

SE7 COMMUNICATOR

July 2019 # 11

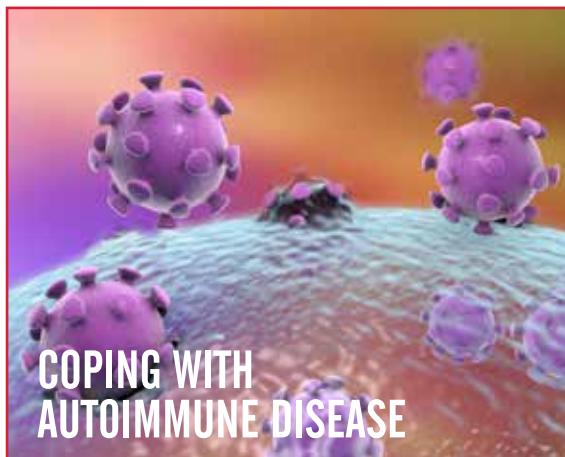
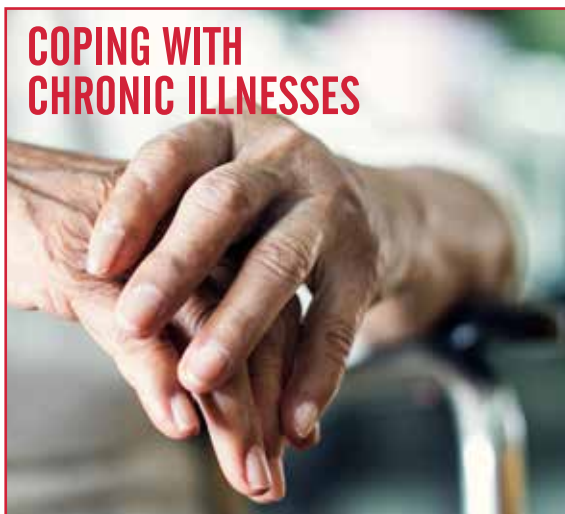
COPING WITH *Chronic* ILLNESS

£2.00



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





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Editorial

COPING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS

Persons diagnosed with any form of chronic illness will tell you that the experience is debilitating. Given the fact that chronic illness is long-term and may not have a cure, can leave many feeling very alone and sometimes depressed.

The causes of “*chronic diseases*” are widespread, and many are affected by its agonising consequences. A World Health Organisation report says, “*Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide.*” It says that “*Disease rates from these conditions are accelerating globally, advancing across every region and pervading all socioeconomic classes.*” https://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/2_background/en/. Being Seventh-day Adventist does not exonerate us, as we are seeing the prevalence of illnesses among our populace.

We all want good health and want it abundantly, but unfortunately, many continue to find themselves plagued by incurable conditions. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been strong advocates of a healthy lifestyle. Independent documentaries have attested that Adventists who practice healthy living, live longer. We have not doubted these research findings and we have prided ourselves with these positive conclusions. However, there are many who have done everything they could to be healthy, yet, have been prone to chronic illnesses. Some have been life-long vegans. They have avoided any lifestyles that would make them susceptible to chronic illness, but have found themselves agonising with the illness.

Answers are not always straight forward when it comes to explaining why some people are more prone to the range of chronic diseases.

Some people are born with greater propensities toward certain illnesses than others. Some are simply not managing their lifestyle conscientiously, in spite of the overwhelming evidence available. In every circumstance, however, it is wise not to hold judgements.

In this edition, our aim is to share personal stories of those who have endured the agony of a chronic illness or are still enduring it. What have they done differently? what can we learn from their experience of enduring a chronic illness? how has their faith been impacted as a result of their chronic illness? Is God still close by, even if they contributed in part to their illness?

As, Christians, we do have a responsibility to bear each other’s burdens, perhaps by praying for them and with them; supporting them to uphold their faith, even when that is difficult to do; and just being there for them.

There are many assurances in the Bible for those agonising over incurable diseases.

The Psalmist says in Psalm 103:1-5 (ESV):

**¹Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!**
**² Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:**
**³ Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,**
**⁴ Who redeems your life from
destruction, Who crowns you with
lovingkindness and tender mercies,**
**⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with
good things, So that your youth is
renewed like the eagle’s. (ESV)**

OUR COVER



Cover Photo Onysha Collins



SAM O. DAVIES
Editor

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SEC SESSION 2019

5-8
SEPT

Making Disciples

Building Communities

63RD SESSION OF THE SOUTH ENGLAND
CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

the President's Desk

DR. EMMANUEL OSEI



Chronic illness has been defined as a human condition or disease that is persistent or otherwise long-lasting in its effects; or a disease that comes with time. The term chronic is often applied when the course of the disease lasts for more than three months.

It is important to note that there is a difference between chronic disease and chronic illness. Chronic illness is the experience of living with the affliction that often accompanies chronic disease. Examples of chronic diseases are heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, asthma, arthritis, etc. According to some health professionals, the cause of chronic diseases are poor lifestyle choices, such as smoking, misuse of alcohol, poor diet, lack of physical activity, obesity, etc. These can lead to chronic diseases. The experience of chronic illness can be very challenging and can even lead to deep depression.

Sin can be likened to a chronic disease. The Bible teaches that we are all

born in sin and shaped in iniquity. Again, the text says: *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* I submit to us that we all have a chronic disease. The experience of living with sin causes pain, misery and eventually death. The Apostle Paul wrestled with this chronic illness and described his experience this way in Rom 7:14-24 (NIV):
¹⁴ *We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.* ¹⁵ *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.* ¹⁶ *And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.* ¹⁷ *As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.*

¹⁸ *For I know that good itself does*

not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ *For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.* ²⁰ *Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.* ²¹ *So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.* ²² *For in my inner being I delight in God's law;* ²³ *but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.* ²⁴ *What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?*

We can all sense the frustration expressed by Paul in this passage. It is ever so real in our own

lives and experiences. How many times have we gone on our knees and cried out to God, pleading for forgiveness? We lay claim to the promise that, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Yet we find ourselves falling again and again. We are impotent in dealing with sin. We are experiencing a chronic illness, desperately looking for healing. The only panacea to our illness is what Paul found: *"Oh wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* Rom 7:25

This is the good news of the gospel. There is healing for our chronic disease. This healing is found in Jesus Christ. He is the only One that can bring healing and set us free. By receiving Jesus, we can begin to experience healing and restoration from chronic illness. Again, Paul writes in Rom 6:23, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Thank God for this hope!



Dr. Chidi Ngwaba

Health Ministries Director

LIVING WITH OR WITHOUT DISEASE

Someone you know has a chronic illness! If this statement does not apply to you, then you are a rare individual indeed.

Increasing numbers of people around the world are living with chronic lifestyle diseases such as Type-2 diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cancer, autoimmune disease and many more. Even diseases that affect the mind, such as depression and dementia, have been shown to have a lot more to do with our lifestyles than previously thought. We call them lifestyle diseases, not as a label with which to attribute blame, but rather as a way of presenting a ray of hope to many who are currently suffering under the weight of these difficult burdens. The hope offered is that:

"If my lifestyle has contributed to causing my illness, then a change in my lifestyle may contribute to freeing me from my illness."

Up and down the country and around the world, individuals, communities, and governments are starting to listen to the overwhelming, scientific and medical evidence which demonstrates that

many of the illnesses that we suffer from have their cause and cure in our lifestyles.

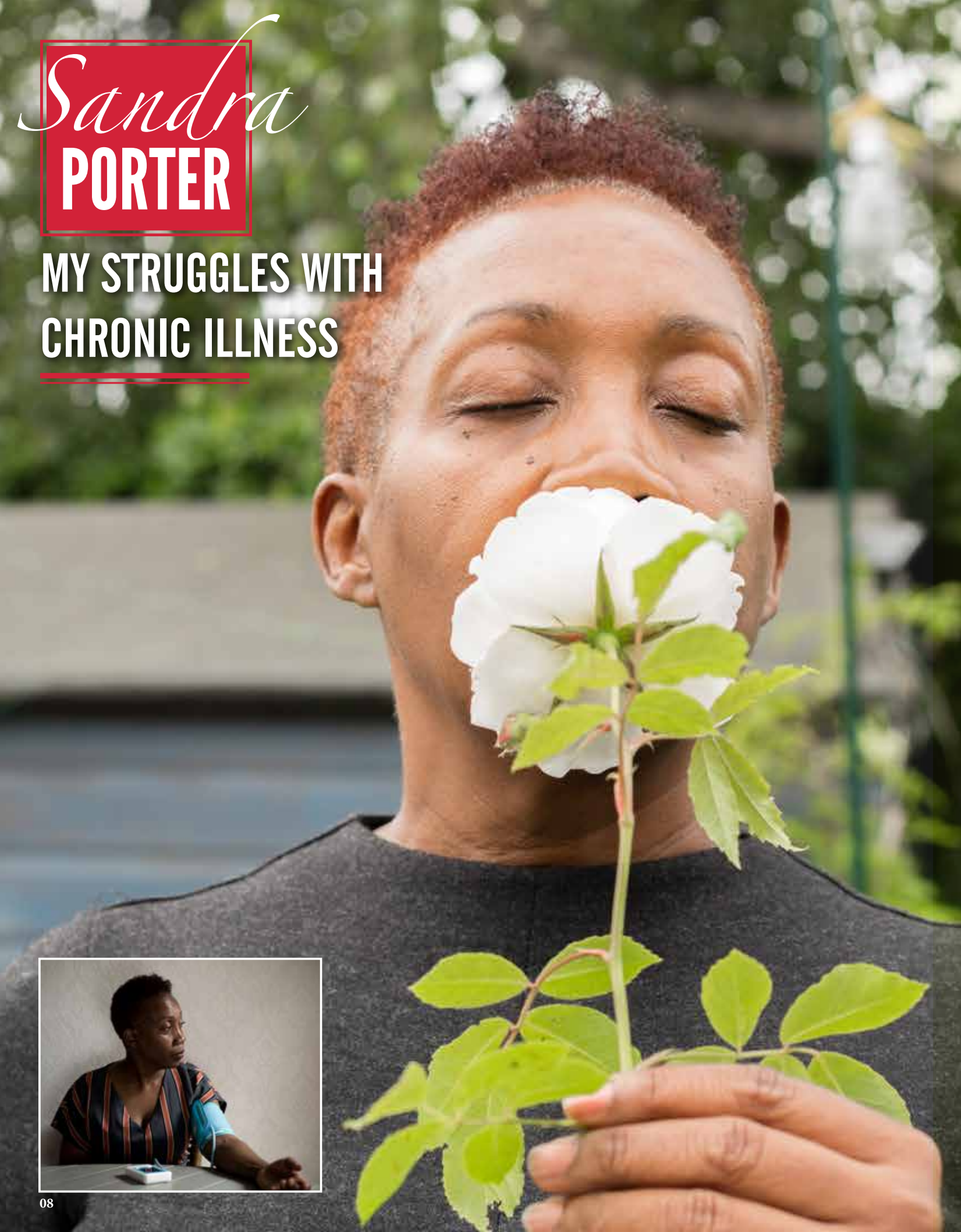
Over the last 25 years, it has been my pleasure and privilege to help people, who thought that they had a chronic incurable disease, back to total health. Some of them have written so powerfully in this very issue of the Communicator. The common theme in their restoration, and the aspect that brings me so much personal joy, is that moment when they realise that they are taking back control of their health and their lives. They are starting to have more confidence in themselves, and more hope for the future.

