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# ISSUES OF

# D

# IVERSITY

# PART 1

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH



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**Design**  
Peter Oppong-Mensah

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# Editorial

Politicians in the UK sometimes tend to refer to their parties as a “broad church”. Such expressions become rampant usually when a party is facing threats of fragmentation or when they want to appeal to voters across the spectrum during political campaigns. We are a “Broad Church”, they would say. One such statement was made by the Minister for the Cabinet office, David Lidington earlier this year. *‘Speaking after a series of open spats, Lidington, who works closely with the Prime Minister in Downing Street, told the BBC’s The Andrew Marr Show that all sides of the “broad church” should unite to confront Labour. “I think what I’d say to all my colleagues is that the Conservative family – left, right and centre, because we’re a broad church – has to come together in a spirit of mutual respect,” he said. [https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jan/28/ex-cabinet-minister-theresa-villiers-uk-stay-eu’*

The expression gives credence to what church stands for – An inclusive society where all belong and participate fully. Church by default accepts people from all walks of life. Church does not discriminate among its adherents. Everyone is welcome. And that is what Christianity is about, an inclusive body that all can emulate.

Even though the tenet of church provides a great example for politicians to follow, can we honestly say that Church, as we experience it, is unjudgmental and truly a place for all?

Many who leave church cite attitudes of discrimination and non-acceptance as reasons for their leaving. Many young people say they sometimes feel marginalised. Many still say they feel judged.

Sin continues to distort human perceptions when it comes to acceptance of those who are different from us. Often it manifests in issues of race, cultural differences, generational gaps, ageism, socio-economic status, gender and many more.

I believe when God created our world with its rich diversity, he meant it for our fascination and enjoyment. But something went wrong. The good that God intended for us is distorted by sin; and now diversity, after sin, has the potential for causing prejudice and discrimination.

The good news, however, is that many institutions and business organisations are actively addressing the inevitable challenges of diversity through training of staff and by raising awareness of unconscious biases that lead to discrimination in all its forms.

Church is certainly not immune from the challenges of diversity and the ever-increasing range of diversity confronting society today. We cannot wish these away. We must confront the issues of diversity for the sake of our mission to reach everyone with the gospel, without discriminating against anyone.

In the parable of the banquet (Matthew 22:9-10), Jesus instructs his servants to “Go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding”. We read that the servants “gathered together all whom they found, both good and bad. And the wedding hall was filled with guests” (NKJV). Jesus is not irritated by the appearance or the condition of the invitees. He alone is capable of providing the appropriate garment for them, not the servants whose work is only to invite. Yet the irritation we sometimes feel often leads to avoidance or the pressure to change people, to make them blend into the majority, or to fit a certain pattern that is less uncomfortable for us. Without a doubt, the “broad church” mindset of inclusivity in a diverse church and a diverse society has its challenges. But it also has its rewards, as uncovered by the excellent insights in this issue - “Diversity part I”.

In the next issue of the Communicator, “Diversity part II”, we will focus on some of the difficult topics of gender identity and the church’s position on them.

You can now read the SEC Communicator online at <https://seccommunicator.com>

**NEXT ISSUE:** January 2019. Subscribe to receive your copy!

## OUR COVER



Cover Photo: Asun Olivan



**SAM O. DAVIES**  
Editor



# The South England Conference is a diverse conference



## the President's Desk

DR EMMANUEL OSEI



**During the years 1996 – 1999, I pastored the Willesden Church in North West London. We were passionate in our evangelistic efforts and would hold outreach programmes every year. We would also give out literature and do street-witnessing in the Harlesden area where most of the community (predominantly Afro-Caribbean) would come to do their weekly shopping on a Saturday. The Lord blessed our efforts with many souls through baptism.**

Not long after leaving that district, I received an invitation to preach in the Romanian Church. You can imagine my surprise when I was informed that the church was located in Harlesden, about 1 mile from Willesden Church. To my amazement, there was a large congregation of Romanian worshippers in the very place where we had been doing evangelism those past years. I could not reach these Romanians and bring them to Willesden Church, but under the leadership of a Romanian pastor, these Romanian community members were happy to come and worship God in their own language and cultural worship style. The Romanian congregation continues to grow and has birthed another two congregations.

I was invited to preach at the Portuguese-speaking church. Once again, I was surprised that this group was meeting in Kensal Rise, about a mile away from the Willesden Church. It was thrilling to see a number of

members worshipping together in the Portuguese language. Where I could not reach these Portuguese community members, a Portuguese-speaking pastor was more effective and successful in helping them make decisions for Christ.

Jesus called us to be *'fishers of men'*, and there are different ways to catch fish. I can throw the net far and wide then draw in anything that is caught in my net. However, certain fish requires certain bait. If we want to win certain groups within our community, we should be wise enough to learn about that specific group, and then use what is available to reach them. Today, we have a number of Portuguese-speaking churches around our conference, and they are growing and making a valuable contribution to the SEC.

This practice of people-groups being motivated to come together for worship isn't new or unique. Today, people will drive past two or three churches to attend a particular church where they feel comfortable worshipping. I live in High Wycombe where we are blessed to have two congregations. Both churches have a high proportion of members from the island of St Vincent. My siblings and I arrived in the UK in the '60s and attended the Chiswick church. Chiswick had a very high proportion of members from the Island of Grenada. Chiswick also gave birth to other congregations such as Hanwell, Fulham and Willesden, all of which had many members

from that island. I pastored Holloway for a number of years and noted the large proportion of members from Guyana. Go to Brixton, and you will meet a large proportion of members from Jamaica. Simply put: Birds of a feather flock together.

There is a church growth principle which is known as the *"homogenous unit principle"*. This principle states that it is easier for people to become Christians when they have fewer barriers (whether racial, linguistic or class) to cross. Whether we want to admit it or not, this is precisely the reason why many members are prepared to drive past other congregations in order to reach the one where they feel most comfortable.

The SEC is a diverse conference. We have members from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, all wanting to worship God in the way they understand from Scripture. Our understanding of Scripture is linked to our cultural experience. Today, there are those for whom worship has to be staid and formal, with a 15-minute sermon and no expectation of an afternoon programme. Others are more accustomed to spending the entire Sabbath day at church, listening to dynamic preaching and responding with loud *'Amens'* when convicted. For this group of people, a 15-minute homily would seem like a sermonette; they would feel *'short changed'*.

Is one form of worship wrong and the other right? Not at all! We are all different, and we

need to live with our diversity. So, what are we to do with our mono-ethnic churches? Is there room for these churches within the SEC? Most definitely! Our conference is the richer as a result of having them. The SEC is experiencing growth as a result of these churches. Whereas we couldn't reach certain groups in the community, now these individuals are coming in, as they feel a sense of belonging to the wider church.

Are there problems? Yes, there are problems that we encounter and have to deal with. For instance, in certain cultures, there are ceremonial marriage traditions which are not fully understood and that can often pose challenges to clergy in the UK. The challenge of the church reflecting the local community is also a problem for most of our churches today. The danger of the church being viewed as racially or ethnically segregationist and separatist is another issue that must be addressed.

It is most probable that the next generation of immigrants within these mono-ethnic churches will not want to continue doing church the way it's being done presently. Any change will need to be developed naturally and organically, rather than being dictated by another source. But, however these congregations evolve, we know that God will continue to lead and give guidance, and the SEC will be there to support all our congregations.

# THE THEOLOGY OF DIVERSITY



**Dr Daniel Duda**

Education Director, TED

**I recently read that there are 512 types of shark! I can understand and appreciate 512 types of roses or tulips. But who needs 512 kinds of shark? Would not a couple of them suffice? The fact that we have 512 types of shark informs me that God loves diversity and variety. The DNA that determines our genetic characteristics has been deliberately designed to produce the most extraordinary variety.**

When God freezes water in the atmosphere, snowflakes fall. If you were to examine them under a microscope, you would discover them all to be different and unique. But when humans freeze water, we get ice cubes, identical blocks of boringly homogeneous uniformity! This is a metaphor for our human society.

Sin caused a division between us and God, and between us as human beings. This resulted in anxiety instead of trust; suspicion and hatred instead of love; insecurity instead of worth; slavery instead of freedom. Instead of variety came its great counterfeit - uniformity.

Think of the indescribable suffering caused throughout the centuries by racism, nationalism, tribalism, sexism, ageism, and sectarianism.

It seems that we humans only feel safe and comfortable when we surround ourselves with people who think, act, talk, dress and eat the same as we do. How did God redeem this situation? He came down to bridge this gap. God is

a bridge builder, and the purpose of a bridge is to connect two sides that are divided by a gap.

How did He accomplish this? Not by creating an ice cube, but by creating snowballs! The coming of Jesus started a new community. The way Jesus treated people shows that all polarisations within society are now dramatically changed: the racial division between Jews and Gentiles, and the class division between slaves and freemen are no longer acceptable anymore. Furthermore, male

circumcision was replaced by Christian baptism, and this change of initiatory rite spelled the end of the gender division in the community of Christ.

The Bible shows us that the divine ambition is to build genuine community out of human diversity. In God's church there is not only a new way of looking at natural human diversity due to differences of sex (male and female) or ethnic origin (Jew and Gentile), but also cultural human diversity due to differences of socio-economic status (slave and free)



[Galatians 3:28]. Moreover, the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in Christians produces even more diversity, due to differences produced by giving us various spiritual gifts and ministries in the fellowship of the Church (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4).

Unlike human empires, the Church should not homogenize people into uniform 'ice cubes' but integrate them like snowflakes into the interlocking matrix made possible by social diversity. That is one of the most exciting ways in which the New Jerusalem in Revelation differs from Babel in Genesis. The Apostle John describes the population of the redeemed as a single multitude, but gathered from every tribe, kindred, nation and people - and still recognizably so!

In the world to come, the immense diversity that characterizes us humans will not be erased, but preserved and enhanced in a vast multi-cultural, multi-lingual celebration. In heaven and on the renewed earth, we are not all going to be the same. We are all going to be gloriously different! And it is the social richness of that future world that we Christians are supposed to be modelling in our church life here and now. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit does not produce a battery farm of similar clones, but a vast family of precious individuals, each one loved and valued for their uniqueness. To illustrate this, Paul uses a metaphor of one body which is made up of many parts.



Wherever we try to generate an exclusive "in" group, wherever we define our world as "them versus us", we are grieving the Holy Spirit, and we are not fulfilling our mission as God's people. Any time we create polarisation in church or society, erect walls of separation and foster barriers of division, we cease to be followers of our God. For God in Christ has stepped into our world to demolish all walls of discrimination and prejudice that sin has constructed. What if we were such a community?



**Royston Smith**

Pastor, Bristol Central, Bristol North & Bristol

# cross cultural

# fears



**Through the ages Christians have faced many social, political and economic challenges, some of which date back to the early church in the mid-fourth century.**

Today, we are still having difficult conversations; the times have changed but some of the debates remain the same. One particular debate - *cross-cultural fear* - is gathering momentum, as we are living in a time of acute social awareness and nationalism. Indigenous groups are anxious that migrants will obliterate their way of life. This phenomenon is as much a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as it is society. Homogeneous groups are becoming highly protective of their way of worship and quite often refuse to engage out of fear of *'spiritual syncretism'*. Consequently, cross culture conversations are scorned and scoffed at. Simply put, cultural

barriers are erected to keep out this *'invasion'*.

We all have unconscious biases to some degree. It is natural to gravitate towards those who are most like us and away from those who are not. This natural instinct is often dismissed as negative behaviour and self-segregation. Could this commitment to protect our values and lifestyle be directly connected to searching for something more fulfilling?

Culture lurks on every corner, influencing how we see the world. Of course, one of the most valued things about interacting with unfamiliar cultures is the reflection it provides for seeing our own culture. Such immersion enables us to gain a deeper understanding of another culture whilst breaking perceived barriers. In his book *Cultural Intelligence*, David Livermore

notes: *"Few things are as sacred and worthy of our connection with other human beings than our shared identity as image bearer of the imago Dei, the image of God."*

A cultural barrier is a rule or expectation that prevents or impedes someone outside of that culture from being included or participating equally. These barriers are an affront to God, His children and the spreading of the gospel. To overcome cross-cultural barriers, we need to educate ourselves about the effects of *'treating everyone the same'*. However well meant, this kind of response is not inclusive. By doing so we negate the differences in others that should be celebrated. To this point, Dr. Martin Luther King famously stated in his address to Cornell College, Iowa (1962): *"People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because*

*they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other."* In addition Paul says, *'Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.'* Adventism should naturally embrace or integrate peoples' experiences and understanding of God on the basis that God has created various ethnicities and cultures. In other words, we should not be barrier builders.

