

# SEC COMMUNICATOR

April 2019 # 10



## FAITH AND MENTAL HEALTH

£2.00

ISBN 978-1-912693-05-4



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





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# Editorial

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health issues have become increasingly prominent in recent times as more and more people become aware of its debilitating effects. The impact on individuals in many cases extends to their families and their wider circle of friends. Statistics from NHS Digital shows that 1 in 4 adults in Britain is likely to experience a form of mental health issue.

Many people still associate stigma with mental health illness. However, as various interventions become more accessible, many more people are now willing to admit and report the problem.

As people of faith, we are also aware that mental health problems are no respecter of persons as people of all backgrounds and ages can be affected. There is a range of factors that contribute to mental health illnesses. In our modern society, stress, financial uncertainty, job, worrying, social media and peer pressure for young people are all factors that affect a person's mental well-being.

We all need to do more to support our mental wellbeing. We also need to do more within our capacity in assisting those with mental health situations and help fight the stigma surrounding it.

Our churches should be a sanctuary for the distressed and those who are mentally burdened. Instead, many find themselves ostracised by their condition.

Greater understanding is required as we support those among us who struggle with their mental well-being. The articles in this edition contribute to the awareness of the problem, and they seek to share ways in which we can get help to assist in preventing or minimizing the impact of mental illnesses.

Jesus said in Luke 12:25-31 (NIV):

*<sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? <sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?*

*<sup>27</sup> "Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."*

## OUR COVER



**SAM O. DAVIES**  
Editor

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# BREAK THE STIGMA



## BREAK THE SILENCE!

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## the President's Desk

DR. EMMANUEL OSEI



### What is Faith?

Jesus gave the answer to this very important question and it is actually illustrated in Matthew 8: 5-13.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, <sup>6</sup>saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

<sup>7</sup> And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

<sup>8</sup> The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup> For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

<sup>10</sup> When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" <sup>11</sup> And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>12</sup> But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." <sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Jesus described the Roman Centurion as exercising *great faith* [emphasis added].

1. The Centurion has a servant at his home, paralysed and dreadfully tormented.

<sup>1</sup> All Bible quotations are from the NKJV

2. Jesus offers to come to his home to heal him.

3. The Centurion recognises that Jesus is Lord and reminds Him that he is unworthy.

4. The Centurion asks Jesus to only speak the word.

5. The Centurion is dependent only upon Jesus' word for the healing of his servant.

6. The Centurion believed and expected the word of Jesus to perform the healing.

7. The Centurion's servant is healed that same hour.

8. Jesus concludes that the Centurion has exercised great faith.

There is another story recorded in John 4:46-53.

<sup>46</sup> So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. <sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

<sup>49</sup> The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So, the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. <sup>51</sup> And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!"

<sup>52</sup> Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." <sup>53</sup> So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

What lessons can we learn?

1. The nobleman has a son who is very ill and urges Jesus to come and heal him.

2. Jesus speaks the word and tells the nobleman to go.

3. The nobleman believes the words of Jesus and goes on his way.

4. The following day he meets his servants who give him the good news that his son is healed.

5. After enquiring the time of the healing, the nobleman recognises that the healing took place the same hour when Jesus spoke the word.

In both these stories, the healing was accomplished the same time when the word was spoken. It is also noticeable that the sick ones were not in the immediate presence of Jesus, but some distance away. The latter was at least a day's journey away, yet the healing took place at once, when the word was spoken.

This is because the Word of God is not only powerful, but it is creative. The Word of God has the power to bring into existence that which it speaks. The Psalmist recognised this when he wrote: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were

made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth...For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33: 6-9)

Faith, then, is accepting the Word of God and depending on it to accomplish the thing it says. When the Centurion said to Jesus, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed," Jesus said to them that stood around, "I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. 8:10).

Today we can exercise faith. If we are in need of forgiveness, the Word of God says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

If we want wisdom, the Word of God says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

If you want the assurance of salvation, the Word of God says, "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

If you are sick, and want healing, the Word of God says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call the Elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5: 14-15).

Today, we can exercise faith by accepting the Word of God and depending on that Word to accomplish the thing it says.





# MENTAL HEALTH

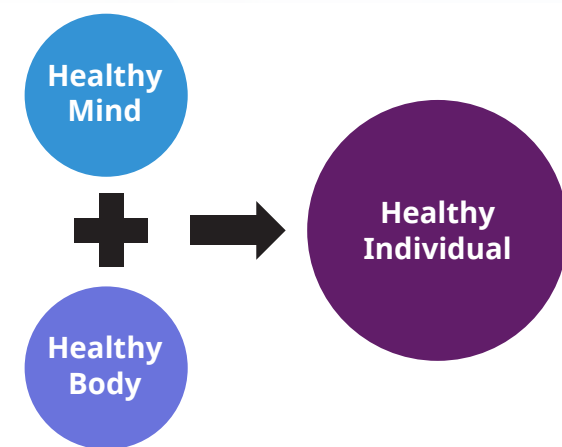


**Alison Awuku**

Member of the Wokingham Church  
CCS Counsellor & Author

The concept of mental health and mental illness is misunderstood by many and remains a mystery to some. Just like our bodies can sometimes suffer poor health, so can our minds. Good health not only entails our physical wellbeing but also our mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. So, what is mental health?

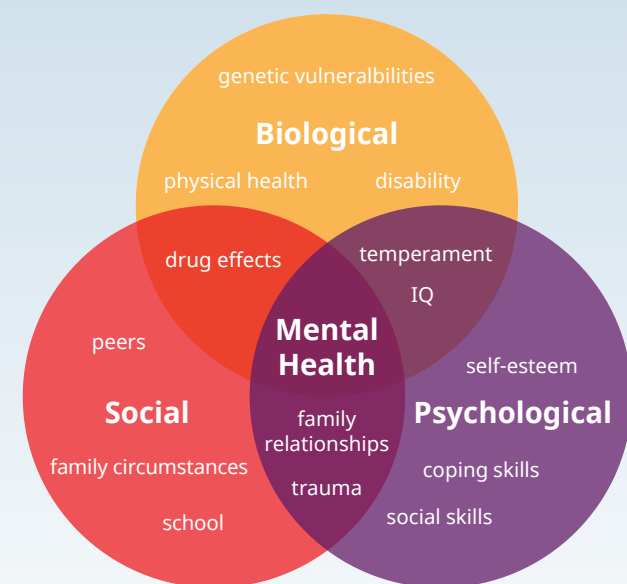
Mental health comprises our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. Our mental health determines how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Having good mental health is just as important as having good physical health. Just as there are indicators of good physical health, such as a good diet, exercise and non-detrimental lifestyle habits, there are, likewise, indicators of good mental health, such as the ability to process emotions and information in a constructive, beneficial manner; positive self-esteem and confidence; cultivating appropriate relationships; effective decision-making and being creative and productive. Wholly healthy individuals are people with a healthy mind as well as a healthy body.



**Figure 1: Healthy minds and healthy bodies make healthy individuals**

So how does mental illness come about? It can result from several factors such as:

- Unhappiness
- Excessive stress
- Life experiences such as abuse or trauma,
- Loneliness
- Low self-esteem or self-worth
- Biological factors such as the brain make-up and chemistry or genetic factors
- Family history of poor mental health



**Figure 2: Factors that contribute to mental health (Source: Kidsmatter)**

Some of the common mental health problems include: Anxiety Disorders - such as social anxiety, panic attacks, phobias, eating disorders (over-eating or under-eating); Addictions, which manifest as a dependency, habit, fixation or compulsive disorders, such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD); Psychosis, including schizophrenia, hallucinations, Alzheimer's disease, leading to dementia (a deterioration of the brain) and affecting cognitive tasks, memory and reasoning.

Our minds are amazing and good mental health is essential for our well-being, as well as the well-being of those around us. God communicates to us through our minds, which means that healthy minds are crucial for our prayer lives, spiritual growth and Christian experience. How then can we ensure good mental health? Here are a few tips:

- Know your Limits - Just like physical thresholds, we also have mental thresholds. The mind, just like the body, cannot cope with certain things. Get to understand your mental thresholds and, if possible, the thresholds of those around you.
- Empathise - Empathy shows that we understand the other person's perspective and challenges.
- Adjust - Make necessary lifestyle changes to improve diet, include exercise and sufficient rest, and cultivate creativity.
- Support - Build a healthy support network of trusted friends, family, community members and colleagues.
- Be Kind - Do something good for someone.
- Boundaries - Establish Healthy relational boundaries.
- Get Help! - Get professional help if needed.

Cornerstone Counselling Service, (CCS), has a team of qualified counsellors who have been demystifying mental health for more than 20 years, offering professional and confidential counselling to individuals, couples and families who struggle with depression, anxiety disorders, abuse, trauma, addictions, bereavement, and more. The team supports churches through mental health psychoeducation, workshops and support groups. Since 2016, CCS has been training counsellors to fill the need for qualified, experienced service in this area of mental health.





Jennipher Whitney

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Depression and anxiety are different disorders; however, people often experience symptoms from both of these disorders at the same time. Both disorders do not discriminate and can impact anyone at any stage of life regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion. Although similar, they have their own causes and their own behavioural and emotional symptoms.

#### Symptoms of depression (emotional and behavioural)

- Low self-esteem
- Social isolation
- Worthlessness
- Substance abuse
- Difficulty concentrating and thinking
- Poor school performance
- Helplessness
- Loss of interests
- Suicidal thoughts or plan
- Attempts at suicide

Feelings of anxiousness are a normal human response to stressful or frightening situations such as: a class presentation, a performance, meeting new people, or a job interview.