Now, let's be clear. Not all diseases can be cured by lifestyle change, and even those that can, often require traditional medical intervention also. It is important to recognise that *'lifestyle medicine'* is not *'alternative medicine'* but rather an addition to modern medicine. However, where modern medicine seeks to maintain and improve our lives with the disease, *'lifestyle medicine'* seeks to eliminate the disease by eliminating the cause.

With some diseases, however, we cannot find the cause (at least, not yet). In those cases, our compassion, our help, and our love are even more important to those suffering. Let us not fall into the trap of making judgments about the suffering of others.

We are a church organisation, charged by Jesus Himself to make disciples for Him. Can there be any better way to reach people, than to show how His love and compassion are extended to us, even today, by the ministry of His healing. Because, that is exactly what is taking place. The lifestyle changes that we offer to bring about a restoration of health, are nothing more than the health principles laid out by God in the Garden of Eden; in the laws for the Israelites, in the ministry of Jesus, and in the inspiration of Ellen White. This consistent message of health, healing and hope has been, and will always be, relevant to all generations.

Our task is to continue to present this message in a way that is relevant and applicable to our local communities, message of hope over fear, grace over judgement, and life (real living) over death.



Sandra
PORTER

MY STRUGGLES WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS



My life as an HR consultant is hectic. It requires long working days that are stressful, both physically and mentally. What I didn't factor in, was a life with two chronic illnesses that compounded these issues.

My life has always been active and relatively healthy, filled with adventure, travel and family. So, it was with surprise, 15 years ago, that I was placed on thyroid medication; and then 5 years later, medication for blood pressure. I was told that I would have to take these for the rest of my life.

Work pressures meant that I would often miss meals, working through lunch or eating late at night, after which I would fall asleep almost immediately. My gym membership wasn't being utilised because of lack of time. I only attending once a week - mainly on Sundays.

I was exhausted all the time and was getting forgetful. It was difficult to articulate myself clearly, and this affected my confidence in doing my job. I was scared of what was happening to me and it seemed that no matter what I did, nothing changed. I wasn't overweight, so I thought I was doing all the right things to make the best of what I had. On the outside I looked well, people would often comment on how well I looked. On the inside, I was crumbling.

I moved to a new house so had to change doctor. A full medical check-up showed that, not only was I diabetic, but my records showed that I had been pre-diabetic for over 2 years. The doctor told me that not only did she want me to go on medication for the diabetes, she wanted to put me on medication for cholesterol as well. Because of my high blood pressure, it was likely that my cholesterol would be affected, even though it was OK at that point.

I begged her not to put me on medication, I promised to watch my diet, exercise and drink plenty

of water. I did this for a few months, but not much changed. Because of my job, it was difficult.

A few months later, in July 2018, I took my HB1C blood test. I had not been feeling well. I drove to Camp Meeting with my daughter, knowing in my heart that the results were not going to be good. On the last morning there, I met Dr Chidi. I briefly explained that, although a friend had given me his contact details over two years previously, I had not used them but wanted to see him ASAP. I booked an appointment to see him that coming week.

On my return to the doctor, my results confirmed my worst fears. I was definitely diabetic and was told that if I didn't take diabetes medication, I would likely be on dialysis within the foreseeable future, as my blood sugar was too high and had already begun to affect my kidneys and eyesight.

I was devastated. I had seen first-hand what diabetes could do - blindness, amputations etc. I agreed with her to take the meds, with the agreement that if I was able to get my blood sugar down, then I could stop taking them. I was lucky; she was one of the few doctors who admitted that diabetes could be reversed.

My appointment with Dr Chidi came at the right time. He took his time

and was able to break down in simple terms what was happening to me and what we could do to tackle it: a simple diet, exercise and plenty of water. I learned that, for me, the exercise should come after I ate and not before. Together we embarked on a programme, and within weeks, I was medication free. Not only did I not have to take the diabetes medication after the first few days (agreed in advance with my doctor when I started the programme), my thyroid function returned and my blood pressure was so low, I had to stop taking the medicines for that as well. My mind was clear, I had lots of energy, I lost weight and I was so happy. I felt amazing!

I am now medication free and have been for the past 10 months. My blood pressure often reads low on my machine, and my blood glucose reading is constantly below 6:0. I control both through diet and exercise.

It wasn't an easy journey; and without the support of Dr Chidi, I believe I would be in a different place. His knowledge of these conditions, his ability to interpret and articulate simply and clearly and make it personal, his confidence and supportive manner have enabled me, not only to take charge of my health, but to maintain it over the past 10 months. He enabled and supported me to do it for myself. I have a better understanding of my body and how it works. He encouraged and assured me that it is possible to reverse chronic diseases. This assurance, along with the results achieved, has enabled me to take control of my health. If it gets bad again, I just need to go back to the beginning and start over.

You have the ability to take charge of your health in the same way. It's easy to just take tablets to fix a problem but it often leads to more complications. God has given us the answers to all our problems. Where our health is concerned, he has provided experts, like Dr Chidi, to help us understand and to advise us. Let's get the help we need and do the best for our health.





Paul King Brown

Pastor, London Live and Potters Bar

Coping WITH Type II Diabetes

I remember the shocked look on my wife's face when she discovered that I had hidden the fact I was a diabetic from my closest family and friends. She found it difficult to understand my secrecy, but such was the shame and stigma of my chronic disease. Hiding and concealing my disease was how I decided to deal with it.

Over the last year, I became very ill; and the crisis and intense questioning forced me to be honest and transparent with those around me. My secret was out.

From the outset I fought my disease alone. In my solitude I lost a lot more battles than I won. In this chronic position, I learned how to live life in silence, with a mask. Because in all the busyness of life, I felt that there was no-one who really had the time or compassion to care about me, as well as care for themselves.

It took a while, but it soon became clear to me that I couldn't do this alone. Those who were concerned about me cited my social isolation and irrational behaviour as clear signs that I needed to get help in coping with the trauma of dealing with my disease. And so, I went to my doctor, who at first seemed concerned and attentive, but after a while I felt that I was becoming a pharmaceutical pincushion. The other aspect that caused me great distress was that, while I was trying to get better, the doctors were solely about maintaining where I was. To them, the only place for me to go was down, and they found it difficult to assist me on my quest to get better.

My wife felt that I was not relying on the doctors, so she came with me to the hospital as I met with the consultant about my condition improving and the

steps to reach that goal. This would be a day I would never forget, as he laughed at my new plant-based diet plan as just wishful thinking and bad medicine with no evidence.

In the middle of my pharmaceutical nightmare, I was taking a range of antibiotics that clearly alerted me to the fact that I was allergic to penicillin. My doctors insisted that I needed to take them regardless, but it was clear to me that I needed another way. On one visit my doctor gave me statins, as she said, "Just in case." But I was thinking - There is nothing wrong that requires this medication.

In our Adventist community, I have found that it is possible to know people's name, but not know the person. In this case it was my colleague, Dr. Chidi. One day, in my frustration at having just got a box of statins, I bumped into him. Dr. Chidi gave me his time, compassion, and expertise. We spoke for two hours. It was not planned, but such was his sensitivity to my needs, he made the time. For the first time in years I felt a semblance of control over my disease. It was the first time I felt hope, that I was not simply a victim to my situation. He was truly a lifesaver. I came out of his surgery with a bounce in my step - and it's hard to bounce at my age!

One of the great things he did was connect me with a wonderful lady called Sandra. We had never met before, but she had so much time for me, as I had so many questions. I think we spoke for hours. Her demeanour simply said, "I am here for you." That was massive for me. I had now travelled full circle, from being in

isolation to being open to share and to listen. Things were really looking up.

Dr. Chidi is best placed to explain the healing process to you, but he also gives an inordinate amount of time and compassion to you and your needs. I was no longer alone. I truly believe that sometimes with chronic diseases, the thing that hurts most is not the disease, but the loneliness and the overwhelming loss of the best of ourselves. To my surprise, I found that in this new community of healing, I felt renewed. An emotional revival was taking place. I had people who, because of my sharing, were now cheerleaders; and how could I let them down? I was not just accountable to myself but to them. I am so glad my wife made me expose my heart to the compassion and caring of others. I was truly surprised by the power and impact of a healing community on my life. I urge you to surround yourself with people who have your back; but you need to let them in. I don't know if this is a medical fact, but I read that it is better to eat chocolate with a friend than have a plate of broccoli alone. I sure by now you know what I am saying.

Every blessing, I am here for you.



MY Journey THROUGH Cancer



Naomi Watson

Natural Solution for health!

In January 2007 I was diagnosed with cancer. Several years into my recovery, the seriousness of my prognosis and definite diagnosis of Grade 3 aggressive ductal invasive breast cancer hit me. Infamous consultant Dr. Patterson (now in prison) said that I would have to have a mastectomy (one of his potentially dangerous, partial ones), chemotherapy, radiotherapy and then Herceptin.

At that first consultation, I did not even believe that I was 'ill'. My initial shock deepened further by his immediate prescription of therapies. Having reviewed them twelve months before, I knew I didn't want them. My keen interest in health and wellbeing maintained in me a belief that God had another way other than Patterson's prescription. Time was critical. The first thing to do was schedule the mastectomy in a one-hour surgery window that became available due to a cancellation. I didn't want reconstruction.

In need of wise guidance, my prayer life became doubly active. First, I had to learn what His 'healing' meant, both in principle and, specifically, for me. I read the chapter, "Prayer for the Sick" in Ministry of Healing. My husband and I made enquiries of doctors and friends around the globe. I found it difficult to share my

concerns with my consultant and the Breast Care Team because they did not want to listen to any of my questions, but instead made negative remarks and just challenged my thinking. (Later, Patterson admitted that he had used his budget to send patients to a complimentary cancer treatment unit in Bristol). Well-meaning friends and church members said they were praying for me, but very much believed I should just follow the medical advice I was given.

With the help of my family, who had come to accept my way of thinking, I put into place a strict routine of what I believed was the 'natural' solution to build my immune system: Specific fresh vegetable juices, plenty of water, aloe vera (two fluid ounces every waking hour), certain supplements, exercise, rest, sunshine and avoiding harmful things. I claimed daily God's promise of Exodus 15:26 and maintained a positive attitude. And after a home anointing service using James 5, I was assured of a

healing God. God's course was the mastectomy and the excision of three sentinel lymph nodes. Two were clear; the third had started to metastasise. But the natural processes I'd adopted meant that I had no pain post-surgery; and I surprised Patterson that same day, being up and laughing by his afternoon rounds.