We need to be intentional about inclusivity. Multi-cultural worship is a must. To permanently diversify the style of music, for example, would nurture the cause. It is necessary to promote permanence to avoid a token approach which welcomes diversity, but only as long as it does not offend. Worship must be embracing and innovative, sensitive to the needs of the diverse groups within the church. It must bridge all gaps of race and class, and the style of ministry must be calm and accepting. Speaking of future diversity, John the Apostle declares: *'I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb...'* (Revelation 7:9, KJV)

If this is our future reality in heaven, how can we get closer to seeing this here on earth now? Surely, cross-cultural experiences are opportunities for growth and peace rather than obstacles that divide and damage us.

# multicultural church

# Can it work?



**Adrian Peck**

Pastor, Norwich & Kings Lynn

Someone from southern Africa once told me that if a meeting is scheduled for 10am, as long as he arrives by 10:59 am, he considers himself to be on time. A couple of people who had moved to the UK from the Caribbean relate how they turned up to a funeral of a British colleague 45 minutes after the advertised start time, only to be embarrassingly met by the mourners walking out of the church. Alternatively, my wife and I have arrived at functions hosted by folks from a number of countries on the time indicated on the invitation, only to have to wait for at least an hour for proceedings to start or for the hosts even to make an appearance.

What is our normal reaction to such occurrences? Often, we just mumble and complain and shake our heads, bewildered, bemused or exasperated; because no matter who we are, how we behave and see things is right, and how others behave and see things is just plain wrong. The accusations that fly around are familiar but not necessarily accurate: Jamaicans always start late; the English are uptight and over-obsessed with timings; Zimbabweans don't even seem to care about time!

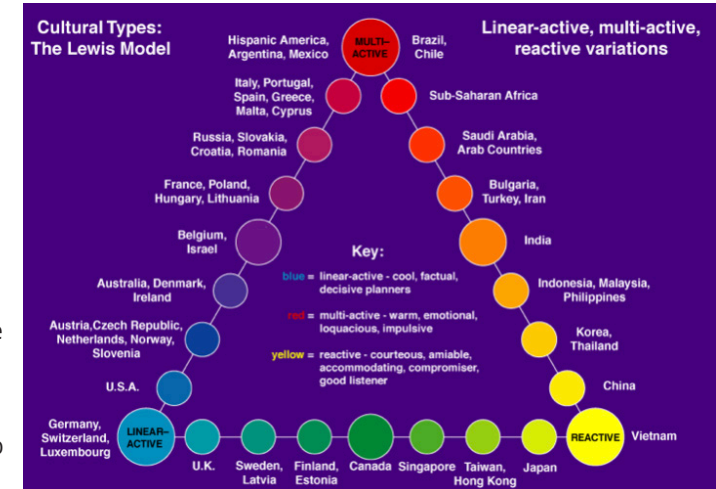
But here's the thing with difference: It's just different- not necessarily wrong- and therefore attitudes like tolerance, respect and a willingness to learn are imperatives. So, what can we learn of how others relate to time?

Accepting the dangers of stereotyping, Richard Lewis developed a way of understanding how people from different parts of the world behave according to their culture. His suggestion is that there are three main categories of time culture to consider, namely: linear, multi-active and reactive. Some features of these are given in the table below:

Linear Cultures	Multi-Active Cultures	Reactive Cultures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do one thing at a time</li> <li>Plans ahead</li> <li>Facts before feelings</li> <li>Focused on the job</li> <li>Time is rigid and limited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do lots of things at a time</li> <li>Plans in outline</li> <li>Truth is negotiable</li> <li>Focused on people</li> <li>Time is flexible and can be stretched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reacts to others</li> <li>Works on general principles</li> <li>Diplomacy before truth</li> <li>Very focused on people</li> <li>Time runs in cycles &amp; is unlimited</li> </ul>
Typically found in: US, Germany, Switzerland	Typically found in: Spain, Italy, Middle East	Typically found in: Thailand, China, Japan

*Adapted from Richard D. Lewis, When Cultures Collide; Leading Across Cultures, Hatchett UK, 2006*

A cursory glance at the differences conjures up all sorts of possibilities for one culture to irritate another. A linear active person will struggle to appreciate a multi-active person's time management style, just as a multi-active person would be frustrated by the others' lack of humanity; or for reactive people, the dismay experienced by the perceived failure of multi-active and linear groups to focus on the harmony of the bigger picture.



But rather than getting irritated, how about appreciating the strengths others bring to the party? Respect the ability of a linear active person to plan and manage projects. Embrace the multi-active person's focus on relationships, so ensuring that people always matter. Draw on the reactive person's empathy, patience and holistic thinking. Imagine what a great team they make! Think about how much better church is because people from different time cultures help make it work.

This is not just a pragmatic way forward - it's Biblical. In his first letter to the Corinthians (Chapter 12), Paul envisions the church as a body. He emphasizes that diversity is vital, such that:

- Difference, or variety, is a God-given way of doing things (vv.4-6)
- One part of the body is not excluded on the basis of not being like another part, and so difference does not mean it doesn't belong (v.14)
- The so-called *'weaker'* members, and indeed every other part of the body, are in fact indispensable (v22)

But does that mean it's alright to stroll into a church meeting any time we culturally feel like? Well, that brings in another dimension we call mission. If we're seeking to reach British people, then turning up an hour after the scheduled start time probably means they've got their feet up in front of the fire, having *'come and gone'* already.

If your intention is to interact with an Italian or a Ghanaian, then the timings are not quite so important... not as important as the emotional context. Meeting a person from Asia? Be polite, non-confrontational and timely. Remember, from a Christian's perspective, we are encouraged to *'look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.'*

# The Common Denominator

## the blessing of Cultural Intelligence



# Youth Voice on diversity in the church

**What do you have in common with the Alaskan Bush people? What are the similarities between a First Nations Canadian and someone raised in the heart of urban London? Are you able to identify with people of other cultures, whether through ethnicity, business, sexuality, socially or any other way?**

One thing we all have in common is that we have 'families of origin'. Each of us has a mother, father and ancestors and therefore each of us has a familial history. Our histories create our stories, and these stories create meaning and purpose in our daily lives.

Too often, we distance ourselves from others because we don't understand their culture, whether organisationally or personally. We often believe the stereotypes about certain people groups and respond accordingly. Here is where we need cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence is the ability to function effectively across various cultural contexts, be they ethnic, generational, organisational or national. Cultural intelligence enables us to interact positively and meaningfully with people who are 'not like us'. It encourages us to find the common denominator in our experiences and values for the greater good of the communities in

which we operate.

We often talk about the power of the Gospel to unite people, making it sound so very simple. In fact, looking at some of the biblical models, especially in the Early Church, it was so much more complex.

The apostle Paul was sent to minister to the Gentiles, and Peter, to the Jews: 'Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews.' (Galatians 2:7, NLT). In Acts 15 there were conflicts between the Jews and the Gentiles regarding circumcision. In Acts 16 we see that the church in Philippi was at the home of Lydia, deemed to be a leader in the synagogue. And immediately following this, in Acts 17, the Jews attacked Jason's house because he harboured Paul, saying, '... These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.' (Acts 17:6, NKJV).

These challenges came about because of a lack of cultural intelligence with regard to ethnicity, gender and belief. And these issues still occur in our church today. We are still divided along lines of ethnicity, gender and biblical interpretation, to the point that we are unable to value and appreciate each other's differences and diversity; and so we remain at war with each other.

But Paul embodies the true value of cultural intelligence when he says, 'Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all, in order to reach a wide range of people- religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is, in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!' (1 Corinthians 9:19-23, MSG)

A model not only for the early church but for the 21st century church too.



**Jacqueline Hinds**

MA (HRD) CEIC MCIPD  
Emotional Intelligence Coach  
& Leadership Consultant

**In a picture of the final chapter of earth's history, we see a great multitude of people from 'every nation, tribe, people and language' (and I suspect socioeconomic background, age and gender too). They are all 'standing... before the Lamb', engaged in an act of worship, their praise directed towards the person of Jesus. The final picture of a reconciled people is one of diversity.**

In this present life, however, diversity has been distorted by sin. Discussing the topic with a number of Adventist millennials, I was struck by how many saw diversity as a challenge for the church in varying ways: the tensions created by ethnic, generational and cultural differences; the lack of representation of different genders, ages and races at all levels of church life; and the challenge of navigating different types of gifts. Diversity appears to be a moving target, manifesting itself in new ways and different contexts.

Ultimately, the notion of diversity seemed to be underpinned by one key idea: Value. Where diversity creates tension, it seems to express the notion that what makes people different also makes them less valuable. Where diversity is not respected, it sends the message that some voices are not as worthy as others. Yet, at the very heart of the gospel lies a message of individual value.

The Cross demonstrates the love of God for each of His children; "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us". As God 'reconciles everything to Himself', He displays no favouritism. Instead, He counts 'all one in Christ'. This does not

create a monolithic Christian culture, but one that can celebrate diversity and include all in it. It testifies of the innate potential and value that Christ sees in His creation, each of us being "brought into existence because we were needed".

So, what are some ways in which we can express this idea within the contexts of our churches? Though there are many ways, I would suggest two key principles:

**Intentionality.** As a white, middle-class, British female, I have had to come to the realisation that I have inherent biases. These do not necessarily manifest themselves in animosity but can be present in more subtle ways, such as giving preference to those who are similar to me over those who are different, simply because the former feels safer and more familiar. However, to value people, and to contribute to the church community in a way that expresses God's view - that is, inclusion of all individuals- I have had to intentionally commit to recognising my biases. This has involved listening hard to those with whom I disagree, building trust, taking time to reflect on how my bias manifests itself and seeking, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to rectify this. It is uncomfortable. It is embarrassing. But it is necessary to build a community that truly embraces individual value and relates to people accordingly.

**Representation.** Including a diverse blend of voices at all levels of the church may not just show how a diversity of viewpoints are valued, but it may also begin to help to tap into the rich potential that lies in our difference. The early church was a hub of diversity,

something particularly reflected in the multiculturalism of their leadership. Barnabas was a wealthy Jew, whereas Lucius of Cyrene was most likely a Greco-Roman from North Africa. Simeon was from Africa. Manaen was a Hellenised Jewish aristocrat. Principally, this displays that the early church did not shy away from embracing leaders from varied backgrounds. Notably, this was a church that both thrived and grew. Perhaps, one way to model this today could be by ensuring that leadership positions, in both local churches and administrative units, represent and reflect the demographics of the communities they serve, in race, gender, age and background.

Indeed, intentionality combined with representation could lead the church to a more effective mission. Instead of diversity that divides, it could begin to create a church that testifies to both Christians and non-Christians alike, of how God values the individual. Similarly, it could speak of how difference, through the involvement and inclusion of 'every nation, tribe, people and language', can enrich and enhance our communities for the better.



**Alex Browne**

Civil Servant living,  
working and worshipping  
in London

# Ageism



The term "ageism" was coined in 1969 by Robert N. Butler, former director of the National Institute on Ageing. He was revolted by the discrimination exhibited by young and middle-aged citizens to a proposed public housing scheme for older members in Maryland, USA. Butler (1980) further defined the term so that it could be useful to social scientists. Ageism comprises three inter-related aspects:

1. Prejudicial attitudes toward older people and old age as an ageing process which includes the attitude of older adults themselves;
2. Discriminatory practices against older people; and
3. Institutional practices and policies that re-enforce and perpetuate stereotypes based on the belief that ageing makes people less attractive, intelligent, sexual, and productive. (Atchley 1997; Macionis 1998). Prejudice refers to attitude, while discrimination focuses on behaviour.

Human dignity, respect and rights are important in the making of a cohesive society. Millennials must build on the foundations of Generation X and those before them, without prejudice to their benefactors. Regulations by the UK government (2006) outlawed discrimination on the basis of age, in institutions and the work place. The Church, by divine anointing, is best placed to practice an inclusive gospel that excludes negative ageism.

Language is a social construct which defines our role and status in life, from the cradle to the grave. It is important to avoid the use of appellations, patronising and condescending words when addressing senior citizens. Older people should be accorded the dignity they deserve as human beings created in the image of God. Neither advanced years nor maladies should render older people invisible in our communities. Address the aged by their names to preserve their true identity and dignity.