Anxiety becomes unhealthy when you experience it too often or if the symptoms feel too overwhelming and so prevent you from carrying out everyday tasks. Anxiety is usually brought on by situations that have an uncertain outcome and sometimes it may lead to a panic attack.

#### Symptoms of Anxiety (emotional and physical)

- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Isolating self from friends
- Feeling frightened, panicky and nervous
- Heart beating faster (palpitations)
- Difficulty sleeping
- Shortness of breath
- Muscles tensing
- Dry mouth
- Feeling sick
- Trembling
- Feeling light headed
- Tingling feeling in feet and hands.

These symptoms may not all be experienced at the same time but can sometimes be experienced simultaneously. Symptoms can vary in intensity and are unique to that person. Depression symptoms may also be present, as these two common afflictions are frequently co-morbid.

Recent mental health statistics from leading charities reveal that there has been a sharp increase in the number of young people developing anxiety. Within the general population of the UK, 1 in every 6 persons develop anxiety and depression. According to MIND, 13.3% of 16-19-year-olds and 15.8% of 20-24-year-olds have suffered from anxiety at some point in their life. The National Centre for Youth Mental Health reported that there has been a 39% increase in the number of young people with anxiety using their service since 2017.

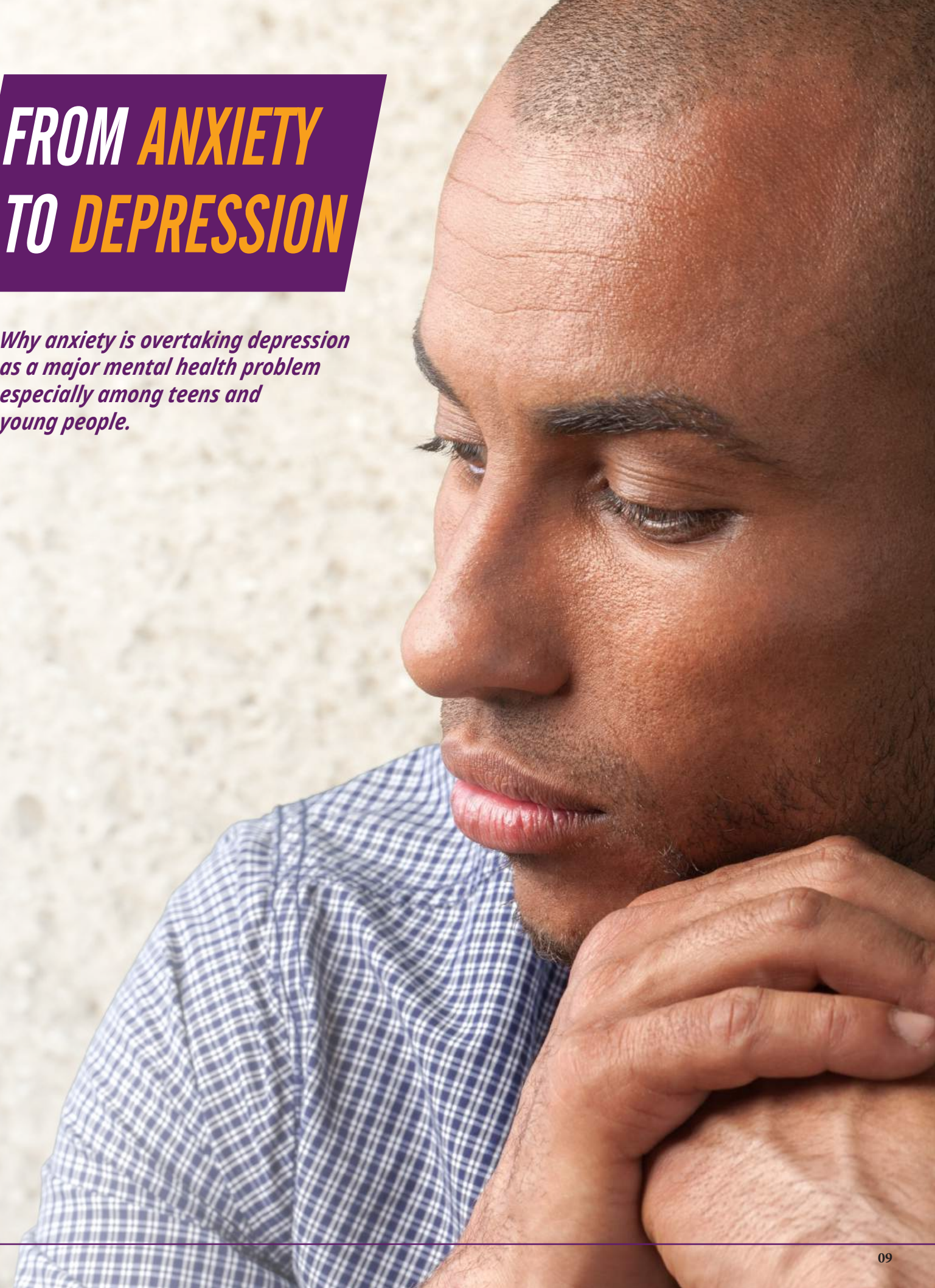
Similarly, the NSPCC (who supports Child Line) also report that there has been an increase in the number of children seeking help. Their counsellors delivered 11,750 counselling sessions for anxiety in 2015 and 2016. This expanded to 21,300 during 2017 and 2018. At least 88% of their support was provided to girls. The identifying issues were bullying, cyber-bullying, eating problems, relationship issues and school pressures, such as homework and exams. In addition, other contributing factors were related to parental separation and traumatic experiences.

Gillian O'Brien, Director of Clinical Governance at Jigsaw Charity, states that there are a number of anxiety-provoking factors that particularly affect young people, such as uncertainty about the future, loss of a sense of identity and navigating the fast-paced world they live in. However, she revealed that one of the major driving forces for anxiety among the young is the expectations of their parents, teachers and society at large.

And these factors are further exacerbated by social media. Here, a false reality can be created where everyone is looking good and has it all together. These images of other people's lives can create unrealistic expectations; and when these expectations are not met, anxiety levels can rise to overwhelming proportions.

## FROM ANXIETY TO DEPRESSION

*Why anxiety is overtaking depression as a major mental health problem especially among teens and young people.*







Dr. Adam Ibrahim

DipProfDev, BSc (Hons), MB BS, DipCBT  
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## WHY NUMBERS DON'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY

Recently, I have been reflecting about growing old. Later this year, my parents will both turn 70, and my grandfather will be 90 years old. As for me, I realised that I will be 57 when my beautiful little girl (now 18 months old) turns 18. I worry sometimes about what health I will be in, how much of a help or hindrance I might be to my little girl when she starts out on her adult life. I'm sure I'm not alone in having such thoughts.

Yet, it's not so much the passage of time that should concern us. My paternal great grandmother lived to 103, retaining all her mental faculties into her early 90's before developing dementia. Also, just before last Christmas, the great Dr Ellsworth Wareham- an amazing role model for me- died at age 104 in Loma Linda, California.<sup>1</sup> He had remained actively involved in his field of open-heart surgery up until the incredible age of 96, and his family reports that he had good mental health right till the end.

So how did they do it? Is it all just good genes, or can we learn some principles to help ourselves too? I believe we can.

Growing older brings many potentially serious challenges to our mental health. Over 2 million seniors live alone in the UK. Shockingly, half of them go for over a month at a time without meaningful human contact, with only the TV or radio to keep them company.

Ageing often brings changes in status and finances from retirement, loss of loved ones, including life partners,

<sup>1</sup> <https://spectrummagazine.org/news/2018/memorial-ellsworth-wareham-blue-zone-pioneer-and-cardiologist-dies-104>

worsening physical health, and much more. On top of this, we face the fear of losing our memory - the dreaded dementia.

Dementia comes from the Latin for madness - to be literally 'out of your mind'. In reality, it is more that our mind leaves us. There are 3 main types:

- Alzheimer's disease (50-70% of cases) involves slow deterioration with nerve damage and brain shrinkage;
- Vascular dementia (25%) is essentially heart disease in the brain, leading to essentially micro-strokes, causing more stepped, sudden changes;
- Lewy Body dementia (15%) brings a horrible trio of memory, behaviour, and movement impairment (like Parkinson's disease).

Mercifully, there are things we can do to reduce our risk and to maximise our mental health, even if our memory or mood starts to deteriorate. Here are the 3 top principles that can help:

### PROTECT

Despite the claims of some cosmetic companies, there is no magic cream that can keep one young forever. We need to think more about what goes inside our bodies. Dr Wareham was a famous advocate for being vegan and physically active.<sup>2</sup> My grandmother ate a simple Mauritian diet of rice, vegetables and small portions of meat or fish. Neither drank alcohol or smoked.

Medical and scientific research has taught us that diet and physical activity has a massive impact on our risk of developing Alzheimer's in later life, as well as affecting the risk of depression and anxiety. Current guidelines with **good scientific evidence** are:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/omega-3-and-dementia> Accessed 09/02/19  
<sup>3</sup> Thomas, J et al. "Omega-3 Fatty Acids in Early

# STAYING MENTALLY HEALTHY IN LATER YEARS

1. Fat balance. Our brains are mostly made of fat, and most body hormones and Vitamin D are made from cholesterol. Reducing unhealthy saturated fats (animal fat especially) and ensuring a good intake of healthy Omega 3 fats (from oily fish, chia/flax/rape/linseed seeds/oil and walnuts can reduce your risk of developing dementia if taken regularly.
2. Good fruit and veg intake - we are now advised to have not 5-a-day but a whopping 10 portions a day! Basically, dark green, leafy veg and colourful fruit/veg (not starchy potatoes etc.), are essential to provide the vitamins we need to protect our brains. Especially vital are B vitamins. Those who drink heavily can actually develop a form of dementia, because the alcohol uses up all our B vitamins. I've personally had to arrange for a 36-year old man to live in a nursing home due to alcohol related dementia.
3. Aerobic exercise for 40 minutes, three times a week. An active lifestyle reduces risk of vascular dementia and Alzheimer's, as well as lifting mood and reducing anxiety.
4. Enjoy the sunshine to boost Vitamin D. That said, everyone in the UK should probably take 400 IU of Vitamin D a day or 20,000 IU every fortnight (Veggie versions) to improve psychical and mental health, due to almost universal deficiency. Low Vitamin D increases

Prevention of Inflammatory Neurodegenerative Disease: A Focus on Alzheimer's Disease" BioMed research international vol. 2015 (2015): 172801. Online version: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4537710/>



the risk of depression and other mental health issues.

