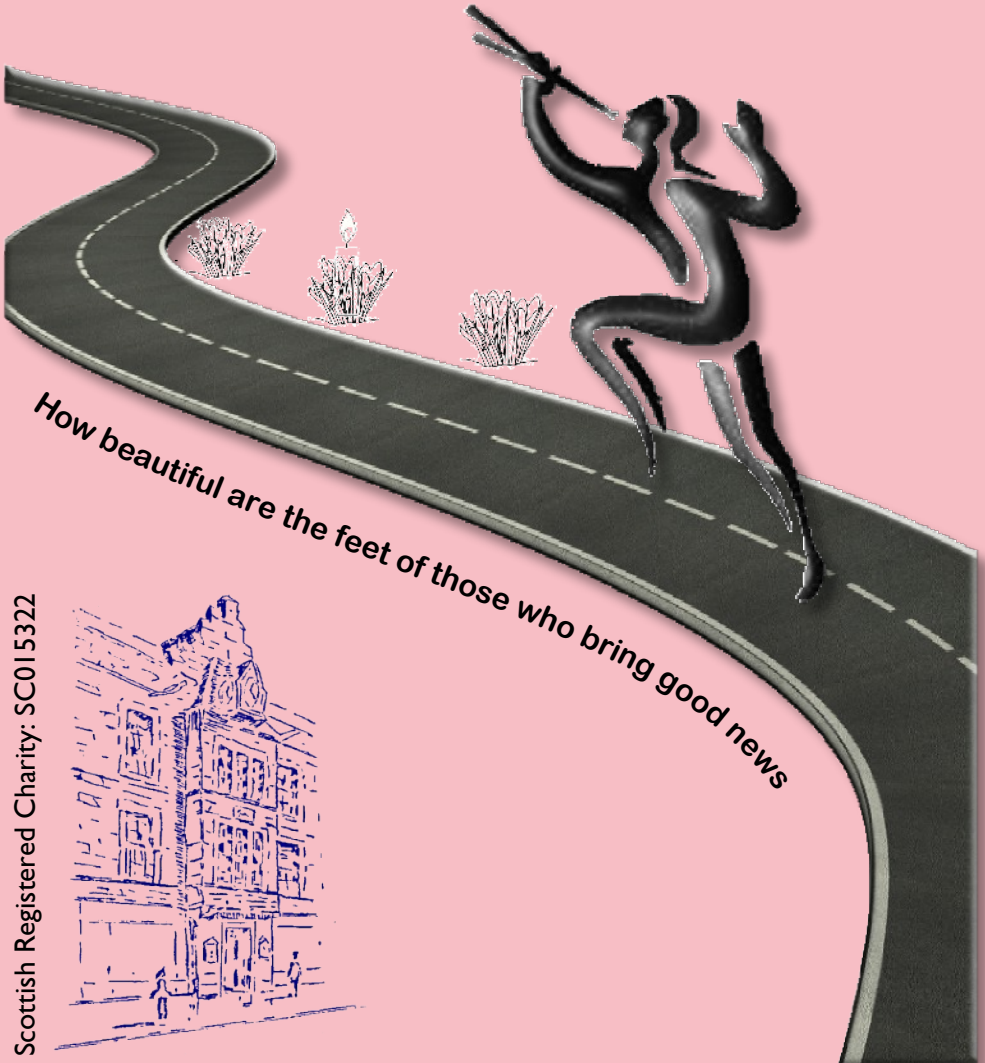


The magazine of Portobello Baptist Church

# MESSENGER

www.portobellobaptist.co.uk • March 2012



*How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news*

Scottish Registered Charity: SC015322

NEWS • TEACHING • ENCOURAGEMENT • LETTERS

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

		Tues	10.30 a.m.	Weekly Hour of Prayer (all are welcome to stay for all or part of this time)
		Wed	07.30 p.m.	Midweek Prayer & Bible Study
March	6th	Tues	08.00 p.m.	Management Meeting
	30th	Fri		Christian Aid Souper Soup Cafe

