



Women in leadership

Who are you?

Made in the image of God, wonderfully created, beautifully made, loved, adored, restored, forgiven, worth dying for, unique, heirs, part of a family, highly valuable, legitimate, God's artwork, powerful, in direct communication with God Himself, with direct access to the King of kings.

Loved just the way you are.



Vashti – ‘a queen lost to culture’

Esther 1:1-22

by Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference

Nestled in that book where God's name is not mentioned, we find an unusual story of a woman who lived in ancient times called Queen Vashti. Nothing much is recorded about the life of Queen Vashti except for a few verses found in the book of Esther. Vashti's act of impudence will indelibly be remembered in my mind as the action of a queen lost to culture.

Queen Vashti had the audacity to refuse the command of her husband, King Xerxes, to appear before him and his hordes of drunken men.

The reason for Vashti's refusal is not given in the text. Herodotus (a fifth-century Greek historian), the Greek historian known as 'the Father of History', notes that she feared for her dignity in the midst of such a drunken group.¹ The

Jewish Talmud suggests that modesty was the issue, indicating the possibility that the king called Vashti to appear dressed *only* with the 'royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold' (Esther 1:11, NKJV).²

What is clear is that she paid the ultimate price for acting against the Persian culture of her time. Perhaps her personal standards, perhaps her moral principles, perhaps her determination never to be humiliated again led to her refusal to appear in the king's drunken debauchery called a banquet.

If the truth be told, this act of defiance, this act of insubordination, this act of self-protection ultimately placed her at odds with the command of her husband. She found herself at

odds with the culture of her day and the expected behaviour of women in her time and culture. Her moral stance and her husband's desires clashed and placed poor Queen Vashti into a situation where she was fighting against the norms of the day. She was ruthlessly separated from her husband, banished from her position as a queen, and lived the rest of her life in biblical anonymity. She was a queen lost to culture.

It took the king three years to find another queen to replace Vashti. But I wonder if we have any modern-day Queen Vashtis amongst us – women who are willing to step outside the social norms of the day, stand on moral principles, and fight against injustice to women? I just wonder if we have any women who are brave enough to defy our cultural

norms? I wonder if there are any men who are bold enough to stand with these women – men who recognise the true 'beauty' of women; men who will not simply use women as trophies, but who are able to value them and create 'a seat at the table' for them instead; men willing to help women find an environment where they can achieve their God-given potential?

The rise of the 'me too' movement, 'End it now!' and 'End violence against women' should have increased our awareness of the problems that women face. Sadly, too many women are placed in the situation where they must demonstrate in order to highlight the disregard that our culture often has for women. Maybe today we are seeing women who are determined to fight the culture of our day, just like Queen Vashti . . .

Well, maybe today it's time we started to protect our queens . . . before they are lost to our culture, just as Queen Vashti became lost to hers.

¹Whitcomb, J., *Esther: The Triumph of God's Sovereignty* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), p. 38 ²Kadari, D., *Queen Vashti's Costume Party* (The Schechter Institutes, 2008), available at: https://schechter.edu/queen-vashtis-costume-party/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI7s-po6Gj9gIVirHtCh3yCwY_EAMVASAAEgLX11D_BwE> (accessed 28 February 2022)



#METOO



Julian Thompson,

Editor

From the editor . . .

Dear Reader,

It would be an understatement to suggest that much has happened since the last edition of *MESSENGER*. I had intended to begin this editorial on a positive note, highlighting the fact that, in recognition of the current 'cost of living' crisis, some supermarkets have since pledged not to decrease the number of value-range items on offer. I intended to reflect on the importance of engaging with real-world issues and how we, as Christians, can make a positive contribution to the communities in which we live. However, given recent events, I think it's more appropriate to highlight our duty to respond to suffering and injustice wherever it may be found.

War has once again broken out in Europe. On 24 February, we awoke to the profoundly troubling news that Russia had launched an invasion of Ukraine after weeks of diplomatic intervention. There can be no doubt that this

invasion has had and will have devastating consequences. In response to the crisis, ADRA has mobilised humanitarian teams in bordering countries such as Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova to respond to the growing numbers of people fleeing the conflict. There is an ongoing ADRA appeal for funds to assist those fleeing the war: if you're in a position to give, your donation will be much appreciated. Further information can be found on the ADRA-UK website.

Please be sensitive to the fact that we in the British Union are not unaffected by this conflict. Many of us have friends, relatives, and church members from both communities who have nothing to do with the broader geopolitical agendas. Indeed, this is a time for coming together, not for pulling apart; for demonstrating love rather than magnifying hate.

In recognition of the fact that March is Women's Month, this edition of *MESSENGER* focuses on women in leadership. I have always found it interesting that Judges 5 and Exodus 15:21 – widely believed to be two of the oldest passages in the Bible – are attributed to Miriam and Deborah: women. Given the patriarchal nature of ancient Near-Eastern society, this is nothing short of exceptional and is surely a testimony as to how respected, influential and valued their leadership must have been to ancient Israel. I have great admiration for Miriam, Deborah, and all women called to lead in similarly challenging contexts, where some (women included) view their contributions as less valuable than those of men.

In this *MESSENGER*, we celebrate the Miriams of today and seek to inspire the Deborahs of tomorrow. We are thankful for the women among us whom God has called to lead: not only in ministry, but in industry, government, and all aspects of society.

It would be remiss of me not to especially mention Elisabeth Sangüesa, our Press manager, and Cathy Boldeau, the co-editor of this edition; without them this *MESSENGER* could not have taken its present form.

I am pleased to present you with the March edition of *MESSENGER*. I trust that within its pages you will find both challenge and hope, and will come to know a little bit more about what God is doing in and through the British Union. Happy Women's Month.

Adventist schools in Ukraine: from educational institutions to places of refuge

by **Kostyntyn Kampen**, Director of the Education Department of the Ukrainian Union Conference

Early on 24 February, Ukrainians were awakened by rocket attacks and explosions. On that day active hostilities began with the shelling of all parts of the country – from west to east, from north to south. On that day only one of the twenty-four Adventist schools in Ukraine held classes in the school building. Fighting took place on the city streets and in the suburbs in the cities where five of the Adventist schools are located.

Despite the Ukrainian Ministry of Education's decree declaring a two-week break, some Adventist schools continue to teach through Zoom. Online learning helps children, at least to some extent, to fill their lives with something other than news about the war.

When kids switched to online learning or went on a break, the school buildings didn't become empty: they transformed from educational institutions into places

of refuge. School classrooms began to fill up with people. In cities affected by the fighting, school buildings are used to shelter people from shells. In cities further away from the active combat zone, schools serve as shelters for displaced people from other cities. Saturday 26 February, the first Saturday of the war, was the first time some displaced people

had attended a Sabbath service. If schools need to move desks and mattresses out of classrooms, if school principals need to organise meals for refugees instead of scheduling classes, and if chaplains need to hold worship services for adults rather than children – to fulfil our mission, we are willing to do all of these things to save people.



‘Even the dogs, Lord . . .’

The importance of faith for women in leadership



by Catherine Anthony Boldeau*

She came boldly: not shy; not timid; no excuses. She came begging. Her daughter was sick, and she had heard that Jesus could heal.

He appears to ignore her need. His disciples want her to ‘go away’. She’s obviously emotional, and it’s causing them discomfort. Jesus, the miracle worker, now states, ‘I was sent to help the Jews . . .’ and, by implication, not you – a Gentile.

But this woman is desperate: she knows that her daughter is on the brink between life and death. She needs the miracle, and her request is now brazen, some might even say brash: ‘. . . help me!’

She stares at Jesus, terrified by the words that have left her mouth, but knowing that she has little choice. He stares back . . . but, to her surprise, His eyes are not filled with the indifference that she first thought she’d heard in His voice.

And then, in the middle of the tension, surrounded by the irritating undertones of disgruntled disciples and the incredulity of the watching crowd, these two key players

engage in a playful war of words that is set to change the course of history.

‘It’s not right to take the children’s bread and give it to the dogs.’

There is an alarmed silence in the crowd. How is she going to respond?

‘Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall. . . .’

Even the dogs . . .

It’s a deeply uncomfortable story by contemporary standards. Here we have a woman who experiences maternal bias, racial bias, gender bias and the intersectionality of all three. Here is a woman who is publicly dismissed, ridiculed and derided. But here is a woman who rises above the extreme prejudice and allows her faith to be more dominant than the challenges of her demeaned status.

In 2022, many women still face the same challenges, even in positions of leadership. Snide remarks are often given to women who need to attend to the needs of their children. In boardrooms and on shop floors, in health centres and in educational institutions, and

even in faith-based organisations, women in leadership are often treated differently to the men in similar positions because of their gender, often in the form of microaggressions. And there are the stereotypes of women of all ethnicities that are often presented as fact by their male counterparts.

So how can women in leadership make a difference in the twenty-first century with all the challenges that surround us? Let me offer a few tips that have helped me . . .

First, be brave and bold in going to the Father! Spending time with God and presenting your requests to Him daily is important. Sometimes, as in the story, He may appear to ignore you, with the intent that you may develop a meaningful spiritual experience with Him by being persistent.

Second, remember that many times you will have more detractors than supporters – and you may find this to be a lonely space. But, if you believe that God called you to fulfil your purpose through your giftedness, keep going.

Third, you may experience discrimination and prejudice. You may feel the nuances of microaggressions. The burden of bias may weigh heavily on your shoulders. Remove the weight by politely challenging these issues and raising awareness of appropriate behaviours both for yourself and other women.

Finally, your faith in God will be evident in your deliberations with others, in the words that you speak, and in your behaviour. Make your faith count.

Father, sometimes, as women in leadership, we feel that our input is not as valuable as that of our male colleagues . . . but thank You for the voice that You give us to speak up for those who are vulnerable and in need, and also for ourselves. As we lead, may we be conduits of grace and mercy and love. May we demonstrate the loyalty of a Labrador, the simplicity of a puppy, the strength of a German shepherd, the tenacity of a Siberian husky and the grace of a shih-tzu.

Even the dogs, Lord . . .

¹Matthew 15:24, The Living Bible

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Leading as a tech specialist

by Paula Carrillo*

While at work one day a visitor had an IT issue and my colleague called me, since I am the IT person. When I arrived, the gentleman with the IT issue was surprised to see me – a woman – coming to the rescue. His shock was such that he even said, with a paralysed expression on his face, ‘I was expecting to see someone in trousers – you know?’ to which I only smiled graciously.

Thankfully, I do not receive that type of comment very often. I had the opportunity to study Administration of Computer Systems at university in the Inter-American Division, and then I volunteered in IT & Web Development in two of our Adventist educational institutions through the Adventist Volunteer Service. The part I currently enjoy the most in my work is software engineering and training people to use the applications available – and, in so doing, building their confidence using technology. I feel that this is my professional contribution to a better world and to the advancement of the Gospel.

In addition to my employment, I have, for many years, led my local church Pathfinder Club, Youth and Children’s Sabbath School departments. I see leadership as a service to God and an opportunity for good stewardship, rather than as a position of privilege.

In God’s eyes both women and men have the same responsibilities and are equal. He gave us talents and skills to work together to look after the earth He gave us. Sadly, women have been stereotyped to do only certain types of jobs. It is only very recently that women have had more access to any career they would like to pursue; but are women actually 100% involved, heard, included and valued?

In the Bible, we can see Deborah chosen to become a female military leader; Queen Esther in the right place at the right time to save her nation; the businesswoman Lydia, who was effectively the first native missionary in Europe . . . and we can mention more, but there is one particular example that I’ve always loved: Mary of Bethany, who was allowed to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn along with the men! There was no distinction for being a woman. Jesus gave us an extraordinary example of gender parity, respect, valuing women and supporting their right to access education.