5. Weight management - Type 2 (lifestyle related) diabetes and obesity are associated with higher risk of developing dementia. So, if you become less mobile - consider reducing your calorie intake, whilst keeping everything nutritious.
6. Stay well hydrated. Probably the commonest cause of acute (sudden onset) confusion in the elderly is a bladder infection. Keeping hydrated flushes, the bladder regularly, reducing the likelihood of infections, as well as maintaining blood pressure.

### PLAN

Think about where you want to be in the future. Many people long to return 'home', to their birth place; yet these days, family is often scattered worldwide. We need a strong support network at all stages of life, especially when major life changes are happening. If you are going abroad, make plans for regular communication.

It is worth choosing trusted family members (or your solicitor) who can be legally authorized to act on your behalf

in the future (this is called having power of attorney). If this isn't done, the courts often have to step in to help families with financial and health issues, and stress levels go up all round. It is too late to do this when someone's memory is impaired, so thinking ahead is vital.

Keeping a diary, having clearly visible clocks and calendars can help, not just to remind you of events, but it keeps the brain orientated. If we don't plan our day to have structure, days blend into each other easily. This increases the risk of confusion.

### PURPOSE

Without a job, close family or a clear role, it is easy to develop depression, and dementia is more likely. Here a church family can literally be a life-saver.

Immobility needn't be a barrier. My great grandma was bed-bound from her 90's, but always left her door open, and her daughter and all visitors would always discuss daily news with her and seek her wisdom. She felt needed and involved. Solitude is a breeding ground for depression and dementia. Seniors have so much life experience and wisdom to share - but younger people these days would rather seek advice from their inexperienced peers. Thus, they are

doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. (See 1 Kings 12:8 for a great example of this!).

Making the best of things is essential. Learning a new skill has been shown to reduce risk of dementia - so maybe learning how to email, paint, play an instrument or even taking up a course of study can not only improve your mood, but protect your brain and provide a social network.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, as Christians, our true purpose is found in God. An active faith involving meditation, prayer and praise improves stress and depression, increases self-esteem, improves memory (often memory for music remains even when other memories are lost to dementia), and reduces loneliness. So, our churches need to care for our seniors, and provide opportunities for companionship, creativity and healthy living.

<sup>3</sup> John 2 (NIV)

"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/risk-factors-and-prevention/how-reduce-your-risk-dementia>





Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a collection of symptoms that continue to bother a person at least 30 days after they have experienced a traumatic event.

In the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, a person is likely to experience a large number of symptoms related to stress. For many people these will reduce over the course of the next 30 days and they will return to functioning as normal. For these people, during the course of these 30 days, the brain is able to recover from the traumatic event. However, for some people this does not happen, and the symptoms continue and, indeed, often get worse. This leads a number of psychology professionals to consider PTSD as being a problem with recovery.

The two main sources of PTSD classifications

are: the American-based Diagnostic & Statistical Manual, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (DSM-5); and the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Classification of Diseases, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition (ICD-11), which officially comes into effect at the start of 2022. The latter, which is the basis for this article, provides the following explanation of trauma:

Trauma can be a difficult term to define in this context: the key concept is that the person experiences an event as traumatic. Nonetheless, some of the most common forms of trauma include child sexual or physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, serious accidents, natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes), sexual or physical attacks, experiencing or witnessing domestic violence, traumatic bereavement and being in a war zone. Research by the USA Veterans Administration (VA) indicates that about 55% of people experience at

## Do You Need To Know About POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?



least one traumatic event and about 15% of these develop PTSD.

In order to meet WHO's new classification of PTSD, the person must be experiencing problems in the moderate to severe range in 3 distinct symptom clusters: re-experiencing, avoidance and sense of threat:

1. Re-experiencing refers to dreams, nightmares and flashback images relating to the traumatic event;
2. Avoidance refers to avoiding thoughts, feelings or sensations that remind the person of the traumatic event, or to avoiding people, places or things that are reminders of the event;
3. Sense of threat refers to being easily startled and to being constantly watchful or on guard for possible threats.

PTSD is only indicated if the person has problems in all three clusters.

WHO has also developed criteria for a new classification called Complex PTSD; the term Complex PTSD has been around for many years, but this is the first time it has been officially classified. In addition to the above requirements for PTSD, a person must also experience problems in the moderate to severe range in the following 3 symptom clusters:

1. Emotional dysregulation – difficulty calming down when upset and feeling emotionally numb;
2. Negative self-concept – thinking of oneself as worthless or a failure;
3. Disturbed relationships – Finding it hard to stay emotionally close to people or feeling distant or cut-off from people.

Complex PTSD has previously referred to trauma that was ongoing and interpersonal in nature, but WHO's classification does not specifically address this.

One of the key things addressed in treatment is avoidance, because the more a person avoids things, the more they are reinforcing the idea that what they are avoiding is dangerous or fearful. Their avoidance then typically generalises – for example, if the person was injured in a car accident, they may start to avoid all forms of transport.

Another aspect of avoidance is avoiding emotions and memories related to the trauma; these emotions and memories are experienced as dangerous and so are avoided. Therefore, a catchphrase that we often use with trauma clients is to tell them, *"What we want you to start avoiding, is your avoidance!"*



Lucia Hall

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Psychotraumatologist EMDR Therapist





**Dr. Augustus Lawrence**

Family Ministries Director

## LET THE CHILDREN COME

Children play a remarkably prominent and important role in the writings of the Bible, particularly in the gospels. The gospels show Jesus repeatedly focused his attention on children, talking time to hold them and bless them, as well as heal them. Not only did Jesus welcome and bless the children, he affirmed their place in the kingdom of God. When the disciples sought to turn them away, considering them insufficiently important to warrant his attention, Jesus commands, *“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”*. (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16, NIV). The aim of this article is to attempt to show how fatherhood can impact children’s mental health as they journey to the kingdom.

Children are human beings, created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). That said, they are also developing beings who are on their way to adulthood. It is extremely important to understand that children need to learn from the caring adults in their lives what it really means to be an adult. When it comes to notions of adulthood and maturity, one should think in terms of states of mind and not in developmental stages, or cognitive and behavioural dimensions. Being a *“grown-up”* or an adult would mean, not the fact of chronological years, but the capacity to accommodate or bear intense emotional states. Adulthood is about developing the internal world of a child. Thus, fathers, or rather, fatherhood, is key in helping children navigate safely through this emotionally-packed process.

The Scriptures widely reflect the theme of adult responsibility to guide and nurture children. Ellen White has a rich tradition of emphasising the scriptural mandate to teach and nurture young children: *“How*

*interestingly the Lord Jesus knocks at the door of families where there are little children to be educated and trained! How gently he watches over the mothers’ interest, and how sad He feels to see children neglected.”*<sup>1</sup> White also stresses the value of *“the early training of children,”* stating that *“The lessons learned, the habits formed” during early childhood “have more to do with the formation of the character and the direction of the life than have all the instruction and training of the after years.”*<sup>2</sup> Having established the vital role that caring adults play in nurturing and instructing children, how then can fatherhood impact the wellbeing of children?

A survey of social media outlets and various news organisations reveal the enormous internal distress children currently encounter in our communities. Mental disorders in children are quite common and sometimes severe. About one in four children and teens experience some type of mental disorder in any given year. The most common kind of mental disorders are anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), mood disorders like depression, and substance-use disorders like alcohol use disorders.<sup>3</sup>

Even though the above might seem discouraging, there is hope. In February 2017, the Centre for Mental Health published a research on the distinct role fathers can play in nurturing good mental health in their children. According to research, it is believed that even from birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, have confidence to explore their surroundings and, as they grow older, have better social connections. When fathers play with their children, such interactions have an important impact on a child’s emotional and social development.<sup>4</sup>

## How Fatherhood Can Impact CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH



Further, children whose fathers are involved and caring also have better educational outcomes. The projection of a father’s involvement extends into adolescence and young adulthood.<sup>5</sup> Studies find that an active and nurturing style of fathering is associated with better verbal skills, intellectual functioning, and academic achievement among adolescents.

So, there is no question that fathers do play a vital part in their children’s lives. Generally, a father’s presence and involvement can be as crucial to a child’s healthy development as a mother’s presence.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, let the little children come and let fatherhood take its stand in positively impacting the mental health and well-being of their children whose aim is to inhabit the Kingdom of God.

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# Adventist Connect



April - June 2019

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau

April is usually dominated with showers, especially in the UK. It is also the beginning of spring, and with the season comes new life and new opportunities for continuing to develop a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

On **6 April**, there is a special **day of Prayer and Fasting**. Why not do something different on that day, not only as a church but as an individual. Take time to reflect on the wonders of the season and the blessings of newness. It is also a day of Youth Spiritual Commitment and we should pray for our young people at this time, in particular.