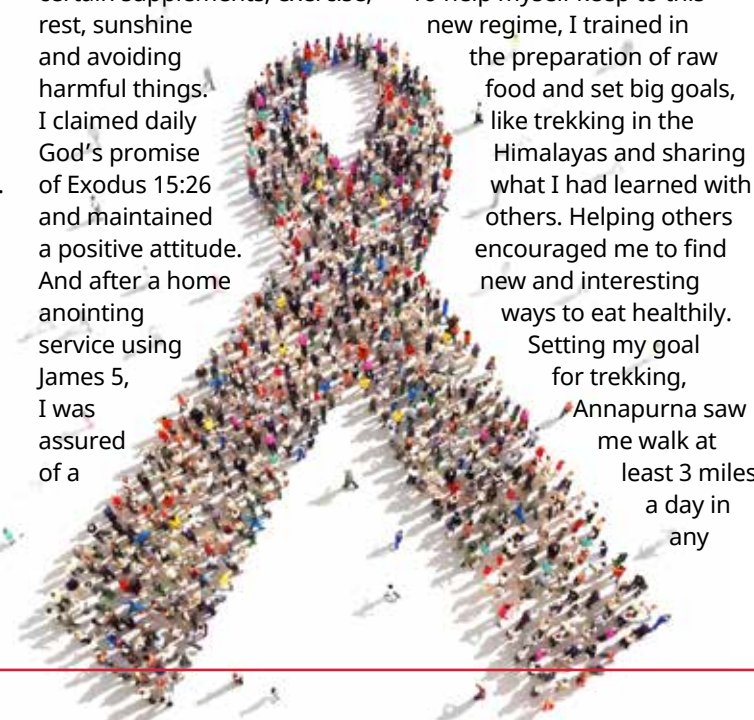
As soon as the surgery wound healed, I went to Uchee Pines Institute in Alabama for a full programme of 'natural rational therapies'. This wasn't as life-changing as I had expected because, apart from hydrotherapy, oxygen therapy, special teas and sunbathing, I was already using all the other therapy elements of the programme.

To help myself keep to this new regime, I trained in the preparation of raw food and set big goals, like trekking in the Himalayas and sharing what I had learned with others. Helping others encouraged me to find new and interesting ways to eat healthily. Setting my goal for trekking, Annapurna saw me walk at least 3 miles a day in any

weather condition. Karen, my neighbour, good friend and an experienced athlete, coached me. Also, together we completed an overnight Cancer Support walking marathon through London.

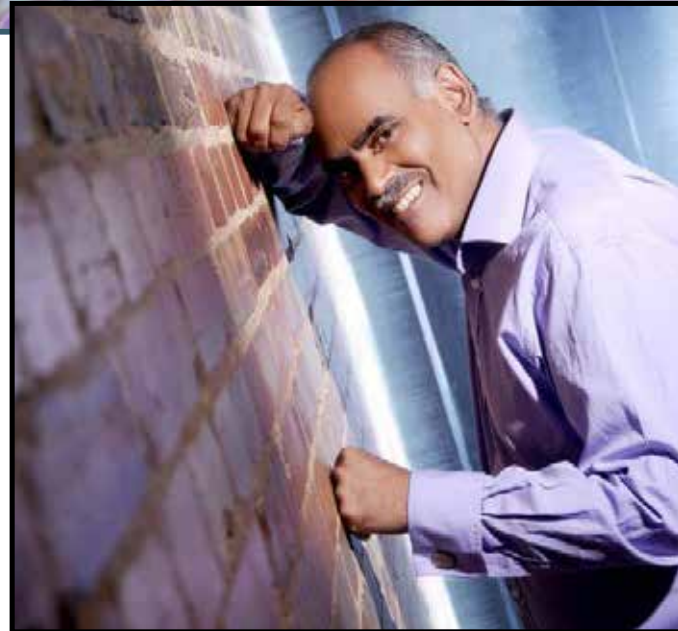
Since 2007 I have continued to research and connect with organisations and practitioners such as 'Forks Over Knives', and medical doctors such as Caldwell Esselstyne, Dean Ornish and Wes Youngberg. The work of these men is benefitting many people and beginning to gain government recognition (See Medicare/ Medicaid and Dean Ornish). The principles I followed (although blindly to start with), are now being adopted, repeatedly, around the globe, both by medical practitioners and lay people.

To a large extent, God's organic laws of health, the Adventist Health Message that God revealed in Genesis 1:29 and Daniel 1, and the health visions to Ellen White in 1863 and 1865, are being discovered and adopted more and more by others. How important it is then, that we learn and live out God's "Organic Laws of Health" ourselves. Living as God's health ambassadors cannot only benefit others physically and socially, but spiritually as well, by introducing them to Christ our God, Creator, Re-creator, Saviour and Healer.



Coping WITH

AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE



Dr. Des Boldeau

Pastor, Edmonton & Enfield

“He who began a good work in you, is able to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6, NKJV).”

Can you imagine what it’s like to be afraid to go to church or any social event because you feel embarrassed and self-conscious? How would you feel if every day you looked in the mirror and you hated yourself? What if you felt that you could never expose your arms or legs for fear of people staring?

This has been my experience for the past 25 years, and yet, despite my low periods and coming close to severe depression, our Father has been good to me.

In 1994 I began to see signs of what became ‘psoriasis’ on my body. Many people have psoriasis, but like Job, I have it from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet. Currently, it is controlled by biologic medicine which my dermatologist considers to be highly effective, but it also has some risky side effects.

In 2014, 20 years after contracting psoriasis, I also developed Erythroderma – the loss of bodily fluids from my lower limbs - and found that my lower body was becoming darker, swollen and more painful. I was diagnosed with septicaemia, a condition which has a high mortality rate, and spent nearly 6 months recovering.

You can’t begin to imagine how it feels, whenever I looked into a mirror, to see my entire body traumatised by the inflamed, raw and angry skin, the pain and discomfort. Imagine the intense pain of wearing clothes, of bathing, of sitting or lying down or just moving!

Six months after returning to work, I had routine day surgery on my left knee. Within days the pain was excruciating, and by the following Friday, I was diagnosed with septic arthritis, the result of an infection left after the orthoscopy surgery the previous Saturday, and I was admitted to hospital on a cocktail of antibiotics and morphine. In the absence of my regular medication for the psoriasis, my skin flared up severely.

By the following Tuesday, the consultants were recommending that my leg be amputated in order to save the rest of my leg, stop the poison from spreading, and save my life.

I believe that the prayers of my family, close friends and church members saved my leg, because my mind was so muddled from the drugs, that I’m not sure that I prayed myself.

I was discharged after three weeks with a picc line to my heart and daily visits from community nurses to administer intravenous antibiotics for the next four months.

Every day, I was lying on the same sofa, eating, sleeping and little else. I was taking in excess of thirty tablets daily. My body looked awful. Skin was everywhere and my body was still reeling from the shock of contracting septicaemia twice in less than a year.

My predicament was affecting my mind and my spirituality because I began to have ‘dark’ thoughts like: *‘Take me now!’ or ‘Just end it now!’*, *‘Why me Lord, please trouble someone else, but give me a break!’*

God had provided a wonderful wife in the person of Catherine and daughter, Arianne, who loved me unconditionally and God, through them, nursed me back to health, despite all the stresses and pressure they were under; both at work and school. Cath would wake up early to wash and dress me. She’d

prepare breakfast and lunch for me, leaving all this on a table beside the sofa, then travel 48km to work and 48km back home on the notorious M25, a feat that I’d never wish to undertake.

Making sense of why I have been given this ‘thorn’ in my flesh is a daily struggle. But, like Paul, I still keep pressing toward the mark for the prize which is in Christ Jesus my lord.

I still carry this infliction. The recent observation from my consultant is that *‘I am a complicated case.’* But this guy is determined to make it to the kingdom by His grace, and until He either heals me or I carry it to the grave, I live in the hope of the resurrection and a glorious new body, which is promised to all the faithful.

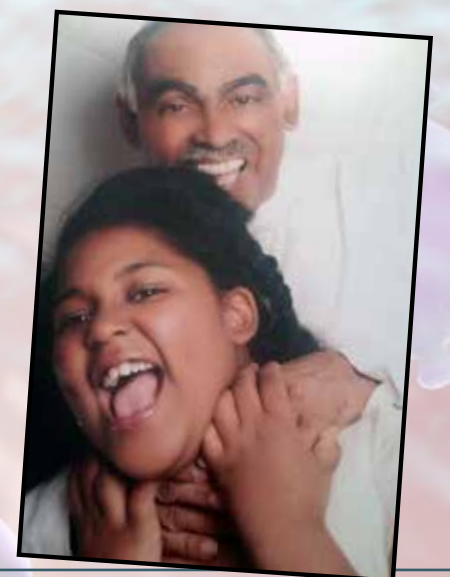
In the past 25 years, despite this ‘thorn in the flesh’, God has enabled me to serve the Family Life, Teens, Pathfinder and Youth Ministries Department of the SEC. I spent time as the Section Leader of the Gulf Region and 11 years as the Youth Director for the British Union Conference and completed a DMin (which took 10 years, specialising in mentoring pastors) as well as serving as a local church pastor.

While it has been extremely challenging dealing with my own health condition, it has often been much harder to face the fact that my 16-year-old daughter also has a long-term chronic health condition which has affected every aspect

of her life. As she started Year 10, she was struck down with the flu, which she struggled to shake off. After months of lethargy and intense feelings of being unwell, she attempted to return to school. In Year 11, Cath and I took the decision to homeschool her and we were able to assist her to take her GCSE’s. Last year, she was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue with Chronic Pain.

I cried when I realised that it could take years for her to recover, but I am reassured to know that the Father is enabling her to have a cheerful spirit and ‘carry on anyway’. She has good days when she can do almost anything another teenager can, followed by bad weeks where she is unable to do very much.

If you’re going through a tough time and uncertain how and where God is leading you, the song reminds us, *‘when we can’t trace his hand, trust His heart’*. I am journeying toward that kind of trust; how about you?





Sharon Platt-McDonald

BUC Director for Health, Women's Ministries & Adventist Community Services

Coping WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS - A WHOLISTIC APPROACH

"You will always have some level of pain, as you have a chronic illness. In fact, your condition will be life-long. I am sorry, but there is no cure; you just have to learn how to live with it."



These were the sobering words uttered to Mrs X, as she sat in the doctor's office, one bright spring morning. Processing what she had just heard, Mrs X felt as though the light had faded from the room, and instead of sunshine, a darkness enshrouded her. There commenced a long journey on the road to living with her condition.