Today, ‘despite decades of progress towards workplace equality, women remain woefully under-represented in the UK’s technology workforce. The figures speak for themselves: according to WISE,¹ just 23% of the people working in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

roles across the UK are female – and only 5% of leadership positions in the technology industry are held by women.²

According to PWC, ‘50% of the females we interviewed say the most important factor when choosing their future career is “feeling like the work I do makes the world a better place/has a wider impact”. The corresponding figure for men is only 31%.³

So why are girls not envisioning the tech field as one where they can help the world to be a better place? There are many factors, but one that speaks to me the most is expressed in the words of one of the female pre-university students interviewed by PWC. She said: ‘Although heavily involved in STEM subjects at a younger age, I was discouraged by the sexism that surrounded me when I took part in competitions and conventions.’⁴

Comments like that make us realise that women still struggle to be valued in some careers. I have had the opportunity to study and work in a field I enjoy, surrounded by supportive people. However, this is an opportunity that many women still lack.

In a month when we dedicate our *MESSENGER* publication to women within our

church community, I wonder, how can we start building the confidence in our girls who want to study STEM subjects? Gender parity as God planned it begins at home. I recognise that my husband has been a strong supporter in this by sharing domestic tasks and balancing our shared parental responsibilities. It is at home that our sons and daughters learn to value each other as equals, values that can and should be reinforced at church, as Jesus has clearly shown.



¹<https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/statistics/women-in-stem-workforce-2017/>

²<https://techcrunch.com/2016/05/10/the-lack-of-women-in-tech-is-more-than-a-pipeline-problem/?guccounter=1>

³<https://www.pwc.co.uk/women-in-technology/women-in-tech-report.pdf>

⁴ibid.

Resources of interest:

<https://www.grisda.org/>

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/study-work-abroad/in-uk/scholarship-women-stem>

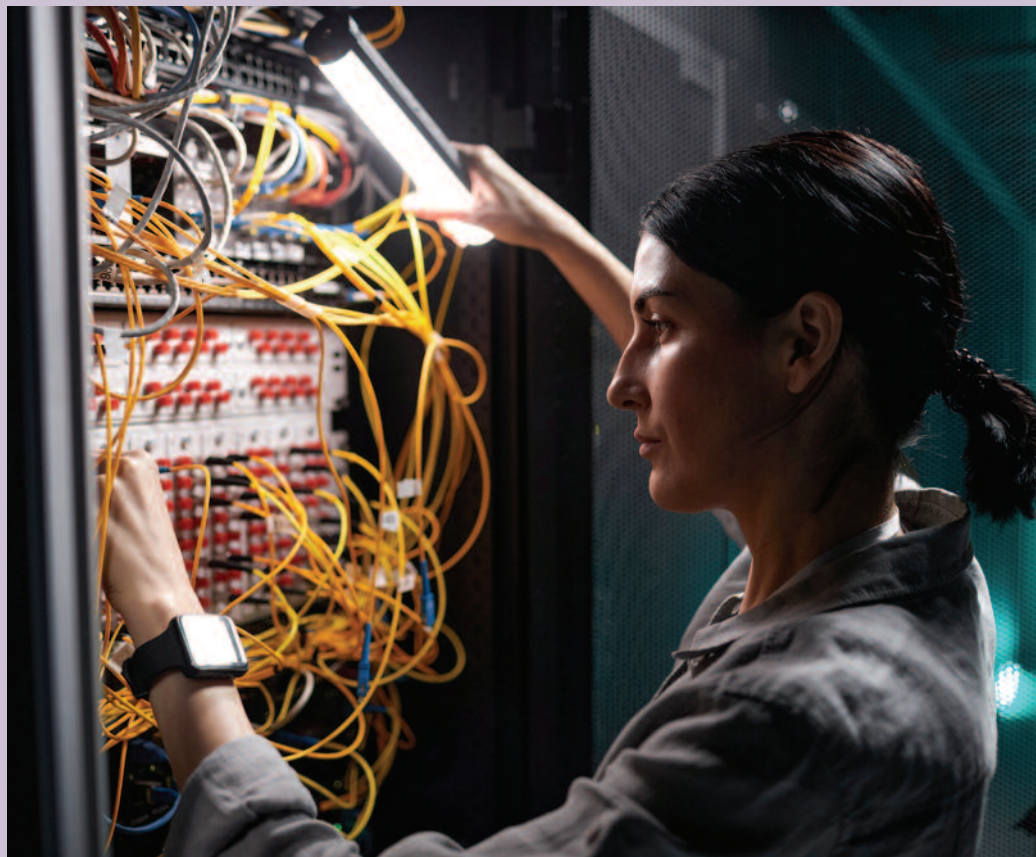
<https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/funding/>

<https://www.studyhigher.ac.uk/outreach-provision/girls-in-stem/>

<https://www.stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors>

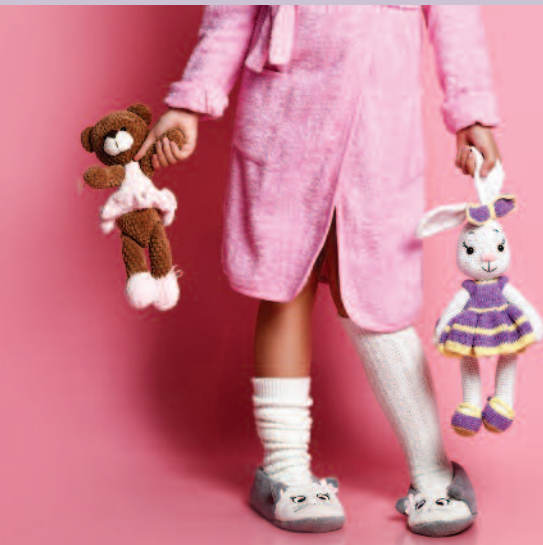
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Shaping girls into leaders

by Karen Holford*



If you had known me as a child, you would never have picked me out as a potential leader. I was extremely shy. I used to find places to hide at church so that I didn't have to speak to people, and I'm forever amazed that God took that shy and awkward little girl and gently grew her into a leader!

Leaders are not born. Their gifts and skills are nurtured and shaped by the people around them. Some of the most valued strengths in leaders today are empathy, social intelligence, kindness, creativity and a 'Big Picture' perspective. At the start of the pandemic, the countries with women leaders were often more successful at protecting their people, perhaps because they were more likely to be wired and socialised to nurture and protect others than to take risks like the male leaders.

Ground them in God's love

My journey towards leadership started in my family. One of the greatest blessings in my life has been the wonderful picture of God's love for me, and for everyone else, that my parents gave me from the moment I was born. Because they had positive experiences of God's love in their own lives, they were able to pass that experience on to me. I have always known that I am precious to God, that I am His beloved princess, that He has loved me from the beginning of time, and that He will love me forever. This has given me the best foundation for growing with Him into the leader that I have become and that I am still becoming. My lived experience of God's amazing, accepting, comforting, forgiving, encouraging, and empowering love for me (Psalm 103) has helped me to grow and to be strengthened by facing life's challenges with courage and hope.

It's not just parents who can nurture women leaders. Husbands, siblings, and the church family can also empower the girls in

their lives as they stretch their wings and soar. When I married Bernie, he continued to encourage and empower me, slowly and gently nudging me on my personal, spiritual and leadership journey. He celebrates with me each tiny step along the way. We have helped each other to grow in our spiritual journey as leaders, and we have each been blessed in this collaborative process (Phil. 2:3, 4).

Grow their faith

Help your daughters to develop a growing relationship with God. Talk about your own faith journey, including the ups and the downs (Deut. 6:1-7). Help them learn that God is with them, lovingly and gently guiding and comforting them, in the green pastures as well as the dark valleys (Psalm 23). Teach them to talk to God naturally, about everything, as if they're chatting to a beloved friend. Learn about God together, thank Him, look out for the ways that God is expressing His love to you, and nurture your daughter's spiritual gifts. Follow her passions, help her to discover her own unique mission project, and work alongside her to bless others.

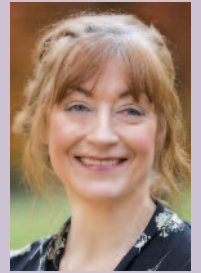
Nurture her character strengths

Good leaders are continually growing and developing their character strengths – so learn about the 24 key character strengths that are valued in every culture (www.viacharacter.org) and discover how to nurture them in your daughters. The 'wisdom' strengths are creativity, curiosity, a love of learning and a Big Picture perspective. The 'courage' strengths are bravery, perseverance, honesty and enthusiasm. The 'humanity' strengths are love, kindness, and social intelligence. The 'justice' strengths are social responsibility, teamwork, fairness, and leadership. The 'temperance' strengths are forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-control. And the 'transcendence' strengths are an appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humour, and spirituality (2 Pet. 1:5-8).

The more character strengths your daughters (and sons) develop, the more resilient they will become, and the more effective they will be as leaders. Some of the best character strengths to develop in Christian leaders are their caring skills, their spirituality, their team spirit, and their servant heart. They also need to understand their boundaries so that they stay safe and balanced, rather than being overwhelmed by trying to serve everybody.

Affirm your daughter for using these character strengths, learn about Bible characters who developed the different strengths, and point these out in the stories and films that she's watching. At the end of each day, describe the character strengths you saw her using, and tell her that she made

really good choices. Then she will sleep with a warm, happy, and settled heart.



Inspire your girls!

Provide your daughters and granddaughters with positive role models of women leaders. Find inspiring stories of Christian women leaders and biblical women who showed courage, faith, kindness, perseverance, and good leadership skills, such as Esther and Abigail. Examine your own deeply held beliefs about women and female leaders, especially your negative biases, because your daughter will absorb them. Speak highly of good women leaders. Hearing negative comments about women leaders can seriously undermine a girl's self-confidence and deter her from developing good leadership skills. If she thinks of leadership as something that only men do, or if she believes that good leadership requires masculine qualities, she will be less likely to develop her unique leadership skills.

Provide opportunities for growth

Even though I was extremely shy, my parents gently encouraged me to play music with a small band in my church, and to write poems and stories that I read in our church worship services. Speaking in public terrified me, but our kind and loving congregation encouraged me and helped me to grow. Choose a church community that empowers your daughter by giving her opportunities to serve in a safe and supportive space. Encourage her effort and perseverance rather than her achievements. Be good role models for lifelong learning and personal development. Churches where women are valued and given positions of leadership will help to grow these girls into positive leaders.

We need women leaders!

Families, churches, communities, schools, organisations and even entire countries can be blessed by women leaders. God created women to be equals with men, and we need the qualities of each of them to portray a healthy and complete picture of the image of God. What will you do to nurture the leadership qualities of a girl in your life, even the most unlikely ones, like the eight-year-old Karen, who was so shy that she hid in the cupboards at church? If it weren't for the love and encouragement of my family, my husband, and several other significant people who saw potential in the most unlikely person, I might still have been hiding in the cupboard . . .

**Karen Holford is the Family, Women's and Children's Ministry Director for the Trans-European Division. She has postgraduate degrees in educational psychology, family therapy and leadership. She is married to Pastor Bernie Holford, and they have three adult children and three grandchildren.*

Growing and developing as leaders

by Audrey Andersson*

As the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics finished, two images of two women in tears stood out: tears of sadness; tears of joy . . . tears of failure; tears of success.

Skating on thin ice

The first image is of a young 15-year-old skater, Kamila Valieva, in tears, being berated by her coach, who was repeating, 'Why did you let it go? Why did you stop fighting?'

For the non-sporting, Valieva's challenges started before she arrived at the Olympics. She is Russian, and officially Russia was banned from the competition. Following complicated negotiations, she was allowed to participate, and she started well, living up to her potential: the first woman to do a quadruple jump of any kind in an Olympic competition. Then things started to unravel: a positive drugs test, allegations of cheating, a series of falls in her final routine ending with tears, and those condemnatory questions ringing in her ears: 'Why did you let it go? Why did you stop fighting?'