**13 April** is designated as the **Friends of Hope Day (Visitors Day)**. Think of exciting ways in which you can plan a special day for your friends and visitors. Possibly, theme the day, and remember to make them feel welcome without overwhelming them. Not everyone wants to be recognised publicly or kissed or hugged.

**27 April** is **Special Needs Awareness Sabbath** and the service should reflect diversity not only in the content, but in the way that it is executed. Remember, many people have 'invisible' special needs.

The month of **May** has been designated as **Drug Awareness Month**. You may wish to run programmes during the month, not only to inform your members, but this might be a great time to connect with your local community about issues that might probably affect their family or friends, in particular, young people.

On **8 June**, we celebrate our **Women with an Emphasis Day**, and **15 June** is **World Refugee Sabbath**.

Joining with other Seventh-day Adventists around the world helps us not only to feel part of a family but enables us to share ideas and resources that will help, not only our spiritual growth, but will assist others to come to know Jesus for themselves.





# FOREST SCHOOL

Stanborough Primary

# EKYOMBO (Noah's Ark)

Interview With Safina Kavuma

*"Miss... Miss are we going to the woods today?"*

In 23 years of teaching, only one thing compares to the excitement felt for teaching Forest School sessions. For the past 20 years, Forest School has existed in Britain, launched by educational practitioners who recognised the impact of taking children out of the classroom and into nature to learn.

*So, what is Forest School? 'Forest School is an inspirational process, which offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.' Forest School Association.*

At Stanborough Primary School, its 40 acres of nature, bountiful with trees, has provided the perfect setting to facilitate Forest School sessions. Supported by Headteacher Angelika Horwood and the School's Governing Body, I completed my Forest School Leadership training. Subsequently, Forest School was introduced to students as part of the curriculum and, more importantly, into the ethos of SDA education.

*'True education means more than the perusal of a certain course of study... It has to do with the whole being... It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental and the spiritual*

*powers.' E.G White.*

In our Forest School Sessions, the students and I speak often about the God-given gift of nature and the responsibility we have for our world, the animals, and the plants that occupy it. The practical implementation of this stewardship is bolstered by the animals on site, including badgers, deer, rabbits and more.

A huge benefit of Forest School is the opportunity for our students to practically apply life skills that we teach in the classroom but cannot always implement in the classroom setting. The students regularly problem-solve, work in a team and use good verbal communication to achieve tasks. It is not uncommon for students to use saws, axes, palm drills and fire starters in order to get the desired result.

The achievements students make in natural surroundings, without the pressures of time and limitations of stationery, are astounding. Students readily rise to challenges in the forest, which they may, at times, shy away from in the classroom.

The impact is noticeable, based on the numerous letters and notes students have sent:

*'Forest school is a great way to learn. It's one of the best experiences I have*

*ever had, and everybody in our class loves it!' Year 4 student.*

*'I don't really have a favourite thing that we have done, because each and everything we have done in Forest School has been an amazing experience...' Year 5 student.*

*'The fire is fun...' Nursery.*

Furthermore, parents too have been positively impacted. One parent asked to speak with me and was quite emotional about the impact that being out in the forest had on her child. Her child was quite withdrawn and had some difficulty in relating to her peers at times. The mother expressed her joy at the happiness that her child had when she knew that she was going into the woods to learn.

I myself thank God for this opportunity to teach and learn in the great outdoors He created.

If you would like more information about Stanborough Primary School & Nursery or book a tour of the school, please contact the school office:

**01923 673291** or email **info@stanboroughprimary.org.uk**

by Mrs Deborah St Cyr



Safina Kavuma, founder of Ekyombo (Noah's Ark), has been diligently seeking to address poverty within the developing world. The organisation's main focus is evangelism through creative and practical methods. Safina has spent her life working as a carer in the UK. However, being from the Ugandan diaspora, she realized in 2010 that she would like to do more for her homeland.

Safina has worked in rural communities to impart skills, offer counselling services, provide health education related to hygiene and contraception, as well as teach sewing skills. When speaking to Safina, she said, *"It isn't bad to give aid, but if we continue to do that, people remain impoverished because they don't learn how to fend for themselves; nor do they develop the confidence to."* Her words echoed the adage *'give a man a fish, and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish, and he*

*eats for the rest of his life.'*

At its core, Ekyombo seeks to empower people to move from a dependency mindset of expectation to independence focused on self-providence, in turn boosting their economic prospects and social status.

With a small team of volunteers, including her son, Safina started a school last year in the village. It caters to the large population of Rwandan and Congolese refugees who sought asylum in Ugandan following civil unrest. Due to the stark realities of poverty and war, education has been ignored, and so children nearing adolescence lack basic literacy and numeracy knowledge. So, in one class, the age of students may range from 2 to 11 years old; and the numbers continue to show a steady growth, from 53 students in the beginning, to 78 in 2019.

However, with only three teachers available, Ekyombo needs support. First, through finances to employ more teachers and to complete building the school; second, through volunteers to give their time and teach the children, women and men occupational skills.

Ekyombo's motto is faith with action. Therefore, anyone interested in actively assisting people develop faith can learn more about the organisation and give their support by emailing:

**namabalenoahsark@yahoo.com**  
or visit their website:

**www.ekyombo.org**

Donations can be made at:  
**https://bit.ly/2TAzy3T**

Reporter: Onysha D Collins





# Vegan Cooking

for Kids



***Celebrating the diversity of vegan food...***

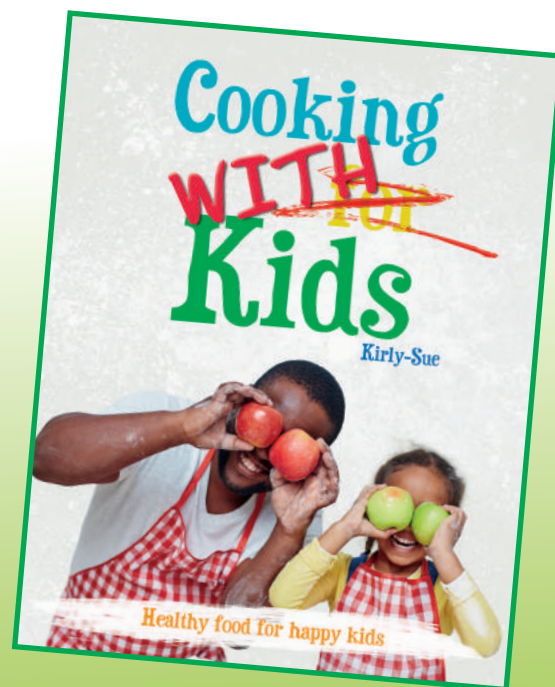
***Vegan Cook Kirly-Sue Releases New Cookbook: Cooking With Kids.***

Five years after publishing her first cookbook, Kirly-Sue's Kitchen, the vegan cook from Walthamstow Seventh-day Adventist Church in London has new stories to tell and fresh recipes to share. *Cooking With Kids* features over 70 memorable dishes, representing the best of Kirly-Sue's creative dishes for kids.

Published by Stanborough Press, the book contains some stunning food photography and tasty easy-to-follow recipes. *Cooking With Kids* reveals a glimpse into the inner workings of Kirlew's approach to plant-based meals for children. There are some time-proven favourites, inventive new ideas and contemporary twists on multi-ethnic dishes from around the world.

More than just a cookbook, *Cooking With Kids* is a testament to Kirly-Sue's conviction that anyone can cook tasty vegan food, with the right mix of creativity, persistence and innovative thinking. This book is a personal journey with Kirly-Sue, featuring some of her favourite dishes, anecdotes and the sources of her inspiration. It is an indispensable guide for the parent who wants to cook not just for, but with their children.

In addition to the new cookbook, Kirly-Sue has a new TV series coming out, based on the cookbook, and that will begin production in the spring of 2019. The series will have 10 episodes that will be broadcast in the UK, Europe, USA, Caribbean and Africa.



Kirly-Sue said *"Vegan cooking for children is easier than you think. In this book you will find simple and easy to follow recipes, using ingredients that are easy-to-find and are probably in your kitchen cupboard already".*

Making fresh, delicious vegan meals for and with your child has many benefits.

Kirly-Sue also said *"I have two nieces (Lejhel and Isobel) and one nephew (Alexander). I remember when Lejhel, my eldest niece, was about seven years old and she was staying with me for the day during the school holidays. She seemed a little bored, so I asked her if she would like to do some cooking with me in the kitchen. Before I could even finish the sentence, she rushed to the bathroom to wash her hands and ran back in record time and said, "I'm ready now." Bless her, she was so eager. It's a nice thing to do together and can be quite bonding too.*

My nephew, Alexander, loves cooking and is very good in the kitchen; he has also been interested in plants since he was about eight years old. He now grows his own vegetables and tropical fruits in his green house. He is a keen gardener like my dad. My youngest niece, Isobel, baked cookies with me once when she was smaller, and we decorated them with some lettering that said *"God is Love"*. She was helping me to make them for the children at my local church. I always make cookies for them when it is my turn to teach the children's class.

I have always done some kind of cooking or baking with my nieces and nephew, so I have learnt firsthand about the different kinds of things children like to eat and also the things they like to cook and bake.

Widely viewed on social media and featured in a popular cooking show on 3ABN TV in the USA for four years, Kirly-Sue is known by many across the globe. She has made guest appearances on:

- BBC Radio London on Vanessa Feltz Show
- BBC Radio London Jumoke Fashola Show.
- London Live TV
- Your Now Radio
- BBC Radio Liverpool
- BBC Radio West Midlands
- Phoenix Radio
- 3ABN TV (in the USA)
- STV – Riverside show
- Adventist Radio London
- BEN TV
- Hope Channel - UK
- Hope Channel – Africa
- ARTV - USA

She has contributed commentary and by-lines to The Islington Gazette, Huffington Post, Pride Magazine, The Hackney Gazette, The Ham & High, The Communicator Magazine, The Messenger, Black Hair Magazine and The Voice Newspaper.