Paul's advice is relevant in addressing the above issue. "...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable - if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise - think about these things." (Philippians 4:8, ESV)

Also, Moses, who lived until he was 120 years, recorded the words of God to Israel: "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD". (Leviticus 19:32 NLT)

The onset of old age comes with complications that require greater resources and humane understanding. Ageism has a tendency of categorising people as consumers or producers, competent or incompetent, visible or invisible. Consequently, few older persons are featured on multimedia or in places where image matters.

The value of seniors (parents and grandparents included) in our society outweighs their economic charge on the state. Their contributions to the nation's economy and voluntary care industry may well be impossible to estimate. The Telegraph published the following report on its front page on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2013:

*Older generations contributed almost £27 billion to society through unpaid care, charitable and voluntary work over the last year. The report found that those approaching retirement and those already retired gave society the estimated equivalent in value of: £5.7 billion for charitable work; £5.5 billion in voluntary and community service, and free care for grandchildren, parents and other family members, saving the family economy £15.5 billion. The upgraded figures would be greater today.*

The UK population is ageing. People are living longer because of the advancements in medicine and improved nutrition. In mid-2014, the average age exceeded 40 for the first time. By 2040, nearly one in seven people is projected to be aged over 75.

The Office for Budget Responsibility projects

that total public spending, excluding interest payments, will be equivalent to £79 billion in today's terms - due mainly to the ageing population.<sup>1</sup>

The need to plan for old age can help alleviate the financial challenges ahead. This may be depressing news, but we can take comfort from the Psalmist: "Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails." (Psalm 71: 9 - KJV) Ageism also affects younger members of society. Age determination limits the age to vote in local and national elections or to obtain a driving license. You now have to be 18 years old to buy an energy drink.

The pervasiveness of ageism is global, spanning civilizations, ancient and modern. King David's detractors questioned his wisdom and competence when, as a young lad, he volunteered to face Goliath. Jeroboam broke with convention when he discriminated against the wisdom of the old in favour of the inexperienced advice of a younger set of counsellors. As a dilemma of the human condition, we all grow old, but ageism will continue as a consequence of our acquired and inherent prejudices.

Jesus's answer to the complexities of ageism is the one we most need to take to heart, the Golden Rule: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets". (Matthew 7:12, ESV)

<sup>1</sup> The Government Office for Science- Executive Summary, 'Future of An Aging Population' Page 6



**Cecil Perry**

Retired Pastor & Former BUC President

# Mental Health Issues And Diversity



## CHRISTIAN DEPRESSION?

**For some it may be difficult to equate the phrase *clinical depression* with the word *Christian*. But this has been my reality.**

For years I have hidden my depression from my church for fear of condemnation. Depression is a very painful and difficult human experience, and it has interfered with my daily life, making it difficult, at times, to undertake even the simplest of tasks such as self-care.

There have been times when I have found it hard to get out of bed, wanting instead to curl up and just forget about everything. I even had suicidal thoughts. I had been absent from church for a significant length of time after a family bereavement; and my pain was compounded by the challenges of having to cope with my 14-year old son becoming hooked on cannabis, and who had run away from home. I was also caring for my younger son who was experiencing educational difficulties due to dyslexia and dyspraxia.

Torn between the responsibility of helping my husband in planning and financing a funeral, and the needs of my children - *my eldest son going off the rails, and my youngest struggling at school* - left me feeling worthless. It was as if I were wading through treacle or falling into a black hole. Life became a drudge. I struggled at work and withdrew from social life and from church. Some church members criticised my actions, while others 'blanked' me. I couldn't understand how or why this was happening to

me. I felt that, surely, there should be some compassion and understanding. The spiritual joy of salvation that comes with knowing Jesus does not always precipitate in earthly health or happiness. In fact, Christians become ill. Depression is an illness, though one of the subtlest to recognize. It inspires a sense of worthlessness that undermines the desired effects of God's love and mercy through salvation. Yet, there are those who still hold that depression is a result of sin.

Coming back to my own personal experience, at my darkest period, I attempted to find my way back into the social aspect of church, and I sought a deeper spiritual walk in life. However, at my time of greatest need, the message from the platform declared, '*Christians should not be depressed!*' The speaker, who was visiting, went on to explain that depression was a sin and that "*we should all have joy in our lives.*" It was not the message I needed at that time; and this person had obviously not experienced true depression! Depression is not a choice. I don't want to be depressed or to go through a tumultuous range of emotions. Sometimes, I feel that I am not in charge of me! I've often felt like I am at the bottom of a deep, dark hole, looking up for that think of light and scrabbling to get out; but the light just gets smaller. Due to the bipolar aspect of my depression, every day is a struggle, either to maintain some semblance of balance, or to harness the euphoria and so maintain control over my actions. Either I will withdraw

completely, or actively go 'over the top'.

When I am in this condition, socialising becomes a struggle, and my smiling, laughing face is merely a façade to mask the pain.

Notwithstanding my depression, I am part of the church. I, too, need a sense of belonging and a place where I can fit in to fulfill a worthwhile role. But I also need compassion and understanding. Those who really know me, accept me for who I am, including my odd behaviours. The last thing a person with depression needs is to be sidelined in the church. We need to be connected!



**Pam Catchpole**

FDEY, BA Hons

*Pam is the Area 2 Pathfinder Co-ordinator since 1996 and also now cover Area 1. She worked as a Primary School teacher for many years and was also the Design Technology co-ordinator for her school. She has great interest in volunteer work and at present work at a local retirement village with a pottery group. She also enjoys looking after her five grandchildren when required. Pam is a member of the Gloucester church.*

# Called to be Burden Bearers



*"And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear his cross."*

One of the highest callings for those who devote their lives to be like Jesus is being a burden bearer. It is a call to lean more toward inclusivity; to talk less about divine holiness and righteousness and more about a God who suffers with those marginalised among their own. The priority is justice for the widows and widowers, being a father to the fatherless and a defender of the helpless.

Called to be burden bearers is to act on behalf of those who exist on the margins of the church. It is to act in tangible ways for those who we often ignore or dismiss; for those families who are disintegrating or whose marriages are crumbling; and even those whose lives end through tragic circumstances. This is where the struggle is real. Like Simon of Cyrene, the call compels us to bear the cross of another in greater need than ourselves. His narrative challenges us to bear the cross of Jesus in places

where people are hurting, both inside the church and in the unexpected places of society, such as in minority communities where the counselling office is often the church, and the counselling officer, the clergy. This we can do by keeping at the center of our mission three core imperatives:

Firstly, the people of Christ should feature prominently in the wilderness, bringing real actions of hope, healing and restoration to places where there may be a lack of support and basic resources, and in places of isolation and loneliness. Simon of Cyrene was a passer-by and minding his own business when he was confronted with the cross of Jesus. He became an active participant. Like him, the followers of Christ are called to bear the cross of those within the church. This includes the widows and widowers, young carers, the divorced and separated, orphans, and those who suffer abuse and family violence, just to name a few.

Secondly, the Church should understand the crosses borne by people within its wider community and align itself with them in ways that are relevant and helpful. Just as Simon of Cyrene shared the heavy load of the cross, so the church should share in the pain, healing and restoration of those outside its sphere. The followers of Christ should extend their love to those on the periphery of society and culture. We live in a time when crisis often forms part of our daily routine. The church is called to assist those who face traumatic, potentially life-altering and unexpected events.

Lastly, the church is called to bear the 'burden' of being and acting like Jesus. In the biblical witness, we find God being attentive to the minor characters - those who are marginalized - and preferring to act on their behalf. In like manner we also must minister to those marginalized inside and outside the Church. We notice that

the biblical narrative focuses continually on the overlooked, the outsider and the downtrodden: David enters the Messianic lineage through Bathsheba, a woman he stole from another man; Judah learns about justice from his suppressed daughter-in-law, Tamar; Naaman, the leprous Syrian Army Commander, is healed because he listens to a slave girl from Israel; Jeremiah is rescued from a muddy pit by Abimelech, an Ethiopian eunuch; unclean shepherds are the first to see and recognise the Messiah; and the city of Samaria hears the gospel through a divorced, socially-outcast woman.

The followers of Christ can learn the breadth and depth of God's presence and His love where they thrive and flourish - at the margins. This is the burden which the church is called to champion, and God often uses those on the periphery of 'respectable' society to fulfil his call.



**Dr Augustus Lawrence**

Family Ministries Director



# Creating places of Belonging



**Sophia Nicholls**

Diversity & Disability Director



'Belonging' - It is said to be the individual's emotional need to connect to others through being accepted by the group. That group could be family, friends, co-workers, or a religion group. People have an 'inherent' desire to belong and be a part of something greater than themselves.

As the Diversity Director for the South England Conference, when I ask our congregations what comes to mind when they think about what it means to belong, I get responses like: 'ownership'; 'being part of something'; 'feeling at home'; 'being missed'; 'group identity'; 'acceptance', and many more.

The church should be the place where the community can come and feel that

they belong. However, in a self-conducted poll of church members, over 60% of the sample group felt that their church could do better in creating places of belonging; roughly 10% believed their church to be a place where everyone felt they belong; and 30% believed their church was not a place of belonging, and they did not feel the value of membership. These statistics shed light on the experiences and thoughts of some of the SDA members in the SEC churches, with respect to belonging:

10% believed that their church is a welcoming and happy church where everybody belongs. The view of many leaders is reflected in that statistic.

30% related that the church struggled to maintain the initial welcome extended to new members. Within this number, the perceptions and reasons shared for this lack of a continuing welcoming were described as: cliques, cultural division, lack of communication between leaders and members and poor access to the information and services necessary to benefit from being a part of the church.

Evidently, there is a significant discrepancy in perspective and experience between local leadership and their members.

### Is belonging important?

Individually, our sense of belonging to a greater community improves our motivation, health and happiness. When we, as individuals, can see our connections to others, then we better understand that all people struggle and have difficult times. There is comfort in the knowledge that one is not alone.

Belonging implies a relationship that is greater than simple acquaintance or familiarity. The need to belong is the need to connect, to give attention

to others, as well as to receive the same from others.

The church can be a place of belonging for all. Likening the church to the human body, the Apostle Paul wrote: "The parts that seem to be weaker are indispensable." (1 Corinthians 12: 22, ESV). His ideal vision is a church of belonging; and it is of great loss to the church when it fails to include all its parts.

Inclusion will not happen organically. Every church needs to be intentional about creating places of belonging. Philippians 2:3, 4 give us the clue to making this ideal a possibility: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, value others above yourselves." (NKJV)

This is the key to creating places of belonging. Let us work intentionally to bring everyone, as valued members, into the mission and ministry of the church - no matter their culture, ability or status. Let us be intentional about forming relationships that develop into partnerships for the kingdom.



# Outside on the Inside



**Antonio Belgrave**  
Strategic Development

Everyone knows France won the 2018 World Cup, so why did South African comedian Trevor Noah have to rock the boat by tweeting, 'Africa won'? Trevor was only saying out loud what the rest of us were thinking- 'a French national team with a large number of African faces forming the starting line-up.' Everyone knows that Ambassadors are paid to be diplomatic and not interesting. It was a huge surprise then, when France's Ambassador to the US joined in the Twitter storm, stating that 'Trevor Noah's comments denied the 'Frenchness' of the players by calling them African.'

But is cultural identity really that simple? Is it true that being one thing means I have to deny being something else; that I can never be both? This forced choosing between parts of our self is not an easy matter. It will require that we slice off ever bigger chunks of our identity in order to fit in, while still accusing us of being 'too this' or 'too that'; never 'just right'. Inclusion, however, means that we can put down the knife, because inclusion accepts, as a whole, our uniqueness as

individuals and as part of the human family. Too often, the words 'diversity' and 'inclusion' are used synonymously when, in fact, they are not the same. An organization - be it a football team, a company, or even a church - might be diverse, but where's the victory if it does not extend inclusion to its people who are different?

The challenges of diversity and inclusion are extremely relevant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom in the 21st century. I have come to believe that the winning formula is: 'diversity + inclusion - pressure to assimilate = the way forward'.

So, what is the lived experience of the believers in our churches who do not look like us, talk like us, eat or view the world like us? These are the ones who find themselves 'outside on the inside'. Do we connect with them or do our biases make connection feel like hard work? Do we roll them out on special days to signal our virtue and diversity

credentials, but then have nothing to do with them the rest of the time? Would these individuals say that they have a sense of belonging and feel valued for their uniqueness? As a church on a mission to be more nurturing, relevant, spiritually hungry and resourceful, these are important questions that we cannot ignore.