The rights and wrongs of her Olympics will be long debated and judged in other forums; however, it was impossible not to be moved by the sight of an exceptionally talented young woman whose hopes and dreams had just been shattered. Time will tell if Valieva will put the difficulties and disappointments of Beijing behind her and go on to achieve her potential.

Tears of joy

The second image is that of Eve Muirhead, captain of the women's British curling team, standing in tears on the podium as she receives a gold medal. Talking afterwards, she said, 'This is a moment I dreamed of as a young child. To stand on the podium and get that gold medal round your neck is a moment I'll never forget. It's a moment that I've been waiting for for so many years.'

This was Eve's fourth Olympics. In 2014 she led the women's curling team to win a bronze medal, but four years later it was her mistake that cost her team another bronze medal: a mistake that replayed itself many times in her head, almost making her give up.

These two snapshots offer us some important insights that can be applied to leadership.

Identify the next generation

As leaders, we have a responsibility to look for the next generation of leaders. We should be like sporting talent scouts: being alert and recognising potential leaders who may not fit the stereotypical mould, leaders who are sometimes found in the most unlikely places.

When choosing disciples, Jesus did not go to the rabbinical schools – the universities of

His day. Rather, He looked in the unlikely places, finding fishermen, a fiery zealot, and a tax collector. When wanting to reach a Samaritan village, Jesus did not go straight to the village. Rather, He waited by the well, engaged a woman of dubious reputation, and empowered her to be a leader by becoming the door to her community.

We tend to gravitate to people who look and think like we do. Given that many leaders are men, it is easier to recruit men than women. However, when looking for tomorrow's leaders, we need to be intentional, take off the blinkers of gender, age, and ethnicity, and look for those who may be different from ourselves, asking who has the right attitude and potential. Ellen White expressed it this way: 'When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do this work, and it will feel the loss if the talents of both are not combined' (*Evangelism*, p. 469).

Failure: an essential stage of development

Leaders do not emerge fully developed and polished; rather, they need opportunities to learn, grow and develop: to succeed and to fail. Often the most important leadership lessons are learned from failures, rather than successes.

All but one of Jesus' disciples failed their end-of-training exam. When Jesus was taken to be tried and crucified, only one disciple was found at the cross. They failed their second attempt in doubting the women who brought the news that Jesus had risen. However, they learned from failure; and, following Christ's ascension, they waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the Christian church was born.

Showing Christ-like understanding and compassion when developing leaders make mistakes can be transformative. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child: the same can

be said of a leader. When a young leader fails, let's not point fingers and criticise. Instead, when the community is supportive – offering a safe place to try, fail and try again, helping young leaders to see what went wrong and how to do things differently – the result will be stronger, more resilient, and more compassionate leaders.



Sustainable leaders

The value of a supportive team was clearly illustrated in the contrasting stories of Valieva and Muirhead. Valieva's coach reinforced messages of failure. Muirhead's teammates helped her stop replaying her mistake and start creating a new narrative.

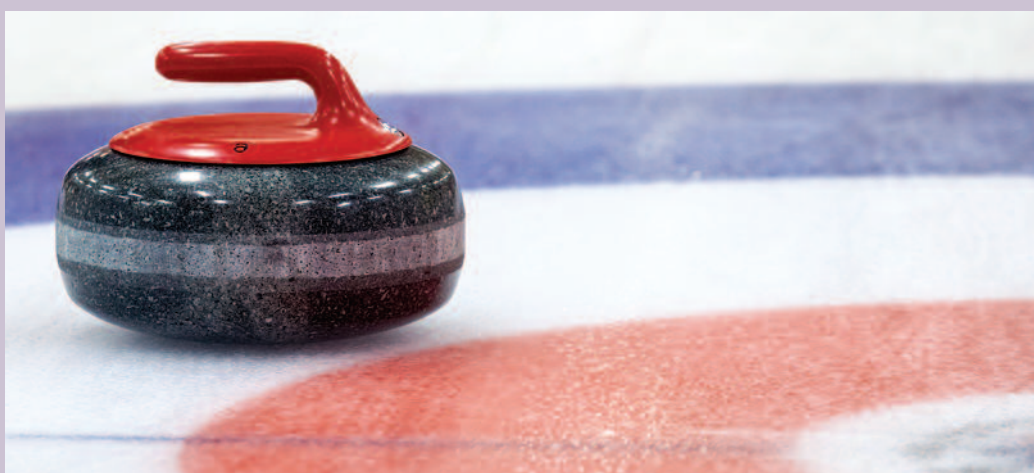
We all have teams, and some are visible; but more important are the invisible teams. These are the people we go to when we are in trouble, when we are happy, or when we need advice. If these are wise, positive people of integrity who will tell difficult truths in a kind and gentle way, we will flourish. If they are negative, harsh, and critical, they cause damage, undermining rather than building up.

Leadership is lonely. Leaders need to be careful about who they allow into that invisible team. If there are people who intentionally or unintentionally are not fully supportive, the results may be catastrophic. Solomon understood this when he wrote, 'The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise' (Proverbs 12:15, NKJV).

The non-negotiable attribute

Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, but to be successful there is one non-negotiable attribute: a living relationship with God. Only those who spend time in Bible study and prayer will ever truly achieve their full potential as children of God, leaders who will be able to stand in the most difficult circumstances.

**Audrey Andersson is the Executive Secretary of the Trans-European Division. Part of her personal mission is to support and provide opportunities for people to grow and develop as leaders.*



A woman's place

Beliefs, behaviours and perspectives

by Sharon Platt-McDonald*

Recently, during a leadership workshop, I conducted an exercise, asking attendees to think about the women they knew in leadership positions and then answer the following questions: 'Where are the women placed (organisational hierarchy)? What are their positions (job title/role)? What are their parameters (scope and impact of that role)?' The varied responses were quite enlightening and diverse in terms of the narrative around women in leadership. One respondent reflected that they strongly believed that a woman's place was still in the home, and therefore they were against women in leadership positions.

In regard to church life, certain gender attitudes have created negative environments isolating the very people who come to our churches to seek acceptance, nurture and love.

In an article published by *Christian Today* (19/01/2016), commenting on a poll of 8,000 people (reported by The Fawcett Society), journalist Hannah Mudge writes: 'While the Church has not always been a natural ally of the feminist movement, a commitment to equality and egalitarian theology remains important for some churches, campaigning groups and many Christian organisations. However, it could be said that in some churches an outward commitment to equality isn't necessarily reflected in appointments and attitudes – something that needs work if, as 68 percent of women polled believe, more needs to be done to bring about equality.'¹

Reflecting on this research, I have found that common beliefs, behaviours and perceptions have certainly impacted the experiences and leadership positions of women in our church.

Beliefs

Individuals (male and female) who maintain deeply held beliefs about the headship of men over women use Scripture as the basis for their theological arguments, highlighting the fact that man was created first – and also the apostle Paul's statements in the following scriptures:

- 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 – headship and deportment in worship
- Ephesians 5:22-24 – wives' submission to their husbands
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-38 – women remaining silent in church
- 1 Timothy 2:11-15 – women as learners only, not teaching or having authority over men

While the debate continues on the contextual

relevance of these scriptures, and how they should be interpreted, it would be useful to undertake some self-reflection on the impact of our beliefs and biblical views.

- Have our beliefs on women in leadership helped to nurture and grow the membership of our church, or harmed and hindered its progression?
- Are women respected and valued in our local churches?
- Are their giftings acknowledged and used as an integral aspect of ministry?

Interestingly, examining the practical aspect of the apostle Paul's work, women were in fact placed in crucial roles in his ministry. Paul always worked in teams, and his church-planting teams included women. Writing to the Christian church in Philippi, he instructed them to support Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2, 3). In Paul's evaluation of these women's contribution to church life, he explains: 'And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life' (Philippians 4:3, NKJV).

Clearly, these women laboured alongside Paul in ministry. Although Scripture does not specify their exact role, it does not appear to be an auxiliary or subordinate position, as specific reference is made to 'gospel' participation. The reference used in this context is the same title he uses for male workers in ministry – 'co-workers' or 'fellow labourers' – for example, 'Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers' (Philemon 24, NIV).

In Romans 16:3, Paul establishes this unity of working with women: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus' (NIV).

Behaviour

Clearly, our beliefs influence our behaviour. This was evidenced in the testimonials women shared with me about the way they are being treated in leadership positions in churches, or working as employees of our church. Here are three of the most common experiences:

- 'When I put forward a point, it is often overlooked. However, when my male colleague presents the same point, it is viewed as a "good idea".'
- 'I notice that my requests are often denied, whereas my male counterparts are granted the same requests.'
- 'My voice is not "heard" when my male associate speaks.'

Perceptions

Our socialisation, culture, values and beliefs help shape our perception of the world, how we should behave, and what we expect of others.

My 'conservative' upbringing, and a very traditional church life with fixed views about women in leadership, has resulted in me challenging perceptions (mine and others'), realising that the outcomes of specific viewpoints and ideologies can be detrimental.

Here's a serious deliberation: instead of debating who is right or wrong, and whether gender inequality is prevalent in our churches, focusing on *what* inequality does is both sobering and impactful. This is verified from research on 'Women, Inequality and the Church' from SAFER, a domestic and family violence resource for the church in Australia:

*'The evidence is in: inequality, fixed gender roles and patriarchal teachings can help create church environments where abuse of women can thrive.'*² This is unacceptable.

Summation

While our church continues to debate the parameters of women in ministry, there are individuals waiting to receive ministry from us, regardless of leadership gender.

Ellen G. White states: '**When a great and decisive work is to be done, God chooses men and women to do this work, and it will feel the loss if the talents of both are not combined**' (*Evangelism*, p. 469, emphasis supplied).

At Creation, both male and female were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). That makes us 'equal' in His eyes.

Working together as equals is a key aspect of ministry. The apostle Paul demonstrated this in his team-working with women in evangelism (Gospel work) and building up the body of Christ. First Corinthians 3:9 states: 'For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building' (NIV). The 'we' is inclusive of both male and female workers.

Since biblical times, women have been integral to the work of the church, including leadership positions. Deborah, as judge over Israel and prophetess (Judges 4 and 5), is one such example.

Does God differentiate in regard to gender importance or hierarchy? The apostle Paul, in Galatians 3:28, provides a fitting summation response (NIV): 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' And I say, 'Amen to that!'

¹<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/5-ways-the-church-can-tackle-gender-inequality/76965.htm>

²https://www.saferresource.org.au/women_inequality_and_the_church

*Sharon Platt-McDonald is the British Union Conference Director for Women's Ministries, Health & Adventist Community Services.



'You've got to preach!'

by Pastor Anne-May Müller*

I graduated from Newbold with a Bachelor's degree in Theology in 1994. After graduation, I returned to Denmark to begin my ministry. Now, 27 years later, I am back at Newbold as a part-time student studying for a Master's degree in Theology.

I felt a strong calling to the ministry after finishing secondary school. I had to decide what area of work I wanted to go into, what kind of education I should pursue. I remember looking through pamphlets from different universities offering courses in chemistry, biology and geography, etc. Suddenly, I thought, *All this is useless unless I know God*, and asked myself why I would want to learn any of these when I could study theology. I started praying about it, and different things happened to confirm that theology was for me.

In my opinion, I do not have a *lifelong* calling to ministry, but an *ongoing* one. Knowing that God called me once is not enough, because I need to know where God is leading me. I think it is essential to listen to the voice that makes me ask myself, 'How can I best serve God?' So far, it has kept me employed in ministry for the Adventist Church.

