

CENTRAL

NEWS

GOOD NEWS STORIES from the CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION



Spring 2018

“Padre, why are you wearing wings?” This is a question I get asked often... when I step out of my role as pastor of St James Road Baptist Church in Watford. A few days a month, I put on the uniform of an RAF Chaplain and head over to RAF Halton. After 23 years of regular service, I left the RAF in 2011 to train for Baptist Ministry. I thought that I had closed the door on one life and entered into a new one. So I was rather surprised when I found myself exploring the possibility of serving in the RAF once again. After much prayer and talking and exploring this calling, I joined the RAF Reserves just over a year ago. As a former RAF pilot, I am currently the RAF’s only Padre with “Wings”! I get a real sense of excitement, being able to move easily around an environment I am so familiar with and have spent a great deal of my life in. But more than that, I

life. Within the RAF, people do not view Padres in the same way they view church ministers. Rather they seem to see us as “theirs”, available to them, and part of their work environment. They will come

door to telling my story. Just after 9/11, I found myself flying into Afghanistan and every night as I crossed the border from Pakistan, I reached out to God in prayer. I bargained with God for protection



“Padre, why are you wearing wings?”

am really privileged to have access to so many people who see me as someone who can come alongside them, listen and hear what they are going through; be that the joys or trials of service

to us with a myriad of problems and emotions they wish to untangle and sometimes they will come seeking a spiritual perspective. In these instances, it is a joy to pray with someone or

for myself and my crew and in return I would give church another chance! It was the beginning of a journey which brought me back to church and back to Jesus. As I stood in the waters of baptism, five years later, I heard a “call” to ministry. It took another four years before I took the call seriously, but the journey from pilot, to pastor & padre took place! Each time I share my story as a Padre, I see God impacting others. My hope is that the seed is planted... and that it will be watered and grow along the way.



Alice at the controls of a Hercules C 130J

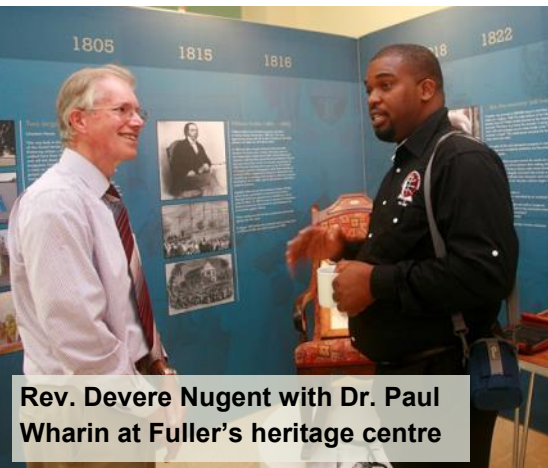
after they have left the office. The biggest difference to pastoral ministry, is how often I end up sharing my testimony. It is obvious from my uniform that I was a pilot in the past, and so people want to know why I am now a Padre. This opens the

Rev Alice McDermott

What connects legendary sprinter Usain Bolt and a pioneer Baptist mission worker from 19th century Kettering?

Not much, you might assume, but if you managed to see the championships last year you'll have seen Bolt sporting an odd pair of trainers, one gold and one purple. Given that Bolt has a fistful of gold medals one choice is accounted for. The other is a tribute to a Baptist-founded school on Bolt's homeland of Jamaica. It was some years ago that Bolt first donned the purple livery of the William Knibb Memorial High School in Falmouth but I now know the story of how Bolt ended up there, and who fought his corner back then.

It all started when some months ago I was contacted by a



Rev. Devere Nugent with Dr. Paul Wharin at Fuller's heritage centre

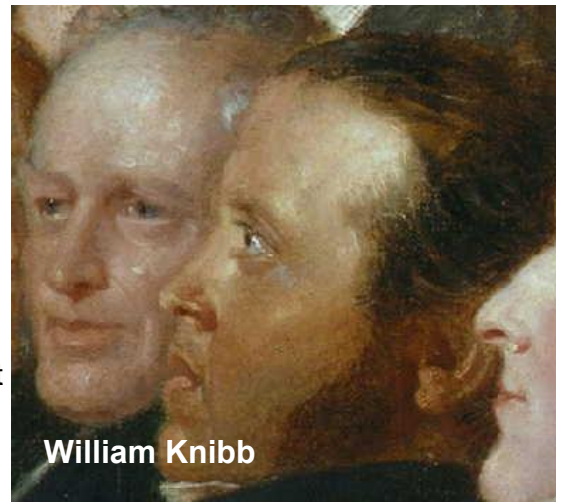
representative of William Knibb Memorial Church, which led me to correspond with the pastor, Rev. Devere Nugent. Knibb was born just around the corner from Fuller Baptist Church, where I currently serve with Vicki my wife as co-pastors, and hence the purpose of the contact, to re-establish the connections with our Jamaican Baptist brothers and sisters. In fact the Jamaican Baptist Union (JBU) have had good ties with British Baptists recently, but I hadn't realised just how deeply our two Unions histories are intertwined.

