

MISSION TO MILITARY GARRISONS

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John & Winnie Morton
Retirement Day at Larkhill



News Letter
Spring 2003

CENTRE UPDATE

LARKHILL

The new Team Leaders Les and Pam Blake have settled in well, and are enjoying the challenge. Their sons Aaron and Daniel have also settled in well at school and at college.

The Oasis and Cyber café continue to be very busy with opportunities presenting themselves on a regular basis. It is the Teams intention to start an Alpha Course again and are actively involved in Bible studies and a daily morning prayer session.

There is a regular prayer group who meet every Tuesday at lunchtime in the Centre, indicating the importance of prayer, which can never be underestimated.

We are grateful for the invaluable support of the Chaplain, Major James Roskelly, and the other Senior Officers here at Larkhill.

Alex Forth, one of the Casual Workers at Larkhill has applied and been accepted as a full time Mission worker. It is a joy to include Alex' testimony later in the magazine.

JOHN & WINNIE

John and Winnie Morton, who have served the Mission faithfully for 16-1/2 years, retired at the end of January 2003. John and Winnie have served in Benbecula, Cyprus, Ascension Island, Holland, London and, latterly, Larkhill.

On 28th January Council Member Dr. Duncan Munro paid tribute to their faithfulness over the years by presenting them with a gift from the Mission as a token of their long service.

ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting

Saturday 26th April

Anniesland Hall

Crow Road

Glasgow

2:30pm

Refreshments will be provided.

TOUCHING LIVES

My name is Alex Forth. I am 37 years old and I have two children, Steve aged 17 and Alana who is 12. I have been working at the Oasis in Larkhill Garrison for 18 months. It is a job that has changed my life and I would like to share this story with you.

In November 2000 I lost my father and I began asking questions about God and my faith. Then in April 2001, I saw a job advertisement for help in a local Christian Café, and so I joined John and Lesley Spencer working at MMG Larkhill. It was like going into my mum's kitchen at home with the family atmosphere. After long conversations with John and Lesley about life, faith and hope for the future, they suggested that I went on an Alpha course. This I did along with the Church Leaders, Peter and Teresa Smithies. I then joined the Durrington Christian Fellowship, which is part of the Ichtus Church in London.

All of this eventually led to me being baptised on 3rd March 2002. During all of this, my faith and trust in the Lord has gone from strength to strength.

I discovered how the Lord works in the most unexpected ways when one day whilst working in the Oasis, a friend I had not seen for over five years appeared at the counter. Having revived our friendship, Helen and I have enjoyed many discussions about our work, life, etc., the end result being that Helen has found her way back to the Lord and my faith continues to grow.

Throughout all this I have the support from what you might call my rock, Geoff. In August last year we were married and things in my life just become better and better.

Alex Forth

CENTRE UPDATE

John and Winnie were touched by the many gifts they received from fellow workers and friends, after which all present enjoyed a Buffet Tea in the Oasis.

We wish John and Winnie a long and happy retirement along with God's richest blessing for the future.



Dr Munro

Winnie

John

Major James Roskelly
Chaplain

Please pray for the Service Personnel who have left Larkhill for the Gulf.

CENTRE UPDATE

CYPRUS

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your Salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of His glory".

EPH. Chapter 1:13-14

When we think of Cyprus we think of sunshine; so a few would be forgiven for finding it hard to believe that as I write this article the rain is pounding down and lightning is streaking across the mid-day sky. Last month we had hail stones the size of golf balls (that's not an exaggeration for effect) and the resultant damage that came with it.

So here in Cyprus we have floods and hail in the winter and in the summer temperatures that can soar as high as 43 degrees C. This is a lot to cope with as well as run a fairly large and well used centre: The passage above is one of my favourites (if I can have a favourite) because in spite of everything the world and weather can fling against us we have a seal and promise that is sure in Jesus our Lord.

Today is Monday and that means "Kids-Zone". This is a children's club that Patricia and Dee run to reach the children on our base at Ayios Nikolas. This has been running for most of the time that Patricia and myself have been here and we often take in our full quota of Children. It involves games, crafts, Bible Stories, and song. Later on today Mike and Dee have got involved with the local youth club: All this runs along side the commercial aspect of our centre where we try to show the "face of Christ" in our welcome and hospitality.

TOUCHING LIVES

A GLIMPSE OF MMG FIFTY YEARS AGO

They were absolute stalwarts and very brave in view of the fact that at one time a drunken soldier had broken into their quarters, which must have been quite frightening. However I remember it being sorted out without damage. Being "Brethren" these two ideal ladies did not do any speaking at the services. In fact, I remember Miss Martin would not even have her photographs taken on a Sunday!

But she was a real gem and if any soldier was found capable of preaching he was asked to be responsible for the Sunday service. This meant a lot of preparation and was very good training as far as I was concerned. It gave me a thirst for the Bible that has never left me and a desire to learn more by quiet and consistent study. One of the great 'perks' for the preacher was that he had a meal with the ladies in their quarters using China cups instead of the jam-jars that were used for the 'mob' because so many cups were stolen! I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the lovely folk at the MMG. It was an 'oasis in the desert' in more ways than one.