One of the things I love about the Café Church is that we are never afraid to ask questions like, 'How can we be a relevant church right now?' Our main question is: 'How do what we preach, what we teach, and the way we live become relevant to the average Dane in Copenhagen?' It is always good to ask those questions. Also, we should

ask hard questions about what we do, the way we do it, the language we use, the programmes we run, the structure we have around worship services and how they help us reach out.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought new challenges. However, I have been proud of my congregation for finding ways to continue being a church even when all our churches were closed. It is very uplifting, because it shows there are alternatives. The church is not bricks and mortar; the church is where we are. We have developed a concept called 'Couch Church', which we hold on Zoom on Sabbath mornings. We have had some fantastic worship services and discussions. It shows what is possible when we are flexible, adapt to new situations and continue to be relevant to our communities.

Being relevant also means making time for people. Some years ago, a teenager approached me and asked me to baptise her. We started Bible studies. The day before her baptism, I enquired why she had chosen me to baptise her. I was not the pastor of her church. I was working as the Danish Union Youth Director. She responded, 'Because you were always there for us.' As pastors and as a church, we get so caught up in programmes, having to do one thing or another, that sometimes we forget to be with the people. That teenager knew I would make time for her. It was a defining moment in my ministry. I revisit this experience from time to time to remind myself that the way to bring people to

God is by making myself available to them.

As I reflect on my ministry, I realise there are challenges unique to me as a female pastor. When I received the calling for the first time, I did not think being a woman would be a problem, and I did not foresee any difficulties. I did not have any significant challenges to my ministry until we drew closer to 2015, when there were many debates about women's ordination in the Adventist Church. For the first time, I felt my church did not want me. I am not talking about my local church or the Danish Union, but the Seventh-day Adventist World Church. I struggled with this. It is strange that I worked for the Adventist Church for so many years and never felt that way until that moment.

One day, feeling frustrated, I went for a walk and talked to God. I am not one of those people who can tell you stories where 'God said to me, God told me, or God showed me,' because I do not have those types of experiences. But on this occasion I heard God say, 'You've got to preach,' and that was all. He did not say I had to fight for women's ordination, or to change the church, the world, or my attitude. He simply said, 'You've got to preach,' and that has been an encouragement for me. I know that even if the World Church does not accept me, God has a plan for me, and I can fulfil His calling by preaching His word no matter where I am.



*Anne-May Müller is the pastor of the Café Church, a Seventh-day Adventist church in Copenhagen, and is also the Family Ministries Director at the Danish Union.



Newbold College of Higher Education, Pastor Müller's alma mater



Have we given up on evangelism?

Part 2

by **Dr Kirk M. Thomas**, Evangelism, Missions, Publishing, Personal Ministries & Sabbath School Director of the British Union Conference

Let's not deceive ourselves: some of us have made no space in our lives for witnessing to others about the Jesus we profess to serve. OK, there it is: I have said it! For this category of people, evangelism is dead. Making a living becomes far more important than making a life. I sincerely hope that sharing with you openly and honestly will, through the power of the Holy Spirit, ignite a fire in you to share your faith with a dying world.

Even as I write, bombs are falling on Ukraine. Innocent people are dying in a war they did not ask for. Soldiers who had nothing to do with the decision process will not return to their families alive. To date, millions have been displaced and neighbouring countries are opening their borders and homes to refugees. Miles of soldiers with tanks and other artillery are marching to the capital, Kyiv, while civilians make Molotov cocktails – home-made bombs – to fight the might of one of the largest armies on the planet. War has come to Europe. Here is a text that jolts me, every time I read it, with the present reality of why God calls us to evangelise: 'For you are fully aware that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and security," destruction will come on them suddenly, like labor pains upon a pregnant woman . . . but you, brothers, are not in the darkness so that this day should overtake you like a thief' (1 Thess. 5:2-4, Berean Study Bible). The question is, what more do we need to see, hear, or feel to make us realise that time is running out?

Wherever and with whomever there is a passion to share Christ, publicly and privately,

the Lord of the harvest will bless those efforts. Let me share with you some important reasons, lessons, and experiences why evangelism still works. Some of these must be credited to Oswald J. Smith in his book, *The Passion for Souls*.¹

Firstly, experiencing the power and conversion of the Holy Spirit is the most important ingredient in doing evangelism. It seems that over the years we have forgotten this most fundamental point. We spend a tremendous amount of time in training and equipping our members with methods and techniques – but, while that has its place and is important, the vital power of the Holy Spirit can sometimes be minimised and understated. Without the indwelling power of His presence, we will be over-trained and under-used! Apart from the Spirit of God, we will continue to fiddle with the minuscule.

Secondly, as we try to do evangelism, we will be confronted with unfavourable conditions. You will hear people say, 'Winning souls in Europe is hard. No one will come to the meetings; no one will listen.' The worst is the opposition from those in the Church who are afraid of evangelism. Then comes the age-old killer of enthusiasm: 'What if no one is baptised?' I have learnt in over twenty-eight years of ministry, and from my first evangelistic campaign at the age of sixteen, that effort belongs to us, but success belongs to God. So why be afraid of the unfavourable conditions? They can be changed by the power of prevailing prayer.

Thirdly, in my reflective moments I often cogitate on the question: 'Why is there such a malaise when it comes to evangelism?' My

conclusion is that obedience to the will of God should be a lived experience. Two biblical passages more than adequately sum up why we should obey His will to be co-labourers with Christ. These are Luke 19:10: 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost' (KJV) and 1 Peter 2:9, 10: 'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but

now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy' (NIV). I vividly remember that a student who graduated from the South England Conference School of Evangelism as a Bible worker was studying with thirty students. I asked her why she was dedicating the time to do this, and she said there was a fire burning deep in her to share the Gospel of Jesus with everyone with whom she came into contact. She had recently suffered the bereavement of a closely loved one, and on the morning of the funeral she was giving Bible studies before attending the service. How many would show such passion for the lost?

Fourthly, evangelism brings material as well as spiritual blessings to the local congregation. With the growth of membership, financial resources will increase to take care of local expenses as well as community outreach programmes. Evangelism costs, but it pays. The investment to win one soul pays present and eternal benefits. Let me illustrate this with two experiences. A few years ago, I was invited to conduct a week of evangelistic/revival meetings on a beautiful island in the Caribbean. At the conclusion of the meetings, five people gave their lives to Christ and were baptised. The brethren were rejoicing a bit extra when a certain individual was baptised in the sea. After the service I enquired about this, and was told that our new brother was a man of considerable wealth, a millionaire. The Holy Spirit had converted him and made him a humble Christian. His wife and children also later accepted Christ and were baptised. This family used their wealth to further the cause of Christ. Recently, here in the United Kingdom, God used me again, and this experience was repeated.

So, have you given up on evangelism? Do you think it's dead? Is the problem with God, or with me? God wants to give you a passion for souls: will you accept it?

¹Oswald J. Smith, *The Passion for Souls* (Suffolk, Great Britain: Richard Clay – The Chaucer Press Ltd., 1983)

I need a word, Lord

by Leah Mills



Have you ever felt a desperate need to talk a problem or worry through with someone? We all have one Friend who's always ready and waiting with a listening ear and an understanding heart. He has the wisdom of the ages, and knows what's best for us. Of course, we can talk to Him, but we also need to hear Him speak to us.

I've never forgotten something once said to me by a lovely Christian lady whose advice I listened to as she truly lived her faith.

'Whenever I'm in a difficult situation and don't know what to do and I need an answer quickly, I offer up this prayer: "I need a word, Lord." The "word" will come in various ways. Of course, it might come directly from His Word, but sometimes it will just pop into my head. At other times, a word might jump out at me on the cover of a magazine. On other occasions, it will come from the lips of a friend or even a stranger.' The trick, of course, is first to ask, and then to be listening (or watching) for the 'word from the Lord' when it comes.

Most of the 'words from the Lord' come from the Word of the Lord. However, I don't recommend asking for 'a word from the Lord' and then opening the Bible at random to see where your eyes fall. I did try it once.

I had been asked to preach, an activity with which I am profoundly uncomfortable. It was the Sabbath morning, and nerves were kicking in – big time! I remembered my friend's words. I needed encouragement.

'I wouldn't normally do this, Lord,' I prayed, 'but You know how I'm feeling. I need a word from You to reassure me.'

I opened the J. B. Phillips paraphrase of the New Testament I was holding, and my eyes fell on 1 Corinthians 14:34, which says:

'Let women be silent in church; they are not to be allowed to speak.'

What could I do but laugh? In a strange kind of way, it *was* a word from Him. It took the edge off my nerves before I began my sermon.

God has really spoken to people very directly in this way. I have a friend called Barnabas (his nickname, because he really is a 'son of encouragement'). In his self-imposed role as encourager, he would call a young lady following the break-up of a relationship which had left her feeling very low, and share some words from Scripture to reassure her of God's love for her. One day she told him that she was certain God had abandoned her. Barnabas reminded her of a text he had shared on an earlier occasion: John 3:16. The young lady was anxious to look it up in her Bible while he was still on the phone. There was a gasp! 'God hasn't abandoned me! I've just opened my Bible and that text is right in front of me!' Barnabas

had to wipe a tear from his eye.

Another was in a mission story from Germany. A young man had studied the Bible on his own and come to the conclusion that Saturday was the Sabbath. At first enthused with his discovery, he found a Seventh-day Adventist church and began attending. But it made things difficult at home, so he persuaded himself that keeping Sabbath was not really necessary (even using certain passages of Scripture to confirm his change of heart) and reverted to his old lifestyle.

One Friday evening he was working on his computer when he heard a voice telling him that he should not be working on the Sabbath. Thinking it a flight of fancy, he ignored it, but it came again. In the end, he picked up his Bible and opened it – and was confronted with Isaiah 58:13, 14 (NKJV):

**'If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy day of the LORD honorable,
And shall honor Him,
not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking your own words,
Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;
And I will cause you to ride on
the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage
of Jacob your father.
The mouth of the LORD has spoken.'**

There was no counter argument to that. He switched off his computer, was in church the next day, and has attended ever since.

Yes, sometimes the word from the Word is very direct, pointed and personal.

But at other times it's not so immediate. God often speaks to us through a kind of drip-feed process. We absorb promises, instructions and encouragement as we read day by day. They're stored unconsciously in the data bank, and, when needed, the Holy Spirit calls them to mind. Jesus promised that would happen, didn't He?

There's a statement from Ellen White that almost takes my breath away every time I read it:

'The Bible is God's voice speaking to us just as surely as though we could hear Him with our ears. The word of the living God is not merely written, but spoken. Do we receive the Bible as the oracle of God? If we realised the importance of this Word, with what awe would we open it, and with what earnestness would we search its precepts. The reading and contemplating of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Most High' (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 134).

An audience with the Most High? Do I

always sense that when I open my Bible? Do I always sense Him speaking to me – personally? Or do I sometimes – perhaps all too often – mechanically go through my daily reading without really engaging with it? And then, as James says, promptly forget what I've read? And what future blessings do I lose by approaching it that way? What do I sometimes fail to call to mind because I wasn't concentrating when I first read it?

I remember a hymn I used to sing when I was at school:

**Lord, Thy word abideth,
And our footsteps guideth,
Who its truth believeth,
Light and joy receiveth.**

**When our foes are near us,
Then Thy word doth cheer us,
Word of consolation,
Message of salvation.**

**When the storms are o'er us,
And dark clouds before us,
Then its light directeth,
And our way protecteth.**

**Who can tell the pleasure,
Who recount the treasure
By Thy word imparted
To the simple-hearted?**

**Word of mercy, giving
Succour to the living;
Word of life, supplying,
Comfort to the dying.**

**O that we discerning,
Its most holy learning,
Lord, may love and fear Thee,
Evermore be near Thee!
H. W. Baker (1861)**

In other words, there's a word in the Word for every occasion, for every eventuality. And we're given the needed words, yes, to encourage us and help us, but not just for that. It's not just about receiving, is it? We can be His mouthpieces too, speaking words for Him to others.

