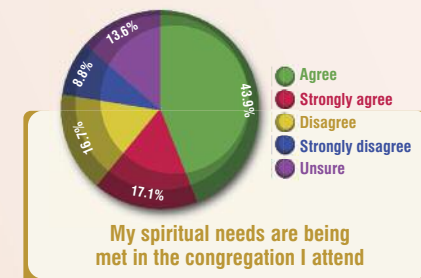
believe that more emphasis on youth-designed services could lead to a genuine uplift in new young converts. They are convicted that a lost generation is out there in the UK, and Adventism holds the key to the dismal outlook on life many young Britons face daily.

Adventist youths not only see Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, LinkedIn and other social media as tools for staying in touch and reaching out to those in Cyberspace: of those surveyed, 66% affirm that recreational events will help build stronger relationships and will be good overall for the Church. They believe that the Church is failing to capitalise on



key social media tools to bring the message home to the new iPhone and Blackberry generation.

However, despite the zeal and enthusiasm coming from the youth, a worrying red flag was raised in relation to the question, 'My spiritual needs are being met by the congregation I attend.' Thirty-nine percent of young adults felt they were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Church delivered what is required to sustain them spiritually long-term.



The survey asked, 'To what extent do worship services or activities help you with everyday living?' This question focuses particular importance on how worship services and messages from the pulpit translate into the day-to-day life application tools that can be used by our youth, teens and church attendees.



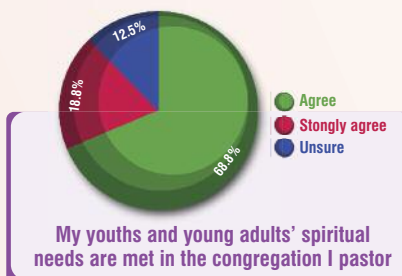
This signals a number of questions. Are weekly sermons having an impact? Are the Sabbath School lessons and training carried out by the Church equipping the youths to tackle the key challenges facing



young Britons in the outside world? Is the Church able to cope with high-profile social issues such as crime and gang culture, binge drinking and drug misuse, teenage pregnancy and sexual health, exam pressure, lack of jobs, negative stereotyping, and hanging out with nothing to do or nowhere to go? Sixty-eight percent of youths surveyed felt that worship services helped only to a small extent, or not at all, with the day-to-day issues faced by youths in their daily lives. It is incontrovertible that some of the issues mentioned are being lived out by youth attending church.

So where do the pastors feature in the lives of the youths in the Church today? Are they in touch? Are they up to speed on crime and gang culture, binge drinking and drug misuse, teenage pregnancy and sexual health, exam pressure, lack of jobs, and negative stereotyping issues facing the youths? Is there synergy? And where would an astute pastor begin looking to make an impact?

In a recent South England ministerial workers survey, one question sought to measure pastoral perception of youth spirituality. It asked whether 'My youths' spiritual needs are being met by the congregation I pastor'.



A marked 88% of pastors strikingly agreed with this statement. Many pastors genuinely believe they are hitting the mark in meeting the spiritual needs of youths in their congregation, and that they are delivering programmes and tools to build their youth and teens. Herein lies the dichotomy. Nearly 70% of youths conclude worship services add marginal value to their Christian experience. Many youths study for themselves and take full responsibility for weekly spiritual input in their lives, yet in all sincerity pastors do believe they are meeting their needs.

The challenges revealed in the survey should be seen as opportunities for change, to take the Church forward. This is borne out by the fact that – although the youth appear to be struggling to find their place in making a contribution to the Church in its current shape – the facts reveal that they have an unquenchable, earnest desire, burning in their hearts, to bring others to the message.



Providing the Church is willing to change direction, this should be a win-win situation.

In one pivotal survey question, relating to evangelism, the youth were asked, 'Would you be prepared to invite friends or relatives who do not now attend church to a worship service?' Sixty percent of youth said they would, and have done so

in the last 12 months; however, 25% were not prepared to do so until their church makes real changes in the style and content of worship service messages, and becomes more accommodative in dealing with real-life issues facing the youth in society today.