When I met her, she was desperate for a breakthrough and somehow believed that the doctor's verdict was not final. She stated that surely there must be some way of rising above her diagnosis of having a 'long-term' condition. Rather than just existing, she wanted to at least improve her level of pain. As we talked through her options and prayed, I shared with her a holistic approach to coping with her condition that involved lifestyle changes - physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. Thankfully, as she implemented the suggestions, she began to see improvements in her general wellbeing and is now coping better.

So, what helps when you have a chronic illness? Here are some suggestions:

1 Spiritual support: In times when we are too ill to read the Bible or don't know how to even pray for ourselves, an audio Bible, music CDs and DVDs or inspirational videos can bring great comfort. Utilising these tools can bring peace and reassurance, assisting us to a place of stillness which enables us to catch a fresh glimpse of God, our Comforter. Request an anointing as indicated in James 5:16.

2 Peace in the pain: Beautiful encouragement scripted by David in Psalm 46:10 states: "Be still and know that I am God". The reality of life is that each of us at some point will experience sickness and pain, to some degree. When that happens, we may take reassurance in knowing that our loving, compassionate, and attentive God is there with us in the moments we find difficult to bear. As we release our burdens to Him, He takes the pressure and relieves us of the weight we carry.

3 Pain management: Are you in pain? If you have pain, you need a diagnosis. This ensures that whatever treatment you choose, a practitioner can have a clear picture of

your condition, monitor your progress, highlight other treatment options and be alert for any adverse reactions. For information regarding pain management, contact the Pain Relief Foundation via the internet at: www.painreliefoundation.org.uk.

4 How food provides pain relief: Dr Neal Bernard's research concludes: "Nutrients work against pain in four ways: They can reduce damage at the site of injury, cool your body's inflammatory response, provide analgesia on pain nerves themselves, work within the brain to reduce pain sensitivity." (Foods That Fight Pain: Revolutionary New Strategies for Maximum Pain Relief. Dr Neal Bernard)

5 Anti-inflammatory foods: Dr Bernard's study found that green, leafy vegetables and legumes (beans, peas, and lentils) contain omega-3 fatty acid which is an anti-inflammatory. Chamomile, flax, turmeric and fenugreek were also found to be anti-inflammatory, reducing pain (pubmed.org).

6 Medicine in your kitchen cupboard: Dr Bernard lists the following foods and their efficacy for chronic conditions: Rice or peppermint oil can soothe your digestive

tract. Ginger and the herb feverfew can prevent migraines. Natural plant oils can reduce arthritis pain. Cranberry juice can fight the pain of bladder infections. Vitamin B6 can even increase your pain resistance.

7 Exercise and pain relief: An article published in *Pain@*, (May 21, 2012) carried the headlines: Exercise as a Form of Pain Relief. Numerous research studies demonstrate that when we exercise, our body releases endorphins - a hormone-like substance produced in the brain. These not only gives a 'feel good' factor, but act as the body's natural painkiller. Highlighting the importance of exercise for chronic illness involving joints and muscles, Harvard Health Publications states: "Practiced regularly, joint pain relief workouts might permit you to postpone - or even avoid - surgery on a problem joint that has been worsening for years, by strengthening key supportive muscles and restoring flexibility." (<http://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/the-secret-to-joint-pain-relief-exercise>)

8 Hydration: Adequate hydration is key for wellbeing and crucial for chronic health conditions. Here is why: All our body systems require water to function efficiently. Water acts as a lubricant, preventing inflammation. Helps dilute body acids that can cause irritation. Helps to dilute toxins which build up in the body. Assists with medication breakdown and transport. Dehydration causes pain. For more information visit: <https://drjaydavidson.com/hydration-for-chronic-illness/>

9 Water therapy: "Hydrotherapy is one of the safest treatments for arthritis and back pain." (Arthritis Research UK). Read more at: <http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/therapies/hydrotherapy.aspx> Amongst the therapeutic interventions, are the following: Hydro therapy treatments, Hot and cold compress, shower, spritz bath and swimming.

10 Humour helps: Scripture gives insight into the emotional impact of wellbeing. Proverbs 17:22 admonishes: "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones".

Norman Cousins, famed as 'the man who laughed his way to health,' highlights the natural anaesthesia of laughter in his book, "Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient", published in 1979. The positive effect of laughter was eventually acknowledged in 1989 in the Journal of the American Medical Association. It documented that laughter therapy could help improve the quality of life for patients with chronic illness and reduce pain.

Always consult your physician for any long-term condition and any alternative interventions you may undertake. Good health!



Thembie Mapingire

Cornerstone Counselling Service Coordinator

Coping WITH HEALTH ANXIETY

Experiencing any form of chronic illness has the potential to cause health anxiety. The condition, sometimes called “hypochondria”, is when you spend so much time worrying that you’re ill or becoming ill.

It is marked by a continuous belief that you have symptoms of a serious illness. You feel extreme distress about your real or imagined symptoms, even after medical test results come back negative and medical professionals reassure you that you’re healthy.

The condition can potentially impact your quality of life, as well as your ability to create and maintain meaningful relationships. It can impact your work, study and daily functioning. It can exist in people who are “healthy” and people who are experiencing real, yet unexplained, medical symptoms. It can also affect people who have a currently diagnosed medical condition.

However, with health anxiety, the issue is not whether your physical symptoms are real, but whether you are responding to and coping with your symptoms in a helpful or unhelpful way.

Symptoms

Some of the symptoms of health anxiety include:

- constantly worrying about your health
- frequently checking your body for signs of illness,

such as lumps, tingling or pain

- always asking people for reassurance that you’re not ill
- worrying that your doctor or medical tests may have missed something
- obsessively looking at health information on the internet or in the media
- avoiding anything to do with serious illness, such as medical TV programmes.

Anxiety by itself can cause symptoms like headaches or palpitations, and you may mistake these for signs of illness.

Although the actual causes of health anxiety are not known, past experiences can leave you feeling rather vulnerable and lead you to develop increased concerns about your health.

Some helpful ways for coping

Understanding what keeps your health anxiety going is the first step towards breaking this disabling vicious cycle. This might mean looking deeper into why you worry about being ill. For example, is it the fear of death or the fear of losing control of your life when you are ill? Dealing with the root of your fear may help you take a balanced view of illness.

- We tend to assign meanings to specific situations. Changing the meaning you attach to your body sensations

can help, for example, “I have headaches, so I have cancer”, instead, think of headaches as usually a sign of stress. Identify what you are stressed about and deal with it. *(however, do not ignore symptoms that may require real medical attention, especially if symptoms persist).*

- Have a list of activities to distract you from experiencing worry about your health, like going for a walk to a public place and observing what is going on around you; or do something demanding.
- Schedule worry time. Sit down and write down your worries. Schedule a time to worry about them. When that time comes, address each worry and cross it off the list.
- Find solutions to your worries when you sit down for worry time. For example, if I have a stomach ache, I will monitor my diet and book a doctor’s appointment if necessary.
- Reduce information-seeking by writing down how long you spend daily, researching and reading about symptoms and conditions. Significantly reduce it. Look for information that is physically and mentally helpful but do it in moderation. Invest time in self-care and with family and friends instead of googling your condition.
- Reduce checking your body for new growths, spots or lumps, by recording how

long you spend doing that and reducing it daily. Remember that every time you check, you become afraid of finding something new, and that can increase your anxiety.

- Use your doctor’s appointments to address issues on your worry list with your medical team. Also, ask how often you should be visiting them and what you should do when symptoms arise in between appointments.

Treatments

Treating health anxiety usually focuses on improving your symptoms and ability to function effectively, daily. Generally, treatment involves counselling therapy, with medication if required. Other forms of treatment may include behavioural stress management and exposure therapy. In addition to these treatments, doctors may recommend medication if your symptoms are severe and you are not responding to therapy.

If you have been overly anxious about a diagnosed health condition and the above suggestions have not helped, you may want to consider speaking to a therapist.

At CCS we have counsellors qualified to deal with health anxiety and other anxiety disorders.

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Capitalising on the favourable May weather, retired pastor, James Philip, tilled the ground in his Lewisham allotment. This space has brought him much healing since he began kidney dialysis in 2010.

Born in St Kitts, he eventually settled in Britain with his wife Anne, a maths teacher for over thirty years, and their two daughters. For 40 years, pastoral ministry was his life. He began work in St Lucia in 1973 as the Youth, Health and Temperance Director of the Eastern Caribbean. The first four years in office saw the birth of his eldest daughter. His second term was in Barbados. When asked what makes a good youth director, he stated that *"love and loving people is a crucial part of this role."*

Philip clearly understood from early on, the importance of being authentic - being the wheat, not the tares - in youth ministry; and this approach he has sought to model in his leadership. This level of care he applied to the Dominican community shortly after Hurricane David in 1979. Fifty-six people died and one hundred and eighty were injured. Responding to the need for immediate relief, the Eastern Caribbean Conference sent Philip and the Pathfinders to help the French Army rebuild roads. Several years later, under more favorable conditions, his ministry led him to Grenada, Carriacou, St Vincent and Bequia. But the regular separation from his family and young children was challenging and may

have impacted his health.

It was in 2010, while rebuilding the Balham Church, that Philip received a kidney transplant from his eldest daughter. His body briefly accepted it, but some years later, joy was short-lived when his body rejected it.

Even up to his retirement in 2015, none of the doctors could conclusively state what caused his kidney to malfunction. The common causes for kidney disorders are high blood pressure or diabetes, neither of which Philip had. One might imagine that he would give in to feelings of dejection or doubt when faced with ill health after a life of service. In his sanguine fashion, Philip rather focused on the fact that the treatment and dialysis did not take a drastic toll on his mobility or physical appearance, thus allowing him to maintain a similar pace of life as before. The impact on his family was also mitigated. His testimony is that God has sustained him in spite of sickness, and for that he is very grateful.

He fondly recalls his first and only mentor, Pastor Palmer, a Jamaican man who briefly mentored him in his youth. Palmer's training quickly led to Philip's leading five districts in St Lucia, the largest consisting of 500 people. Philip describes his rapid ascension to a position of leadership as an *'easy feat'* due to his personable nature and other people's keenness to help him. This healthy level of confidence, he revealed, came from his favourite scripture: Philippians 4:13 *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'*. After three years as the Dean of Men at the Caribbean Union College in Trinidad - now the University of the Southern Caribbean - he was invited to Pastor five

churches in South London, including Lewisham, Sydenham and Eltham.

