



Steve & Debs serving with The Navigators in Southampton and beyond...Oct 2013 Edition



Our growing family, Southampton, Sept 13

## A day that changed everything...

*"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." Job 1:21*

The 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013 will forever be a day of great sadness for us. It was the day that James Witham, one of our summer team, fell to his death in a tragic hiking accident in Norway (read more at [www.navigators.co.uk/news](http://www.navigators.co.uk/news)). Many of you will know this already (esp. if you receive our regular e-mail updates) but we are conscious that some will not have heard this sad news. James was a late addition to our team but had been a consistent part of our group for the past 3 years and had just joined our student leadership team. He had become a dear friend to our whole family and was much loved by us and many others in the ministry. Many of us watched with great excitement as he grew in faith and love for the Lord during his time with us (read more about his journey of faith in the attached article written by Adam Collett about his own reflections of James' journey). Despite the sadness of our loss we are sure you will agree that Adam's article is very encouraging; helping people like James to meet and experience Jesus is a huge reason why we continue to give our lives to student ministry. We are grateful that the gospel is not without hope and James is now with Jesus. Please pray that we would meet many more young men women like James who we and our student team can draw alongside and train.

Many of you will also know that earlier this year we found ourselves feeling quite weary and drained from what we have now seen was an unsustainable pace of life. This backdrop for the summer exaggerated the emotional effects of going through this trauma especially for Debs. You will be pleased to read that we are doing much, much better now and we are currently managing to find a good balance in life and ministry this term. Debs has in fact stepped back significantly from ministry and while Steve is still leading the student ministry he has handed over a number of his regular activities and responsibilities. Thank you so much to all those who have written to us and prayed for us; it has meant so much to know that we have so many people supporting us through this. We are still looking to God for our future and will have more to share in coming newsletters about how the Lord is reshaping our contribution in ministry.

Another significant day was 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 1993, 20 years ago. That was the day that Steve, aged 14, became a Christian during his time at the Independent Chapel, Spicer Street, St Albans. We are grateful for how the Lord called Steve that evening after a talk at church on Isaiah 5. Steve still has a letter from Peter Secombe (his former pastor who actually gave the talk) who wrote to encourage him in the faith. Twenty years on from that day both I (Steve) and Debs are thrilled to continue having opportunities to be involved in the lives of students like James and see their lives similarly transformed by the gospel.

*"To encourage students to know, love and share Jesus Christ through purposeful, intentional and reproducible disciple-making as we share our lives together in community." SOTON NAVS Vision statement, Sept 2011*

*"To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of labourers living and discipling among the lost" Worldwide Navigator Calling Statement*



NAVS Southampton Student Team 2013 at Lulworth Cove, Dorset pictured with our new regional Leaders Phil & Susan Watson

## Building to last...

There have been some changes to our student team since last year. James P has stepped out of his role leading IGNITE and Liz (Connect Programme) and our old student team (Sam, Eleanor & Alex) have all moved from Southampton. In their place God has provided Stephen Hartwell (Connect) and Márcio & Alessandra Gomes da Silva from Brazil who have been working with NAVS in Spain. They are living and serving with us in the UK for a year before moving to Portugal to start ministry there.

We took our student team away at the start of Freshers week for our annual Equipping Weekend entitled "Building to Last". We spent lots of time thinking about how we might "build to last" both in our own lives and in the lives of those we are seeking to help. We had a couple of sessions on this theme as well as seminars on Pastoral Care, Generation Disciple-making, Discipling amongst the lost, and time to celebrate last year, pray and commission one another before term.

Since then time has flown and we are now into the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of term! Our student team is working hard to meet and draw alongside a new generation of students. We are running student home groups (studying Mark's gospel) on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and our IGNITE discussion group has also moved to Thursday evenings to encourage people to bring their friends along.

### Key dates:

- Fri 11-13 Oct**  
Weekend in Riga for wedding of Ljuba Koval
- 14 Oct, 12 Nov & 2 Dec**  
Equipping Seminars with Thompy Wright, Martin Cooper & Dave Morrish respectively
- Sun 27 Oct & Dec 8**  
NAVS Student Lunches
- Fri 8-10 Nov**  
Ministry Weekend Away with Ted & Linda Pilling (UK NAVS), IOW
- Sun 8 Dec**  
CU Carol Services
- Fri 13 Dec**  
End of Term

### Please pray for us over the coming months:

- Pray especially for us, our team and some of the returning students that God would bring comfort and healing as we grieve the loss of our dear friend James.
- Pray that God would lead us to a new generation of students in whose hearts and lives He is already at work. Pray also that God would help as we seek to make disciples who make disciples...
- Pray also for us as a family that God would continue to bless our family as we try to find a better balance of life and ministry this term. Please pray for both of us (and especially Debs) as we take some time to step back and work through some of the things that we have been through this summer.
- Please pray for Steve as He continues to lead the student team and for those needing to step and take increased responsibility for different aspects of our ministry here.

*To God be the Glory, All our love Steve, Debs, Benjamin, Naomi and Samuel*

The Navigators, Turner House, 54 The Avenue, Southampton, SO17 1XG  
Tel: 02380-558800, Website: [www.navigators.co.uk](http://www.navigators.co.uk) / [www.sotonnavs.org](http://www.sotonnavs.org)

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Our Address: 53 Harefield Road, Hampton Park, Southampton, Hants, SO17 3TG  
Tel: 023-80677557, E-mail: [steveanddebs@the-mcclures.co.uk](mailto:steveanddebs@the-mcclures.co.uk), Web: [www.the-mcclures.co.uk](http://www.the-mcclures.co.uk)