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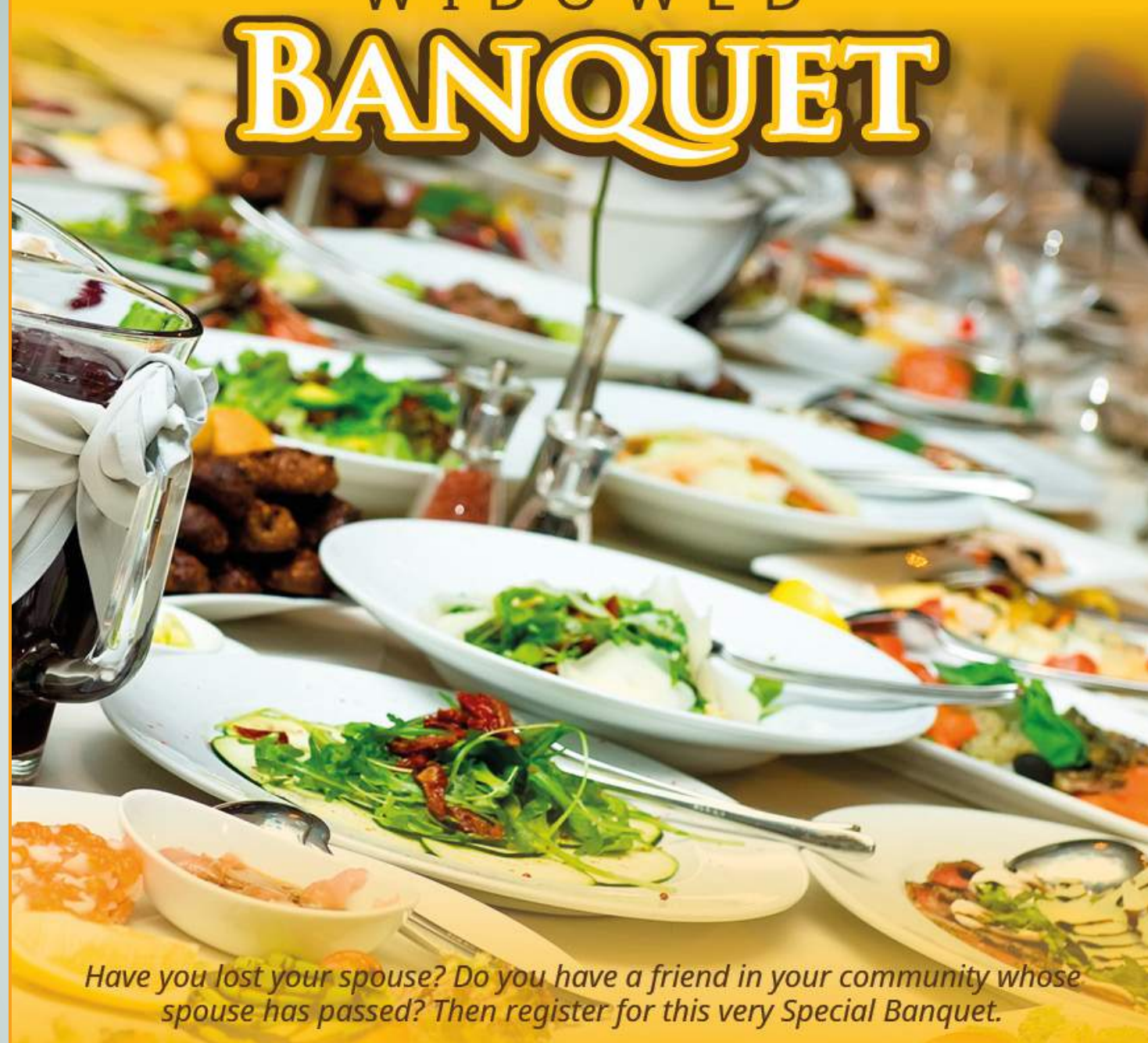
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For information contact Vanessa Dawson  
**01923 232728 or [vdawson@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:vdawson@secadventist.org.uk)**



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# Ruth Stewart

## ALWAYS A LADY



***Celebrating the contribution of Ruth Stewart to the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church***

# Profile

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau

She walked into the room, as graceful as on the first day that I met her nearly 19 years ago. Not a hair was out of place, and the broad but shy smile caressed her delicate face. I sat mesmerised by the gentle mannerism; the switching off her phone, the settling of her handbag and the folding of her coat over the chair next to her. Her mannerisms reminded me of the care and attention she always took when dealing with those in need.

Until late last year, Ruth Stewart was the PA to Dr Emmanuel Osei, the President of the South England Conference, and had served Dr Richard de Lisser and Pastors Sam Davis, Humphrey Walters and Don McFarlane over the past 18 years. In her role, she served faithfully and tirelessly and always went beyond the call of duty, spending many late nights in the office, preparing for weekend programmes, organising large conferences, in addition to attending to the everyday activities that formed part of her job description.

Prior to joining the South England Conference, Ruth worked in HR, and the change of role meant a reduction in salary and change in status. *'I wanted to do missionary service,'* she said, when I enquired as to why she chose to be a *'gatekeeper'* in the house of God. *'I saw the job advertised, prayed about it, applied for it and was delighted to be able to do what I believe God placed me there to do - serve.'*

Ill-health has forced her to leave the job that she so evidently loved and there were tears in her eyes, but a fondness in her voice, for the time spent in service.

Ruth is one of the founding members of The Hub, one of the SEC's church plants that meets in WALMART-ASDA in Watford. The aim of the plant is to minister to the direct needs of the community, and the services at the Hub are designed to be seeker-friendly but Biblically sound. If you visit the

HUB, Ruth will not only welcome you, she will be in the kitchen, warming food or serving guests. Her passion in life is to make people feel the love of the Father through compassion and empathy.

Commenting on Ruth's service to the church, Dr Richard de Lisser, who is now her church pastor, said, *'Working with Ruth is always a pleasure. She is passionate about the work of God. She has a heart for people, and she knows how to get things done.'*

Despite not being able to work full-time, Ruth continues to serve at church, as well as in her community. She continues to inspire others by her perseverance, worshipping her God in her dignified way.

One of the hardest things that she had to cope with was arranging her late mother, Doris Maxam's, funeral while having chemotherapy as she was her rock and a woman above all women.

Ruth is mother to three sons, Pablo, Garry and Dylan and has six grandchildren. She loves God with a passion. She says, *'in my trials, I hold onto God's promises in Psalm 46, that He will never leave or forsake me - my refuge and strength and a very present help in trouble.'*

As she prepares to leave, I am saddened. I recall those *'happy times'* when we ate together, laughed together and when she gave me advice, as a new mother, on how best to care for my mixed-heritage daughter's hair. I remember the worships, the prayers, the discussions about decorating the board room and the preparation for conferences. I recall the struggles, frustrations and disappointments that we shared. And I thank God for the service that she gave to so many over the years.

*"Ruth - may God bless you in this new phase of your life."*



# SEC DEPARTMENTS

## Reports and Articles

### SEC SESSION 2019

Preparations are underway for the **63rd Session of the South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SEC)**. The Portsmouth Guildhall and University will be the venue from the 5 – 8 September 2019, as it welcomes 600 delegates from all over our conference. The theme for this Session is **Making Disciples, Building Communities**.

We are not so far away from the location where the first SEC session was held in 1903, after the work in the British Isles had been reorganised the year before. At that time the British Conference covered the largest population of any conference in the Adventist Church, some forty-two million. It was proposed at that time to create the three missions: Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Additionally, the North and South England Conferences were established, dividing the population in two, along county lines with fifteen million on each side. The first president of the SEC was E J Waggoner (of 1888 fame) followed the next year by O A Olsen. Since then, the work has steadily progressed throughout the BUC, the history of which can be found at

[www.adventist.uk](http://www.adventist.uk) and the General Conference archives.

Today, we as a conference are facing some of the old challenges, along with new ones. As the churches consider their delegates, the context in which we now live and the work that lies before us, we look forward to gathering, once again, as we have many times before, to be led by the Spirit of God. For many, it will be a time of reflection as we consider the past four years; and also, a time of planning, as we seek to embrace all God wants us to be for the next quadrennium.

Among other things, we will also be having a Day of Fellowship on the Sabbath and an Ordination service in the afternoon. This will be a ticketed event, and details of how to get your tickets will be available in due course.

Please join with us in prayer as we seek God's guidance and leading through these few days that we will share together. It is our hope that the Spirit of God will take charge of the proceedings and direct his church here in Southern England.

DOUGLAS McCORMAC





The start of a new year takes us to the land of beginnings and resolutions! Somehow, we imagine that each January 1st brings with it a whole new chapter in our lives and presents us with page after page of unused, unwritten opportunity. And in a sense, that is true; there is much to take advantage of! But there is also a sense in which we do not suddenly arrive at January 1st fully free and able to simply take any new direction, for the paths of the previous years are well trod and the path well-travelled offers familiarity, stability and comfort. The path less-travelled requires a more pioneering and adventurous approach!

Bearing in mind that the New Year presents fresh opportunities and that our habits of the past will influence our ability to engage, the Church Growth Department shared two seminar streams at a one-day joint training event held at the Hilton Hotel (Watford) on the 9th February 2019. Led by Lynn Chetcuti (our Natural Church Development UK Partner) and Llew Edwards (retired Pastor), participants had the opportunity to immerse themselves in concepts for a healthy church and what it means to truly lead from our internalised values, respectively.

