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PORTOBELLO BAPTIST CHURCH

Messenger

January 2007

www.portobellobaptist-church.org.uk

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A THOUGHT

First of all let me take this opportunity of wishing you all a very happy new year. As far as the church is concerned I'm sure that you are all looking forward to what the Lord has planned for us over these coming months. 2007 could indeed be a momentous year in the life of Portobello Baptist Church in a number of areas of church life.

For some, the present struggle up the stairs to the sanctuary hopefully will be a thing of the past and we will be able to use the new lift. I could certainly have made use of it myself a couple of years ago before I had my hip replacement operation. But for the moment I know that it continues to be a real struggle for some of you.

2007 could also be – in the Lord's will – the commencement of a new ministry within the church. I know you have been blessed through the ministries of many faithful and godly men in past days. As a church you have indeed so much to be thankful for over the past century. While Alan and I have very much enjoyed sharing in the church's ministry over the past three years or so, I'm sure you are all looking forward to the possibility of being led to new pastures and new challenges in the future.

But most of all what I am sure we are all looking forward to in this new year is a continuing sense of the Lord's presence in our midst and the consciousness of His hand upon us as we move forward in His will.

Robert Gemmell,
Pastoral Assistant.

THE PULPIT

January	7th	Rev. Alan Montgomery
	14th	Rev Robert Gemmell
	21st	Rev Alan Berry
	28th	To be arranged
February	4th	Rev Alan Berry



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

January	19th	7.00 p.m.	Management Committee
	25th	7.30 p.m.	Child Protection Training Evening -- Dalkeith Baptist Church

BAPTISIMAL SERVICE

The first baptismal service in the church for five years took place on the first Sunday of the year (7th January) when Ewan Sinclair was baptised by Rev Alan Montgomery. It was a joyous occasion for both Ewan and the church and we trust that it augurs well for the future. Ewan will be received into membership on Sunday 14th.

THE BUILDING PROJECT

The lift did arrive! Unfortunately it could not be taken out of the van -- there was no crane or forklift. It is now in storage in Cumbernauld. The delay continues -- overheard "probably in for Easter." "Which year?"

TRIBUTE TO MR WILLIAM OLIVER

We pay tribute to Mr Willie Oliver who died suddenly on Thursday 30 November 2006 in the sheltered housing at Baldwin Court, Penicuik where he was a resident from the time he left Williamfield Square, Portobello. He was found sitting in his chair in his room. He was 92 years of age.

Willie had a long active life despite his disability. He was a self-employed Brass Polisher. Before the days of press button admission to homes, access was gained by a signal from a bell outside the house which was made of brass. Willie polished these bells working for long hours, as one can imagine, to earn a living. Latterly he worked at Seafeld Crematorium directing traffic.

Willie became a member of Portobello Baptist Church on 31 May 1970 but he had previously been associated with the church for a number of years. He served the church in several capacities -- a Steward, Deacon and Church Officer. As such the doors would always be open early and one can recall his figure at the top of the stairs handing out hymn books. In this he was very faithful.

Willie had a great interest in model railways and locomotives and was a member of the Model Railway Association. He was also an interesting man to talk with. His knowledge of Ministers in the Church and Denomination, as well as prevailing theological issues, was fascinating and belied his quiet nature and style. In addition he always showed an interest in the people of the church.

After his illness he went to reside in Penicuik where his stepsons and family lived. He was missed but he was never forgotten in our prayers and interest.

We give God thanks for our memories of Willie, for his service to the church and we extend our sympathy to Mr & Mrs Wilson and other family members.

Jack Spiers

EMAIL UPDATE FROM OUR LINK MISSIONARY

Happy New Year. Hope you all had a blessed time over the Christmas Season. We certainly did with our trip to Namibia.

It's a beautiful country, wide open spaces and not many people. The people we met were friendly and kind and we enjoyed good times of worship and fellowship at the local churches and I felt ministered to through the preaching. I loved the freedom to walk around next to the ocean and it was bizarre to see sand dunes and desert at the end of the road. I came back feeling refreshed and back to full strength.

In my last update I asked you to pray for the trip to Uige. In the end I didn't manage the trip, having to cancel at the last minute which was really disappointing. I had a bad reaction to some malaria treatment and was laid up for a few days. I'm trying to get my flight changed so I can go up on 20 January, prayers requested.

Meanwhile we are into week three of the training course. From starting with 13, numbers rose to 18 and they all came back raring to go on Monday. It was lovely to see them again and there is a real warmth and friendship building up among them. They are from six different churches and two different church groups and it's great we can just be family in Christ.

PEPE received a lovely Christmas gift. I met a gregarious Irish lady at a Carol concert. Bernie has been in Angola for 14 years and does a lot of work with orphans and abandoned people at the TB clinic. People give her lots of stuff to pass on and she passed a lot of it on to PEPE. We have clothes to hand out as well as toiletries and various books and games that can be used in PEPE lessons. Praise God for such kind hearted people. Please pray especially in the next two weeks for PEPE as I meet with church leaders. The monthly help from PEPE is being reduced and we hope the local churches will contribute financially for their PEPE to continue.

I have yet to get confirmation that the International Director of PEPE is coming to visit. There was a hitch with one of the documents that had to be rectified at the last minute. It was touch and go whether it would come out the Angolan department on time so close to Christmas and if it would get to Brazil on time. I had to leave before it was resolved but it was sent to Brazil. Terezinha is now in South Africa or Mozambique at the moment

so I am awaiting contact from her. Pray that she has got the visas and pray for her as she travels and trains people in Africa.