Philip expressed that interactions with those of the Caribbean diaspora included a vibrant community life and rigorous dedication to upholding tradition. However, that pride in traditional values appears to be ebbing away. The South London region has been heavily featured in media reports surrounding knife and gun crime. Granted, South London isn't the only impacted region, nor the highest impacted area. Nonetheless, when asked, Philip stated his disappointment in the youth violence and pondered whether violent music was a contributing factor. Knife-crime isn't foreign to him though. When he was Pastor at Lewisham, incidents of violence reared its head. He spoke of two such occasions:

The first, he recalls, was at the funeral of a member's son when shots were fired in a drive-by shooting. The aim of the perpetrators was to let the bereaved family know that a vendetta was still in effect. In spite of the police presence at the scene, Philip and congregants remained shaken by the situation. In another instance, Philip was thrust into a mediating role. During a church service, a young man entered with a knife, prepared to attack a member. It was never made clear to Philip whether the threat had escalated from a previous altercation or a recent provocation. Philip, the church elders, and congregants sprang to action and restrained the young man. In spite of this, the member whom the young man sought to attack, had readied himself with a knife from the church kitchen. Thankfully, no blood was spilt in God's

sanctuary; but a testimony arose. The perpetrator reformed his life and several years later contacted Philip for a reference. Philip chuckled at the absurdity of the situation.

Perhaps his preparation for such active ministry came while serving as the Dean of Men at the Caribbean Union College in Trinidad. He was primarily drafted into the role because the male students were deemed unruly and in need of a more patient hand. Philip spent five years transforming young men's lives prior to coming to England.

In spite of all the lives God has changed through him, Philip still feels one small element of disappointment- when new pastors decline offers for guidance and mentorship. Then they end up struggling in silence under the burden of their ministries. Church life deteriorates, congregants suffer, and their own spiritual growth is stunted. Fortunately, though, far more junior pastors have accepted his hand of mentorship than have declined it, and he is ever encouraged to see their dedicated work within the South England region and beyond.

When asked about his legacy, Philip pauses; then he recounts his most memorable highlight, a campaign in Blackheath which resulted in 40 baptisms in one day. At its core, the message was about transformation and adaptation and based on his favourite scripture, Philippians 4:13. He wants others to be inspired by that verse, as he has been inspired. Reliance on Christ's strength is enough to be effective in ministry.

SEC DEPARTMENTS

Reports and Articles



Four years, in the grand scheme of things, isn't a really long time; and it certainly doesn't feel like it was four years ago, when all the delegates from the local congregations and conference gathered together in Warwick for the 64th South England Conference Session.

But here we are, only a few months away from another gathering of some 600 delegates from across the south of England for our 65th session at Portsmouth Guildhall and University. The Adventist Church has come a long way since the first conference was organised in Michigan in 1861. Seven ministers were present and the following resolution was made, *"Resolved, That we recommend to the churches in the state of Michigan to unite in one Conference, with the name of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists"* (Review and Herald 18:148, Oct. 8, 1861).¹ The following year in October 1862, they had their first regular session, and at that time resolved to call a General Conference Session of delegates from several of the conferences that had been established.

On the 20 May 1863, 20 delegates gathered together in a small church in Battle Creek, Michigan, and officially organised the Seventh-day Adventist Church and established the General Conference. Sessions were an annual event for a number of years until delegate numbers made it impractical, and as the church began to consider locations other than Battle Creek. Next year, 2020, over 2500 delegates will gather at the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis for the 61st General Conference Session which will have some 70,000 attendees from all over

the planet to observe this marvel in church democracy.

Today the church is organised into 13 administrative Divisions, 135 Union Conferences, 665 Conferences, representing over 84,000 organised congregations and over 21,000,000 members.

As we gather this September, we are following a tradition which has been established over the decades in church governance which invites participation from every level of our church.

So, this autumn, among other things, we will be electing the officers, directors and trustees who will guide the conference through the next four years. There will be a time to reflect on the last four years and make plans for the next four. We will be discussing changes to our constitution, voting on the credentials of our church workers, from pastors to teachers, support staff and lay preachers. Each of the elected personnel will give their reports and there will be time to ask questions, move motions and make observations. There will be opportunities to effect real change and to have your say.

As we prepare for this special time together, it is the work of each member of the South England Conference to pray for this quadrennial convocation, to ask that the Holy Spirit will move amongst our delegates as they meet together and that each of us will earnestly seek God's will be done in the four days that we spend together. Recently I heard a preacher speak to a gathering of several thousand young people, and he challenged them to

stop speaking about church and start being the church with their voices, hearts, hands and feet. Let us embrace the calling that Christ has placed upon His people to be His Church. Time is short as we look forward to the return of Christ, and it is only through the working of God's Spirit through all His people in these last days, that we will effect real change in the communities in which we live.

¹ The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. (1996). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

DOUGLAS McCORMAC



Relationship and Sex Education – how prepared are we?

In boroughs in and out of London, parents are expressing their concerns about the new Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum that the Department for Education (DFE) is making mandatory from September 2020 and is also encouraging schools to trial it now.

For many years, it was known as Sex and Relationship Education (SRE). So why the change? And why now?

The Equality Act 2010 and Schools – May 2014 outlined the nine protected characteristics in Modern Britain. These are, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

1 During the passage of the Children and Social Work Act in 2017, the government recognised that there was a compelling case to make compulsory Relationships Education for all primary pupils and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for all secondary pupils, through regulations, and to consider the status of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) or elements of the subject for all state-funded pupils.

2 On 19 July 2018 the Department for Education launched a consultation on the draft regulations and statutory guidance and the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) relating to Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education. This was the next stage of our

engagement process, which included a call for evidence to seek public views from adults and young people.

3 The department received 11,186 online and emailed responses to the consultation. Additionally, the department also received 29,000 signatures in response to two petitions.¹

With the passing of The Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Government sent out a nationwide consultation. They wanted to hear from us about the new proposal to change SRE to RSE – with the emphasis being on RELATIONSHIPS. Regardless of the numerous responses opposed, the DFE pressed on and the introduction of RSE became a reality.²

From September 2020, all primary schools will need to provide:

- Relationships Education
- Health Education
- Sex Education continues to be non-compulsory

Primary schools won't be required to provide sex education, but the DfE does recommend that they have a programme in place.

From September 2020 all secondary schools will need to provide:

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- This will replace the current need to provide sex and relationships education (SRE).*
- Health education
- Schools may already cover parts of this in Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), which is currently optional for state-funded schools.*

¹ Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education in England Government consultation response February 2019

² RSE and Health Education for Primary and Secondary schools – draft guidance February 2019 (DFE). Additional guidance is also given in The Independent School Standards April 2019 – (DFE)

Changes to the right to withdraw (SECONDARY schools)

- Parents will have the right to withdraw their child from part or all of the sex education delivered as part of RSE, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.
- When the new requirements come into place, parents can do this up until 3 terms before their child turns 16. After that, it will be the child's decision.
- Currently, the SRE guidance does not set any age limit for withdrawing a child from sex education.
- Parents CANNOT withdraw their child from the Relationships Education in RSE or Health Education.

Changes to the right to withdraw (PRIMARY schools)

- Parents CANNOT withdraw their child from Relationships or Health Education.

This new curriculum is to prepare our children for 'life in MODERN BRITAIN'. What does 'MODERN BRITAIN' look like? It encompasses and celebrates gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and sexual orientation.

The DfE has set out what pupils should know by the end of primary and secondary school.

Are parents still the primary 'teachers' of their children? Is the government taking away the 'right' of parents to choose how and when they teach/ discuss with their child, the subjects of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and sexual orientation?

Children are a 'gift' from God; and we have a responsibility to "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6 (KJV)

As parents, we have been given

the privilege of being stewards of our children's lives for a very short time, but the teaching and training we provide is ETERNAL.

Adventist Education begins in the home! Its philosophy is:

1 The aim of true education is to restore human beings into the image of God as revealed by the life of Jesus Christ. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can this be accomplished.

2 An education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person- spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional in a process that spans a lifetime.

3 Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate with divine agencies to prepare learners to be good citizens in this world and for eternity.

Its core curriculum goals are;

- CHILDREN will choose to accept God as their Creator and the Redeemer.
- CHILDREN will grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's creation.
- CHILDREN will creatively apply their spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional knowledge.
- CHILDREN will demonstrate their commitment to the Creator through service to others.

It is imperative that parents play an active role in the education of their children. It is their duty to ensure that they know what the schools are teaching their children.

The National Curriculum (DFE) wants to prepare our children for life in Modern Britain. Adventist Education prepares our children not only for life in this world but for citizenship in "the world to come!"

Pastoral Ministry: Call or Occupation?

Ellen White writes: "The position of those who have been called of God to labour in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church is one of grave responsibility. To win souls to the kingdom of God must be their first consideration" (Gospel Workers p13; 31).

When we confuse our calling with our occupation, the work of God suffers.

Ben Patterson asserted that 'our vocation is our calling to serve Christ; our occupations are the jobs we do to earn our way in the world. While it is our calling to press our occupations into the service of our vocation, it is idolatrous to equate the two.'¹ However, with the introduction of employment law, enforcing rights and responsibilities and the evaluation of the pastor, the distinction between a calling and occupation appears inseparable.

A Call

A call is defined as speaking in a loud, distinct voice to be heard at a distance. When God called Abraham, all he heard was a voice directing him to leave Babylon and 'unto a land that I will show you' (Genesis 12:1). Abraham had no road map, no circuit to follow and no destination to foresee. This object lesson from Abraham's story shows that a call depends on hearing a voice. The presumed organ of response is the ear, not sight. Everything depends upon the relationship between the 'caller' and the 'called'.

Pastors are called to be spiritual guardians of the people entrusted into their care. What that duty is, and how it is discharged may obscure the call with the occupation. For example, Moses confused the call

with the occupation. God said, "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt".² Moses responded as though he were presented with an occupation decision. He spoke about his qualification, experience and the skills required to undertake the call. He talked to God as though he were in a job interview: Who am I to do such a thing? What if people don't follow? Moreover, doesn't God know that I am a useless public speaker?³ Moses' questions were irrelevant to God. The call came with a guarantee that bound Him to his words: "...I will be with you."⁴ In short, God equips the person He has called. Moses did not have a road map. He had the Voice.

An Occupation

When a person does not hear the call anymore, there is the apparent danger to take pastoral ministry as an occupation. Occupation is defined as a person's principal work or business, especially as a means of earning a living.⁵ Occupation consists of an agreement to carry out the desired action that one is legally entitled to do. In occupation, one is paid for their services. There are contractual obligations on the employer and employee. There are job descriptions and forms to complete. In pastoral occupation, the pastor is held accountable to their local church and the employing organisation. In order words, our employer tells us what to do by the rule of law. It is possible to pursue our occupation with a certain amount of personal detachment. I have interviewed many persons wishing to be employed to pursue their call. For example, if the Lord has called a person to plant

churches, the person may confuse the call with their occupation. I am not against church employment. I am saying that our call must always transcend the things we do to earn money, even if those things are done in the church.

In conclusion, our call in Christ is one thing; our occupation is another. Our call is to serve God. We must continue to follow the voice of God. Our occupation is the chore we do to earn a living. Our occupation comes with unavoidable mundane compliance with our employers' policy. While it is our calling to push our occupation into the service of our call, it is idolatrous to serve our occupations at the expense of our calling.