Llew engaged participants regarding their personal values and what it means to be “values-led”. With the day divided into two sections, the first considered some of the reasons why being values-led, as individuals and as churches, is difficult:

Because we: limit our values to the beliefs and



WAYNE ERASMUS

practices of Adventists and risk the danger of Jesus telling us that, unless we exceed the values of Adventists, we will in no case enter the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matt 5:20);

– mistake being values-led for good management and do not understand the role of inspiring aspirational, values-led leadership;

– limit being values-led to being nice rather than pursuing the tough path of character development.

The second presentation took time to seriously consider God’s value statement in Exodus 34:6-7 (NIV), *“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”* We noted Jesus’ mirroring of those same core values and ended with an exercise in writing a personal value statement.

In her seminar, Lynn Chetcuti shared the principles of a healthy church culture, with a view to investing in church life that reaches people for the Kingdom; that trains and equips disciples who, in turn, will make disciples. As a group we explored our strengths relative to our spiritual walk and our passion to reach out to others while serving the communities within which we are placed. The direct outcome of that conversation was a second conversation in which we found ourselves exploring ways by which we might capitalise on these strengths, and indeed, see even greater growth.

While exploring an actual NCD survey report, the group recognised that we experience vibrant and inspiring

times of corporate worship, but also appreciated that as we gather more and more people into each congregation there grows an inherent diversity and along with it, an increasing number of expectations and aspirations. These findings raised the question, *“How do we meet the needs of our wonderfully diverse congregations, as we continue to reach out to more people?”* In response, the group looked at how welcoming we are; our ability to make every visitor feel safe, valued, and able to join us; while additionally considering how we might enable more people to develop a few very deep relationships with others, where they can experience real accountability and support in pursuing all that God has for each one.

As the day drew to a close, time was also spent considering our approach to helping people identify their spiritual gifts: how they might use them to serve others and grow in their gifting, as well as looking at the structures through which we empower leaders to lead, develop vision, etc.

Sometimes, I meet individuals who wonder if the Church Growth Department is able to help them grow from 20 to 200 in “five easy steps”. I would have to respond, *“Five easy steps are what it is about.”* The goal is always to connect people with Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all mankind; to invite people into the atmosphere of the Kingdom – into its shade, if you like; and to be mindful that the Spirit of God is always at work to draw men and women into relationship with Christ. We simply co-operate with that work. Jesus says, *“I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18, NKJV).* As we build with Christ, it is imperative to know His core values, to aspire to those values and to pray those values into our lives and communities. Communities will be healthier in every respect because we are values-led and Christ-centred. And that does not fit into “five easy steps”!

10 Top Tips for Supporting Church Members with Mental Health challenges

1. Messages from the pulpit need to be sensitive to members living with mental illness. Statements such as, *‘Christians should not be depressed’*, can cause some distress for people who are Christians experiencing depression or other mental illness. Looking at Elijah’s crisis experience, of feeling low, depressed and suicidal<sup>1</sup>, helps us understand that the feelings of those with depression can come at any time, even after times of triumphant experiences and seeing God working in our lives. The support and love of fellow members can help through the low periods. Messages from the pulpit that recognise this experience can bring hope and comfort.
2. Mental illness is a hidden disability and can often be misunderstood and overlooked. Care must be taken to get to know members better and to develop intentional relationships with one another, moving from the ‘I’ to ‘we’ when we come to worship.
3. People with mental illness need to be treated with care and understanding. Their behaviours can often not be controlled. Support will be required to understand the best way to address periods of crisis.
4. *‘Accept me for who I am, unique and special in my own way’*. This is the plea of us all, but more so for people who are often misunderstood, isolated and marginalised. Intentional policies and practices must be established to ensure all have a sense of belonging and acceptance. Members need to feel valued, and they need to have a part to play in the life of the church to develop a sense of belonging.
5. *‘My condition is not just feeling down or ‘out of sorts’. It is chronic. I cannot just ‘shake it off’. Try to understand and be patient with me’*
6. While supporting members with mental health problems, it is important to understand the legal aspects of the situation. An understanding of the Mental Health Act will help facilitate the actions and procedures needed in some situations. Be aware and clear about the legal aspects and implications of your support.
7. It is also important to be clear about how much people with mental health problems want you to share the situation. Unfortunately, there is a great amount of stigma surrounding mental health problems. There should be agreement about what needs to be shared with fellow members or the community. Confidentiality is paramount.
8. Know the correct procedure to follow in time of crisis. Ensure the church community is educated in supporting people with mental illness. The Mental Health First Aid<sup>2</sup> course will be a good starting point
9. It is important to understand your limitations and boundaries as an individual and as a church. Professional help is often essential in some circumstances. There may be members in your church with these professional skills, who can provide advice or direct to appropriate services. Be prepared for any possible situation. Have a resource in a place, available to all members and that lists the contact numbers and details to use when necessary.
10. Prayer is key to supporting people with mental health problems, both for carers and individuals suffering with mental health problems. Pray for guidance, agape love and commitment.

(The first 5 are given by members within the church community who experience mental health challenges.)

<sup>1</sup> 1Kings 19:4-14

<sup>2</sup> <https://mhfaengland.org/>



SOPHIA NICHOLLS



Unveiling the Covers! Faith & Mental Illness/Mental Health: a difficult but necessary conversation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It's been said that stigma accounts for one of the key reasons why many people live in silence with mental health difficulties rather than seek help to alleviate their pain. However, when it comes to Christians, the issues of stigma seem to take on another level altogether. This may be due in part to fear of how the struggling Christians may be perceived by others and also, perhaps, misinterpretations of certain scriptural passages.

We often hear clients say, *"I can't tell my people from church that I am struggling with depression. That would be a terrible thing to do!"*. Current figures tell us that 1 in 4 people will experience a common mental health disorder such as anxiety or depression in a year. Some issues experienced include factors such as childhood trauma, loss, major life stresses or changes, substance misuse, social isolation, history of mental illness within the family, childbirth and hormonal changes. All these daily life issues shape our views of ourselves, others, and the world at large. These views, in turn, have an impact on how we interpret events around us.

While acceptance of the existence of mental illness in faith groups is growing, there are many who are still living in denial of the realities of mental illnesses and would rather wear their masks of, *"I am ok,"* while continuing to suffer in silence. Addressing the issue of mental illness in our church needs to start with all of us working together to dispel the myths that many still hold about it.

One of the main issues that increases the problem of stigma within Christian circles is the belief that we can *"pray away mental illness"*. While I have confidence in the God we serve, and in the power of prayer, it is also true that God works through people. Therefore, just as we, as a people, would not *"pray away"* physical illness, but seek professional help, so should we also view mental illness and seek help when needed. The second problem we find among our Christians struggling with mental illness is the response from others, such as, *"it is the test of your faith"*, and, *"God will not give you more than you can bear"*. On a personal



THEMBIE MAPINGIRE

level, I cannot imagine how heart-breaking it would be for anyone experiencing depression, who may have lost all hope and possibly may even be contemplating suicide to hear such responses. As a Christian I know that I will endure trials in my walk with God, but I do not believe that it is God's intention that His children should suffer this way. The Bible is littered with plentiful evidence of God's desire to alleviate His children from suffering from various illnesses including mental illnesses (2 Timothy 1:7; Psalm 29:11; Psalm 103:3; 1 John 4:18).

How can the church help improve the situation of mental health in our congregations?

Having an open discussion will help normalise and dispel the fears and stigma we have in discussing or admitting to struggles with mental illness.

We also need to create an environment in churches where individuals feel listened to and less judged. Providing psychoeducation and awareness, as well as mental health support groups for both church leaders and members, can erase or minimise the stigma attached to those seeking, or refusing to seek, treatment. Psychoeducation can also enable leaders to recognise symptoms and make appropriate referrals to mental health professionals. Mental illness impacts our spiritual development and ability to share the gospel. Let us begin to deal with the brokenness that impacts us physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.

In this way, true healing will take place, minimising some of the difficulties we experience, like interpersonal conflict and relationship problems, and so render our churches true places of belonging, with spiritually and emotionally healthy people.

**Is it time to unveil the covers!** Cornerstone Counselling Service (CCS), has a team of qualified counsellors who have been unveiling the covers on mental health for more than 20 years. Offering professional and confidential counselling to individuals, couples and families who struggle with depression, anxiety disorders, abuse, trauma, addictions, bereavement etc. The team supports churches through psychoeducation, workshops and support group. Since 2016, CCS has been training counsellors to try and alleviate the need for qualified counsellors.

This article was written by  
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What can I do?

Adventist Radio London has been broadcasting live to London and beyond since 8th April 2018; and you may be wondering as to how this medium can be effective in advancing the mission of the South England Conference. Well, let me share a few pointers as to how I believe radio can be used to reach the masses for Christ's kingdom.

Let me begin by stating that Adventist Radio London can most effectively present Christ to the community by demonstrating Jesus' method of reaching people - by reaching out and connecting with individuals in our communities. In Ellen G. White's inspired guidance, she notes: *"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" - Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p.143.*

So, how can Adventist Radio London demonstrate Christ's Method?

**Mingle!** First, we mingle with the community because we desire good for each person. Radio mingles by spending time in the company of people. The mere fact that radio establishes a connection when it is listened to, means that it is, by nature, relational. In effect, the more time we spend listening to the radio, the deeper the relationship that is built, and, in turn, the more opportunity to share the blessing with the listener in whose company we spend time.