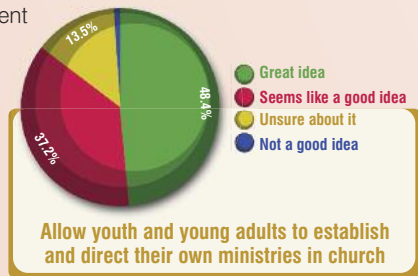


The youth are also showing a desire to become engaged in front-line evangelism and community ministry. Seventy-five percent surveyed would like to become involved in UK or overseas mission activities – delivering aid, working with the poor and homeless, helping drug rehabilitation programmes, or working with battered women or sexual abuse victims. In fact, 96% said they would like to be personally involved, or agreed it was a very good idea.



Despite the survey revealing an intrinsic desire to be involved, the results showed an underlying tension. Many youths would like to be allowed to establish their ministries in church, and this is a root cause of frustration. The current working church model does not readily accommodate 'out of the box' concepts easily, and many youth complain about being met with bureaucracy, overregulation and lack of funding to get direct ministries off the ground.

This tension has culminated into many youth being detached from ministerial programmes being run internally. Eighty-six percent of young people would like the freedom to establish their own direct ministries. However, only a very small percentage are able to do so at present. Lack of funding – underinvestment – was cited as a root cause. In one example provided by youth, they confirmed the annual budget for their local church was £75.



The survey ended with participants being asked, 'How well do the following statements describe your congregation?' Thirteen generic statements were put to the youths. The responses to seven are worth mentioning:



In March 2011 *Adventist Edge*, a leading church publication, cited the average age of church members in the US as age 52, with many youth leaving the Church before they are age 20. It confirmed over one thousand Seventh-day Adventist churches do not have enough children to conduct Sabbath schools or AYS programmes. The net effect of this in 30 years' time is a dying Church, in its present form; a stagnant one.

The research confirmed that many members show no alarm, no concern about the age gap. In fact, it states there is a 'disturbing state of complacency and self-centredness' emerging from these churches.

In Britain today, we have the opportunity to make real change before it is too late. To invest in our youth, spiritually and financially, and give them the emotional security and freedom to take our Church in the UK forward, however, we must act now and we must empower them today.

Dr Steve Thomas, South England Conference Youth Director, states: 'The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church reminds us of young people, driven by the Holy Spirit, being able to preach, teach and lead in the establishment of the end-time Church. I am proud to lead young people who share the same aspirations and zeal as our founders. The survey results highlight a need for change that should include more youth and young adults being given leadership responsibilities and input into the services of the Church; without this, we are in imminent danger as a Church. God's hand has led the Church in the past; therefore, let us not fear. We must define a clear role for the young people in the Church, and let them take their place and lead.'

- Our congregation is a moral beacon in the community.
  - 24% of youths scored *slightly*
- Our congregation is working for social justice.
  - 25.4% of youths scored *slightly*
- Our congregation is trying to increase racial/ethnic diversity.
  - 19% of youths scored *slightly*
- Our congregation helps members deepen their relationship with God.
  - 22% of youths scored *slightly*
- Our congregation has a clear mission and purpose.
  - 22% of youths scored *slightly*
- Our congregation deals openly with disagreements and conflicts.
  - 23% of youths scored *slightly*
- Our congregation welcomes innovation and change.
  - 25% of youths scored *slightly*



Editor's Note: all statistics are supplied with this article by the South England Conference. Please contact Steve Thomas at [stthomas@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:stthomas@secadventist.org.uk) for further information.



## Extreme teens ready for action!

Where can you go canoeing, zip-wiring, paintballing, biking and power-kiting all in one week? The only answer is: Extreme Teens Camp, in Cornwall!

This year, ninety teens travelled down to the Chapel Porth caravan site, in Cornwall, for an action-packed and Spirit-filled camp. From 27 August to 2 September 2012, teens, counsellors and leaders enjoyed a sunny week of activities, fellowship and socialising in the beautiful setting of a small coastal town in the south-west of England.

Cairo Duhaney-Burton, from Croydon Church, was still enthused mid-week. He explained, 'It's been very good so far. Half the guys in my caravan only met at the beginning of the week and we're really good friends already, and the counsellors are really nice actually!'