Love is the principle on which Christ's church is built, but it takes love with intentionality on the part of all believers for the church to incorporate diversity and inclusion as part of their modus operandi. In John 13:35 Jesus says, 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another' (NIV). Imagine the power of our witness if, rather than destroying or ignoring, assimilating or tolerating, we could instead genuinely embrace each other's differences? Society would marvel at the miracle of seeing diverse groups of people working in harmony despite their differences. For believers in the final stages of life's 'Great Controversy World Cup', diversity with inclusion is a goal worth playing for!

# Diversity in Diet



You'd think by now, after knowing someone for nearly 30 years and being married to her for nearly 20, that I would have learned the most basic of lessons about being a husband. I'm not referring to being vague about anniversary dates in case you're questioned; clearly, I've learned that. No, it's the simple fundamental universal truth that will never be changed:

*"When it comes to a disagreement between my wife and I, she is right, and I am wrong!"*

I was reminded of this when we moved into our current home. I loved the bright, spacious rooms, the neutral colours and clean lines. I was happy to leave the house that way. Why ruin such lovely rooms with unnecessary clutter, such as furniture? After sleeping on the floor for a couple of nights, I relented on the furniture, but only the most necessary of items. I still liked the almost monochromatic look.

It wasn't until we went to the neighbour's similar home that the scales fell from my eyes! They had plants, paintings and pictures which gave a wonderful colour and warmth to the house. They also had interesting furniture which added to the whole ambience of each room. Our "white house" may have looked good, but with colour and character, it could look great! *"The Swan is beautiful, until it stands next to the Peacock."*

This reminds me of the special Olympic year we had in London 2012. London hosted the Greatest show on Earth. Those five coloured Olympic rings signify the multi-colours, creeds and cultures from all over the world. We

are reminded of the world's beauty in diversity.

Those five Olympic rings also remind me of the colours of nature, especially in the plants, fruit and vegetables that we eat. It is an amazing fact that our food is designed with color to be attractive to us. Even more amazing is that the atomic reason for the colour in each fruit or vegetable is the same thing that provides its antioxidant properties!

In the Olympics we saw certain nations dominate certain events: The Jamaicans dominated sprinting, the Africans dominated middle and long-distance races, the Australians dominated swimming and the British... hosted the games. Just as with nations, different colours in our food have different properties and strengths:

**Blue, Purple and Black:** Blueberries, Figs and Eggplant - contain flavanoids, Vitamin C & resveratrol. These boost the immune system, lower cholesterol and help make healthy skin and bones.

**Yellow and Orange:** Apricots, Carrots and Lemons - contain Beta-carotene, lycopene and potassium. These reduce prostate cancer risk, lower blood pressure and protect our vision.

**Green:** Broccoli, Apples and Spinach - contains chlorophyll, folate and fiber. These boost digestion, reduce cancer and heart disease risk.

**Red:** Strawberries, Water melon, Tomatoes and Peppers - contains Lycopene, ellagic acid and Hesperidin - These prevent prostate cancer and enlargement and lower cholesterol levels.

As a Plant-based Doctor, nutritionists will often say to me that "surely meat is the better source of protein, as one steak has all the amino acids that the body needs. No fruit, vegetable, bean or grain has the complete number of essential amino acids." This is, of course, only half true. No plant contains all of the amino acids to make all of our proteins. This is because God did not design us to eat a boring slab of meat each day, but rather to consume a wonderful, colourful and diverse diet that appeals to the visual senses, as well as the senses of taste, smell and touch.

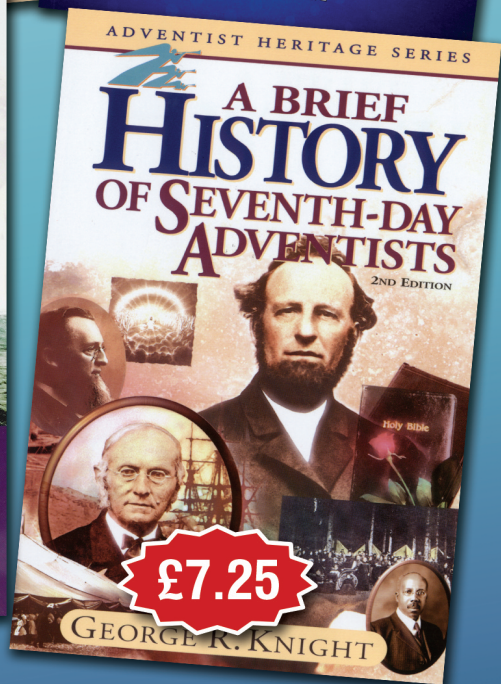
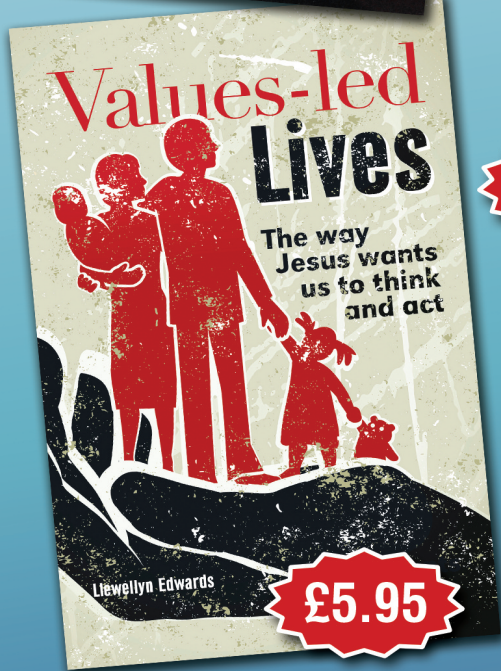
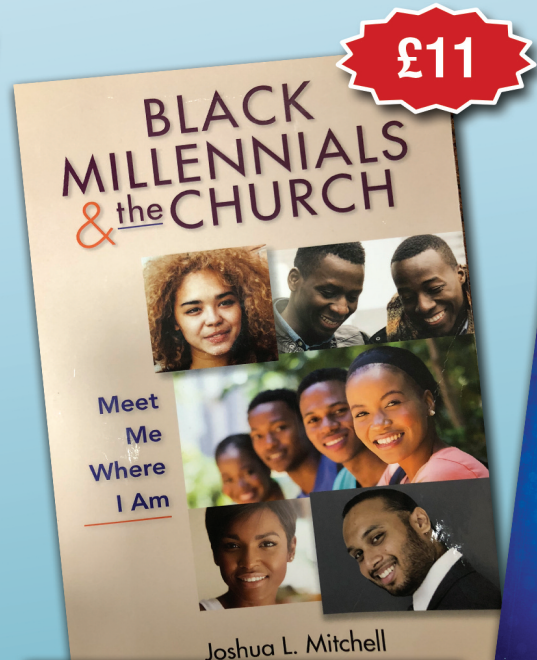
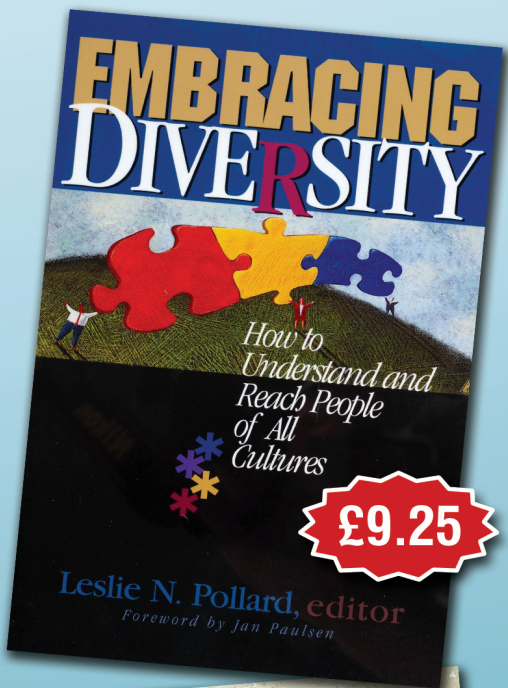
So, remember to eat a diverse plateful of colour each day - and I don't mean Smarties!



**Dr Chidi Ngwaba**  
Health Director



We have a wide variety of resources available at The Stanborough Press; check out some of our titles focusing on diversity to increase your resource library!



For further information please contact us on (01476) 591700, or email [sales@stanboroughpress.org.uk](mailto:sales@stanboroughpress.org.uk) or visit [www.stanboroughpress.org.uk](http://www.stanboroughpress.org.uk)

# TECHNOLOGY KEEPS GIVING AND GIVING



**ADRA-UK**  
launches their  
Virtual Gift Box Appeal

After completing a successful pilot test for Swaziland during this summer, ADRA-UK's new Virtual Gift Box (VGB) campaign will benefit children in Sri Lanka and Burundi. From 14 September to 14 November you will have eight weeks to go online and pack a virtual gift box for children in one of these countries.

The Virtual Gift Box is a way in which ADRA-UK can utilise cutting-edge technology to provide much-needed supplies for children in developing countries, without any costly physical intervention in the UK. Funds will be transferred to the receiving ADRA office, which will purchase the supplies in the recipient country, and the gifts will then be hand-delivered to the children.

**Sri Lanka's** central mountains host beautiful tea plantations. While it may look pretty, life in these areas can be hard, especially for children. Many families there are just surviving, and 'making ends meet' is a daily challenge. Your virtual gift box, delivered by ADRA Sri Lanka, will bring a smile to a child's face there and light up their day.

**Burundi** is one of the world's poorest nations and faces almost constant political upheaval, which affects children in particular. ADRA Burundi is working in some of the most challenging areas of this small country, and with your help, they will bring a bit of hope to disadvantaged children there.

Why not decide to donate a virtual gift box today? Just visit [adragiftbox.org.uk](http://adragiftbox.org.uk) between 14 September and 14 November and provide tangible support to a needy child today.

Each virtual gift box you donate will cost just £10; and did you know that if you are a UK taxpayer, you can Gift Aid your donation to further assist ADRA-UK? Go to [adragiftbox.org.uk](http://adragiftbox.org.uk) and help children in need.

You may want to support a child in the mountains of Sri Lanka or the struggling nation of Burundi. What about supporting a child in both of these countries? Whatever you choose to do, please go to [adragiftbox.org.uk](http://adragiftbox.org.uk) and use technology to help needy children in positive and meaningful ways.



Note: 100% of your donation will go to your chosen country. Please add gift aid to your donation. ADRA-UK will retain the gift aid to cover processing, transfer and operational costs.

First Printed in Messenger 31 August 2018.Vol 123.17

# Letter to the Editor



## DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing to share concerns regarding the recent April 2018 SEC Communicator publication which featured articles on Relational Health including one written by Dr Chidi Ngwaba titled 'And they lived Healthily ever after'.

This SEC publication was handed out to everyone at a recent area day of fellowship for local churches. The following week after preaching at one of these churches I was approached by a member who confided that they suffered from depression and asked me if what had been written was the official position. The concerns, and which having subsequently read the article and undertaken some lengthy research I share, were as follows;

- The article suggests that depression is not due to chemical imbalance in the brain.
- That there is no evidence that anti-depressants work.
- That depression is only due to missing or the breakdown of relationships.

Suggesting to someone suffering from depression that the treatment they currently receive is useless and inferring that they are to blame because of faulty relationship is, I believe, both unacceptable and dangerous. It is just as inappropriate as telling them that depression is a spiritual condition that just needs to be cured through prayer alone – a view warned against by most Christian health related agencies, including our own.

This article appears to be too simplistic and devoid of proper references. Perhaps it should have come with a health warning! It certainly needed to be accompanied by a clear statement that the opinions expressed were personal to the author and not the official position of the church.

There is no doubt that the content of the article has caused problems for the person I met and, having considered what was written in some detail, feel that a correction statement should be written at the soonest in the next edition of the SEC Communicator. As editor of the publication, I would appreciate your response.

David L. Wright

## DEAR READER,

Since the publication of the article "...And they lived Healthily ever after" (Communicator, April 2018 ed.), some individuals have rightly raised concerns that it could be interpreted as though we are suggesting that an individual with depression should not seek medical advice or treatment. This is certainly not the case, and I apologise for any hurt and confusion this article caused to our readers.