As the wise man said:

**'To make an apt answer is a joy to a man,
and a word in season, how good it is!'
(Proverbs 15:23, ESV)**

So let's have our eyes and ears open to whatever words He wants to share with us – and then have the sense and sensitivity to pass them on.

We need a word from You, Lord . . . today and every day.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

On 26 February 2022, following the invasion of Ukraine, The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) scaled up its operations to deploy humanitarian assistance for children and families displaced by the war in Ukraine. ADRA launched a fundraising campaign to strengthen programmes for refugees from Ukraine and other global communities. According to the United Nations, about 100,000 Ukrainians have been forced to flee from their homes. More than 5 million people are expected to seek refuge in other countries.

'ADRA calls for peace and the protection of the millions of people impacted by the crisis in Ukraine. Join us in prayer for the safety and well-being of tens of thousands of children and families who are in harm's way, and for those who have been, are being and will be displaced,' says Michael Kruger, ADRA president. 'We are taking measures to ensure the protection of our staff on the ground and working with trusted partners and the Adventist Church to ensure our humanitarian aid can quickly reach those in need.'

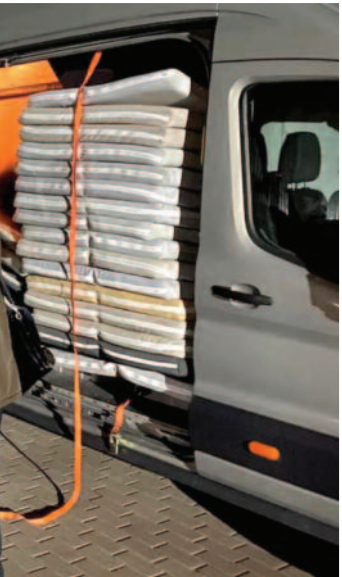
'ADRA is closely monitoring the situation on the ground. There are refugees on the move inside of Ukraine leaving the cities under attack. Many have already crossed the border into Poland or are now making their way to Slovakia, Hungary, and nearby countries,' says Mario Oliveira, ADRA director for emergency management. 'Adventist Church volunteers from those regions are helping us to distribute food, water and hygiene supplies. In Romania, we are already providing shelter to refugees in youth centres, and we expect to accommodate hundreds of families.'

To learn more about ADRA's response, or to make donations to assist with relief efforts in Ukraine and around the world, please go to www.adra.org.uk or donate to ADRA-UK directly through this link:

<https://app.donorfy.com/donate/C4311R6V76/Level3Emergency>.

Thank you for helping.





The February Diversity Lecture – 8 February 2022

Christianity, animals and the environmental crisis

Newbold's first Diversity Lecture of 2022 was about eating animals, and the effect it is having on human life and the deepening environmental crisis. It was a highly informed encouragement to follow traditional Adventist health principles!

The speaker – Professor David Clough, Professor in Theology and Applied Sciences at the University of Aberdeen – has devoted years of study to the place of animals in Christian theology and ethics. His ground-breaking two-volume work, *On Animals: Systematic Theology*, has been called 'indisputably the most important and comprehensive theological treatment of animals to have appeared in any language at any time in the Christian tradition'.

Clough, a Methodist lay preacher, introduced his lecture by recognising Seventh-day Adventists as fellow inheritors of the Wesleyan tradition. He referred to John Wesley's sermon in 1781, 'The Great Deliverance', in which Wesley lamented the cruelty with which animals were treated. 'The cruelties that we visit on animals have multiplied since Wesley's day,' said Clough.

He began his lecture with the first of six questions: 'Do we have time for animal ethics when there are so many other human and social ethical issues to attend to?' Clough suggested various answers to that question. The first was the urgency of the global situation for animals, which he illustrated with some alarming statistics about human consumption of animals. In 1900, farmed animals weighed 3.5 times more than all wild animals. By 2000, the biomass of farmed animals was 24 times the weight of wild animals. 'Unless we pay attention,' said Clough, 'wild animals will become an anachronism.' (Their numbers have decreased by 60% in 50 years.) 'The UN estimates another 50% increase in global meat consumption by the middle of the twenty-first century.'

Clough made it clear that we don't have to choose between different ethical issues, because many of them intersect. For instance, a commitment to employment justice leads to concern for safe and healthy working conditions for abattoir employees. Clough showed that, internationally, workers in meat-processing plants have little job security. Doing high-risk, unpleasant, and physically and mentally dangerous jobs, they are disproportionately likely to be migrants and members of ethnic minorities.

From social issues, the lecture moved to theological issues and the idea mentioned in the Q&A that 'what God has reason to create, God has reason to redeem' (John Hildrop). With multiple references to various biblical books, Clough emphasised the centrality of the Christian doctrine of creation. He showed biblical pictures of a good

God who created humans and animals in a harmonious, non-violent relationship. This God came, in Jesus, to redeem the cosmos and all 'flesh' – not just human flesh. 'God's reconciling work has cosmic dimensions,' said Clough. The Messianic peace in Isaiah's prophecy and in Revelation encompasses the human and the non-human realm. All Christians have a responsibility to join in that work of reconciliation.

One of the most graphic parts of the lecture came next as Professor Clough answered the question, 'What are we currently doing to animals?' He described, and in some cases showed, what human beings are doing to fish and chickens, to pigs, sheep and cows – both dairy and beef. He reminded us that creatures, all of them sentient and (some) highly intelligent and created to live freely, are confined in small spaces and deprived of 'their preferred behaviours'. For market advantage they are confined to small spaces while they are alive and slaughtered by means both greedy and inhumane.

The connection between meat consumption and the climate crisis is massive. 'There is **no** path to net zero while we are doing animal agriculture,' said Clough. Globally and locally, rivers are being polluted by industrial animal agriculture, and the land that we are taking away from the rainforest is impacting the survival of indigenous people. Then followed these amazing statistics: 'We are feeding 33% of our cereal crops to farmed animals. If we changed this we could feed 2.4 billion more people. Water security is at risk. It takes 20 times more water to produce 1kg of beef than the same nutrition from plant-sourced food.'

This behaviour has negative effects not only on animals, but also on human health.

Xenobiotic diseases, like COVID-19, which resulted from the transmission of infectious agents from one species to another, is one of the impacts nearest to home. The feeding of antibiotics to animals is resulting in the growth of antibiotic resistance in both them and human beings. Without effective antibiotics, pandemics could be bigger and more destructive than those we have already seen.

Professor Clough finished his lecture on a practical note, asking, 'What should we do?' Clough recognised Seventh-day Adventists as being 'significantly ahead of other Christians in having thought about diet and faith'. He advocated a vegetarian or flexitarian diet to give our fellow creatures the opportunity to flourish. He called on his fellow Christians to source their food from higher welfare sources and avoid factory-farmed products. He offered various resources – a recent document, 'The Christian Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare', obtainable through various websites, and more help and practical ideas on *CreatureKind* and *Defaultveg.org*.

The Q&A session discussed secular and other traditions for humane animal ethics. It looked at the perceived tension in Genesis between dominion and stewardship. It explored the contribution of a sacrificial atonement system to animal cruelty and hierarchies in nature. It considered the tension between apocalyptic views of the end times and contemporary concern for animals and other fellow creatures. It discussed the destruction of domestic and global natural habitats, UK food security and tree-planting and the negative effects of some alternative diet foods, such as soya and almond milk. It looked at who benefits from the industrial animal agriculture and the effects of powerful and influential lobbies on government of mostly white male capitalists from the global north who are set on maintaining the status quo. It concluded with a description of Professor Clough's Christmas dinner and his expression of delight in both cooking and eating good food!

A recording of the full lecture, including the Q&A session, can be heard on the Newbold College of Higher Education Facebook page and on the College website at www.newbold.ac.uk/diversity-centre/.

HELEN PEARSON



Newbold
Diversity
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Diversity Lectures
Spring 2022

**Diversity
Centre
lectures**

**Theme – Faith and Environmental Action –
Diverse Responses**

**Tuesday 12 April, 7.30pm GMT
22 April, Earth Day**

Speaker:
Ruth Valerio –
Global Advocacy and Influencing Director for Tearfund

To register, go to:
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1yQ1Aw2ES1WdhDL



East London School of Music Rejoicing in the mercy and power of Almighty God



Alexandra Soprano



Yeron Roro

The East London School of Music (ELSOM) was formed to provide an affordable, stimulating musical training platform of the highest standard to music students of all levels and all ages.

From its inception in April 2015, the school's motto has been: *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'* (Philippians 4:13, NKJV).

With this mandate, our relaxing and supportive environment allows students and tutors to flourish and work together to enhance the students' musical abilities, including composition and performance. All age groups are given the opportunity to be creative while learning the proper way to play an instrument, sing or compose music.

At ELSOM all students receive high-quality classical music tuition. Our school is a non-profit musical organisation. Therefore, you will not be paying huge amounts of money, as we keep our fees low. Our primary aim is to give quality musical training that is both affordable and enjoyable.

The school is managed by ELSOM's committee, under the chair of Pastor Nerine Barrett; managing director and piano and music theory tutor, Fiona D.



Isaac on the violin



Titus and Lilia



Jose and flute students

Pacquette; and Kieron Daniels, assistant manager and violin tutor.

A close relationship has developed between the School of Music, the Clapton Community Seventh-day Adventist church, and the local community.

The pandemic did not close the music school: an initial Google classroom was put in place, but face-to-face classes soon resumed.

Enrolment and fees

ELSOM has the full support of Area 6C and the London Lay Advisory Council (LAAC). In addition, Hackney Council's mayor and councillors, who always attend our concerts, fully endorse the music school's programmes and its influence in the community.

The target intake of students has almost been attained, with only three less than a hundred.

On a termly basis, fund providers are subsidising the fees for low-income parents in order to facilitate music lessons for talented students with the passion to excel.

Voice training is offered under the tutelage of Chikezie Chike-Michael.

Concerts

Hackney's mayor and councillors joined us on Sunday 21 November 2021 for a Baroque Music Festival, organised by Kieron Daniels – the landmark event to end an outstanding academic year.

In addition, the ELSOM Orchestra, combined with the famous and longstanding HACS Philharmonic Strings and Woodwind Ensemble, blended with voices as a large and ethnically diverse congregation of church and community members sang Christmas carols in a service attended by the mayor and his entourage, who commended ELSOM's work. Pastor Nerine Barrett's sermonette reminded the congregation that the greatest Christmas gift of all is Jesus.

Achievements and accomplishments in 2021

- Clapton Community Church's E5 Baby Bank outreach programme provides practical help for deprived families and refugees.
- Young Afghan refugees sitting in the precincts of the church embraced the soothing sounds of classical music from the music classrooms, as they gave them hope for the future in their new country. This has been very positive, because twelve Afghan refugees and deprived youngsters in the community aged 8-10 have now joined the School of Music.
- ELSOM is now registered with Trinity College as an accredited music examination centre not only for ELSOM students, but also for music students living in the surrounding geographical areas. There are two sites: Clapton Community Church for practical examinations, and London Ghana Church in Plaistow for music theory examinations.
- ELSOM has registered as a charity with the Charity Commission.
- The restored and recently installed pipe organ, the stellar workmanship of pipe organ builder Martin Renshaw, is one of ELSOM's two newest instruments (see the January 2021 *MESSENGER* magazine, page 12). The second newest instrument is the oboe.
- ELSOM now offers tuition in the piano, pipe organ, violin, viola, double bass, classical guitar, flute, recorder and saxophone, in addition to voice training and music theory.
- The Royal College of Organists has provided not only a two-year bursary for the ten pipe organ students, but also an excellent and experienced organ tutor, Nicholas Morris, who teaches these students twice weekly.
- Every student passed the March and November 2021 Trinity College examinations, demonstrating the blessed reality of ELSOM's motto.

