

LIFE ON SUNDAY

Charles Gardner looks back at the lofty vision of a national newspaper

My personal involvement with Clifford Hill's ministry and that of *Prophecy Today* dates back to 1999, shortly after teaming up with Nick Thompson, who was boss at that time of *Good News Broadcasting* based in Bawtry Hall, just south of Doncaster where the *Centre for Contemporary Ministry*, had been established by Cliff and Monica to run 'In-service Training Courses for Clergy' although they had recently moved to Moggerhanger. I was sports editor of the *Selby Times* and I had heard, through my friend and former pastor Tony Horsfall, that Nick shared a vision for a national newspaper reporting and interpreting news from a biblical perspective.

I had had a similar vision while working in Fleet Street for the *South African Press Association* in the late 1970s. Nick I knew, had held senior management positions on nationals including those led by Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell.

Nick and I eventually got together and felt led to share our vision with Cliff and others at Moggerhanger, and subsequently gave presentations to leading financiers (known to Cliff) in the City of London as well as politicians in the Houses of Parliament where we engaged the support of Baroness Young and others.

I remember that our venture was the talk of Fleet Street at one time, with word getting round to my bosses at Edinburgh-based Johnston Press, who called me in to find out what was going on!!

Although originally aiming for a national daily, we downsized (for practical and cost reasons) to an initial stab at a Sunday paper, and so *Life on Sunday* was born (in our minds and spirits at least).

In the end, we failed to raise enough cash or interest, but did have a significant pot of money to do something with, which is how we were led to found the *Lifebite* website, dedicated to the same vision of interpreting topical news from a biblical perspective, employing young Bible College graduate Luke Wilson on the technical side with an office in Bawtry Hall which I would visit every Wednesday afternoon after putting my own weekly paper 'to bed' (the sports section anyway). We paid a decent rate for articles produced by the many professionals involved and covered a wide range of subjects from the troubles in Ireland and the Middle East to the many woes on our doorstep, just hit by a serious financial recession.

Sadly, our efforts proved unsustainable in the long term, but I feel that we did make our mark for the kingdom over the two years and four months we published from 2008-2010. I had considered packing in my secular job and going full-time, but the Lord wouldn't allow me as he obviously had other things in mind.

A Further Personal Blessing

During our early efforts around the turn of the millennium, I was going through a particularly stressful time, with my late wife Irene in the last stages of a long battle with cancer. She passed into the Lord’s presence, her faith undimmed, on 5 April 2000. One of the special blessings of meeting Nick and his wife Deborah, who both met Irene, was the part they played later in introducing me to Linda, who prayed regularly with Deborah as part of a Lydia group. We met on a blind date at their home, and the rest is blissful history!

I probably should add that the first I heard of Cliff was back in 1980 when I read his book *Towards the Dawn*, recommended by a Christian businessman friend in my early days at Sheffield’s *Morning Telegraph*. I was stirred by his heart for a nation on the slippery slope, and was galvanized all the more to try to do something about it. Thanks, Cliff and Monica, for all you have contributed to the Kingdom over the years.