The following clarification sets out the advice that both current medical experts and the church recommends:

### DEPRESSION SHOULD BE TREATED:

Whenever depression or any other mental disorder negatively affects quality of life or functioning in life, one should seek appropriate treatment. Untreated depression will usually have detrimental effects on life, not only its mental dimension, but the physical, social and spiritual as well. Undertreatment of mental disorders is probably a bigger problem than overtreatment among our church members.

### CAUSES OF DEPRESSION:

Genes, temperament, adverse life experiences, physical disorders and an unhealthy lifestyle make us prone to depression. As with many physical disorders, depression may run in families, partly because of genes and partly because of learned patterns of thinking, behaving, relating and dealing with emotions. People who are anxious, dogmatic, rigid and un-expressive may have a higher risk of depression. Trauma, such as abuse, neglect, loss and other negative life events, especially early in life, may increase vulnerability by making one more sensitive to perceived threats and disappointments. Loneliness, dysfunctional relationships, or lack of meaningful and fulfilling content in life may lead to feelings of emptiness that turn into depression. A range of physical disorders may lead to depressive symptoms, making it important to identify and treat such disorders, as they may be the underlying

causes of the depression. Currently, promising intelligence is emerging on the influence of immunologic disturbances on depression, as well as the composition of the bacterial flora in the gut, the microbiome. Even a range of common medications have depression as a side-effect, therefore all prescriptions should be evaluated if one suffers from depressive symptoms. Prolonged stress causes hormones to be released that are neurotoxic and may change the architecture of the brain. This may lead to depression by adversely affecting concentration, memory, learning, planning, reflection and feeling. When the brain has changed, recovery will take time, as it is not only the mood that needs to change, but the brain that produces the mood. Finally, lifestyle may play a major role in the development of depression, as well as recovery from depression. In general, whatever is good for the body is good for the mind, and vice versa. Adequate sleep, wholesome food, regular exercise, sunshine and rest make for optimum health. These benefits may not only increase longevity, but also promote happiness. Conversely, where the mind and body are lacking these benefits, and alcohol or drugs are used, mental, as well as physical health suffers. Still, even when everything is done right, there are many other aspects of life that may harm us and trigger depression.

### BRAIN CHEMICALS AND DEPRESSION:

When it comes to what is happening in the brain and the body during depression, much is still unknown. Psychiatry has held that disturbances in brain chemicals play an important role in most mental disorders. Thus, medications have been developed in an attempt to regulate the availability of certain brain chemicals within the brain in order to alleviate symptoms. It is not clearly understood how, and to what extent, brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) play a role in depression and other mental disorders. Since we cannot measure the levels of brain chemicals of interest with common methods, we do not know if levels in individual cases are actually elevated or decreased. Therefore, there is no blood test that can provide an indication of what biochemical disturbance there may be in the brain for a given mental disorder. Furthermore, it is unclear if changes in the level of brain chemicals are the cause or effect of depression. Lately, theories and research have indicated that antidepressants may have other beneficial effects on the depressed brain, apart from their effects on brain chemicals. Thus, there is still much we do not know about the role of brain chemicals in depression, but we cannot reject that they may play an important role.

### ANTIDEPRESSANTS:

Antidepressants alone are not recommended as the only treatment for depression, yet because of limited resources, they often become the first intervention in any treatment attempt. Medication should always be combined with other supportive measures, such as counselling or psychotherapy. Medication often has little or no effect on mild depression, but it may be effective and necessary in moderate and severe depression. Yet, there are great individual differences. Some patients with depression may experience good effects from antidepressants, while others may not have any positive effects at all. Antidepressants take time – usually 2 to 4 weeks – to work, and often, symptoms such as sleep, appetite, and concentration problems, improve before the mood lifts. It is therefore important to give a medication attempt sufficient time before concluding that it does not work. If medication does not improve the condition, it should be evaluated by a doctor, or possibly a psychiatrist, and an increase of dosage, a change of medication or termination should be considered. Since antidepressants may have undesirable side-effects, even when they have no positive effects, they should be discontinued if they do not provide any desirable effects. If you are taking antidepressants, do not stop taking them without the help and guidance of a doctor. Abruptly stopping antidepressants may cause severe physical and mental symptoms.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

We would also like to add that views expressed in the SEC Communicator are opinions of the writers.

## YOUTH WORK PRACTICE LEVEL 3: 15 CREDIT VALUE

### THREE COMPULSORY DATES:

Session 1: Sunday 04 November 2018

Session 2: Sunday 18 November 2018

Session 3: Sunday 02 December 2018

**TIMES: 10:00AM - 04:30PM**

**VENUE:** Oasis College of Higher Education  
1 Kennington Road, London, SE1 7QP

**COST: £75.00**



## INTRODUCTION TO CHAPLAINCY LEVEL 4: 15 CREDIT VALUE

### THREE COMPULSORY DATES:

Session 1: Sunday 11 November 2018

Session 2: Sunday 25 November 2018

Session 3: Sunday 09 December 2018

**TIMES: 10:00AM - 04:30PM**

**VENUE:** Oasis College of Higher Education  
1 Kennington Road, London, SE1 7QP

**COST: £75.00**



# Adventist Connect



**October - December 2018**

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau

Adventism is a world-wide religion with over 20 million people sharing the same faith, worshipping on the same day each week, believing in similar doctrines and holding similar values. There are several key dates over the coming months that we, here, in the South England Conference, can join in so that we can feel more connected to our 'brothers and sisters' around them world. Enjoy your journey as an Adventist over the coming months.

### 13 October 2018 Pastors' Appreciation Day

On the 13th October, it is Pastors' Appreciation Day. This is the day, when you can say 'Thank You' to your Pastor and Bible Workers. This could be done in the form of a letter or a card signed by the members of the church. Alternatively, you may wish to arrange a special lunch for the ministerial family in your church. You may plan a special service of dedication or thanksgiving, or even offer a special prayer in the worship service. Remember, the ministerial workers in your church have spouses and children too.

### 20 October 2018, Spirit of Prophecy & Heritage Sabbath

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, one of our unique doctrines is our belief in the Spirit of Prophecy. On the 20th October, it is the Spirit of Prophecy and Heritage Sabbath. What an amazing opportunity to relook at this key doctrine. For the children you could devise a short quiz to find out what they know about the Spirit of Prophecy; or you might wish to retell the story of how the Seventh-day Adventist Church began, in a creative and innovative way.

### 27 October 2018 Creation Sabbath

The possibilities for retelling the Creation Story are endless on the 27th October on Creation Sabbath. You could decorate your church with murals about the days of creation, or you could focus on one day, such as the Sabbath and have short talks about the benefits of rest.

### 3 -10 November 2018 Annual Week of Prayer

3rd -10th November is the Annual Week of Prayer. Nightly readings should be available shortly. Please take time to access the readings through the Adventist World magazines available in your local church and take time to pray with and for each other. Your local church may have special prayer services. Take time to attend these if possible and, if not, pray at a specified time each evening. Adventist Radio London will be hosting Sacred Conversations - the art of talking to God - throughout the week.

### 24 November 2018 Focus on needs of those affected by HIV/AIDS

36.7 million people world-wide are affected by HIV/AIDS. The 24th November is designated as the day to focus on their needs. Find a local group of people living with this condition and befriend them or find ways in which you can cater to their needs.

### 1 December 2018 World Stewardship Day

World Stewardship Day is celebrated on the 1st December. Biblical stewardship is about the holistic development of our lives and the belief that everything that we own belongs to God; we are simply stewards of these resources. You may wish to look at the way that you spend money or how you treat the environment. Your church may wish to host a day that focuses on talents or resources.

### 8 December 2018 Health Emphasis Sabbath

8th December is Health Emphasis Sabbath and this comes just ahead of the festive season, which is most expedient. Health is vital to life and you may wish to emphasis the need for moderation as part of any presentations.



Adventist

# Homeschooling

*With a difference!* 2

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£5 PER PERSON

11am to 4pm

Sunday 28 Oct 2018



Asna  
Adventist Special Needs Association

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FOR THE LORD

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## Living MY PASSION

**Amanda Mukwashi, of UK and Zambian heritage, is a committed Christian and dedicated Seventh-day Adventist.** At the helm of Christian Aid, the official relief and development agency of 41 British and Irish churches, she works to support sustainable development, to alleviate poverty, injustice and inequality, and to support civil society, with a special focus on women's leadership, civic engagement and volunteering. She has more than 20 years' experience, with extensive knowledge and expertise in disaster relief in countries across the globe. It is evident, when you meet Amanda, that you are in the presence of an individual who is extremely passionate about humanitarian work. With an educational background in law - at both undergraduate and Masters' levels- she is solidly grounded in her role as leader of the international organization Christian Aid that works in 37 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean. Her self-assured demeanour is one of the qualities that has ensured her success as a leader in her sector, along with her humility and love of justice.

### In reality, what are the practicalities that encapsulate social justice?

The basic grounding is that God created every human being equal. If you go to Genesis, it's very clear: God created man in His image; male and female he created them. In the New Testament that is further affirmed when Paul the Apostle says that there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor slave, nor free man, nor male, nor female. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so, when you look at how we live at the moment, in terms of the levels of extreme poverty, extreme injustice, the mistreatment, discrimination

and oppression of women, I believe that it is all as a result of sin. It is not God's plan. That's not how he intended the world to be. That's what I define as social injustice, because it has come about because of our social, economic and political activities. Respect and dignity have to be at the heart of all our interactions, but above all that, we have to restore the relationship that was broken with God when sin entered.

### Does equal treatment for men and women mean everybody being the same?

Equal is not the same as *'the same'*. Men and Women are different, individuals are different. Each one of us have got our own very unique DNA, and so our vision or aim is not striving for sameness, but it's striving for equal treatment in terms of dignity. It's not a blanket *'we are all the same'*, but *it's definitely a blanket'* we must treat each other with respect and with dignity'. In terms of poverty, it means that we must be dissatisfied and outraged if we have 40 million people who are on the move, who are vulnerable and at risk because of conflict, because of natural disasters. It means we must be outraged when we see the high levels of child marriages. When we see gender-based violence taking place, we must be outraged and angry about this. That is the justice in a very unequal and unjust world. God is the author of equality. As people of faith, we are continually striving to go back to God's intention - equal treatment. How we as human beings have twisted God's plan is not an indication of where God stands on the issue of gender justice. Let's not confuse the two. The instruction that man shall rule over you as a woman only came after the fall, you know,

so that was not God's plan.

### How should I show my outrage at the injustices that I see?

Christian Aid is supported by thousands of people in Britain and Ireland. They support us in very different ways. Sometimes we need to talk to politicians. We have policies or issues, like climate justice, that we want to bring to attention, because we see ourselves as stewards and custodians of the earth; and if we don't look after it, it won't be able to look after us. But we don't make the decisions that are going to protect. We need the politicians, the decision-makers. So, People express their outrage by standing together with us, standing together with those who are being impacted and by lending their voice to the politicians, to their local MPs, in their churches, in different spaces.

### Who are the 'Displaced People' at the core of your values?

These are people on the move; we are hitting 70 million, including refugees. At the moment we are trying to highlight *'internally displaced'* people, who are about 40 million of the people on the move. They're not crossing their borders, which means that, either because of flood, drought, earthquake, hurricane, or conflict in their country, people have been forcibly removed or have been forced to move from their homes into the unknown. This is a big issue for us at Christian Aid. In terms of international law, refugees - if they cross the borders-have international law, and international provision to take care of them. But, as long as they are in their country, they are supposed to be under the protection of their national government.

Sometimes the national government is a problem because the people have moved because of conflict that the national government is a part of; or they are not well resourced to be able to take care of people on the move. People on the move are some of the most marginalized, most vulnerable people in the world- including people in Haiti, displaced because of a hurricane; and people displaced by the conflict in the DRC. Nobody is taking care of them.

### What is your object for these people?

In the humanitarian context, we are working very closely with some of these communities to help them rebuild, but what we are asking for is that, at the international level, apart from just having guidelines on how to deal with them, we need much more concrete legislation that allows them to be recognized as people who are displaced. Otherwise, when we talk about sustainable development goals (SDG's) and *'leave no-one behind...'*, we are not going to achieve those because these people will be left behind. We need resource commitment and a legislative framework that allow governments to view these people as a group.