**Sympathise!** Second, the medium of radio allows for a meaningful expression of genuine sympathy to the people who listen and respond to the broadcasts. We, the presenters, demonstrate sympathy when we *"[r]ejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep"* (Romans 12:15, ESV). As a radio ministry, we are able to feel and respond to the emotional experiences of the audience. For example, when listeners phone the radio station

or go online<sup>1</sup> to the Response Page and leave requests for prayer, or testifies of answered prayer, we are given an opportunity to demonstrate sympathy, to rejoice or weep with them. Minister!

Third, radio ministers to the revealed needs of the listener. To do so, we are forced to be as practical and as authentic as possible. It teaches us to be good listeners to those who are trying to share with us. We cannot effectively address a need unless we are listening and observing to see and understand what the need is. It also means that we must develop resources that will equip us to minister effectively.

**Win Confidence!** Fourth, we must build such a relationship with the listener that we win their confidence. Our ministry must be altruistic. Altruism stems from a genuine desire for the other's good, while expecting nothing in return. It is hard to do and often just doesn't make sense, but this is Christ's way of reaching people. Authentic radio will build relational confidence.

**Invite!** And fifth, having won their confidence, we invite them to join us in experiencing a holistic life in Christ. We have confidence enough in what we have as a people, that we are eager to invite others to share it with us. Our listening friends will want to do what we do - eat what we eat, go where we go, live how we live, worship whom we worship.

As a Seventh-day Adventist community we help the radio to reach the community by sharing our *'Community-oriented'* projects with them through the radio and inviting them to participate. This is a great opportunity to connect with them and take steps toward identifying with and ministering to their needs. Please send us the information on your projects at least two weeks in advance of the event and we will help to produce a promotional advertisement for broadcast.

<sup>1</sup> [www.adventistradio.london](http://www.adventistradio.london)

MIKE HAMILTON



Finally, remember that we will not get ready for heaven by just speaking to ourselves. We must speak to those who are not familiar with us and the things that interest us. *"Christ's Method Alone"* reminds us that Adventist Radio London is intended for our friends and family who are not yet part of the Seventh-day Adventist family. Share the radio with them so that we can mingle, sympathise, minister, meet needs, win confidence and *"Share the Hope"* of eternity with Christ.

**On-line; on DAB; on Adventist Radio London App.**



SEC EVANGELISM EXPO



The ‘*Death of Christianity in the UK*’ marked the headlines of *Psychology Today*. These words were greeted with relish by the secular and astonishment from the Christian. The poll noted a steady decline in those professing the Christian faith and attending church.

The *Spectator* took these statistics further, with a projection that 2067 will mark the end of British Christianity - an indicator that either the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20 hasn’t been implemented, or that the British exemplify the Parable of the Sower where, “[w]hen anyone hears the message about the Kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart” (Matthew 13:19).

The Evangelism Expo on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January provided an opportune time to assess the situation and instruct members on how to respond. The call drew one thousand people to Newbold College of Higher Education where keynote speaker, Pastor Louis Torres, reiterated Jesus’ call to action. Using English history as the backdrop for his sermon, Torres charted the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and Robert Devereaux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, where, according to Torres, in spite of being thirty-three years his senior, they partook in a short-lived courtship.

Eventually, her beau instigated a coup d’état, swiftly leading to his arrest and imprisonment in the Tower of London. The crux of the story came moments after his beheading. After receiving news of his execution, the Queen promptly enquired of her aide, “Did he read my letter?”, only to receive the response that the letter had been sent but not delivered.

Thus, the theme, ‘*the undelivered message*’, became the focal point of the sermon, and a reminder that the body of Christ, too, can fail as message bearers. In part admonishment, part encouragement, he highlighted the growing membership of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the UK, a denomination formed around the same time as Seventh-day Adventism, but with a current membership of 125,000, over three times more than Adventists with 38,000 members.

ELDERS, DEACONS AND DEACONESSSES RETREAT  
(Reporter: Sam O Davies)

Under the theme of ‘*Keeping*’, this year’s South England Conference (SEC) Elders’, Deacons’ and Deaconesses’ Conference was held at Staverton Park in Daventry from 18-20 January. The

conference attracted a record number of nearly 400 participants, with many unable to get registered. Led by guest speaker Pastor Patrick Carter from Emmanuel Church in Atlanta, USA, and four SEC directors. Carter’s daily messages and workshops on the theme inspired and challenged the participants to be relevant when it comes to retention of members.

Carter’s highlighted three strategies for accomplishing this: First, be insistent on meeting the needs of those whom we wish to retain. Second, be persistent with them, in the same way that God does not give up on us, supporting those who need help for retention. Third, we must be consistent in our ways and attitude. While our message does not change, the style for reaching out must be tailored to a continually changing society in order to remain relevant.

Pastor Ebenezer Jones-Lartey, Ministerial Association Secretary and organiser of the event said that the theme was pitched against the backdrop of the conference’s broader theme of ‘*Retention*’ to address the ‘*Keeping*’ of the Lord’s flock and that the leaders of the church, including the elders, deacons and deaconesses, are the keepers of the congregation. The four workshops presented at the three-day event were led by Conference directors - Pastor Michael Mbui, Pastor Wayne Erasmus and Dr Chidi Ngwaba, and Jones-Lartey.



Jones-Lartey addressed the role of deacons and deaconesses in retaining members, saying, “*The deacons and deaconesses are spiritual ambassadors for Christ. Their purpose is to bring Christ’s ministry of health to the local church.*”

“They must ensure that their local church is a place that meets the following criteria:

- 1. *Trust – is the local church a place where people feel safe and secure?*
- 2. *Belonging – is the local church a place where people feel they belong? The deacon and deaconess are conduits for relationship and community.*
- 3. *Hope – is the local church a place where people think they can find meaning and purpose in life?”*

He added that if the church fulfils the above criteria, people will stay.

VIDEO STORYTELLING WORKSHOP  
(Reporter: Onysha D Collins)

A fantastic opportunity arose for Communications Secretaries within the South England Conference to improve their Video Storytelling skills.

In order to better equip Churches with the ‘Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere’ motto, the SEC Communications & Media Department sponsored a Video Masterclass led by industry leader, Rob Glass.

Rob Glass, a former BBC presenter, videographer and storytelling trainer delivered two Video Storytelling workshops. Firstly, on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January then Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February to a cumulative total of 50 participants.

In the engaging and practical masterclass, participants learnt how to use their phones and tablets to craft compelling stories of their local church events. Aimed at people with no experience, all left ready to create content to impact their community.

MISSION POSSIBLE DOCUMENTARY  
(Reporter: Onysha D Collins)

The Communications & Media Department from the South England Conference has developed and launched Mission Possible.

This new 4-part documentary series explores historical Christian sites in Britain and how they spark questions in our Christian faith today.



**Episode 1:** <https://youtu.be/Glj8TO2AJWc>  
We reflect on the concept of ‘Home’, taking inspiration from St Martin’s Church in Canterbury, the oldest English speaking Church in continuous use.

**Episode 2:** <https://youtu.be/xBis7GNFI90>  
We explore the concept of ‘Division’, taking inspiration from Hadrian’s Wall. The question is asked, *Is division ever a good thing?*

**Episode 3:** <https://youtu.be/ui01RDutIP8>  
The topic ‘Incarnation’ is explored, a term used when adapting an evangelistic approach to the culture one seeks to reach. Set against the backdrop of Lindisfarne, also known as Holy Island, the practical methods of Incarnation are explored.

**Episode 4:** <https://youtu.be/5GegWUgBmZs>  
The topic ‘Revival & Restoration’ is explored. Participants visited Whitby Abbey, a Christian monument known for being destroyed and revived over centuries. It paints a picture of our eventual transformation upon Jesus’ return.

CHISWICK DROP- IN SERVICE FOR THE HOMELESS  
(Reporter: Marcia Silvera)

Many of us have seen the plight of the homeless on the streets of London, on news reports and on social media. The report from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism in October 2018 shows that in 2017, 449 people died homeless in the UK- more than one a day- and the death toll is likely to be significantly higher.



It’s against this background that the Community Services team at Chiswick Seventh-day Adventist church, decided to start a ‘Drop-in Service’ for the homeless. The aim of the service is to provide a shower service to assist guests in maintaining their personal hygiene and to provide a place where they can rest and relax for a while. In addition to having a shower, guests would be able to receive clean clothes, have a hot meal and take food and toiletries away.

As a result of the support received, under the co-ordination of Marcia Silvera, Chiswick was able to launch the project on 3 February 2019. The Mayor of Hounslow, Councillor Samia Chaudhary, was present to officially open our Drop-in Service. (The shower service runs every Sunday from 2 pm - 4 pm). On the day, 4 guests arrived to receive a hot meal, clean clothes, toiletries and food to take away with them, together with warm friendship. They even requested to watch TV, so sports was put on for them to watch on a large screen. They enjoyed their time and said they looked forward to attending on a weekly basis. They also said that they would be inviting their friends as well.

On behalf of the Community Service team, an expression of gratitude is extended to Norman Chingwaru from the Olive Branch charity for his involvement and commitment in helping to get the project on a legal footing. Thanks also to Heerum Fleary from the Southall Adventist church, to Sarah Lubanga and Bea Jackson from Area 6D for their interest and kind support. Lastly, thanks to the members of Chiswick, who have shown interest and willingness to support the project.

BBC THREE COUNTIES RADIO INTERVIEW WITH WYCOMBE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
(Reporter: Sonia Lee)

Joel Williams, a church member from Wycombe Community Church, was invited by the BBC Three Counties Radio to speak on the *Edward Adoo Show* about homelessness. The church



and a group of other churches within the High Wycombe area collaborated to support the issue.

One of those churches who opened their doors to help rough sleepers was Wycombe Community Church. The Wycombe Homeless Connection (WHC), a registered charity that tackles homelessness in High Wycombe, was also invited alongside an ex-service user to raise awareness.