ELSOM's advanced students are now playing with the Hampstead Adventist Choral Society (HACS) Philharmonic Orchestra. The new 2022 academic year resumed on 9 January.

We constantly rejoice and praise the Lord for the growth and successes of ELSOM as a centre of influence in this borough of London.

Website: www.elsomonline.org.uk
Email: elsomonline2015@gmail.com

DOREEN I. FRAY (TRUSTEE AND SECRETARY TO THE ELSOM COMMITTEE)



All performers joined in the final item, conducted by Molly Johnson

Weston-super-Mare concert

So very often young people hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons: antisocial behaviour, knife crime, the drug scene. So it was refreshing to hear of two young people who on the evening of Saturday 15 January organised a concert to raise funds to help members in Yeovil purchase a church building.

Molly Johnson and Alastair Boyd are members of the

Weston-super-Mare Seventh-day Adventist church. Molly is studying music at Bristol University, and Alastair is studying for his A levels at Weston College.

Because the anticipated audience was larger than the Weston-super-Mare church could comfortably hold, a local Baptist church kindly allowed the concert to be held in their premises.

Nineteen young people, living in different parts of Gloucestershire, Avon, Wiltshire and Somerset, took part as vocalists and instrumentalists.

Nearly £1,300 has been raised thus far from donations given at the concert and funds which are still coming in on the Just Giving page.

CYNTHIA SOUTHCOTT

Camp Hill soup kitchen is 30 years young!

The Camp Hill Church Saturday evening community soup kitchen has now been running for a period of 30 years.

Almost every Saturday evening since December 1991, sandwiches, piping hot homemade vegetable soup and bags of biscuits have been prepared in the well-equipped church kitchen. Rotating teams of volunteers cook and pack the food, along with two towers of polystyrene cups and two-litre-sized bottles of squash and water, into the church van. The drivers attend on a rotational basis, and each church department is asked to cover one month of each year to support the core team for the needy people who attend every Saturday evening.

A folding table is slid into the aisle, and, after a prayer inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit, up to ten volunteers plus a caravan of a few others in their own cars head to the city centre to distribute the food and drinks to waiting members of the community in a spot near the back exit of Marks and Spencer's that we have designated for this mission.

Back in 1991, the Camp Hill Youth Department, then led by Christine Burt (née Sinclair), wanted to start a community project. As a university student in London, Christine gained experience in community work with the late Sister Myrtle Roole MBE. They were based at the Stratford church, East London, and this inspired her to start a project in Birmingham when she returned to the second city. As recently weds, Christine and her husband Kenneth initiated the project with faith and drove it for the first few years until it became an established outreach programme.

Wanting to help the homeless in Birmingham city centre, but not knowing how to start a soup kitchen or get people to attend, they prayed about their project and it was endorsed by the Camp Hill church board. The youth and a number of dedicated church members supported the fundraising efforts to purchase an insulated urn.

The youth department sought permission from Birmingham City Council, and were required to comply with food hygiene regulations before beginning this new and exciting work for Christ. Christine recalled the late wintry Saturday night when the team first set up in Digbeth. They were unsure of how to attract the attention of those who would use their services. A man sitting in the bus depot was approached by a nervous team member. He was a seasonal worker travelling the country. He happily accepted soup and sandwiches, and suggested the best time and location for the soup kitchen. He also offered to 'spread the word' among those he knew on the streets. She reflected that there were more volunteers than customers on that first



evening. True to the advice they received, the following Saturday found a larger group of customers awaiting the arrival of the soup kitchen!

Weeks turned to months, and the customer numbers steadily grew to more than sixty on a regular basis. The individuals spoke with the team and shared their pressing needs – not only for food and drink, but also for clothing, sleeping bags, toiletries and underwear – some wanted confirmation they were being given only vegetarian soup and sandwiches!

In the early 1990s there were very few other similar groups working in the city centre. With a lot of need in the community, the demand was overwhelming at times. The work of volunteer groups like those from Camp Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church brought attention to the needs of the homeless across the city, spurring other faith groups and charities to take action.

In the early years, Camp Hill members would provide produce or funds on a weekly basis for the project, some quietly pushing envelopes of money into the hands of the leaders. This enabled the soup kitchen to periodically provide more than mere soup and sandwiches. Camp Hill and other local church Pathfinders often contributed to meal preparation and distribution as part of their Community Service Honours requirement. Successive leaders have enhanced the service by enlisting Marks and Spencer, Costco and Pret-a-Manger as well as local grocers for food donations.

Some of the customers had homes but little food, furniture or household goods. Addresses were taken, and volunteers dutifully visited the addresses within a week and supplied the need from church volunteers where possible.

Other customers were suffering economic hardship, marital problems, recent release from prison, drug dependency and mental

health issues. In spite of their burdens, they were polite, helpful to the team and appreciative of the meals and other donations. They were orderly, peaceable, patient and grateful. The customers respected our belief in God and the presence of women and children; there was always someone within their ranks reminding others to curb their language and put away drugs and alcohol. Attendees began to relate with them on first-name terms. On a few occasions 'regulars' came to the Camp Hill Church on Sabbaths, asking for the kind volunteers they had not seen at the soup kitchen for several weeks.

Volunteers often share encouragement, counsel or items of literature with customers. Sometimes there is singing and prayer.

COVID-19 exacerbated the needs of the community. The Camp Hill soup kitchen has seen some individuals build their lives back, and they are grateful for God's leading in this ministry.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL

Camp Hill foodbank

Valerie Downer, Yvonne Smith, Elder Vivia Salcedo, Azed N'gona, Janett Mullings-Smith, Jillian and Clifton Hayden, Andrew Jordan and Gloria Sewell established the Camp Hill Foodbank Project near the start of the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown when a number of people lost their jobs. The church acted promptly, and Valerie has been blessed.

Once a week her team run the foodbank between 10am and 1pm. At 8am Andrew Jordan and a few others start cooking meals for about 100 people. Some of these are given to in-person attendees or 'walk-ins', individuals who travel to the church on foot or by bicycle. They sign in at the entrance in the basement of the church, providing their names and contact details and listing the cereals, bread, sugar, milk, vegetables, fruit and tinned food they need. This is bagged up for them to take away. They can take a container of hot food if they wish. There is also provision of a few toiletries.

A hot meal, groceries and toiletries are delivered to the homes of those who are unable to get out of their homes due to disability or isolation, being dropped off by a handful of volunteers each week.

One man in his mid-thirties had been physically assaulted some years ago, suffering a fractured skull and a long-term brain injury, impaired use of his legs and reduced cognition. This affected his ability to work. He was clearly still quite traumatised.

A second gentleman had suffered a work injury as a self-employed contractor. He was taken to hospital by a colleague who left him with the nursing and medical staff. When he came round he was at his partner's property with no recollection of what had happened.

The foodbank would gladly receive support from anyone willing to volunteer their time to cook, shop for provisions or interact with walk-ins at Camp Hill Church.

Help is also sought from volunteers who are willing to use their own vehicles to take food to homes in Birmingham, typically no more than 6 miles from the church base, with an average of six or seven drop-offs. More drop-offs for housebound individuals (some of whom are Adventists) would be possible with more willing volunteers – it touches their hearts in their homes and reminds them that God loves them.

One of the drivers, Duran, was required to make five stops on one particular Sunday. His main contact was a Muslim lady with five children who requested seven packets of hot vegetarian food. The children were delighted as he handed over the meals that would keep their energy levels up for at least a day. Jeff has also been a long-term driver for the foodbank delivery – he likes driving for his work, and is humbled to drive to help the community.

The impact of COVID-19 is still weighing heavily on many people in the Birmingham community, and although the pandemic appears to be settling down there is evidently a need for the foodbank going forwards. If you are able to commit even a few Sundays per year to this effort or contribute financially, please contact Valerie Downer on 07845202637 or Yvonne Smith on 07713554095.

Hopefully this article will touch the hearts of those who can do and give more to help isolated and less privileged people in our society – sometimes only a few doors away.

JACQUIE HALLIDAY-BELL



When the Spirit Moves

Pastor Richard Daly interviews Pastor Vince Goddard about his new book

Richard Daly: Pastor Goddard, congratulations on your new book, *When the Spirit Moves*. Can you tell us about it? What motivated you to write the book?

Vince Goddard: People hearing about my life knew my experiences were extraordinary. My sister, Marlene, even bought me several recorders to record events that happened when I moved from place to place. David King, an old friend, and I collaborated and produced the first draft, and then I took it from there.

RD: What is the book about in summary?

VG: It's a light-hearted, wistful recollection of unrelated experiences viewed through the lens of faith. It's my life as a poor Jamaican-born Commonwealth English disaffected youth, who manages to do a U-turn to become a dynamic force for change in the United

Kingdom and abroad as a pastor, evangelist and vice chancellor, but everything is executed by the Holy Spirit.

RD: Why do you think this book could benefit someone else?

VG: It's a book of hope – written for those who cannot see how their life fits together. Jeremiah 29:11 says that God has a purpose, a plan for your life. Things could have very much swung against our survival. I might have died at three months old, but I am here looking back and seeing the invisible mix of Holy Spirit and flesh perform mysterious wonders in my life. Other people have a similar story, too.

RD: Can my non-Christian friend benefit from this book?

VG: Yes. Although my faith leads me, I am a

practical man of action. Once I decide something, I carry it out with the input and help of others to its conclusion. It carries a sense of accomplishment, however small the task. The book is about having an open mind and taking risks; being comfortable with being uncomfortable, until the evidence shows that the risk was worth taking.

RD: How can people get a copy of your book?

VG: It's available from Book Depository, Waterstones, Amazon and several online stores in paperback, and as an e-book. I'm planning to work on an audiobook, too. More information will be available from my website: <https://pastorvince.com>.



Youth and teens lead Sabbath programme

Saturday 22 January marked Holloway's first departmental programme of 2022, a youth and teens-led service in partnership with the youth and teens of Stoke Newington Seventh-day Adventist Church. Following the roles of the senior pastor, Pastor Kwesi Moore, and intern pastor, Pastor Hina Ahmed, in pastoring both churches, this was a perfect opportunity to express genuine unity among the teens and youth from both churches, and also to enable our youth and teens to feel more included in the organising and delivery of the church service programmes. After all, our teens and youth are our future, aren't they?

The theme for the day was 'Finding My Identity', the speaker being Stoke Newington's very own Asher Mckenzie. Asher centred his sermon around the story of Gideon, with his dynamic youthful preaching style really bringing the message of Gideon home:

- Like many of us, Gideon was trying his

best not to be found and was afraid of the Midianites, but God still sent an angel to him because He had a purpose for him.

- The way you feel about God doesn't change who God is.
- Your circumstances cannot change who you are as a son or daughter of God.
- If you begin to embrace who you are in Christ Jesus, your life will change by the grace of God.

The message resonated with the congregation, young and senior, and was a perfect reminder that the Lord can use us, no matter our background or perceived human inadequacies.

Physical food swiftly followed the spiritual food; and, as the afternoon wore on, it



was heart-warming to see the teens and youth come together from both churches, fellowshiping together with love and in one accord, even spending time in some fun and games after sunset! Praise God for a hugely Spirit-filled and successful day.

SAFFRON PALMER

Youth matters

Youth ministry matters; it always has, and it always will. Many years of denominational youth ministry have clearly shown me that young people are a number-one priority for the church.

This is not an idle claim, but is one that I can personally attest to. As a young community teenager, I attended a Seventh-day Adventist school. My parents wanted the best they could provide, and sent me there to gain a good education, rather than for any direct interest in the church. However, during those pivotal adolescent years, my life was to change dramatically.