### What is your concept of tax justice?

It is ironic that a lot of studies and projections say the world has never been richer than it is today, but the number of poor people that we have is equally astounding. The simple link is that tax is a way of collecting resources that can be used to address issues that poor people are facing. For example, in Malawi there is plenty of sunshine. The Christian Aid office in Malawi is completely solar powered. If we want to help, say farmers, we can buy them a piece of land where they can grow crops to sell; but we know that water can be an issue. How do we support them in terms of solar power irrigation? All these things require investment. So, if you're not collecting the taxes, if people are evading paying taxes, or if the money is not being used in the right way- for the benefit of the poor people- that's where tax justice comes in; and that's the reason we talk about it and have been passionate about it for many years.

### Professionally, your faith and your works are perfectly aligned. You're head of a faith-based organization that shares your values.

I didn't design it like that way. I have always wanted to work combating injustice. I had been working at the UN for about 3 years, but I was praying for something more, I wanted to reconnect, and I thought my something more was serving in a voluntary capacity in a Christian space. When Christian Aid applied for trustees, I applied, and I

became a trustee on the board. I loved it. I would come for board meetings, we would pray, and I would go back to my day job and think- *"This is fantastic!"* To be able to pray and then talk about work in the same space. People would tell me, *'You are happiest when you come back from those board meetings.'*

It restored my belief that the work we were doing was possible; that it was doable, and that, at the end of the day, it is not statistics. There are people with names- human beings. When the job for CEO was advertised, I started praying about it, and I had to make up mind to step down as a trustee in order to apply. But I felt the way the board and trustees worked and prayed together created a safe place that it would be okay if I did not get the job. So, I applied... and the rest is history. Was I born to this role? I hope so, because the position that I hold is definitely a calling.

### Do you find that support for annual Christian Aid Week is declining or increasing?

Annually we raise anywhere between 8 and 10 million pounds. At our peak we were hitting about 12 million on average. So there has been a little bit of a decline. But I really am amazed at the people that go out, the people that do the breakfast meetings - *'The Big Breaky'*; and the book sale in Scotland. When I saw it being advertised, I thought, *"Wow!"* People plan for this their whole year, and this is the highlight of their engagement. They've decided, *"This is what I'm going to do for Christian Aid Week."* At the same time, we have people who decide that it is not the way they want to engage; they are going to be just involved in the campaigns. And that's fine too.

### Why Climate Justice?

Our health is so interconnected and linked with the health of the planet, so our voice should be up there at the top, leading the fight for climate justice. Some countries have developed based on policies that have had a negative impact on the planet. We're talking about carbon emissions, fossil fuels. Developed countries have grown and have benefitted from negative use of the planet. But the impact of climate change knows no borders; and so, when you're looking at the floods, earthquakes, and droughts that are hitting those countries that are less developed, those are the countries that are impacted much more adversely by our activities. We need to rebalance the scale so that those who are being impacted on, but did not contribute to the full force of the climate change impact, can have an opportunity to develop, to grow, to be supported in terms of financing for adaptation and mitigation of those places

that are less developed.

Every year there are headlines of disasters around the world. What are you doing now about last year's disasters that people have forgotten about?

Once it's not in the news anymore, we continue to work on the ground. We've got partners that we're working with. The reality on the ground is that the media coverage is to bring it to attention and awareness that this is happening and mobilize resources. We're there during and after the media coverage, and in some countries, we've been there for years. Imagine a piece of cloth that you wash all the time. It gets thinner and thinner and thinner, and in terms of risks and vulnerabilities, if you take a place like Haiti, you have an earthquake; two or three years later, you have a hurricane; two years later, you have something else. No matter how strong people are, eventually they cannot bounce back better. Without help, without support, without really concerted investment, they start fraying at the seams as a community. Although we have seen really strong perseverance and resilience, we need to support them, to strengthen them, so that they are in a position to bounce back, and to bounce back better.

### Working for a charity in Britain is challenging. What keeps you going?

People have said to me, *"Are you out of your mind, coming back to work for an aid charity at a time when it is really tough because of safeguarding issues?"* I truly believe God has placed me here for a reason. What keeps me going and keeps me inspired is when Esther, just before she goes before the king, says, *"Perhaps I was put here for such a time as this."* It is amazing for me to be in an organization where I meet with my directors, and before we have a meeting, we have a devotion in the workplace. For the directors in Christian Aid, one of our occupational requirements is that we should be practicing Christians because it's not just a religion- it's a way of life. What Christian Aid has been able to do is to be a home for Christians, but also for non-Christians who share those fundamental values with us. Because in exercising our faith, we also have to respect religious liberty, and therefore everybody that is sitting around the table, whether you're Moslem, Hindu, atheist or agnostic, you can sit around the table and you will be inspired by how we live out our faith and our values.

For more information on the work of Christian Aid, please go to [www.christianaids.org.uk](http://www.christianaids.org.uk)

## Sowing and Growing (Part 2)

Within the garden of the Church, it is so easy to become impatient with one another; to look around us and to begin to think that, if everyone else would just “*shape up*”, we could begin to live in the kind of church we long for. But we forget that the Spirit often works beneath the surface, and behind the scenes. We forget that in the Book of Esther, God is not mentioned a single time, and yet His fingerprints are all over the story. Or that, while on the run from Jezebel, Elijah complained to God that he was “*the only one left*”; God had to remind him that there were 7000 others who had also remained faithful. And, of course, we recall that Peter had to go to Cornelius’s house to learn that the Spirit is working in places he never would go and in hearts that he might disregard. The Spirit does His work most often in ways we do not immediately recognize; ways that are uncomfortable; that are challenging to us. But it is how the Spirit works.

Notice how the parable describes the growth that happens: “... *First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.*” (Mark 4:28, KJV)

There is a progression toward maturity: From seedling to seed bearer; from germination to full-grown; from potential to producer. Inherent in every seed sown is the potential for a mature, seed producing plant. A harvest.

The Church is the environment in which we grow. Having sown the seed, we hope to nurture the seedlings in the greenhouse of faith. Most greenhouses and potting-sheds I have been in are a little disorderly. The important things are light, temperature and moisture. Get those things right, and it doesn’t matter about the rubbish on the floor and the tools lying about.

The life of faith is not a passive spectator sport. Walking with the Spirit does not mean splendid isolation. Living as *kingdom people* calls us towards authentic community and focused engagement. It invites us to passionate spirituality and loving relationships. It challenges us toward empowering leadership and effective structures. Living as Kingdom People calls us to use our spiritual gifts as the basis of individual and collective ministry and to reach out evangelistically to meet the needs within our wider community. It drives us toward small groups that are caring and nurturing, engaging the whole person and draws us together to celebrate and declare salvation in inspiring worship services.

Getting the important things right – the things that allow for optimal growth in the Church- is imperative. To assist us in determining the health of the growth environment (our Churches), the South England Conference administration has endorsed the use of the Natural Church Development Survey (NCD) which helps local congregations take a “*snapshot*” of their current health status in relation to these eight quality characteristics:

- Passionate Spirituality
- Empowering Leadership
- Gift-Based Ministry
- Holistic Small Groups
- Inspiring Worship
- Loving Relationships
- Effective Structures
- Needs-based Evangelism

The survey is not an evaluation tool, but more like a mirror that reveals to us a reflection of ourselves, thus informing

us where adjustments - like the light or temperature or moisture within a greenhouse - might need to be made. Having sown the seed, we must also grow together under the guidance and tutelage of the Holy Spirit. NCD simply provides a mechanism by which to gauge and engage the conversation.

The Church Growth Department recognises the diligent and faithful evangelistic work that is done in our communities through the dedicated and committed work of local congregations and their Pastors. We seek to come alongside that work, offering the NCD Survey as a tool to help us pay closer attention to the growing conditions within the churches and the environment into which we invite new believers and expect them to grow and thrive.

We who follow Christ find ourselves among those who scatter gospel seed; and we find ourselves among the growing seeds, for the Gospel must as surely grow in us as it grows around us. Healthy churches and healthy believers serve to strengthen the witness we give.

NCD Surveys may be arranged through the Church Growth Department of the South England Conference.

\*\* The Church Growth and Personal Ministries Departments of the SEC will be offering a combined training weekend entitled “*Essentials for a Healthy, Thriving Church*”.

# DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS & ARTICLES



WAYNE ERASMUS

# PERSONAL MINISTRIES Dept

## Church as God's Fostering Family

**"I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit."** (John 15:16, ESV)

God's vision is to make His church a fellowshiping family (Ephesians 2:19-20; 3:14-15; 1 John 1:7) of faithful worshippers (John 4:23-24) and fruitful witnesses (Acts 1:8). Just as the family is the place to birth new life and grow the same to successful adults, the church should be the best place for spiritual life to be birthed and matured. Only churches that develop and sustain the effective structures and routines that help every disciple mature and commit to the habits of responsible parents can realise God's vision.

Successful parenting is not an inherited trait but a learned skill. Successful spiritual parenting is a skill best acquired by those available and committed to cooperating with the Holy Spirit, Who is eager to gift every church and disciple to be effective disciple makers. The gifts of the Spirit are given to equip the church (every disciple and congregation) for the role of birthing new disciples and growing the same to the likeness of Christ (Ephesian 4:11-15). Every church can be God's functional family in the community by establishing simple, but essential, models and routines.

Pair members together to form 'spiritual parents' and then train them to work with seekers and new believers, or to work in new areas. Christ underpinned the importance of team-work when He sent the disciples, in pairs, to preach and teach (Luke 10:1). When the early church started, the disciples worked in pairs and in teams, as in the cases of Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas and Paul and Silas. Members and churches committed

to team-working will succeed where others do not.

The greatest need of every new born child is at least one committed parent to provide for their physical, emotional and relational needs. Every seeker and new disciple need spiritual parents to nurture and help them navigate their new life. In a church modelled after the functional family, every seeker and new believer is assigned two or more responsible mature disciples who commit to successfully 'parent them' in all aspects of their spiritual life. Our current practice of giving books to newly-baptised members is equivalent to giving a baby a trolley full of groceries and hoping they will know how to feed themselves. Many 'die' instead of growing, because they don't know how to use these resources.

Many things in life and faith are not taught, but they are caught. Every church must encourage its mature members to embrace the discipline of being foster parents and families where others can see and experience the life of a disciple. They are to foster others at different stages of their spiritual life, whether the seeker, bringing them to faith; or the new disciple, helping them grow in their new faith. Paul's model for the church is demonstrated in the practical

and effective nurture and mentoring of Timothy, over an extended period. (Acts 16:1-5, 1 & 2 Timothy).

The individuals who were instrumental in making me a disciple also nurtured and mentored me to be a disciple-maker. Even since I became a minister, they have continued to affirm and support this work. When members experience the joy of spiritual parenting, they create and foster healthy church families that are able to function by bringing in new members and growing them to become the spiritual parents for others.

The SEC Personal Ministries Department is here to support every minister, ministry leader and church to fulfil God's plan to become a functional family. This was Peter's call, for the church to be a place of growth: *"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (2Peter 1:5-8 NIV).



**MICHAEL MBUI**

# WOMEN MINISTRIES Dept

During the half term break in May, we ran the Holiday Fun Club at Hyland House School for families who need a break or who struggle during the holidays to find suitable activities for their children. Eighteen children attended, including some from the community.

Saturday 9 June was Women's International Day. We joined the celebration at Area 5's 'It's Your Journey'. Over 400 women attended. The keynote speaker was Pastor Audrey Anderson, TED Executive Secretary. Special thanks go to June Thompson, our Area 5 Women's Ministries Coordinator and her team for a well organised programme.

After the success of the Easy Sew School at last year's Camp Meeting, we decided to expand our classes. We ran workshops over three days. We were completely booked every day and had to turn people away. Women, men and young people learned how to operate a sewing machine, customise T-Shirts and make a tote bag. We especially thank our teachers Margaret Watson and Mowbray Holness from the Balham and Luton Easy Sew Schools and assistants Norma Stewart, Clarisse Fergiste and Cheryl Dayley from the Stratford and Hackney churches.

Eight women graduated at Camp Meeting from the School of Evangelism's Woman of Faith Leadership programme. We were happy to share the joy of their achievements. The Woman of Faith programme begins again on Sunday 14 October 2018 at the Advent Centre.

It is always good to learn how to improve your communication skills. Sue Grosvenor from GBS Corporate joined us in July to help with tips, skills and practical ways to improve our effectiveness and build confidence in communicating with others. Some attendees' responses were: *"I am glad I came; this has really opened my eyes to my attitude about how I communicate with others;"* and, *"This course has really helped me think of other ways to be heard without being offensive."*

It was a privilege to visit a Women's Refuge in London. We are now working

collaboratively with a refuge so that we can learn, exchange knowledge, and share expertise and resources in the area of domestic abuse. We also presented the refuge with the funds raised at our 'Breaking the Trend Day of Celebration' in January 2018.