The BBC Three Counties Radio took a keen interest in an article published in the Bucks Free Press local newspaper regarding Wycombe Community Church helping the homeless. This same story was subsequently published in the BUC News and the SEC's 60sec News.



## BREAKING THE TREND

(Reporter: Onysha D Collins)

'*Breaking the Trend*', is a day long programme designed to inspire 'newness', 'oneness'; to provide remedial solutions around issues of isolation, exclusion, and shame. Now in its sophomore year, Breaking the Trend was a joint effort between several South England Conference Departments: Women's Ministries, Men Ministries, Disability & Diversities Ministries, and Church Growth.

The day was themed '*Creating Places of Belonging*'. In the run-up to the day, attendees heard phrases like, '*an opportunity to connect*', '*a place to feel inspired*' and pleasantries of that ilk. Often, the concern is that those commonly used words at Christian functions never go beyond the nebulous to actually provide cogent, practical advice. Perhaps aware of this, the team did a stellar job by heading in the opposite direction.

After beginning the day with a hearty welcome and prayer, the state of the Church was addressed through a short theatre production. Helmed by Parabole Productions, four actors took centre stage to invite the audience to assess how seemingly innocuous conversations can prove detrimental to the self as well as the listener.

The programme progressed swiftly with soothing music from L.E.G.A.C.Y Youth Choir before Pastor Rebecca Davis presented her sermon. Although she'd travelled from California, Davis' jet lag didn't show, since her entire presentation was laced with pert humour and scriptural depth. She began with statistics on the correlation between internet use and loneliness. As a side note, she mentioned that 17 million Brits don't have a close friend- a figure which has risen by 10% since 2013/2014. The

contrast was much more profound when America was brought into the picture.

Using Genesis 2:8, '*It is not good for man to be alone...*' Davis proffered that when our human-shaped void is not filled, we live in isolation. Relational maladies infect us, and we can suffer from loss of perspective. She further stated that we can easily forget the enemy's successful strategy is to isolate us so that he can destroy us. The panacea posed by Davis was community. "*Community*," she said, "*can bring fullness of heart*." Yet, this is only effective if implemented Jesus' way, no longer loving others as we love ourselves- since some people don't even love themselves- but rather to love each other as Christ loved us, as stated in John 13:34.

## BECOMING CHURCH AMBASSADORS

(Reporter: Darell J Philip)

The South England Conference (SEC) Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department (PARL), in association with the Advent Religio-Legal Perspective Ministry (Adventrlp), held a workshop at the Advent Centre for Religious Liberty leaders and members on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The purpose of the seminar was primarily to seek to raise awareness of the need and urgency for Seventh-day Adventist Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Leaders to become its '*Church Ambassadors*.' The event marked a formal systematic training and equipping process to reach that end for dedicated members.

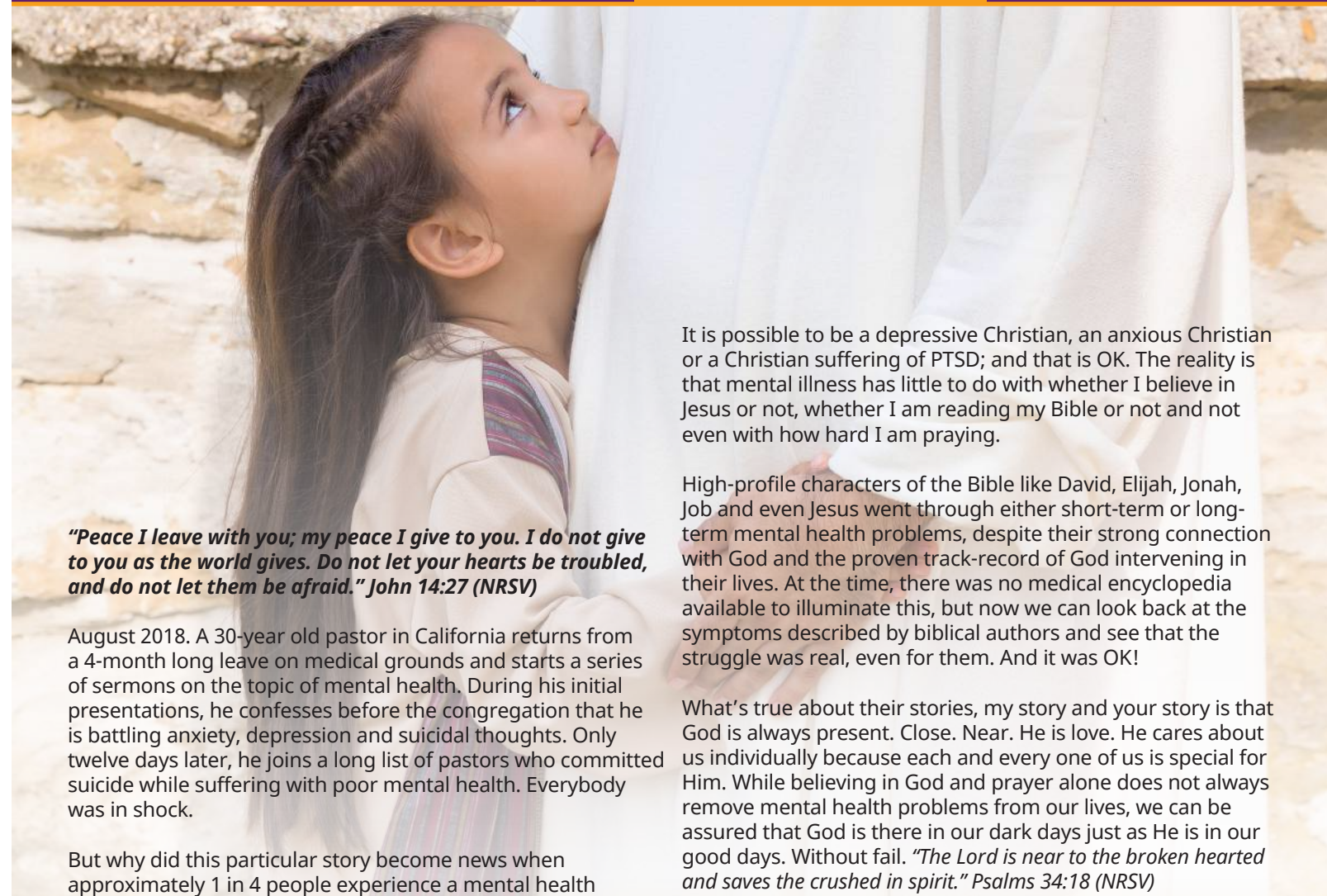
In his presentation on how to become a church ambassador, Adventrlp Director, Dr. Brighton Kavaloh, explained the characteristics of those who are called to represent Christ in such a role: "*An ambassador is one who represents a country or state and works with other representatives on a number of issues with the aim to bring about peace and reconciliation*." He added: "*PARL resembles that of a country's Foreign Affairs Ministry which focuses on three main areas: Diplomacy, Events and Communication*."

Focusing on the cost of discipleship, found in Luke 14:27-32, Dr. Kavaloh showed how Jesus was a strong advocate of the need for ambassadors in public life. "*Jesus does not send His disciples (ambassadors) to cause war with others but rather to bring reconciliation and peace. Jesus also makes this clear in Matthew 5:19 where he says, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God*." Dr. Kavaloh stressed the importance of Seventh-day Adventists developing a deep and meaningful relationship with Jesus to form the basis of a strong foundation upon which, those called to the role of church ambassador, can build to make a positive impact in public and religious affairs.



# DEVOTIONAL

## Acceptance



It is possible to be a depressive Christian, an anxious Christian or a Christian suffering of PTSD; and that is OK. The reality is that mental illness has little to do with whether I believe in Jesus or not, whether I am reading my Bible or not and not even with how hard I am praying.

High-profile characters of the Bible like David, Elijah, Jonah, Job and even Jesus went through either short-term or long-term mental health problems, despite their strong connection with God and the proven track-record of God intervening in their lives. At the time, there was no medical encyclopedia available to illuminate this, but now we can look back at the symptoms described by biblical authors and see that the struggle was real, even for them. And it was OK!

What's true about their stories, my story and your story is that God is always present. Close. Near. He is love. He cares about us individually because each and every one of us is special for Him. While believing in God and prayer alone does not always remove mental health problems from our lives, we can be assured that God is there in our dark days just as He is in our good days. Without fail. "*The Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit*." Psalms 34:18 (NRSV)

Accepting this reality will not separate us from God. It will have the opposite effect, and with bonuses too! It will not only help us get closer to God, feel His unconditional love towards us and the peace like no other that Jesus promised to give to us, but it will also help us deal better with what we are going through. Most importantly, it will open the conversation so that others can be able to reach and support us.



Alexandru Mareniuc

***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."* John 14:27 (NRSV)**

August 2018. A 30-year old pastor in California returns from a 4-month long leave on medical grounds and starts a series of sermons on the topic of mental health. During his initial presentations, he confesses before the congregation that he is battling anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Only twelve days later, he joins a long list of pastors who committed suicide while suffering with poor mental health. Everybody was in shock.

But why did this particular story become news when approximately 1 in 4 people experience a mental health problem every year, approximately 800,000 people commit suicide every year, and we get to hear little or nothing about them? You must know people who have gone through depressive episodes. You surely know people who have to be on medication because of their history of psychotic episodes. You have probably had times when you felt so low that you wished your life would end right there and then. I know I have.

Andrew Stoecklein's story of a believer living with mental health challenges that go as far as him committing suicide represents a chapter in the "*Being a Christian*" book that most believers treat in the same way they treat genealogy chapters in Genesis: pretend it is not there and go to the next one. But ignoring something does not make it go away and has the potential of making things worse.



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