Planning a joint service in September, entitled 'From

Kettering to Jamaica' I had the opportunity to research into the founding of the JBU and the particular contribution made by William Knibb, who was not only an able minister but also an implacable opponent to the conditions in which slaves found themselves a generation after the abolition of the transatlantic trade. Knibb was born in Kettering, in 1803 and would have been a small boy when Wilberforce et. al. achieved abolition. But existing slaves were not emancipated; life in the plantations continued as before. On his arrival in Jamaica in 1824, twenty-one year old Knibb, with help from other Baptist mission workers, set about improving the lot of slaves.

Knibb's story is one of huge courage, battling against tropical disease that killed off many others including his own brother, tackling the injustices meted out by the plantation owners, enduring arrest, threats and the razing of his chapel to the ground. But far from being deterred, Knibb took the argument to the British parliament that all Jamaicans should be declared free. He returned to England in 1832 and campaigned vigorously until on August 1st 1834, a bill was passed to give freedom to all slaves in the British territories. The rest of Knibb's life was spent back in Jamaica holding the authorities to this ruling and establishing the free towns of the island, one of which was of course named Kettering.

It was a great joy to have Rev. Devere with

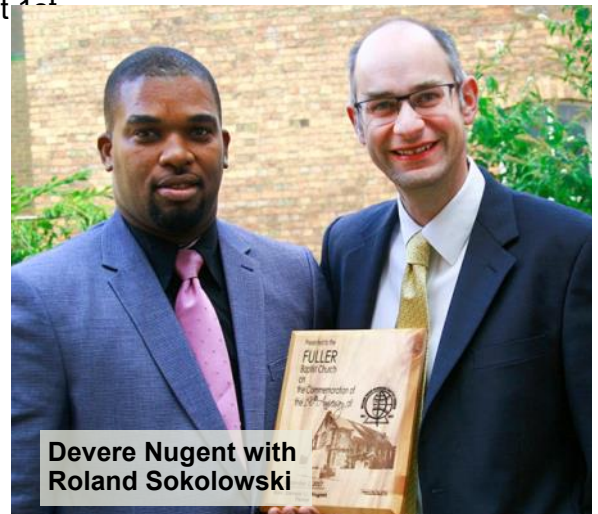


William Knibb

us as we rehearsed the past and celebrated the diversity of our ways of doing church. Rarely do I hear the sound of cheering during a sermon, let alone burst into song at the crescendo to a sermon, but what a blessing it was to experience worship led by the Jamaican diaspora that supported our service back in September. I was reminded of the richness of our common life and the passionate commitment to freedom in all its many hues that illuminates our history. The sheer courage of Knibb, against the political and economic forces of his time is both refreshing and sobering. His is a story that deserves to be retold and needs to be reimaged in our own times.

And who encouraged Bolt as a boy to get his running shoes on? It was Devere, of course!

For more information visit the BMS archive at the Heritage Centre, Fuller Baptist Church, Kettering.



Devere Nugent with Roland Sokolowski

TWINNING

Our first face to face encounter!

In the summer of 2016, we at Walsworth Road Baptist Church, Hitchin entered into a twinning relationship with Tur'an Baptist Church in the north of the Holy Land. Tur'an, it is claimed, was visited by Jesus during his lifetime – it's just that the Gospel writers forgot to mention it! (The town is on the natural route between Nazareth and Lake Galilee, and Cana is its nearest neighbour.)

The whole twinning idea followed a Holy Land visit by two couples in the church which made a huge impression on them, and within six months the church, which has previously enjoyed various world mission links, agreed to twin with



Tur'an. But it was not until summer 2017 that we had our first face-to-face encounter, as our pastor, Andrew, visited the Holy Land for the first time (also with one of David Ronco's highly recommended tours!).

But if there had been any hesitation about the rightness of the decision to twin, it was blown away by some remarkable discoveries about the way that God's hand has been at work over

many years. And it was not just about the warm welcome and generous hospitality that was experienced as finally there were people from both churches physically present in the same place (we have shared Skype conversations as well as various other greetings during the year, and we have treasured the opportunities to pray for one another).

At the church service in Tur'an where Andrew was invited to preach, and where gifts were exchanged, an interpreter was identified (the usual language of the worship, as in the town, is Arabic), and it became apparent that this man, Saleem, a previous pastor of the church, had also been the interpreter at Tur'an Baptist, back in the 1990s, for another UK preacher, Andrew's father (also a Baptist minister). Indeed, as the service last May continued to unfold, it also emerged that Andrew's mother (who was very involved for many years with the European Baptist Women's Union) had visited and shared much time with Saleem's mother. The sense of astonishment as these unlikely "God-incidences" were pieced together during the worship was amazing!