The 'End it Now' Abuse Prevention emphasis day was on Saturday 25 August 2018. Every church was invited to address the topic of Prevention of Domestic Abuse, as an issue that affects us all. The General Conference has included this yearly date in the calendar to keep it at the forefront of our minds. Please check the Women's Ministries website for available resources.

On 25 November all churches will have another opportunity to address the issue of Domestic Abuse. It is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls. Please see our website for available resources.

Finally, we thank God for all our women, young girls, youth and teens for their love and commitment to the church. May God's peace rest with us all as we continue to minister together for His glory.



**MASLIN HOLNESS**

## True Diversity

On taking office as the first SEC Diversity Ministry Director, I set out to learn what was the understanding of church leaders and their members with respect to Diversity and its relevance to church, mission and ministry.

But before embarking on this research journey, it was crucial to establish the meaning and parameters of the term *Diversity* - a term that would direct future strategic planning and ministry. So, to begin with a working definition-

### Definition of Diversity

Diversity, as a noun, names the 'state or fact' of being different;<sup>1</sup> As an adjective, diversity describes the state or condition of something, as compared to others within the same group or setting, so as to distinguish by kind or type; The verb - *to diversify* - is the action of making something different.

The Concept of Diversity realises all aspects of the above definition, while further expanding it in line with the beliefs and values of Christianity and within the context of the church, as a body of believers; the corporate church; and in society in general, including real life situations, settings and relationships.

By definition, the Concept of Diversity<sup>2</sup> is the approach to, and practice of, relationships that are characterized by acceptance and respect of others; valuing each individual as being unique and created in God's image, while recognizing and including individual differences with understanding. It promotes exploring of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment, and moving beyond simple tolerance, to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

This definition of diversity as a concept has directed the SEC Diversity Ministry in its main strategy and objective to create safe places where open and frank conversations for learning and finding common ground can be established. One such opportunity came at the 'Breaking the Trend Day of Fellowship' earlier this year, where members were invited to discuss the question: 'Multicultural Church; Can it work?' A healthy and insightful conversation took place between young and older members and between members of diverse cultural backgrounds.

An interesting point of discussion was raised regarding the demographic and cultural composition of the SDA church in the UK, with respect to the imbalance between those who have migrated to the UK and the indigenous population. By way of response, certain historical factors were highlighted, as well as factors related to the religious preferences and cultural practices of the indigenous population. The perception of, and attitude towards 'Adventism as an Imported Religion', provided an insight into possible reasons for the low numbers of indigenous members that make up the church.

Other conversations questioned the validity of the 'mono-ethnic church'<sup>3</sup> in today's society, as it became clear that the existence of these churches stemmed from historical experiences of exclusion some members experienced on entering the UK. Also, the need for groups to be able to access worship in their native language, and to have a place to meet for social and economic support, further contributed to the development of mono-ethnic congregations.

The present generational shift in expression and need, calls into question the current function of the 'mono ethnic church', as a construct that might be obsolete for this time. In fact, there are those within the millennial generation and younger who feel that these churches are 'not relevant to our experience'. Some have highlighted the need for worshiping in places that are 'less exclusive and more reflective of the

society in which they live'. They feel the need for more diversity in order to bring about 'a richness of experience', and they consider these churches as biased toward one cultural group.

### Are we biased?

Each of us has biases and preference for certain things, certain people, and for the relationships we form. It is often easy to make connections and relationships with people we find effortlessly relatable- people who look like us and share our interests. We also tend to make assumptions about others, based on our experiences and the things we read, see or 'research'. The issue with this is that the assumptions and judgments we make can be and often are, incorrect. Yet, even incorrect assumptions shape our ideas and opinions and inform the unconscious biases on which we make decisions to avoid or exclude the 'other'. If we are to be a church that meets the needs of its community and that makes disciples from all peoples, we will need to be intentional about reaching out to those that are different from us. If we can do this, we will learn to accept and embrace our differences without bias. Only then will we be able to truly appreciate our diversity.

### Unity not Uniformity

The exciting thing about the multi-cultural church is that it allows attendees to practice true selflessness; for participants to have a sense of 'What can we do together as a church? VS What can I gain from church today?' Diversity calls for unity not uniformity. It calls for a place where our differences can be seen, understood and celebrated. It provides a platform for enriched worship experiences, and it frees us to transcend our preferred ways of doing things (our habits!) to achieve new heights only made possible by seeking - as the Apostle Paul phrases it- "the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4, ESV). For the church, especially in our time, this is the path to true diversity!

1. dictionary.cambridge.org  
2. gladstone.uoregon.edu  
3. \*Mono - ethnic church in this context is used to mean a church with a country as part of its name e.g. 'London Istanbul Seventh Day Adventist Church'.



SOPHIA NICHOLLS

## Things are not going...



"Things are not going to go as you've planned," was God's word as I journeyed to Kent Hill Park Training & Conference Centre, Milton Keynes, on that Thursday evening to prepare for the delegates' arrival for our annual Prayer Conference.

Our theme was Advancing God's Kingdom through Prayer, and its focus, the necessity of prayer in support of the SEC's 2018 Reclamation initiative. The delegates gained in-depth understanding of the power of praising God and the power of agreement from Shirley Grant's morning devotions. Her presentation on the Characteristics of the Enemy was impactful.

As God had planned it, a delegate shared her testimony of having been a clairvoyant for 26 years, reinforcing the reality of the enemy. Our local pastor, Wilfred Blake, followed with an excellent presentation on the practical and theological principles of prayer, in which he emphasized the important connection between interpersonal relationships and effective prayer. His presentation, especially relevant to the British context, resonated with the delegates.

On Sabbath afternoon and Sunday morning, the delegates attended workshops on spiritual warfare; methods of prayer; self-care as a prayer warrior and praying with our children. This year the Conference introduced two new prayer spaces, Serenity and the Armour of God, along with the Sanctuary Prayer Room, where delegates could spend time in personal and group prayer.

Area 6B Prayer Coordinator, Ellen Samuels, shared how wonderful it was to be with spiritually-filled people of the same mind, and to be blessed through this prayer event, and to move forward, empowered to support God's kingdom through prayer, as prayer leaders.

As I listened to delegates share their experiences of encountering God through music, praise, prayer, preaching, teaching and testimonies, I was satisfied that the Prayer Conference went as God intended, despite my earlier missives of things not going as planned- the venue relocated the Conference due to a broken lift, and technical problems meant programmes could not be printed. Yet, in Ellen's words, "The whole experience was

phenomenal." To God be the glory!

I am indebted to Ivy Williams who hosted the SEC Prayerline from the Prayer Conference, and to Malika Bediako, Linda Mukuwada, Sha-Lee Worrell and others for their assistance in organising this year's conference.



VERONICA WILLIAMS

## Calling All Volunteers

No worker is of as much value as a volunteer worker. The story is told in 2 Samuel 23:13-17 of three *'mighty men'* who worked for King David. They risked their lives and broke through the Philistine ranks to fetch a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem, all to satisfy the longing thirst of their king. The king, having appreciated the sacrifice, was so grateful that he refused to drink it, but instead poured it out as a drink offering to God. These *'mighty men'* were volunteers!

In Isaiah 6:8, after seeing the glory of God in the temple, and then acknowledging his own unworthiness and uncleanness, the prophet Isaiah heard the voice of God saying, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"* Straight away, Isaiah responded, *"Here am I! Send me."* Isaiah was a volunteer!

Again, in 2 Samuel 18:19-33, after the death of Absalom, the news needed to get to King David, to inform him that his favourite son was dead. A certain young man named Ahimaaz offered his services to run with the news, but, sadly, he was refused. Instead the Cushite was ordered to run with the news and was already on his way when

Ahimaaz, persisting in offering his services, was eventually (dismissively) given permission by Joab to carry the sad news. His enthusiasm and passion for service caused him to outrun the Cushite and arrive at the king's camp first. Ahimaaz was a volunteer!

The next phase of Adventist Radio London's development is to recruit volunteers - volunteers who are able and willing to dedicate time and talent to see this ministry succeed. God has blessed you with something that this ministry needs to reach the people of London and beyond with our unique message for these times.

1. This ministry needs volunteers who will help to produce high quality programmes for broadcasting; volunteers who are blessed with the gift of creativity and understand what the people need for this time.
2. Adventist Radio London is also in need of volunteer presenters; dedicated Adventist believers who will offer their voice in service to proclaim our message with a *"certain sound"* to an audience who need to understand it.

3. We also need volunteer writers. Well-structured sentences have the power to change hearts. A story well written demands the attention of the busiest of people. Writing the plan of salvation for a radio audience is of great value and has eternal consequences.

The scope of volunteering goes far beyond what can be included in this article. As this ministry grows, there will be greater demands for volunteer services. Volunteers are effective because they carry an innate sense of ownership. They have a passion for success and will always go the extra mile for the cause they believe in. Therefore, the church will always be strong. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, volunteers will enable Adventist Radio London to reach areas and people who may not have been reached otherwise. If you feel impressed to be an Adventist Radio London Volunteer, sign up on our website: [www.adventistradio.london](http://www.adventistradio.london) and listen out for the special taster days that will be announced in your church for your Area shortly. God bless your involvement!



**MICHAEL HAMILTON**

TIME	ZONE	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
06:00 - 06:30	ARISE	DAYBREAK	DAYBREAK	DAYBREAK	DAYBREAK	DAYBREAK	DAYBREAK	DAYBREAK
06:30 - 07:00								
07:00 - 07:30		FAMILY BREAKFAST Barbara & Co	BREAKFAST Lynette	BREAKFAST Lynette	BREAKFAST Lynette	BREAKFAST Lynette	BREAKFAST Lynette	SABBATH BREAKFAST Mike & Cathy
07:30 - 08:00								
08:00 - 08:30								
08:30 - 09:00								
09:00 - 09:30	REFLECT	IN THE NEWS Mark Grey	STORYLINE Sam Gungaloo	STORYLINE Sam Gungaloo	STORYLINE Sam Gungaloo	STORYLINE Sam Gungaloo	STORYLINE Sam Gungaloo	PLAYLIST
09:30 - 10:00								
10:00 - 10:30	COMMUNITY	RAY OF HOPE Ray Patrick						HOPE SABBATH SCHOOL
10:30 - 11:00								SABBATH WORSHIP
11:00 - 11:30								
11:30 - 12:00								
12:00 - 12:30		I BEG TO DIFFER EJ Larty	MID-DAY MESSAGE	MID-DAY MESSAGE	MID-DAY MESSAGE	MID-DAY MESSAGE	MID-DAY MESSAGE	MID-DAY MESSAGE
12:30 - 13:00								
13:00 - 13:30		ENCOUNTER Julian & Jonathan	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	
13:30 - 14:00			IT IS WRITTEN	IT IS WRITTEN	IT IS WRITTEN	IT IS WRITTEN	IT IS WRITTEN	
14:00 - 14:30		MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE
14:30 - 15:00								MUSIC SELECTION
15:00 - 15:30	INFORM	ENCOUNTER (R)	ON THE GO Vanesa	ON THE GO Vanesa	ON THE GO Vanesa	ON THE GO Vanesa	ON THE GO Vanesa	HOPE SABBATH SCHOOL (R)
15:30 - 16:00								NEWBOLD SISTERHOOD
16:00 - 16:30		MUSIC SELECTION						MUSIC SELECTION
16:30 - 17:00								
17:00 - 17:30		INSPIRE Catch-up Hour	DRIVE TIME Nigel	DRIVE TIME Nigel	DRIVE TIME Nigel	DRIVE TIME Nigel	DRIVE TIME Nigel	DRIVE TIME Nigel
17:30 - 18:00								
18:00 - 18:30		MUSIC SELECTION						TALKING POINT Mike & Cathy
18:30 - 19:00								
19:00 - 19:30	DOCTRINES	WORK LIFE	EXPLORE Michael Hamilton	EXPLORE Michael Hamilton	EXPLORE Michael Hamilton	EXPLORE Michael Hamilton	EXPLORE Michael Hamilton	MUSIC SELECTION
19:30 - 20:00		MUSIC SELECTION						
20:00 - 20:30		WORSHIP HOUR	WORSHIP HOUR	WORSHIP HOUR	WORSHIP HOUR	WORSHIP HOUR	WORSHIP HOUR	WORSHIP HOUR
20:30 - 21:00								
21:00 - 21:30	CLOSEDOWN	REFLECTIONS Trevor Johnson	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	GOSPEL MELODIES	MUSIC SELECTION
21:30 - 22:00			MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION	MUSIC SELECTION		
22:00 - 06:00			SONGS IN THE NIGHT	SONGS IN THE NIGHT	SONGS IN THE NIGHT	SONGS IN THE NIGHT	SONGS IN THE NIGHT	SONGS IN THE NIGHT