On the domestic front, we've had some bad news about the second car. After waiting months for repairs to be completed we've been told there is a problem with a cylinder in the motor, not got a clue what that means, except that the car probably won't run much longer and it's too expensive to be worth fixing the problem. The car has been "getting fixed" since May! Trying to juggle 3 timetables and one car has not been easy. Please pray for some resolution to this problem and for the problem of people somehow using the phone line. For the last few months we've been getting charged for a lot of phone-calls that no-one in the house has made. If we don't pay we get cut off and it's very difficult to prove it wasn't us who made the calls. Thankfully we can't make calls overseas or our phone bill could have been super huge!

I feel like I'm giving you lots of things to pray about so here's another praise point. Just before Christmas we met a family who live just 5 minutes walk away. They are missionaries with Operation Mobilisation and the wife, Joan, does a lot of work with children. I'm looking forward to spending some time with her and sharing ideas. It seems like I have met a lot of new people recently, thank you for your prayers and pray these friendships would develop.

I'd like to ask you to pray for the leadership and pastors of IEBA too. Being a pastor here is not easy (I don't think it is anywhere) In Luanda congregations are large, 500-2500, a lot of work for one or two pastors. Out in the provinces there are not enough pastors so one can have 4 or 5 churches to travel to and look after. This week all the pastors are having a special retreat in Uige. Pray it would be a time of refreshing, renewal and uniting in the vision for the church. Pray for health and safety in travel too.

Well, this feels more like a newsletter than an update. I am grateful for all your encouragement and prayers. Continue to pray because that is what makes the difference here. Thanks too to all of you who have sent cards and gifts, they are still arriving at the post office and it's exciting to see a full post box.

Every blessing in 2007,

Lynne

EMAIL FROM JANICE (O.M. MISSIONARY)

Dear Friends,

I'm safe and well here in Bangkok. I have been up in the northwest helping with our border work for a week. I heard about the bombings and wanted to be back where communication is good. The border town where our two workers are based is really on the edge of nowhere with power failures, a little email café and sometimes we don't have water for a few hours. It reminded me of India.



The work up north is hard. There are a lot of suffering people. I was able to visit a small orphanage with 21 children and pass out Christmas shoe boxes that our H.Q. in Singapore put together.

The lady in charge is a radiant believer. The kids are so happy and friendly and well adjusted. They sang some Christian songs and some of the girls did a dance. It was marvellous.

I gave the message in a small thatched church out in the sticks beside a rubber tree plantation. I opened saying that we can't know what will happen in 2007. Sometimes we worry about things and they don't happen, other times bad things come out of nowhere. On Christmas Day 2004 hotel owners and tourists in Phuket thought they had it made but then the next day the tsunami came. The important thing to remember is that God is in control. He wants us to be witnesses of His glory to those around us.



I gave the message to the usual church group of about 20 people who have fled our neighbouring country to the west and to a team of 11 Americans who are here to help with outreach and a building project. The church members are very poor. One young man was working cutting bamboo for 30 to 50 cents a day.

We had a New Year's Eve supper, at our little team house, for the team from USA and we had some great praise and worship and prayer. I was so encouraged. I had a very hard two weeks with lots of challenges and it was very refreshing. When I went to go to bed I saw I had a text message from

the Canadian Embassy telling about the 6 bombs in Bangkok. What a shocking way to start the New Year.

I read that there were three more just after midnight in the area where they were going to have a big street party, midnight countdown. Thankfully that was cancelled after the earlier bombs but of course some people just wouldn't go home and so were injured. Please pray the people behind it would be caught and for security and stability. Pray the wounded would recover and believers would be a good testimony and for our safety. Things aren't as bad as they get in Jerusalem of course but Bangkok is a very big, crowded city and we need to pray.

Local believers and our two workers on the border are reaching out in some areas that are closed to the good news. I did however meet a remarkable man. He is one of few Mon believers and he has a lot of clout in the area. This helps our workers have more security and respect than they'd otherwise have.

A few years ago he and three others were arrested in Thailand for smuggling drugs and sentenced to death. A pastor visited the prison and this man became a believer. The other three were executed but he was remarkably pardoned. He is a good friend with the pastor of the prison ministry I work with here. He's working on a Mon translation of the Bible. Their language has changed; even their letters have changed since the old one was written. The connection with this man is vital for our teams.

Please pray that people along the border traumatized by violence, fear and poverty would hear the good news and open their hearts and that God would provide for their needs.

Love Janice

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ARIEL & D'VORAH BERKOWITZ

We are in Hong Kong teaching at the moment although we were in Bangkok when the New Year came in -- not far from the bombs that went off at five minutes to midnight. Blessings upon your year this year.

RWANDAN MAN'S CONFESSION

In 1980 a young man from Rwanda was forced by his tribe to either renounce Christ or face certain death. He refused to renounce Christ, and he was killed on the spot. The night before he had written the following commitment which was found in his room:

"I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed, the die has been cast, I have stepped over the line, the decision has been made- I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed vision, worldly talking, cheap giving & dwarfed goals.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I won't give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up for the cause of Jesus Christ.

I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till everyone knows, work till He stops me & when He comes for His own, He will have no trouble recognizing me because my banner will have been clear."

by Dr. Bob Moorehead