Noticing a growing interest, my father once said to me, 'You'll never become a Seventh-day Adventist, because if anyone offers you a game of sport on the Sabbath, you'll play it.' He was both right and wrong. He was right that at the time sport was my number-one priority, but wrong in that the influence of the Holy Spirit – working through a group of contagious Adventist school friends, together with a dedicated and very relational youth director – was changing my life profoundly.

This was youth ministry at its best – and, to cut a long story short, I came to the point where I knew that I would put God first in my life. As a result, my life



changed dramatically. I went on to study for the ministry and spend thirty years working in the Youth Ministries Department. Here I have seen first-hand that, although times may change, the relational needs of young people remain the same.

Through life-transforming youth events, young people have the unique opportunity to meet and mix with other like-minded youngsters. These include local church youth days, conference-wide youth rallies and camps, and national and international youth congresses and Pathfinder camporees. The importance of these events can be attested to through a series of very important youth studies over the years.

The Valuegenesis Europe Youth Survey (2007) involved more than 6,000 young adults aged between 14 and 25, and revealed not only that youth ministry definitely has an impact, but also that youth

ministry events were rated very highly, as '74.6% of those that actually experienced such activities say that the youth ministry of the union or conference is important because it fosters their faith development.'¹ Faith development is important at all stages of our life experience, but is most crucial during the teenage and young adult years, when young people are making so many life-defining decisions.

I have seen first-hand that young people definitely look forward to events such as international youth congresses and Pathfinder camporees. To be part of a faith-affirming event involving hundreds or possibly thousands of other like-minded young people is inspirational. I remember the experience of my first international camporee, sitting around the evening campfire bowl and being awed by the atmosphere. This is exactly

the same with youth congresses, and I made up my mind that as long as I was involved in youth ministry I would make sure that other young people had the opportunity for the same experiences.

What is so good to see is that the Youth Ministries calendar has grown and developed over the years to include many faith-building opportunities for all. Here are some that will soon take place:

- 16 April 2022 – PBE ABE TED Final (we are hoping for Belfast, Irish Mission as a location)
- 21 May 2022 – World Adventurer Day
- 19-26 June 2022 – NAD and TED Master Guide Camp
- 2-6 August 2022 – European Youth Congress, 16-35 age group
- 17 September 2022 – World Pathfinder Day
- 7 January – TED Vision Song Contest, where youth are asked to write original content as we want to publish a music album every year

Additionally, the One Year in Mission and Service third group is commencing in September. The good news is that this is fully sponsored: <https://www.newbold.ac.uk/courses/one-year-in-mission-and-service/>.

In conclusion, a parent who

was very involved in helping young people in his local church once said to me that life is a cycle. He was helping my generation of young people, and he said that in turn I would help my children's group. I've never forgotten these very wise words, and I pray for the current generation of youth leaders from

the local church onwards as they help our young people to establish, keep and share their faith. God bless our youth.

PAUL TOMPKINS

¹Stephan Sigg, 'A Spiritual Home for Young People? The Adventist Youth and Their Church As Seen from the Valuegenesis Europe Data', Part 111, *Spes Christiana* vol. 24



SEC Youth Leadership Conference

Youth Ministries launched their first event for 2022, 'Youth Leadership Conference: Taking the Risk', at the newly built Hays Wood Retreat. With more than sixty youth leaders from across the SEC in attendance, the event met its objectives of allowing youth leaders the opportunity to share their experiences relating to current trends, challenges and successes in youth ministries, while providing resources, support, training, and inspirational messages to empower, inspire and revive. 'Refreshing', 'Spirit-filled', and 'amazing inspiration' were some of the terms used to describe the impact it made on the lives of those in attendance.

YLC were humbled to have keynote speakers Shannon Alexander, a specialist in youth behaviour; Pastor Raafat Kamal, the Trans-European Division President; Samuel Semaluka, who is currently studying at Newbold College; and the SEC Youth Director, our very own Pastor Anthony Fuller. The youth conference was also blessed with a special appearance from BUC Youth Director, Pastor Kevin Johns, and Mrs Johns.

The weekend put a large emphasis on practical, everyday prayer exercises and the importance of Christ-centred youth ministries. The different topics included 'Youth and You', 'Fearless Leadership', 'Discipleship in the Twenty-first Century', 'Don't Judge a Book By its Cover', and 'The Necessity of Faith'. Each presentation was relevant and centred on challenging the youth leaders that leadership, primarily, is the overflow of a growing experience with Christ personally. In addition to the presentations, youth resources were given out, and the presence of Trevor Johnson with the Stanborough Press allowed each youth leader to leave fully equipped to take their faith to the next level.

In one of the interactive sessions, 'Don't Judge a Book By its Cover', youth leaders were invited to share past experiences of church life, which led to a discussion on youth leadership and mental health. Anthony Fuller commented that emotional well-being and self-care are just as important as health and spiritual well-being. Ashleigh Thomas, who leads the mental health initiative for the Youth Department, shared the news that more than forty youth volunteers had already been trained in mental health first aid within the SEC, and that Youth Ministries are preparing to launch the SEC youth listening line website later this year.

SEC Youth Director Anthony Fuller closed the conference, committing to continue to work with the youth leaders across the SEC, and was encouraged that more than forty youth leaders had committed to the Senior Youth Leadership Award specialist programme.

SEC YOUTH MINISTRIES

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Please respond by **30 April 2022**.



The evolution of normal

by Pastor Nathan Stickland

I recently saw a T-shirt which stated: 'Normal isn't coming back, but Jesus is': clearly a Christian T-shirt, playing on the recent disruption of the pandemic. Over the last couple of years we've all had to deal with lockdown restrictions and other limitations. At the time of writing it looks like the UK is manoeuvring to lift COVID-19 restrictions under the premise of learning to live with the virus. In these following paragraphs I wish to ponder on the desire or necessity of returning to something we were used to – our old normal.

Working practices, at least for desk workers, are experiencing variations of work location and working hours at a steady pace. I know of people who now mostly work from home and only have a hot desk to attend when they visit their workplace. Spare rooms and garden offices are the new locations of productivity. There has been an increase in the number of online searches for accommodation out of town, with speculation that that is spawned from people now working from home but wishing to be in a less built-up environment. Within a global church organisation some employees are being given the opportunity of a hybrid working arrangement, being able to work from home on certain days. The saving on travel is beneficial and in some cases significant.

I have read about some workplaces experimenting with working hours and the number of days worked in a week, so it was no surprise to me to read of this exploration within the workplace and some companies in the UK. Some industries are used to this condensed working practice, working longer but fewer days in the week. Again, some institutions in our church work with this arrangement. While this could cause some challenges for working parents, the reduction of travel time and expenses seems to benefit each employee.

I know someone who gloried in the benefit of working from home during the UK's lockdown. The gift of six hours a week not having to commute and the saving of expenses in travel have been well received; but with that arrangement having been rescinded, the expense of time and money causes us to question why we should wish to return to normal.

While emerging out of the lockdown, we may have heard the reference to 'a new normal'. So I put it to you: what have you retained and what have you relinquished in your evolution of normal?

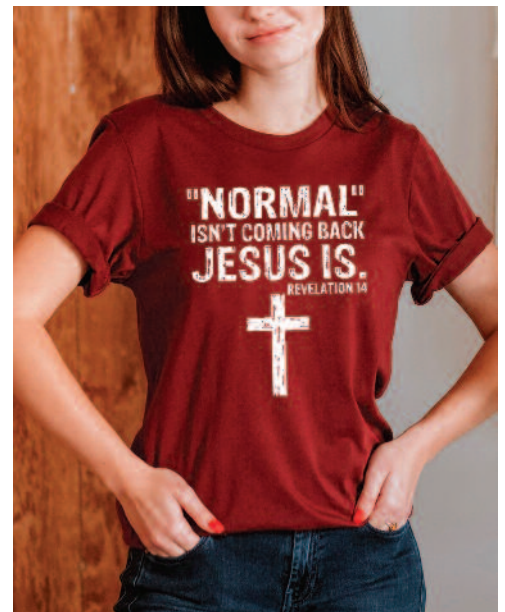
In her article, Rebecca Collins Jordan wrote about lockdown and how she learnt an important spiritual lesson from the experience. She talks about being cloistered in her home; then she realised the benefits of this monastic experience. She wrote about how she continued to work, but came to realise this new opportunity to pray. Work would always be there, but maybe not always this extended opportunity for prayer. She used the extra time for an extended prayer life.¹

Maybe in the past a reference to someone working from home was always accompanied by a wink and a nudge, suggesting that really someone was having a lazy day with minimal work. From my reading of companies who have previously brought in working from home, sometimes for whole departments, they found that productivity actually increased. This sounds like a double win for employers, if they don't have the expense of running an office and their productivity increases. But this can be a win for the employee too, if you invest that saving into personal productivity, especially when it comes to benefiting your spiritual life.

Anne Buckland, in her article about the improvements to family life now that she's working from home, doesn't talk at all about the

improvements to spiritual life, but she does give the reflection that 'change isn't always easy, but it's often how God teaches us what's important.'² What has God been teaching you through this pandemic about what is important in your life?

Soon, as we emerge from pandemic restrictions, we can consider how we wish our new normal to evolve – and, indeed, if we should be content with our condition of 'normal', as I'm sure we could all refine our lives to better benefit God, others, and then ourselves. Jesus is coming back, but in the meantime let us consider the evolution of normal, and how we may benefit spiritually through changes in work practice and family life.



¹<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/young-voices/cloisters-our-homes-shelter-place-vocation>

²https://www.womanalive.co.uk/opinion/working-from-home-has-improved-my-family-life-so-much-that-ill-never-go-back-into-the-office/6088.article?utm_source=Premier%20Christian%20Media&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=13004844_Voice%20of%20hope%2021.02.2022&dm_i=16DQ,7QQL0,LDQ1QX,VKCAD,1

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by Sharon Platt-McDonald

Are you well?

Part 1 – Mental health indicators

Among the wellness workshops that I deliver, there is one I have captioned: 'R U Well?' It explores how to safeguard well-being and recognise when your health is not at its optimum.

We commence this 'Enhancing Health' mini-series – titled 'Are you well?' – with a look at 'mental health indicators' that suggest you may require additional support as a preventive measure for emotional and mental well-being.

The Mental Health Foundation highlights the disparities that can arise between us regarding our mental health, stating: 'When we experience good mental health, we can make full use of our abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life and play a full part in our families, workplaces and communities, as well as among friends. Despite our mental health being such an important personal and social resource, the extent of mental health problems in the population means that too many of us are struggling, rather than thriving and reaching our full potential.'¹

How do you know when you are slipping into poor mental health? A good starting place is to recognise when you are struggling to cope with life in general, due to mounting pressures.

Are you coping?

The Samaritans² list the following indicators that you may be struggling with everyday life:

- Lacking energy or feeling tired
- Feeling exhausted all the time
- Experiencing 'brain fog' – finding it hard to think clearly
- Finding it hard to concentrate

- Feeling restless and agitated
- Feeling tearful, wanting to cry all the time
- Not wanting to talk to or be with people
- Not wanting to do things you usually enjoy
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope with feelings
- Finding it hard to cope with everyday things and tasks
- Experiencing 'burnout'

If you are concerned about experiencing any of the above, book an appointment with your GP for a health check, and to talk through how you are feeling.

Mental health support

Thankfully, there are key agencies that you can access for support if you feel you are not functioning at your optimum emotionally or mentally. Here are a few helpful organisations:

- **Mental Health England** – this organisation runs a mental health first aid course³ for individuals, workplaces, schools and so on, highlighting preventive measures to safeguard well-being, and interventions for declining mental health.
- **Mind** – <https://www.mind.org.uk> – offers information and advice for better mental health.
- **Local Minds** – <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds/> – provide mental health services in local communities across England and Wales.
- **The Mental Health Foundation** – <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk> – gives access to a range of supportive materials and research for good mental health.