GINA ABBEQUAYE



EBENEZER JONES-LARTEY

¹ "Mastering the Pastoral Role" by Patterson B., Cedar P., Hughes K., p.25, Sisters, OR, USA: Multnomah Publishers Inc. (1991).

² Exodus 3:10 (NKJV)

³ Exodus 13:11; 4:1, 10 (paraphrased)

⁴ Exodus 3:12 (KJV)

⁵ www.dictionary.com

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CHURCH GROWTH & ADVENTIST MISSION

The Church Growth Department seeks to provide opportunities for church members and pastors to engage faith and mission.

These opportunities come through training events, coaching appointments and Sabbath afternoon seminars. Several times a year we also have occasion to take advantage of external events, and this year is no exception.

In March a group of seven travelled to Orlando, Florida, to attend the Exponential Church Planting Conference: one of the largest conferences of its kind, drawing presenters and attendees from across the United States and Europe. To be in attendance at a conference attended by over five thousand Church Planters is a very special experience! Our group actively engaged several workshops, including: Planting Thriving Churches; Women Planting Churches; and Reaching Millennials. The fruit of Exponential 2019 will be seen as leaders draw

on this experience with greater vision and wider perspective.

In June 2018 a group of twenty Church members and Pastors, led by Pastor Erasmus, conducted a Mission Possible UK, taking a coach trip from Canterbury to Lindisfarne and Whitby Abbey in order to explore the early narratives of Christianity in the United Kingdom. Taking a local journey was significant to our need to live and work as missionaries in our local contexts. A series of short documentaries produced from footage taken on this trip is available to view here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCJwMkH9QCA-Jsw6eyalyjvtFYjPI3PPb> This year, our annual Mission Possible will take us to Rome, where group of twenty church members and pastors will travel together - not only physically, but also spiritually. Together we will explore: What it means to "be" Church; the heart of the Gospel - the stuff worth giving your life for; and, what does it mean to pray, "Thy Kingdom come"? Our devotional reflections will also be drawn from Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

One more bit of news that I would like to share with our Church Family is that the Church Growth Department will soon have stock of a revised Spiritual Gifts Inventory tool. Several months have been spent in collaboration to make the tool available in a user friendly and compact format. Please keep an eye out for this little A5 booklet in the very near future!

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LIGIA BUZAC at the SEC office on 01923 232728
or email LBUZAC@SECADVENTIST.ORG.UK

DISABILITY & DIVERSITY

An Intentional Ministry of Love

Over 13 million people in the UK live with a disability. A large proportion of them live in isolation, having little access to socialisation, education or employment. The church can be a place where everyone feels welcome and have a sense of belonging.

In 2019, the Disability and Diversity Department of the SEC continued to develop its mission of 'Creating places of belonging' through its local church awareness days and celebrations.

So far this year, we have provided learning opportunities at the following events:

In January, we were at the SEC Expo in Newbold college where over 1,000 church leaders and members received training and support. 60 Disability Champions received training at this event. Delegates were able to share their experiences with each other and receive support and resources.

In February, the department organised a joint departmental day of celebration, 'Breaking the Trend II'. The day proved to be a success. The theme, "Creating places of Belonging", echoed throughout the seminars, music and workshops. This was the second annual day of fellowship where SEC departmental leaders came together to provide a joint event. Members were provided with a safe place to talk freely about issues that cause barriers to effective mission and ministry and to obtain ideas for breaking down these barriers.

A number of the barriers were found to be related to personal attitudes to diversity and difference. Members suggested that, as a church, the liturgy, culture and attitudes can sometimes create barriers instead of build bridges for the ministry to grow.

During the day, members were able to challenge current thinking and practices around ministry and mission. Many took away practical and effective ideas to use in their local churches.

The topics that were addressed included Intergenerational Ministry, Church Culture, Church and Emotional Intelligence and Church and Personal Relationships. The drama workshop organised for the children, as well as the significant involvement of the children during the day, were aimed at modelling good practice for the membership to see and experience.

Feedback from the survey of the event:

"The venue was great; the central location meant easy access via public transport."

"Pastor Erasmus and Pastor Davis gave excellent presentations which I attended. 'This is me' was very good and addressed an area not normally covered in church outreach."

"Great Engaging Sabbath School - special items, presentation and especially the praise team"

"REALLY enjoyed the day; it was perfect, interesting and packed with something for everyone. The workshops were interesting. My daughter is in her 20s and she said she enjoyed the workshop she attended. SO, you must have done something right."

In spite of the low attendance, those who attended expressed how much they found the day an inspiration and would like to see a Breaking the Trend III!

From March to May, local church training and celebration programmes were held in Portsmouth, Southampton, London, Reading and Oxford, where members are given an opportunity to speak openly and frankly about issues of diversity, difference and belonging.

We continue to thank God for the opportunity to work for Him in the vineyard of life. We have seen members report a sense of belonging and understanding following local church discussions and testimonies.

A church leader expressed how much his eyes had been opened to the needs of members living with disability. There has been a shift in understanding and behaviour, within the church community, towards people of differing abilities.

We thank God for the journey so far and the successes we have experienced in this ministry. These milestones include the policy change from the GC which stipulates that all SDA Church Unions within the world church should identify an administrative leader to take responsibility for the Disability Portfolio. Also, the Adventist Special Needs Ministry was developed at the GC and is led by the assistant to the GC President, Dr. Larry Evans. The use of British Sign Language has expanded across local church and regional events, with the development of the British Sign Language accredited course within the Regional Hubs for Disability and Diversity Ministry, and an increased in awareness of the need for the ministry at local and conference levels.

This ministry still has a long way to go. There needs to be more intentionality to integrating people with disabilities (especially intellectual and learning disabilities) into the life of the church. The local church leadership needs to discover more creative ways to provide services for its membership and the local community. There is a need for people with disabilities to hear the gospel in an accessible and effective way. The journey is long, but we are celebrating successes as we go.



SOPHIA NICHOLLS

Become a community relevant church

How does the local church, the Sabbath School class and the small group successfully make disciples from the communities where they worship? This was one major focus at the South England Conference training for Personal Ministry Leaders on February 9th and for Sabbath School Leaders on April 27th. Matthew 5:13-16 states that *"You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world"* (NIV). Christ pointed to three essential values that make the church truly relevant to the local community. Like salt and light, the church is valuable, visible and available to the community.

Christ's methods of making disciples help exemplify how any member can make others around them to be disciple: *'Jesus mingled to make friends, ministered to their needs to win confidence, invited them to make converts and instructed them to make them disciples who would become disciple-makers'* (E G White: *Ministry of Healing* p. 143). A community relevant church will consistently be positioned in the market place and other spaces where they will mingle with the community. The community relevant church continuously brings healing, hope, happiness and timely help to the community. The

community relevant church is always available to stand with the community in struggle and success.

Churches and groups that are succeeding in connecting and discipling their communities show three key commitments.

- First, ongoing training for the church and members at the frontline of disciple-making.
- Second, ongoing learning and unlearning as to what activities and engagements help in connecting to build authentic friendship with prospective disciples.
- Third, when the community respond to what God is doing the church must have in place a workable model to grow them from seekers to disciple-makers.

Jesus modelled effective training in Luke 6:40 - A disciple rightly trained will be like their master. Training needs to be done in the congregation before the external work of engaging with the community. Internal preparation is needed to stop people leaving the church and to create a friendly and accessible environment for those wishing to come in. Such training will help establish and grow shared vision, mission and methods. It should embed in the church the values and routine for authentic fellowship and friendship, meaningful prayer, oneness of purpose, simplicity of experiencing and expressing faith and worship (at home and in church). This kind of training, to help form a workable team and suitable environment, may take

several months to complete and require a plethora of resources. Inadequate work here will compromise the success of the mission.

To successfully engage and win the community's trust, there must be intentional strategic activities that are well-executed in order to connect with people in the community. These are usually one-off events that are of interest to the community but do not detract from the values of the church. The event(s) need to have value or benefit to the community and should be done in a safe and neutral environment. Planning is essential. Every stage of interaction with the community should be pre-planned and connect to the next stage.

While programmes like Health Expos, Vacation Bible Schools, Senior Clubs, Feeding the homeless win trust, other live community events such as concerts, cafes, choirs and movie nights, can help the church socialise with a wider section of their community. Consistency, regularity and professionalism are necessary. Whatever activities and events are organised need to involve multiple sessions (minimum of 6), such as a weekly course or a monthly café, so as to help build real friendship.

Growing those who positively respond is a key element of effective disciple-making. Community members with whom relationships have been established are invited to attend mission-focused study groups like

Sabbath School, small groups, concerts or other church-based spiritual programmes. Here they are given opportunities to *"hear the Word"* and fellowship with the larger church community. One-to-one Bible study, weekend retreats, public outreach campaigns and Camp Meeting are all opportunities for deeper Bible Study, accepting the Word and the invitation to make a personal commitment to Christ through baptism.

New disciples are encouraged to put into practice what they are learning in the Word. They are given opportunities to apply the Word by doing good for others. From the beginning of interest, new disciples are also trained as disciple-makers who will then repeat the circle of reaching, mingling, ministering, winning confidence and bidding others to follow.

The SEC Personal Ministries and Sabbath School currently offer resources, as well as training and support to help individuals, groups and churches become relevant to all their communities, so that we can again make the Great Commission - *"Go, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them,...teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. I am with you to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:19,20) - become the Great Obsession and not the Great Omission¹

¹ (Dr Melak, *Refocus on Discipleship, Ministry Magazine*, April 2019 p. 9-11)

MICHAEL MBUI

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, KJV).

The Pathfinder and Adventurer Clubs continue to grow throughout the South England Conference, through churches forming clubs for the first time, re-starting a club in the local church or through an increase in the numbers joining established clubs.

Significantly, there was a rise in the number of adults, many with very little or no experience of Pathfinders, who took up the challenge to complete the Master Guide programme, so that they could be effective Counsellors in their local clubs. This year more than 70 adults enrolled in the Master Guide programme.

The Teen Leadership Training programme saw 61 Pathfinders on the Voyager programme confirm their intention to complete this training at their induction service at Stanborough School in May. Joining them were Pathfinders already on the programme and their mentors.

The annual Area Curriculum Camps have grown in popularity and attendance is very high with the camp providing the opportunity for the Pathfinders to complete many of their course requirements on site. Camp styles vary, from conference camporee-type events to basic no-frills *"back-to-nature"* gatherings. Whichever style is chosen, all are enjoyed by the children.

The Drum Corps continues to draw attention to Pathfinders and Adventurers and is an essential tool for public evangelism. A Drum Corp Certification programme has been introduced to ensure that when Our Drum Corps perform at public events, they are able to play to certain standard which represents the quality of what we do, as it reflects on the church. All club Drums Corps with public engagements must be certified by the Pathfinder Department before they are authorised to represent the church.