## FUTURE SERMON PLAN

		Lent Studies – Journey to Resurrection		
March	04th	Matthew 3:1-17		– “What Jesus came to do for you”
	11th	Matthew 4:1-11		– “Power over temptation”
	18th	Matthew 4:12-17		– “The foundations of a life well-lived”
	25th	Matthew 4:18-20		– “A reason for living”
April	01st	Palm Sunday		
	08th	Easter Sunday		
		When the going gets tough ...		
	15th	1 Peter 1:3-9		– “Problems that can’t be solved”
	22nd	1 Samuel 17		– “Crisis management”
	29th	Exodus 20:1-17		– “Hanging on through hard times”

## SCOTTISH BAPTIST PRAYER LINK

March	04th	Rev Bob Adams & Rev Neil Allison (Army Chaplains)
	11th	East Mains, East Kilbride & Easterhouse
	18th	Elgin & Ellon
	25th	Erskine & Falkirk

March 2012

A PASTOR'S THOUGHT

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live,  
but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body,  
I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."  
*Galatians Ch. 2 v 20*

Dear Friends,

The comedian Alan King once said, *"I start every morning with the New York Times. The first thing I do when I get up is read the obituary column. If my name isn't in it, I get dressed"*. What an interesting approach to one's day! Actually the Christian should do the opposite. As Paul says, we have laid down the old life and picked up the new. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis because of his testimony, once said, *"When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die."*

Watchman Nee the Chinese Christian used to start each day lying down in an imaginary coffin to remind himself that he was no longer living for himself but for Jesus.

During the season of Lent on our *"Journey to Resurrection"* we have an opportunity to examine our lives in the light of Christ's call upon us. How Christ-like am I? Do I love my Brothers and Sisters as Christ did? Am I willing to serve the world as Christ did? Am I open to His call to serve Him in His Church and in our community? This should lead to healthy, hopeful change rather than depressing self-condemnation.

If we do this, then Easter becomes the glorious celebration that it should be, expressed not only in words but in lives made new.

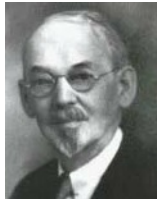
Your pastor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Amy Smith', written in a cursive style.

## THE GIDEONS



### THE IDEA



In the autumn of 1898, John Nicholson (*right*) came to the Central



Hotel at Boscobel, Wisconsin, for the night. As the hotel was crowded, he was asked if he would mind sharing double room with Samuel Hill (*above, left*). The two men soon discovered that both were Christians and shared their evening devotions together. While they were praying, God planted an idea:

### AN ASSOCIATION IS BORN

The two men met again the following May, when they decided to bring Christian Commercial Travellers together for mutual recognition, personal evangelism, and united service for the Lord. They decided to call a meeting on July 1, 1899.

Only three men turned up to that meeting: John Nicholson, Samuel Hill, and a new recruit, William Knights (*right*). They formed an association with Hill as president, Knights as vice president, and Nicholson as secretary and treasurer.



Much thought was given to what the name of the association might be,

and after praying that God might lead them to select the appropriate name, Knights arose from his knees and said, "We shall be called Gideons." He read the sixth and seventh chapters of Judges, which describes Gideon's own willingness to obey God's leading, despite his own weakness. This was, and continues to be, a defining characteristic of the Association both corporately and individually, where man's often-flawed judgement is subordinated to God. 600 joined in the first year.

In view of the fact that almost all of the Gideons in the early years of the Association were travelling men, the question quite naturally arose regarding how they might be more effective witnesses in the hotels where they spent so much of their time.

### BRITISH INFLUENCE AND SCOTTISH MEMBERSHIP

The first suggestion of a Gideon Bible ministry seems to have arisen in 1903 after a Chicago Gideon, Fred Woodcock, visited Britain. His attention was drawn to the fact that the British Commercial Travellers' Christian Association had placed Bibles in the rooms of British hotels. Woodcock's visit to Britain also appears to have been significant for another reason, for at that time a Scotsman, named MacInnes, was enrolled and became the first Gideon outside the USA. This was the first connection between The Gideons International and the British Isles.