Activities throughout the week kept everyone energised yet exhausted at the same time. Campers had the choice of canoeing, archery, paintballing, kayaking, biking and zip-wiring, as well as various beach activities and on-site games.



• **Katie Ramharacksingh**  
SEC Media department

Friday evening's worship was one of the most touching experiences of the year. The young people came together to share their testimonies and, as the evening passed, more and more opened up to the group to the point where the sermon had to be cancelled to allow each person to tell their story.

With most of the campers in tears, the teens continued to encourage each other with their life stories. One of the teens spoke about how he overcame his addiction to rap by being compelled to read his Bible for hours and hours at a time, pausing only to sleep less than a couple of hours. One of the girls talked about how she has problems with her father, because she can't trust him and he hadn't supported her through a family death and her mum being hospitalised. She explained that through this, she has found it hard to rekindle her relationship with God – but she still thanks God for sending friends of her own age to help her through.

Dejan reflected, 'For all of us, it was a very sober moment as we listened to the teens. They were bursting to share what was happening in their lives. Their vulnerability was not seen as a weakness, but as a healing process. It was unbelievable to see teens standing next to teens, even though they laughed and mocked each other before the service, and see them coming together.'



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Grateful to the counsellors, drivers and cooks that made the camp a success, Dejan concluded, 'I found that there was never a moment that was not appropriate to pray. Many of the teens would have arguments, but they would accept prayer as a necessity during the week . . . they realised that God was the only solid thing in their lives; even if their families, relationships or health were not solid, they understood that there is peace and comforting in Jesus Christ. For next year, we want to see the difference in their lives when they returned home.'

**Registration now open for the 2013 Extreme Camp!**

## BUC Pathfinder Camporee

In the past summer holiday, some of the Scottish Mission Pathfinders attended the BUC Pathfinder Camporee at the NEC. For many it was their first camporee; and after the experience they had – through what they told me – I believe it will be their first of many camporees.

Although the journey was long, and at some points tedious, the camp experience more than made up for it. Seeing Pathfinders from across the British Isles was an extraordinary sight. Not only were new friends made through sharing numbers, Facebook and Twitter pages, but many experiences were shared among conferences and missions as all the Pathfinders mingled.

Although meeting new friends and reacquainting with the old is something special for the Pathfinders, the one thing that could not be forgotten from this camporee would most certainly be the theme song, 'Running for Home'. It was a song that embodied the goal of Pathfinders, and in addition to this, the excitement that the speaker brought made this camporee that much more memorable; who could forget his opening words – 'Good morning, Pathfinders and campers' – words that immediately set an air of excitement each time he went up to speak.

Importantly for me, the camporee was my first step into becoming a Master Guide. Having been a Pathfinder since I was 10, I will never forget the Pathfinder Club and the way it brought a wayward youth like me into the Church, and made me the person I am today. For that – in my last camporee as a Pathfinder – I am forever grateful.

In the words of my friend Chinyanta Kabaso, the Camporee was 'AMAZING!'

*By Benjamin Bakina, Scottish Mission Pathfinder counsellor*

When we got to camp it was quite difficult finding our site, putting up tents and getting used to everything.

We did some activities throughout the week. Some of them were zip-wiring, pedal-carting and a few others. Some of the honours I did were really fun! Two of the honours I did were the chocolate honour and the ADRA honour. The pastor, Pastor Israel, came for lunch at our site.

Going to Alton Towers was really great! It was a lovely day out even though it rained.

But the most important thing about camp is what I heard about God and learnt about Jesus.

*Mahalyah (GBK)*



Camporee is not just a time for Pathfinders to socialise and have fun. The leaders also enjoy camporee, to meet old friends and make new ones; besides, the spiritual upliftment enhances the experience for Pathfinders and leaders. Camporee is also a time for leaders to hone their skills, whether as club staff or camporee staff.

In the North England Conference (NEC), as part of its Pathfinder Leadership Training, the Pathfinder Leadership Award (PLA) course was run under the leadership of Wendy Watson-Teague and her team. They challenged the candidates into thinking about why they are Pathfinder leaders through topics such as:

- Team-building,
- Personal improvement,
- Goal-setting, and having open discussions on best practice.