Good health!

¹<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/prevention> ²<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-having-difficult-time/signs-you-may-be-struggling-cope/>
³<https://mhfaengland.org/individuals/>



Earth and Soul 12 – 'A net-zero life'

by David Wright

'For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required.' (Luke 12:48, NKJV)

An economist, Robert Heilbroner, once asked those living on the richest half of the planet to imagine what it might be like to adopt the lifestyle of the poorest half. Ronald Sider put it this way (adapted):¹

'The removals men enter your house, beginning with the furniture, and everything goes – beds, chairs, tables, television, lamps – leaving some old blankets, a table and a chair. With the bureaus go all the clothes, but each family member may keep their oldest suit or dress, a shirt or a blouse. One pair of shoes remains – for the head of the house.

'Next, all kitchen appliances are removed, and cupboards are emptied, leaving a box of matches and small bags of flour, sugar, and salt. The mouldy potatoes in the bin are tonight's meal. Everything else goes – meat, fresh vegetables, canned and frozen goods, biscuits, sweets – all except a handful of onions and dried beans.

'All rooms are stripped, the bathroom is dismantled, running water is shut off, and electrics are removed. Now it's time to take the house. Don't worry – you can move into the garden shed. Next, communications – newspapers, magazines, books, television, computer, mobile – you won't miss them, as literacy goes too.

'Now government services – no more postmen, firemen, police, nearby hospitals or doctors. There's a school, but miles away. The nearest clinic and midwife can be reached by bicycle, if only you had one. Finally, money – you can keep a £3.00 cash hoard – for the whole family.'

Extreme poverty is defined as living on less than £1.30 per day, which currently applies to a billion people. Around 900 million are hungry every day, despite enough food being produced globally to feed everyone, and around 50,000 children die daily from

preventable disease. Both world hunger and extreme poverty are again on the rise due to a combination of the pandemic and climate change. The World Bank suggests COVID-19 alone will force another 150 million into poverty this year.

The removals outcome above will disturb most of us in Britain, but for a quarter of our global neighbours it's a daily reality – or, for some, even an improvement.

With climate impact now grudgingly recognised, it seems that few living in 'developed countries' have fully digested the direct link with our own lifestyle, or entirely understand the likely changes to that lifestyle when COP26 actions are undertaken.²

Adventist stewardship often appears to be all about money and returning tithes, yet biblical stewardship embraces everything that God has given us – time, opportunities, abilities, possessions – and, yes, the earth and its natural resources. So is it time for conference stewardship departments to add creation care to their agenda, and for each conference this year to consider how Adventists in Britain intend – personally and corporately – to respond to climate change and raise their efforts in caring for God's creation?

¹Ronald Sider, 'Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger', 1977

²Adam Vaughn, 'A Day in a Net-zero Life', *New Scientist*, 4/9/2021

NEC Youth Relationship Weekend: 'Past + Present = Future'

by Dr Wynny Campbell

What better way to engage the youth in the first church-based NEC youth event after nearly two years than with a relationship weekend hosted by Winson Green Seventh-day Adventist Church in Birmingham? The two-day event on 11 and 12 February 2022 started on Friday evening with three presentations provided by the NEC Youth Director, Pastor Micah Campbell, and his wife, Dr Wynny Campbell, along with a powerful Divine Service sermon delivered by Wesley Bishop, a Theology graduate from Newbold College. In addition, a panel discussion rounded off the programme, enabling couples to discuss the importance of relationships, singleness and God's plan for our lives.

The aim of the weekend was to refresh the way that relationships are presented to today's youth, reminding them of the relevance of the biblical principles of courtship and dating with science and psychological studies. Topics covered included the concept of 'Learning to Be Whole' as an individual, 'From Singleness into Relationships', and 'How One's Past

Trauma Can Affect Future Relationships' – particularly with attachment styles. 'What's Your History?' explored the conversation courting couples should have regarding their health, covering physical, mental, family and sexual history. The weekend event concluded with a panel discussion based on relationship questions from both the attendees and those watching online.

The weekend gave all who attended the opportunity to make new connections and strengthen old ones. It was refreshing for all present to participate in powerful praise and worship after so long away from church, with a wonderful team coordinated by the NEC Music Sponsor, Joel Robinson. The general feeling of the weekend was positive, and it encouraged the youth to recognise that they are important and valued, and that God has a purpose for their lives and the relationships they embark on.

For any who may have missed the weekend, it is available to watch online on the NEC youth YouTube page (@NECYouth).



Letter to the editor

Are we sleep-walking into the Sunday-Sabbath trap?

Dear Editor,

The United Nations Climate Change Conference COP21, held in Paris in December 2015, was the launching pad for the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which states: 'The interdependence forces us to think of one world, for a common project.' The Pope in this letter calls for one 'to manage the global economy' and says 'there is urgent need of a true world political authority'.

However, in *Laudato Si'* is enshrined the Sunday-Sabbath promulgation to save the planet. This means that we as a church need to be careful. By all means, let's do our bit to 'reduce, reuse, recycle' and protect the environment as far as possible . . . but we should not jettison our doctrinal teaching and understanding of eschatological prophecy by subscribing to the popular approach about saving the planet. God the Creator categorically says: 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev. 21:5, KJV). It's a divine imperative.

Since *Laudato Si'*, the Sunday movement has been on steroids! The day of choice to rest the planet is Sunday – lockdown Sundays. Today they talk in terms of climate Sundays, work-free Sundays. Rome pontificates: 'Use pandemic to give the environment a vital rest' (Frances D'Emilio, 1 Sept. 2020). 'In the past year, 1,600 churches have joined together to keep Climate Sunday. Thirty denominations and organisations have joined the movement. We've used this time to prepare our community ahead of COP26 to protect God's creation' (Hannah Brown, The Joint Public Issues Team). EU bishops have called for nations to protect 'work-free Sunday'.¹ Forty religious leaders, representing 84% of world population, and ten scientists met with the Pope on 4 October 2021 in the Vatican. They signed the *Laudato Si'* protocol on climate change.

Eventually, we will be de-platformed if we preach the three angels' messages, which call the world to worship the Creator. True and false worship will collide. The everlasting Gospel proclamation will be labelled 'hate speech'. This is why Ellen White says: 'The third angel's message increases in importance as we near the close of this earth's history' (MS 135, 1902). 'The third angel's message is to be given in straight lines' (*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 37). 'There has been too much beating about the bush in the proclamation of the third angel's message' (MS 16, 1900).

Furthermore, COVID-19 has turbocharged final events and placed a chokehold on the global economy, and on civil and religious liberties. 'This a time for solidarity, not divisiveness. Kindness, not hatred. As one humanity we can fight the COVID-19 pandemic,' says Pope Francis (Miguel Angel Moratinos, UNAOC representative).

Hence, Ellen G. White's statement is so relevant to our time: 'Marvellous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Roman Church. . . . All that she desires is vantage ground' (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 580, 581). Climate change and COVID-19 give Rome a unique global platform ('vantage ground') to promote the Sunday-Sabbath to the whole world.

May we be vigilant, by God's grace, and reach out lovingly and intentionally to those who should 'come out of Babylon' and pin their hope on Christ and Him alone as the Saviour of mankind.

TRISTAN CUNIAH, WOOD GREEN CHURCH

¹<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2021-03/comece-european-sunday-alliance-eu-synchronize-free-time.html>



Notification of death

Kathleen Best We were saddened to learn of the death of Kathleen Marie Best (née Edwards), who passed away on Thursday 23 December 2021. Kathleen was born on 13 July 1936 in Kingston, Jamaica. On 27 October 1963 she married David Best, and their union brought about three children: Tony, Arnold and Jaqueline.

Kathleen worked as a stenographer before entering employment within the British Union Conference (BUC) on 5 September 1975. She worked as the cashier for Stanborough School, a position she held for almost 29 years before retiring from active employment on 30 June 2004.

Kathleen will be remembered for her kind spirit and motherly interest in the students of the school. She was generous, conscientious and hard-working, and modelled love to her family and friends.

We now look forward, with her family, to Christ's soon return and that glorious resurrection day. Please pray for Kathleen's children and their families during this difficult period.

JACQUES VENTER (BUC ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY)

Rosaleen Gill We were saddened to learn of the death of Rosaleen Anne Gill, who passed away on Friday 24 December 2021. Rosaleen was born on 17 July 1937 in Morpeth, Northumberland to Richard and Elsie. On 10 January 1955 she married Alan Gill.

Rosaleen worked as a teacher before entering employment within the British Union Conference (BUC) on 1 September 1992. She worked as the headteacher for Stanborough Primary School until 31 December 1998, when she retired from active employment.

Rosaleen will be remembered for her kind spirit. She was generous, conscientious and hard-working, and modelled love to her family and friends.

We now look forward, with her family, to Christ's soon return and that glorious resurrection day. Please pray for Alan, Rosaleen's husband, and their family during this difficult period.

JACQUES VENTER (BUC ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY)

Eric John Winch (1934-2021)

d. 27 November.

Eric was born in the East End of London into a large family, but after World War II started he was evacuated to a children's home in Devon. The death of his father in the war meant that he couldn't return home, but circumstances led a Seventh-day Adventist gentleman, Mr Clark, to become Eric's legal guardian. Mr Clark introduced him to the church and encouraged him to go to Newbold College to complete his theological studies. After graduating from Newbold in 1957, Eric's first assignment was to assist Ken Lacy with his evangelistic campaign meetings in Birmingham. Here he also met and married Denise Waugh, and soon they started a family. Over the next twelve years they went on to have five children: Lorraine, Diana, Paul, Valerie and Helen. Eric also went on to accept a number of church 'callings' to various locations in England.



However, not long after their fifth child was born, Eric was made redundant from the ministry. This was a difficult time financially; but, undaunted, Eric moved the family to Scotland in 1970, and enrolled at Calendar Park College in Falkirk to study Primary Education. He did well in his studies, and soon secured a teaching post at a local primary school. But the church had other plans. He was called to be the headteacher at Dudley House School, the church school in Grantham, following the retirement of Mrs Vi Meredith. Eric and Denise left Scotland in 1981 and moved down south. Here, Eric threw his heart and energy into the running of the school, with Denise helping run the school office. Numbers increased significantly under his teaching and leadership. The children did well under the integrated education of mind, body and spirit, with many children passing their 11+ exam to enrol at the local grammar schools.

Eventually, Eric and Denise retired to Crieff in Scotland, where they enjoyed many years in the company of church friends, and where Eric continued to contribute in many ways to church life.

Eric is survived by his wife, Denise, and their now-extended family, including five grandchildren. He will be sadly missed but fondly remembered for his unwavering faith in God, his commitment and dedication to his family and the church, and eager anticipation of his Saviour's second coming.

LORRAINE GLINTON

Prayer pointer

- Following Paul's advice in 1 Timothy 2:1-4, let us continue to pray for our world leaders in these times of turmoil.

Messenger

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South England Conference
Family Ministries
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Who am I?
 Searching for meaning and purpose during and after covid.

SPEAKER:
Dr Noah Washington

Friday 22nd April 2022
7:00pm

YouTube LIVE STREAM SECmedia zoom

As supplied, errors and omissions excepted

Sunset

Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by HM Nautical Almanac Office.

	London	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Mar 25	6.22	6.34	6.27	6.37	6.47
Apr 1	7.34	7.46	7.39	7.51	8.00
8	7.46	7.58	7.52	8.05	8.14
15	7.57	8.09	8.04	8.19	8.27
22	8.09	8.21	8.17	8.34	8.40

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