## THE GIDEONS IN EDINBURGH

Two of Scotland's 38 Gideon branches serve Edinburgh. Portobello Baptist Church has 3 Gideons in its midst — all members of the Edinburgh North Branch which has recently been re-seeded with new members, currently standing at 17 with others in the pipeline. Our territory stretches from Queensferry in the North to the main East–West railway line through the city centre on the Branch's southern boundary. The opportunities are enormous with numerous hotels and guest houses, schools and universities, hospitals and many other institutions.

Please pray for us: for the gifting of public speakers who can present to school assemblies and classrooms, and to churches. Pray also for unity, strength in the Lord, hard work and commitment. Please pray for new opportunities for us, for reluctant schools to share our vision and for hotels which are 'closed' to us to open. Please give thanks for hotel groups like the Premier Travel Inn chain who welcome us and who have just received delivery of 250 Bibles in two brand new Edinburgh hotels.

## WHO ARE TODAY'S GIDEONS AND WHY DO THEY DO IT?

Gideons and their wives are:

- Men and women of 'the Book'
- Men and women of prayer
- Men and women of faith, and who witness to that faith
- Men and women who give
- Men and women of a compassionate heart

They seek to win souls for Christ, through prayer, Scripture distribution and personal testimony.

They are driven by a vision, recognizing the urgency of saving the lost; experiencing the joy of being in God's will and seeing results which glorify God.

## THE LARGEST MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD

No contestant was able to answer Anne Robinson's question on The Weakest Link in 2010, when she asked: "What is the largest missionary organization in the world?" The answer was The Gideons.

The Gideons International is one of the leading organisations in the world dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission in partnership with the Protestant, Evangelical church. It has over 290,000 members and wives in more than 190 countries. As such, Gideons make God's Word available in the cross roads and traffic lanes of life where churches, denominations and other ministries may not be able to go. It has been said that Gideons work at the cutting edge of evangelism, where, thousands of times every day, people have an encounter with God by coming into contact with His Word. Untold thousands of testimonies document the truth of Isaiah 55:11 "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

## WHAT DO GIDEONS DO?

The Gideon ministry is both personal and corporate. The personal aspect is through using opportunities that arise through personal contact in their everyday lives to attest to the love of Christ, and to distribute pocket-sized copies of his Word to those who will accept them. The corporate aspect is to engage in team work with local Gideons and their wives to speak in churches, schools, universities and prisons, and to distribute Bibles in many of life's well-known institutions. Many an individual can trace their faith to the little red Testament that they received at school.

The hotel bible is so well-known that 25% of hotel guests are said to read the Gideon Bible. The Bible ministry also reaches into prisons; hospital wards and day rooms; nursing and care homes (there are large print bibles available); cruise liners; the military; the police service; the rescue services; doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms; and many other places. The Bibles are given free, as Christ gave his life free and without 'strings attached'. Printing and distribution costs are covered by the Gideons themselves, by the 'Friends' of the Gideons who commit prayer and funds to the ministry, and by church giving and other voluntary donations.

Many countries like Morocco, Libya and China for example are closed to the Gideons, and a break-through into these needy nations is a cause for continual prayer. The hunger is evident when one meets nationals from closed countries when abroad as students.

Some fledgling national ministries are supported financially by the ministry in nations where the Gideons are well established, such as the USA and the British Isles.