### COLOUR CODES

- PRE-RECORDED MUSIC
- LIVE SPEECH/MUSIC
- SPEECH

### ZONES

- Arise - Wake up and inspiration for the day
- Reflect - Themed music reflecting our core beliefs
- Community - Programmes from within local communities or containing teachings and practical answers to life issues
- Inform - Information and news for commuters and parents
- Doctrines - Specific teachings and messages explaining our doctrines
- Closedown - Music and conversation to unwind and prepare the mind for res



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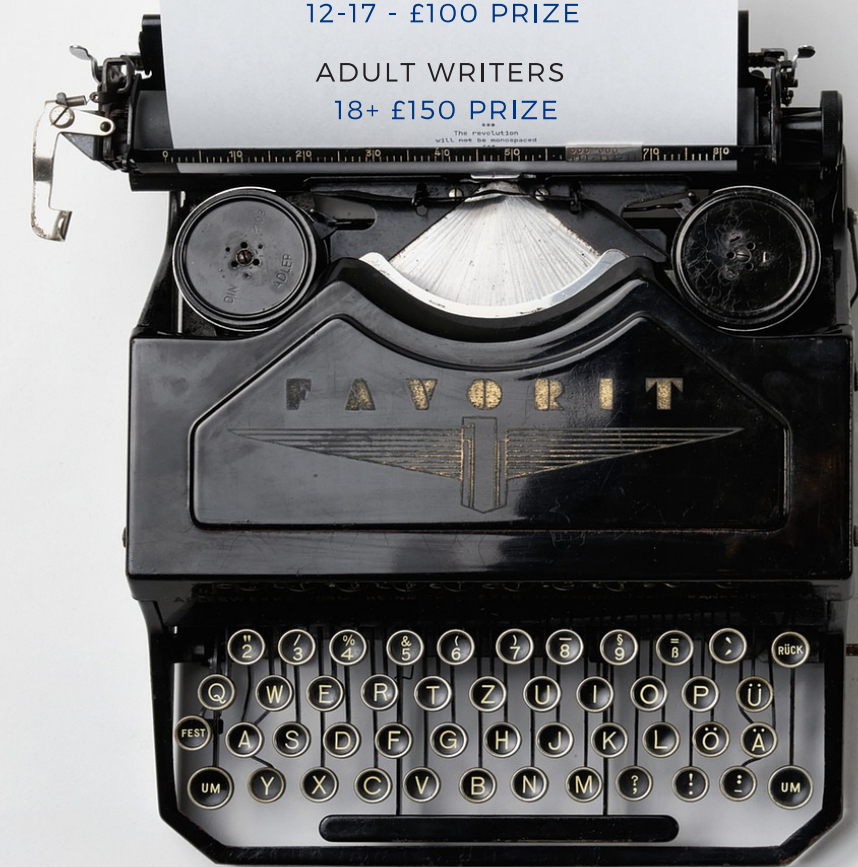
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## MISSION POSSIBLE

History and Theology came to life under the annual Mission Possible trip from 6-10 June 2018. Focused on the history of Christianity in the UK, Pastor Wayne Erasmus, Church Growth Director, led 21 attendees on a voyage into Britain's past. Site visits included Lindisfarne, St Martin's Church, Ripon Cathedral, Whitby Abbey, and Canterbury Cathedral.

Through daily presentations Historian Robin Anthony, Missiologists Pam and Gideon Peterson, and Church Planter Mfakazi Ndebele took attendees deeper into the cultural, spiritual, and psychological milieu around evangelism.

Pastor Wayne Erasmus brought to the fore the concept of 'Incarnation'. The forerunners of Christianity in the England, the Celts, encapsulated this in their missionary approach. Incarnation, at its core, veered away from the Romanic formula of religious promulgation which was often nationalistic and forceful. Conversely, the Celtic tribes spread the gospel by adapting to cultures and environments, and so transforming them.

Consequently, during the sojourn in Lindisfarne (also known as Holy Island) the missionary emphasis focused on local, home-grown approaches to sharing the gospel, as opposed to evangelizing foreign territory through church planting.



## VISION CAST

The hotly anticipated Vision Cast was launched on Saturday, 2 June with a burst of energy by Pastor Anthony Fuller, the Director of the Youth Department. Fuller, alongside supporting members of the Youth Team, delivered a series of poignant presentations, dissecting the current state of the church from a youth perspective. While speaking about his personal interactions with youth, he implored attendees to rethink their methods of engaging with millennials.

Taking this one step further, Fuller shared plans on how the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South England can establish relevance for its young people. With the British Social Attitudes Survey projecting the death of Christianity in Britain by the year 2067, Fuller appealed for a change of mindset among the audience.



He encouraged those present to attend future Youth Department workshops to learn how to address issues related to knife crime prevention, parent awareness, and questions about faith, identity, sexuality and peer pressure.

Details on the Youth Department's work and how to register for courses can be found at [youthministries.org.uk](http://youthministries.org.uk)

## KIDZ PRAISE

Stanborough Park was filled with sun, praise and people on Saturday 7 July for the first 'Live Well, Love Life, Kidz Praise GosFest'. Crowds exceeded 2,000 and visitors came from as far as Nottingham, Birmingham and London. Leading the day was the 270 strong Kidz Praise Mass Choir, led by Tony Best, with supporting performances from Destiny Malcolm, Drae Palmer, Eva Woods, and Spoken Word poetry from Pastor Warren Gillin and Jermaine Wong.

Keen to do more than showcase talented performers, Barbara Lawrence, the event organiser, arranged for an Adult and Children's Health Expo to run simultaneously with the GosFest. Attendees were treated to tasters of healthy food and free books, and there were prayer stalls placed throughout the park.

After nine months of planning, Barbara and her team expressed that they were thankful to see their hard work culminate in a completely praise-filled day, which was part evangelism, part talent showcase and part health awareness.



## CHISWICK HEALTH EXPO

In temperatures rivalling the Caribbean, Sunday 22 July saw a pocketful of its diaspora lead Chiswick SDA Church inaugural Health Expo. Bernie Collins, the Health Ministry Coordinator, with the support of the Family Life Department, had spent five months planning and promoting the event. The result was 200 attendees at Chiswick Back Common Park from 10am to 4 pm.

Keen to tally all attendees, visitors filled out their registration details before proceeding to the Health Check booths. These included, blood pressure and cholesterol checks, blood glucose levels, BMI, height and weight checks. Each stall was monitored by church members within the Health Care profession who were equipped to use medical equipment and provide advice.

The Mayor of Hounslow, Madam Mayor Samia Chaudhary, delivered an opening speech, congratulating the church on its efforts to foster community spirit and engage the public with positive health awareness. Pastor Picart, Chiswick SDA Church's Lead Pastor, followed with an introductory speech, also commending the work of the Health Ministry's team.

## HACKNEY FAMILY FUN DAY

There were positive vibes in the air as members of the public gathered for a family fun day put on by members of the Hackney SDA Church on Sunday 19th August. The event, which took place in Haggerston, where the church is based, attracted both young and old with a variety of stalls and free activities. Tasty Caribbean cuisine was served and music to get everyone on their feet. The little ones enjoyed a bouncy castle and for the older ones, a domino tournament, as well as stalls promoting health and well-being.

Event coordinator Andrea Simpson said the fun day was a follow up to the march around Hackney which the church did during the May bank holiday, in response to the knife and gun crime in the borough. "After our march around Hackney many people asked us what we would do next," said Andrea. She added: "Today was another opportunity to be out in the community to offer some free health advice and some fun activities for youngsters to let everyone know that we care and that, as a church, we are here to support those in need."

Among the health stalls was one promoting 'living a smoke free lifestyle'. Marcos Castejon, from Hackney's Smoke Free service, was heartened by members of the public who showed a genuine interest in quitting the habit. He said: "There has been a really positive vibe here with many people responding well to our message about quitting smoking. Hackney has one of the highest rates of smoking in London - so we are here to let people know of the dangers of smoking and the help that is on offer for anyone wanting to quit."

Marcos, who encouraged individuals to take the Carbon Monoxide (CO) Monitor test found that many of the participants were surprised to learn how high their levels of smoking were. For anyone wanting to quit, they should go to our website ([www.smokefreehackney.org](http://www.smokefreehackney.org)) where some tips and advice are given to help individuals live more healthy and productive lives.

(Extracted from Darell J Philip article. 28 August 2018) [sec.adventist.org](http://sec.adventist.org)



## GENDER SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND THE LAW

Over 70 people attended the Gender Self-Identification and the Law seminar on Sunday 19 August at the Advent Centre. This event was organised by the South England Conference PARL Department in conjunction with Advent Religio-Legal Perspectives.

The main aim of the seminar was to alert the church to the government's proposal to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the impact these proposed changes will have on Christians. The good news is that the government is carrying out a consultation, which the presenter, retired Pastor and Advent Religio-Legal Perspectives founder, Dr Brighton Kavaloh, said was an opportunity to witness and state what we believe and stand for as a church: God creating male and female at Creation, according to Genesis. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gives transgender (trans) people the right to legally change their gender. However, the trans community have deemed the current process too bureaucratic, expensive and intrusive. In essence, they want to have a system that is quick and takes away all the medical interventions, leaving just the administrative tasks.

Pastor Kavaloh said that it was about time that the church responded to this consultation before the proposal becomes law. However, he highlighted that these issues are to be addressed without hostility, in the same way that Jesus demonstrated to Peter, and to all Christians, when he restored the severed ear back to his attacker in the garden of Gethsemane.

(Extracted from Judith Makianikhondo Nyirenda Article) <http://sec.adventist.org.uk/news/sec/gender,-identity,-and-the-law-symposium>

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Special Needs Ministries of the Inter-European Division



# DEVOTIONAL

## Diversity



When it comes to desserts, fruit salad is one of the best options for me. It is not only the variety of colours that makes it more attractive than other desserts, but also the benefit of the different vitamins and minerals the fruits contain. And of course, the combination of different natural tastes makes it more mouth-watering. Every fruit has a distinct taste and is unique in its nature.

Some are sweet, others are sour. Some colours are boring, others are very attractive. All fruits come with different shapes and textures and tastes, yet when you mix them together, their distinctiveness and differences do complement each other.

The same is true when we talk about diversity in the church. We are all distinctly different. We come from different walks of life, with different upbringings, mind sets, cultures, education. But our differences should never get in the way when it comes to serving God.

The Bible provides metaphors to describe the church as being diverse, yet as one unit. One of the greatest examples is found in Romans 12:4-5, "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (ESV). Paul's emphasis of being different, having different functions and yet one in body, is also present in other letters he wrote, such as in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Ephesians 4.

I believe Jesus didn't want people to be all the same. So, each person that has ever lived is different from any other person who has ever lived. We may have the same eye colour as someone else. Perhaps we have the same skin colour, or the same colour hair, or we may speak the same language. Even so, we are still different from each other in many ways. And because we are all naturally selfish, we might think that other people should like what we like and want to do what we want to do. But when Jesus is in our hearts by His Spirit, we learn to love each other despite being different from each other.

I am reminded of some wise advice, a simple adage for newlyweds: *To like someone because; to love someone although.* We may not like the way in which others think or act, but we are called to love each other. And people who love each other talk to each other. Get to know your churchmate. Get to know people in your church. Beyond church, with your family and friends, become that listening person who brings humility and patience to the world.

Maybe then we'll become the disciples who can truly transform the world, not by our own powerful arguments or right opinions, but by the grace of God, known through Jesus Christ.

Rio Espulger

Pastor, Weston-Super-Mare & Croscombe

# BREAK THE SILENCE

What is Domestic Violence, Domestic Abuse?

How can you help victims of Domestic Abuse?

SEC WOMEN'S MINISTRIES T.U.F

## SUNDAY

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VENUE:  
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COST  
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Lunch is provided

Contact Ligia Buzac 01923 232728 • [lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk)  
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