This year saw an unprecedented response by Pathfinders to the Pathfinder Bible Experience, with every team in our conference making it to the Union level of testing and achieving first place, entitling them to take part in the

North American Division level of testing in the USA.

Of the 24 teams from the SEC that went on this trip, 15 achieved first place, 8 achieved second place and 1 team achieved third place. To achieve first place, a team had to score 90% or above of the maximum points.

With the Pathfinders doing so well, the question is asked, *"How do we maintain this financially?"* The answer is very simple: Trust your Pathfinders! Encourage them to use the time they have now, before the event next year, to fund-raise the money themselves! They can organise many fund-raising initiatives throughout the year, and with your support and guidance, they can raise the funds needed themselves!



KEVIN JOHNS

WOMENS' MINISTRIES

With the Conference's theme, Retention, we started the year (on January 12th) with a play called 'Family Ties', brought to us by Parabolē Productions (Parkside Community Fellowship) at the Stratford Circus Theatre in London. This was a fantastic gospel musical, exploring family struggles and life challenges, using contemporary and ancient settings. Approximately 130 people gathered at the Stratford. Comments from attendees who shared their thoughts included, "This was a lovely evening out"; "Good entertainment"; and "a great way to start the year." The play was well received.

The inter-departmental celebration day (23rd February) Breaking the Trend II, held at the Friends Meeting House in Euston, continued the work started in 2018, of creating places of belonging for all people. Our speakers included Pastor Wayne Erasmus, Church Growth & Missions Director, and Pastor Rebecca Davis from the US. The afternoon consisted of a variety of workshops for all age groups and the

inspiring adaption of the Joseph story, by Newbold Children's Choir. The first Safe to Date programme, designed to help young people between the ages of 16-30 identify healthy and unhealthy relationships was launched on 10th February at Ilford Lane Church. Our trainer, Lorraine Anderson-Reid, tackled issues such as the myth of an ideal partner and the red flags that may indicate controlling and coercive behaviour. Ninety-eight per cent of attendees were young people. Comments from attendees included, "I have been to lots of training on Domestic Abuse but this is one of the best;" also, "Good info; liked the style, delivery and content."

The second Safe to Date programme, held on 7th April at North Wembley Church, had a mixed group of women aged from 30 to 60. The feedback was also encouraging: "This type of programme should be on a Sabbath afternoon; the church needs to hear this;" also, "Very thought provoking. I never looked at dating in this way."

The Woman of Faith program continues to gain momentum. We are now in our second cohort for 2019 at Newbold College under the School of Evangelism. Graduation will take place at Camp Meeting.

The Easy Sew schools in Luton, Stratford, Balham and Hyland House are growing. Easy Sew is an outreach programme designed to help members make friends with the community whilst learning practical skills. We currently teach adults and children how to sew and make fashionable clothes and soft furnishings.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Our next event, on Sunday 7 July 2019, is Women's Community Health Day at the Chingford Town Hall in London E4 7EN, starting at 12 noon. We will be tackling general health, hair loss, and skin and nail care. We will also have healthy sumptuous vegetarian cooking demos. Please continue to pray for the work of the church and the Women's Ministry leaders and their teams around the Conference.



MASLIN HOLNESS

MENS' MINISTRIES

Let's talk about it!

While attending Men's Days, either speaking or supporting, I noticed that we do not spend enough time talking about the important issues of mental health or men's health.

There are men, especially in our churches and, maybe, sitting right next to us, who are going through depression, anxiety, loneliness or suicidal thoughts, but who hide their true feelings behind the mask of 'manhood'. Therefore, as a church, we must create a forum or safe space to express and talk about such experiences in confidence and on a regular basis.

According to statistics, 1 in 8 men in England have a common mental health problem. However, men may be reluctant to seek support for their mental health or to disclose mental health problems to loved ones. Globally, a man dies by suicide every minute. In United Kingdom, men make up 75% of all suicides.

The benefit of airing one's struggles and offering a listening ear is addressed by the Apostle Paul when he writes, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV). In other words, ask for help and talk about it. It is important for people in our churches and communities to be comforted and edified. How often do we check to see if this, or that person is OK? Clearly, the Bible endorses this practice.

This year we have been talking about many things: mental health, domestic violence, loneliness and prayer which changes things; encouraging young folks about keeping their eyes on the prize, reaching their goals, and celebrating each time they have reached their targets. Above all, we encourage them to keep their eyes



on Jesus. A quote that means a lot to me is, when life knocks you down, try to land on your back; because, when you can see from whence cometh your help, you can get up.

Whether Teens or older folks, we can work together to overcome fear and isolation. We can build trust and encourage the willingness to confide in, and so help, one another.

In March this year, the Family Ministries Department ran a training programme at the Advent Centre, on how to start ministries in the local church for men, singles and families. Members came to learn and to fellowship with one another, and to work towards expanding the culture of sharing, listening and encouragement across more local churches.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
SEC Men's Retreat, 11-13 October 2019 at De Vere Horsley Estate, Ockham Road, East Horsley, Leatherhead, KT24 6DT.
Speaker: Pastor Andrew Davies. The theme for the weekend is Men's Identity.
Prices: £165.00 for singles & £115.00 per person for twin occupancy.



DEVON BOYD

FAMILY MINISTRIES

We believe, as a faith community, that the family is the epicentre for learning the fundamental skills for life - physically, emotionally and socially - and hence, the context from which the rest of life flows. However, family life in Britain is changing. Adults and children are increasingly faced with the challenges of dysfunctional and fractured families. The church is no exception. Over the last twelve months, the Family Ministries Department has sought to provide messages that influence family outcome, like the provision of preventive relationship education and of parenting interventions. By so doing, we hope to establish a framework which will support the families around the local communities where our places of worship are located, and to offer a stable, nurturing and permanent environment to the benefits of all. The aim is to bring a message of hope, healing and restoration.

The family is the foundation force that directs the attitude, values, hopes and ambitions of an individual. When this foundational base dismantles, it is the children that usually suffer and are damaged. Successfully navigating a family today is like swimming against the tide. Therefore, the Family Ministries Department of the South England Conference, over the last twelve months, have worked to strengthen and support parents from various backgrounds, by giving information and sharing strategies for child-rearing.



The department also provided programmes to help couples prepare for marriage, enrichment strategies for their relationship or review to improve their co-parenting by reflecting on areas of their strengths or weaknesses. The aim is to inspire hope, give encouragement and support the families around the local communities where our places of worship are located, offering a stable, nurturing and permanent environment for the benefit of all, including the members of the church.

It has been a great privilege to minister in our local churches. Through sermons, weekend seminars and workshops, as well as numerous marriage and family counselling, we have been able to address some of the needs of the local church, as well as share relevant resources to support the development of healthy relationships, both in the local church and community.

Here are the three most basic listening skills I gave serious focus to, over the last twelve months, that helped me bring a message of hope, healing and restoration. First, I learned the skill of summarising. By summarising, the person in crisis knows that I am

listening and understanding what he or she is telling me. The goal is to repeat the message, to send the word, "I hear you."

Second, I learned the lesson of clarifying. Clarifying helps me to eliminate any discrepancies, but at the same time helps the member see things in a new way.

Third, and most importantly, I am grateful to have been in a position where I could share in empathy. Empathising allows me to do more than sympathy. It places me in a position to feel the pain and share in the struggles that people are often faced with.

And yet, I am as guilty as any helper in my everyday life, where sometimes I may disregard the three essential helping skills. From this day forward, I resolve to make the change in how I relate to the people around me.

I'm grateful to the many people across the South England Conference who have supported families around them by seeking to summarise, clarify and empathise. Your contributions have been overwhelming. I thank my partner in ministry, my wife Barbara, who has given the Family Ministries Department active service in this regard.



AUGUSTUS LAWRENCE

COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

The Communication and Media Department has focused on more elements of training this year. We began the year with training all Communication Secretaries within the South England Conference who attended the annual Evangelism Expo on 3rd January at the Newbold College of Higher Education. The training concentrated on the importance of Crisis Communication awareness at the local level. The idea was to help local communication secretaries to begin thinking about potential crises and the protocols for dealing with situations that involve engaging with the media.

Video Storytelling Training

We scheduled two training dates for this event to accommodate as many communication secretaries as possible. This training aimed to enable attendees to begin capturing their local stories in video form. Statistics are showing that video storytelling has significantly more potential for attracting an audience's attention, as opposed to print media. We had the privilege of enlisting industry leader Rod Glass to conduct the two training events on January 20th at the Stanborough Centre in Watford and on 4th February at the Advent Centre. Those who

attended commented that it was useful and relevant for their church to begin sharing its news via video clips. With considerable subsidies for all communication secretaries to attend, turn-out was disappointingly low, with less than 50 participants for both training dates combined.

Directors Crisis Communication Management Training

We have had an ongoing annual Spokespersons Training for SEC Directors for the past four years. However, this year, the focus was on "Crisis Communication Management" training. We were privileged to enlist the services of veteran Crisis Communication Management Consultant Adrian Wheeler, who shared the importance of preparedness and how to engage with the media as the primary means for tackling crisis communications.

Engaging with the Media Training for Pastors

All our Area Coordinators and SEC Pastors were invited to participate in an annual "Engaging with the Media / Spokespersons" training on two different dates - at Stanborough Centre on 30th April and at the SEC boardroom in Watford.

on 14th May. This training aimed to equip our pastors and area coordinators to be aware of potential crises and how to engage with the media, should the need arise. Participants had the opportunity to experience rigorous media interview situations as part of the exercises to engage with the media. Thomson Reuters senior manager and former BBC radio presenter Liz Havern, Radio and TV professional, whose speciality includes promoting journalist best practice, conducted the training.

Media Productions

Most of our media work this year has involved streaming significant events across the conference. Our dedicated media volunteers continue to make our streaming ministry possible, as this could not happen without their commitment. Some of the events streamed this year include: Evangelism Expo in January, the "Breaking the Trend" Day of Fellowship in February, the Pathfinder Bible Experience in March, Teens Prayer & Faith Conference in April, the BUC Ministerial Council meeting in May, the Youth Day of Fellowship in June, and others to come each month until November. Besides, we have recorded various programmes and supported various departmental events with audio and video.

Productions

Our new production "A life less ordinary," with the first episode in December 2018, has proved popular.

Our work with Pastor Mathew Herel has been to produce something that relates to current news events and can be linked to relevant spiritual lessons that resonate with our audiences. We have been sharing these episodes on our YouTube channel - see media. <https://youtu.be/bODtfwC3XzM>

Documentary

We also released a four-episode documentary recording of one of our projected Departmental videos which focused on the work of the Church Growth Department's "Mission Possible" trip in the UK. The new 4-part documentary series explores historical Christian sites in the UK and how they help us further our Christian faith today. <https://youtu.be/xBis7GNFI90>

We are grateful to our outgoing Communication and Media Assistant, Onysia Collins, for the initiative to work with the Church Growth Department and for filming and producing the documentary series.