## A STARTLING STATISTIC

In the 5 minutes it has taken you to read this article, 750 copies of the Scriptures have been distributed worldwide. 150 every minute of every day!! 78.9 million were distributed last year and 1.7 billion since the Gideon ministry was founded..  
(Nick Timmins)





## HORRIBLY SCARRED

(by Ray Comfort)

P	E	R	T	E	T	E	P	I	N
E	F	A	N	E	C	F	E	S	A
H	A	J	I	L	E	L	T	U	I
E	C	E	A	W	J	I	E	S	T
R	E	S	T	T	O	S	R	E	N
T	U	N	N	D	E	D	H	J	U
E	S	H	U	S	E	N	A	J	O
P	O	O	O	S	U	M	T	H	M
J	L	M	M	O	E	M	O	S	S
C	A	S	E	S	S	E	O	M	E

JESUS	PETER	JAMES
JOHN	MOUNTAIN	FACE
SUN	MOSES	ELIJAH
TENTS	CLOUD	SHADOW

E	L	T	H	U	S	B	A	D	N
S	E	L	L	E	W	O	M	A	N
W	Y	L	E	B	L	E	T	H	E
A	E	C	W	O	I	I	J	P	T
T	E	A	H	C	R	N	Y	E	E
E	L	T	T	A	C	H	K	S	S
R	R	H	M	J	R	C	N	O	O
D	N	A	B	S	U	H	I	J	J
I	S	Y	C	B	S	A	R	A	O
D	E	T	K	C	U	B	D	C	B

SAMARITAN	SYCHAR	JACOB
JOSEPH	WELL	WOMAN
WATER	DRINK	JEW
BUCKET	CATTLE	HUSBAND

Around 800 years B.C. the psalmist penned the words, “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared” (Psalm 130:3,4). The forgiveness we have in Christ should be coupled with fear. However, it sounds a little strange to be fearful once we are forgiven. When we repent and trust in Jesus, we have God’s smile and not His frown. His wrath has passed over us. We were once enemies of God in our minds through wicked works, but now we are called “friends.” We can say “Abba, Father,” so what’s with the need to fear?

Presumably, Peter was there when Jesus was crucified. Maybe he didn’t stand with John and Mary at the foot of the cross, but rather he stood afar off with the other disciples who fled when Jesus was arrested. Perhaps he watched as the nails were driven into the feet and hands of the Son of God and saw the precious blood gush from His flesh. Maybe he heard Him cry, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). We today hear about the cross, but those who stood around it were eyewitnesses to its unspeakable horror. They saw Him suffer. Couple that with the fact that He was the innocent Lamb of God and that it was for our sins that He suffered and died, and it produces a sobering fear.

Richard Gunther sent me the story of a child who was ashamed that his mother’s face was scarred. One day he asked her why she was so horribly





scarred, and found out that it happened when she rescued him from a burning building. The terrible scars were there because of her love for him.

That was the price she paid to hold her child in her arms.

The cost of our rescue from the power of sin and death was the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. That's why Peter says, "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:17-19).

time  
 fear 1:17-19 without  
 deeds futile ransomed silver  
 1Pe Father exile throughout Christ  
 gold impartially precious according  
 things perishable call forefathers  
 lamb spot knowing conduct  
 blood judges ways  
 one's inherited  
 like blemish

GREAT QUOTES with Kirk



"'I came, I saw, I conquered,' may be inscribed by the Saviour on every monument of grace. 'I came to the sinner! I looked upon him; and, with a look of omnipotent love, I conquered.'"

~ Augustus Toplady

"Recently, I looked at my beautiful wife, Chelsea, and thought to myself, If she had the chance to do it all over again, would she still marry me? I hope so. When I first met Chelsea, she was intoxicatingly lovely (still is). She captured my heart, my imagination, and all my affection. I was only 19 then, but I had enough sense to know to set the hook and ask her to marry me quickly, or someone else would. On our wedding day, I knew that when I walked away from the altar, I received a better half than she did. She married a young man who needed lots of maturing in grace. Fortunately, she could see God at work in my life. God saw my great need and had mercy on me. Jesus came to me when I wasn't looking for Him, looked upon me when I was looking everywhere else, and with a power and love that only He could employ, began to conquer my selfishness, stubbornness, and sinfulness, turning my heart to Him. Maybe on our anniversary I'll ask Chelsea that question, but until then, I'll keep working on becoming the man she'd never want to replace."

~ Kirk Cameron