In 1966, after marrying and having four children, I went into full-time Christian work with the Counties, an evangelistic outreach mostly in the south of England. I am now serving the Lord in Devon in association with them. My wife and I have been 'in the work' for about 36 years and how good our God has been throughout it all. What a wonderful, longsuffering Saviour we serve.

We recently enjoyed our visit to the MMG Centre in Cyprus, seeing the work again after fifty years and spending Christmas with our friends, Mike and Dee Moore.

Maurice and Elsie Newman

TOUCHING LIVES

A GLIMPSE OF MMG FIFTY YEARS AGO

Reading the account of Gordon Neilson recently sparked off memories of Fanara when I was posted to Egypt from 1952 until 1954.

At the beginning of my National Service I was first sent to Aldershot and on the train there I encountered a young man who asked me what I wanted to do after I had been demobbed. When I told him I wanted to be a preacher he was surprised - in fact I was a little bit surprised myself! We found out that we were billeted together and as night approached I couldn't help wondering how I would cope with kneeling down to pray in front of all the other men. To my surprise the friend I had met knelt down to pray beside his bed. That, of course, made it much easier for me and I followed suit. It was the only night he ever did. From then on he said his prayers in bed but how helpful it was for me at that time when I was so much wanting to be a testimony.

I had no fellowship with individual believers during my training, nor did I find any on the ship when we sailed for Egypt. Christians were in short supply during my early days in the army, although I did meet one civilian who was a Pentecostal and we shared prayer together. He was a keen believer and had a large supply of tracts and a real desire to serve the Lord.

Being posted to the Suez Zone began my adventure with the MMG. I was invited to some of their meetings and granted transport by the C.O. who was quite sympathetic to Christian things. There I met two wonderful women who were in charge and their faith and courage were a real eye-opener to me. I can't even remember the name of one, but the other was a Miss Martin, whose brother had written the words of that lovely hymn "I'd rather have Jesus"

CENTRE UPDATE

CYPRUS

Tuesday's mean Ladies patchwork club and home Bible study group. It is often hard to predict how many will come to the Patchwork club, but when there are only a few Patricia finds it easier to have spiritual conversations, so every opportunity is taken to communicate the Love of Christ, as well as share skills among each other. Tuesday evenings we have the "Oasis Fellowship" in our home in Frenaros, and have up to 16 people attending regularly. We are working through some basic Christian teachings just now which, I hope will build a base for more deeper truths later on.

Thursday is the day for Xstitches. This is a club for 8 - 12's and is well attended. Once more we find Patricia and Dee putting the hours in to share skills and the love of Jesus. All of the above have proven to be very fruitful in sharing God's word.

In addition to the clubs we have a monthly "Oasis Tea fellowship" which has proven to be very worthwhile and we often have up to around 25-30 in attendance. What is so good about this is that we actually have our meeting around the coffee tables. This fosters a relaxed atmosphere; which we are told makes it attractive. During this time we have praise, prayer, and the word of God. (With the occasional Guest speaker). To this end we have a friend who feels that the Lord is calling him out here to do some voluntary work for us, During his stay we are having a Scottish Tea fellowship, which is generating a lot of interest as he plays the Bagpipes and we are planning to sing all our songs to them. (John is also going to help decorate the centre while he is here).

CENTRE UPDATE

CYPRUS

Of course we still have our ongoing daily work to do and this often gives us a chance to witness. A soldier came into the shop and had a tee shirt on that advertised a group called the Nephelim. I told him that the name was not original and could be found in Genesis Chapter 6. He was interested and I was able to share about how God judged mans sin and how today he still does. That was the bad news; when I told him the good news he promised to go and read it for himself. Although I didn't see him again I believe taking chances like this can have life changing influences that the Holy Spirit can use again.

Patricia is finding that often the wives around are asking for prayer for different situations and she often shows a lot of empathy towards them. We never know what will happen next as we go from day to day.

One of the other ways we often get the opportunity to share is through hospitality. Both myself and Patricia, Mike and Dee have been used by the Lord to host many different people, from Preachers and Soldiers, to South Africans, and this has often allowed us to have many "impromptu" fellowship meetings in our homes.

We praise God for the many ways He has used us here, and for the many contacts we have made for His kingdom and would like to thank our supporters for their prayers. It has not always been easy, but we know we have a God who cares for us and has often blessed us in the most unlikely circumstances.

All of us in Cyprus pray, God Bless

Sandy
Team Leader.

TOUCHING LIVES

In 1981 I began my job at SASRA, where I am the Administrator. Even then houses were expensive but a mortgage was cheaper than rent. We were able to find the deposit for a house, half of my savings, half was a gift. I had heard much of God's timing and generosity. It was humbling to be a beneficiary of it. It was a practical confirmation that we were in the right place.

We later moved to be nearer our Church, Bethel Baptist, Upper Hale, Farnham, where over the years we have seen God at work in the lives of people.