We don't know what this twinning relationship, just over a year old, might mean for us or for Tur'an, but already we here have been so enriched and encouraged by

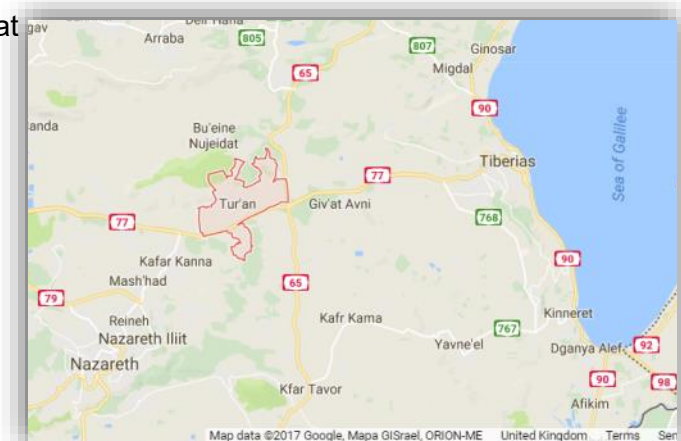
what we have shared. It is hoped that further visits can be arranged - it is our prayer that Ziad, the pastor in Tur'an, will be able to come to Hitchin some day - or perhaps we can share a joint



project or two, but as we seek to discern the way forward in this second year as twinned churches, we are already rejoicing at the marvellous and unmistakable way that God has been at his work in this relationship for two decades!

To find out more about twinning, please contact Baptist Twinning in Israel, or indeed contact Andrew, the WRBC pastor (minister@wrbcchitchin.org.uk) - and perhaps you might also be encouraged to take the next of David Ronco's tours (likely in the spring of 2019)!

Andrew Henton Pusey



Formation Groups: Transforming Disciples

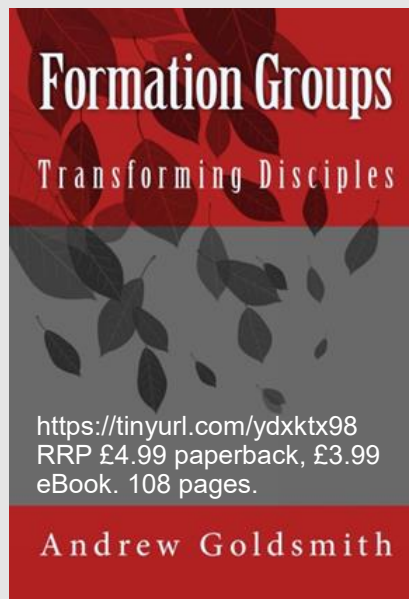
By Andrew Goldsmith

When Jesus said, 'Go and make disciples', he's very clear it's a priority, but it can be hard! Beyond the Sunday gathering with preaching and fellowship, life seems to get in the way at times. This book offers a new, effective tool aimed at equipping and nurturing people in Christian life. It presents a model of small groups - Formation groups. The idea is far from new, arguably it is ancient.

Formation groups are small – just 4 people - and intentional about discipleship - getting to the honest challenges of growing in Christ in our everyday life – and flexible enough to accommodate busy lives. This accessible and relevant book brings together the motivation and means to create such groups. There is clear and practical material for Bible study and questions to help us intentionally share aspects of everyday Christian discipleship, including relationships and family; character; money, work and time; godly goals and more. The aim is to simply encourage one another to apply scripture to our spiritual

growth in Christ and to the hopes and concerns we face. We can help one another to be transformed. This practical book can get you started.

It includes Bible studies on Philippians, Psalms and John's Gospel, with separate discussion questions on areas of Christian life. The final chapter offers a brief insight into Ampthill Baptist Church's experience of initiating these groups, and the encouraging way this has developed alongside our regular mid-week small groups, offering a new 'path' for making disciples.



Nation's second oldest person with Down Syndrome is Baptised in Kettering

Robyn Smith was baptised at Rockingham Road Baptist



Church, Kettering, on 28th May 2017. This was a wonderful event but may sound like one that is quite usual for a Baptist Church. Each baptism is a special occasion but what made Robyn's baptism so unusual is that he is a remarkable man.

He was born with Down's syndrome and when he celebrated his 76th birthday on October 9th this year became the second oldest man alive with Down's syndrome in this country and very likely in the world.

Thus, Robyn is one of the oldest men with Down's syndrome to be baptised, if not the oldest.

On looking at the story of Jesus being baptised in the "Sunday Group" he simply said he wanted to follow Jesus in baptism. He has a firm faith and shows great compassion for those around. In particular, he will ask for prayer when someone is ill at the home where he lives. He regularly plays along on his guitar



At Baptist Insurance we like to spread the word about our legal expenses cover and have developed a simple guide to help. Our guide gives an overview of the cover which is included within your Church Insurance policy, some real-life examples and details of how to get legal advice or make a claim.

Here is a real life example of where Legal Expense cover may prove useful.

The church employed a builder to construct an extension for a visitor centre. During the construction work there was a theft on the site and a large amount of lead was stolen from the roof. The builder insisted that it was the church's responsibility and that they would need to claim on their insurance.

The church disagreed and made a claim on their legal expenses policy. DAS assessed the claim and agreed that the church was likely to win. A solicitor was then appointed to represent the church. The case settled in favour of the church and they received a settlement from the builder.

The policy paid for the agreed legal costs to resolve this case.

Download your copy of our Legal Expenses Made Simple guide at www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/legalexperiences



in services, and helps take the offering. His smile radiates love and always is an encouragement.

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