The course is invaluable to help define effective discipline, the development of faith in Pathfinder growth, and Pathfinder and Community Ministry. This course has been designed to enhance your relationship with Christ through personal development of skills, and to gain a greater understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The course gives the opportunity to operate at another level, allowing each person to become a more rounded person and leader – combining outdoor skills and the skills to efficiently run a club.

A few of the PLA candidates and team were at this year's camporee, either as club staff or camporee staff, using their God-given talents and abilities to help the Pathfinders have a good and enjoyable camporee. Through various activities they helped Pathfinders find out about themselves and their relationship with Christ.

Many young people were part of the staff at BUC Camporee – which was encouraging, because it enabled them to see that Pathfinding does not have to end when they complete the Guide curriculum. There are opportunities to complete the leadership programmes, and the PLA opens to you the opportunity to lead and encourage others.

'With such an army as our youth rightly trained. . . .' This was why the leadership courses were devised.  
*John Bishop, NEC Advanced PLA Course co-ordinator*



My BUC Camporee experience was quite mixed. There were a lot of activities, but some of them did not seem well organised. There were also some good honours to be gained, but again a lack of direction and materials to do these meant that some, like the chocolate honour, could only be run once. The ADRA honour, however, was well run and presented.

The day trip to Alton Towers was a good idea, and this seemed to have been organised quite well. Everyone really enjoyed their time there.

On a spiritual level, the 'parrot man', as I will now always remember Pastor Israel Williams, gave us some very timely and encouraging lessons from God's Word as he spoke to all of us who are 'Running for Home'.

*NEC Pathfinder*

BUC for me was alright: I met some new people, which was cool. However, it really put me off camp, and I doubt I will attend another non-international camp again.

I also thought the Olympic references were a bit cheesy and unneeded. However, Alton Towers was really good.

The speaker was good, and I enjoyed the quirky way he related Godly stuff to how we should lead our Christian life to get to Heaven.

*Rhiannon*

## Cardiff Churches' Night Shelter

◦ **Jeremy Tremeer**  
Welsh Mission Youth Sponsor

'My family don't know I'm homeless; they think I'm OK and working and everything is fine,' Anwar explained to me. About 18 months ago Anwar came from Bangladesh to London to look for work as a chef. He didn't have much success, so he came to Cardiff, staying with a friend he knew. He arrived with £600, but soon this money went – and, unable to find work, eventually he was forced to live on the streets.

Anwar's story isn't that unusual – more and more people are ending up on the streets because times are tough. People are losing their jobs, houses and benefits as the recession begins to bite hard. Each homeless person has his or her unique story. Most are British; some are from abroad. Many of them have drug and alcohol problems. Some of them have mental health problems. In some cases these problems lead to homelessness, and in other cases they are the symptoms – people lose their jobs, homes, and friends, and everything seems hopeless. So they turn to drink or drugs to fill the void. In all cases this creates a cycle of despair which is hard to break.

Last winter, Cardiff Community Seventh-day Adventist Church joined with other churches across Cardiff, and started the first Churches' Night Shelter in the city. Different church groups took one night of the week. On Sunday nights they came to us. Teams of volunteers from our church, most of them students, helped out and made friends with the guests that came to stay. There were challenges, and it was tiring, but the sense of having played



a part in building God's Kingdom eclipsed all of that.

Built into the fabric of God's Kingdom is a responsibility to look after others:

Deuteronomy 15:7, 8 (ESV): 'If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.'

Also built into God's plan was the year of Jubilee, a time when all Israelites had their debts cancelled and were given back their land – land they sometimes sold because of poverty. Just like God's forgiveness, it is not earned – the Jubilee is God's generous gift to His children. This inspires us to treat our guests as God would – regardless of how they became homeless. In the Night Shelter they are not only given food to eat and somewhere to sleep for the night, but we also make connection with them through friendship and playing games.

One cold Saturday night, when the youth and I went out for pizza after church, we bumped into some of our guests in town and stopped and chatted with them. It felt good to be considered their friends. One of them even offered me his gloves when I said my hands were cold.

We are getting ready for another winter Night Shelter – so pray for us and our new student volunteers as we prepare to share God's love with them.

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