At one point Carolyn required delicate and quite dangerous surgery. During that period we both had the peace of mind that can only come from God. I was even accused of being uncaring because I was not worried. God had it all in hand. He still has in the provision of the ongoing medication Carolyn requires.

As I look back, I think my original answer is not unspiritual. It acknowledges God's activity in every area of life. Not in spectacular events but in the ordinary, the every day. God has been good to us. He has kept his word - I pray that I will be able to do so too, as I endeavour to serve him as an Administrator in SASRA.

John Tucker

TOUCHING LIVES

It is always daunting to be asked to give a testimony of God's keeping power. Yet it is somehow appropriate to do so in the MMG Magazine. It was early in 1973, after the Sunday Afternoon Gospel Service at the Ayios Nikolaos MMG that I asked God to forgive my sins. Thirty years ago! In those years much has changed. I now take a 16" collar and rarely need a haircut. Thirty years but in God's sight that is a blink of the eye.

God has been gracious, he has provided for my needs and even for some of my wants. As a young Christian I really did not like people asking me "what has God done for you this week?" My usual counter of, "I'm alive, fed and housed", was generally deemed unspiritual. It is only with hindsight, I find, that one sees what God has done.

Before I was married God placed me in good warm-hearted fellowships. After Cyprus, I was posted to Leicestershire. I told SASRA and there was a letter waiting for me from the local SASRA Representative, containing the name and address of a Christian living in the village where I was posted. The first evening I walked there, up the road, the houses gradually getting bigger, I wondered how the people would react. I found the house, knocked on the door, and a middle-aged man opened it. "I know you do not know me, but I was given this address, I am a Christian just posted in." He smiled, stood to one side and said, "Come in brother". Stan is now with the Lord but he was an example of God's love. He told me that during the war he had been blessed by the ministry of Mr Cupples.

From Leicestershire I went to Gloucestershire. Again God went before me and I enjoyed fellowship with local Christians in Tewkesbury and Gloucester. I also met for the first time, the young lady I would marry. I left the Army and went to Bible College for three years. At the end of my first year, Carolyn and I were married, twenty four years this year.

CENTRE UPDATE

FALKLAND ISLANDS

Although short staffed and very busy, Margo Shaw the Team Leader thanks the Lord for the peace that prevails in "the Oasis".

Everyone appreciates the service offered and we are grateful for the help and support given by the Chaplain.

We trust and pray that the Lord will raise up those of His calling and choosing to serve here. Do you know of anyone?

Urgent Prayer Request

Staff urgently required for Falkland Islands.

Are you interested?

Do you know of anyone who might be interested?

If so, please telephone the Secretary for further information.

4 DAYS

We are living in tremendous days. By every standard of measurement we witness rapid change day by day. Changes in technology, advances in medicine, higher living standards, the list goes on. If these are tremendous days, they are also very terrible days. You only have to look around you to see this.

When we look to Scriptures, we see many glorious days. In Luke's Gospel there are four days mentioned which shook the world to the core.

In Luke Chapter 2, we read of Jesus birth - **a day of Intervention**. No room in the inn, born in a stable. From the beginning everything pointed to poverty and rejection, a symbol of what was to come. Not born into grandeur and wealth, but into a world of ordinary people.

The great thing is that we have a God who knows the life we live, because He lived amongst us. God broke into time and sent us His son, a wonderful Saviour.

In Luke Chapter 4 we see Jesus starting his public ministry - **a day of Intimation**. He came with the good news for the world's troubled people. He went to Nazareth where he was brought up and went into the Synagogue, where He read publicly. Jesus spoke well and those listening asked, "Isn't this Joseph's son". It was more astonishment than admiration and they didn't take his words to heart. People today hear His word but it seems to pass over them. They don't take to heart what is being said and what is being offered.

4 DAYS

Luke Chapter 19 tells the story of Zacchaeus - **a day of Invitation**. Zacchaeus was wealthy but unhappy. His profession as a Tax Collector made him unpopular. Despised and hated by others, Zacchaeus wondered if Jesus would have any time for him.

Here was a man reaching after God's love. He was determined to see Jesus and nothing would stop him - he climbed up a tree to get a better look. Imagine how he felt when Jesus looked up at him and said He was coming to his home. Jesus was a passing Saviour, he was also a seeking Saviour. That day salvation came to Zacchaeus' home.

God's word tells us that 'all that is in the world is passing'. What if Zacchaeus had said to himself, "I'll wait till Jesus passes this way again". Jesus never passed that way again and Zacchaeus would have been lost. How can we neglect so great salvation; the invitation is freely offered now, and tomorrow may be too late.

Luke Chapter 23 heralds **a day of Introduction**. The maximum humiliation was being crucified between two robbers. Nevertheless, one cried out "remember me", and he instantly received a promise of entry into Heaven itself.

The penitent thief trusted in Jesus that day. What are you trusting in today. You can trust in many things, but there is only one Saviour. The old adage is true, 'where there is life there is hope'. Every breath we take is by the providential will of God and Now is the accepted time, Now is the day of Salvation.

Days of Intervention, Intimation, Invitation, Introduction - these are the days that really matter.