Even though we have planned more productions, we have been limited by other commitments, including preparations for the SEC Session in September and the recording of the SEC Director's session reports.



SAM DAVIES



ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON

Preparing for Tomorrow

Just over one year on and Adventist Radio London is still actively influencing listeners to place greater confidence in the everlasting gospel proclaimed by this church. We know this because of numerous listener feedback received via internet and various other platforms. Here are just a few of our most recent examples:

"Just found you today! I have been blessed. Thank you. You demonstrate that Christianity does not need to be dull." (Rachel, Los Angeles, California)

"Great show tonight" (Donald)

"Good afternoon. Today Is the first time I've listened to this radio; it is very interesting. I like listening to Gospel." (Renka)

"Greetings from Bwalya, Zambia. I'm a Seventh Day Adventist who just turned away from his bad deeds and know so little of the Bible and God. You have helped me now understand the Bible and I'm grateful. I love this channel and the music you play."

"This calming and upbeat radio station is really helping me get through a very tough time." (Aaron).

By the time this issue reaches print, we shall have completed our first Volunteer Taster Session and will be on our way to recruiting essential official volunteer personnel who will help this radio ministry to accomplish its objectives to create programmes that will reach the hearts of listeners, not only in London,



MIKE HAMILTON

but also across the UK and the rest of the world. Our volunteers will give essential and needed support to our existing team of broadcasters who have been basically working single-handedly in producing most of our current shows. As growth increases, so do the needs, and so by the grace of God, we intend to address them as they arise.

As time moves forward and Adventist Radio London moves with it, the cost of keeping this ministry alive must be met. And so, in light of this, we have actively developed a plan to invite you, our committed members and listeners, to generously contribute to meeting this huge financial challenge. Annually, we need to raise in excess of £500,000, and you are able to contribute to this in various ways:

Make donations through your local church mission contributions. Please mark your envelopes: "Adventist Radio London" and remember to "Gift Aid" all your contributions if you are a UK tax payer.

Make cheques payable to "Adventist Radio London". And send to: **Adventist Radio London, 25 St Johns Road, Watford, Herts, WD17 1PZ.**

Make regular bank standing order or bank transfer to: **Adventist Radio London HSBC Bank Account number: 41410512 Sort Code: 40 45 28**

Your prayerful and generous contributions will help to secure the future of this ministry and ultimately see souls led to know Jesus as their Saviour and the only hope for mankind.



SHARING THE HOPE



ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON WEEKDAY HIGHLIGHTS



07:00 (M-F) The Breakfast Show
Lynette Alcock



15:00 (M-F) On The Go
Vanesa Pizzuto



09:00 (M-F) Bible Answers
Doug Batchelor



17:00 (M-F) Drivetime
Nigel Maunganidze



10:00 (M-F) Explore
Pastor Michael Hamilton



20:00 Friday - Prayer on the Line
Pastor Ray Patrick



11:00 (M-T) Focus on the Family



12:00 Noon (M-F) Christian Living
Mike Johnson

Ways to listen

DAB+
Digital Audio Broadcasting

Search "Adventist Radio London"



ADVENTIST RADIO LONDON WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS



07:00 - Sabbath Breakfast
Mike Johnson



10:00 Sunday - Ray of Hope
Pastor Ray Patrick



09:00 Saturday - Bible Answers
Doug Batchelor



12:00 Sunday - Our Times
Ebenezer Jones-Larty



10:00 Saturday - Hope Sabbath School
Pastor Derek Morris



21:00 Sunday - Reflections
Trevor Johnson



08:00 Sunday - Family Matters
Barbara Lawrence



09:00 Sunday - In the News
Mark Grey

Ways to listen

DAB+
Digital Audio Broadcasting

Search "Adventist Radio London"

BRIXTON MARCH AGAINST GUN & KNIFE CRIME

(Reporter: Onysha D Collins)



The march began outside of the church. At the forefront of the procession were the Pathfinder Drum Corp who vibrantly made their presence known to neighbours. The congregation swiftly followed with banners and placards in tow, as they moved towards Windrush Square. Compere, Roger Campbell, engaged visitors by offering special gifts as an icebreaker. During this Evangelism opportunity, Adventist material, including EG White’s ‘Steps to Christ’, was distributed.

Brixton Pastor, Keith Boldeau, was a supporting presence throughout the day. Throughout the programme he delivered scheduled prayers of encouragement, healing, and calls for unity. Celebrating the Church’s efforts was special guest, the Mayor of Lewisham Ibrahim Dogus, who gave a short presentation and lit candles in honour of the deceased.

Nathaniel Peat, founder of Safety Box, delivered an impassioned speech about his experience dealing with youth violence. He charged the adults to become aware of youth vernacular in order to gain greater awareness and influence. Also, in attendance were facilitators, Kaydean and Chris, who delivered a presentation aimed at the youth on dealing with peer pressure and prevention.

HACKNEY MARCH AGAINST GUN & KNIFE CRIME

(Reporter: Sam Gelder)

Community leaders, councillors and youth club members took part in a peace march organised by a Haggerston church on Bank Holiday Monday. The event, which followed a silent prayer walk on Saturday, was organised by the Hackney Seventh-Day Adventist Church and led by drummers from its Pathfinders Club.



They were out to march against knife and gun violence, and to let people know that the bloodshed on the streets must stop. In a passionate speech in Dalston Square, Pastor Joojo Bonnie, said: "We are fed up with the dying, we are fed up with the gun violence and we are fed up with the knife killing. We need to come together as one community and take a stand against this issue plaguing our communities."

Hackney Mayor Phil Glanville thanked the church for organising the march, saying: "It is very clear the communities of Hackney care about our young people. Marches like this are important to show the community can come together in a spirit of peace and harmony."

100 YEARS OF THE FAMILY LIFE DEPARTMENT IN THE ILLFORD SDA CHURCH

In celebration of the centenary of The Family Life Department, Ilford Central Church launched a week-long campaign featuring Dr’s Claudio and Pamela Consuegra. The Consuegras, writers of the Second Quarter Sabbath School lesson and Co- Directors of the North American Division Family Life Department, ran informative and engaging presentations. Each night focused on the 12 ingredients of disciple-making families, a much-needed topic which delved into the realistic challenges people face and realistic preparations which should be made prior to entering a marriage.

Topics ranged from financial maturity and budgeting to intimacy and the difference between the sexes. The Consuegras deliberately incorporated real life examples in order to hone-in, on pitfalls and successes (including their own). To encourage audience participation, they began each session with a question and answer segment.

The session ran from Saturday 11th May to Saturday 18th May, while the Core of Adventism ran in other churches in the SEC region.

1000’s DRAW TO SOUTHEND-ON-SEA COMMUNITY CHURCH

(Reporter: Colin Gordon)



The SOS Community Church, a small church plant based in Southend-on-Sea, brought church to the people of Southend on Sabbath 20th April. Thousands of people flocked from miles around to hear singing and to see drumming and marching by the SEC Drum Corps and Drill Team. News of the event was immediately put online by local news media (titled, “Thousands of people have come to Southend today to enjoy

the 22°C warm weather!”) which received 90,000 views within 3 days. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=268347774120167>

Within 4 hours, over 50 public health screening tests were conducted with the assistance of Area 8 Health Ministries Coordinator, Jennie James, and her team from Ipswich. Morecia Barclay provided smoothies and additional health advice. Furthermore, a “Sabbath Sofa” was provided for those who needed to take the weight off their feet. Simultaneously, it presented the opportunity to introduce them to the Sabbath day of rest. The SOS Community Church distributed over 1,000 items of literature and collected just under £400 for ADRA, with help from representatives of the Southend SDA Church Pathfinders Club and local ADRA agent, Paulette Gordon.

Among the newest additions to church plants are Elston and Tashae Waldron. This was the first time that they had experienced the church in the high street event. They commented, “The highlight of the day was how the people reacted to the drum corps, as they were intrigued by the skill and the professionalism of the group. The music was also another highlight: people were seen praising God and even requesting their favourite religious song to be played by the “DJ”. Overall, it was a great day in Zion. We might not have been in a physical structure for church, but church on the high street was a memorable one.”

PATHFINDER BIBLE EXPERIENCE DIVISION LEVEL TEST

(Reporter: Kevin Johns)



On 27th April, 210 teams of up to seven Pathfinders assembled at Rock Valley College in Rockford Illinois to take part in the North American Division Pathfinder Bible Experience Division Finals. Teams came from all Unions across America, Canada, and the United Kingdom, with the British Union being the largest, with 43 teams and 24 from the South England Conference.

Approximately 4000 people were in attendance, causing the NAD to hire another school hall and run a video link to the school hall, as the venue could not accommodate everyone during the testing. Pathfinders from Willesden Church and Plaistow Church did musical items during the Friday night worship service and Sabbath afternoon worship service.

The test results were as follows: 158 first place teams, 48 second place teams, 3 third place teams. The British Union achievements are as follows: SEC 15 first place teams, 8 second place teams and 1 third place team. NEC 8 first place teams, and 5 second place teams. Scottish Mission, 1 first place team. Irish Mission, 3 first place teams. Welsh Mission, 2 second place teams.

The South England Conference Pathfinder Director, Kevin Johns, stated, “Our Pathfinders have done well, and we are proud of their achievements. We are thankful to God for the impact this ministry is having on our Pathfinders, as they grow in Bible knowledge and their willingness to speak confidently about how their lives have changed since they started doing PBE. This ministry is helping to produce grounded future leaders.”



50TH YEAR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AT LONDON GHANA

On Sabbath 20th April, Elder and Mrs Ofori Asante reaffirmed their marriage vows after 50 years of union at a colourful event at the London Ghana Church. The President of the South England Conference (SEC), Dr Emmanuel Osei, was represented by Education Director of the SEC, Mrs Gina Abbequaye. She noted that “Adventist Christians need to recognise and honour marriage as an ordained and divine institution.”

Abbequaye said, for the Adventist, marriage is a union of two children of God coming together as one; they must be committed to Him, as well as to their spouse. This, she noted, must be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. She was of the view that mutual love, honour, respect and responsibility are the fabric of any relationship blessed by God. According to Him, such must be a true reflection of love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church.

On behalf of the SEC President, Mrs Abbequaye commended the couple for their high sense of commitment and dedication towards their union and encouraged young couples in the church to emulate the enviable feat of Elder and Mrs Ofori Asante.

Head Pastor of London Ghana Church, Pastor George Boakye Asiamah, reminded the congregation of the importance of a committed relationship to God at the centre of the successful partnership that makes a long, successful marriage.



HAVEN CAFÉ AT HOLLOWAY CHURCH

Holloway Church held their annual Haven Café Open Day on Sunday 28th April. Hermine Davis, in collaboration with Holloway's Personal Ministries Leader, Cresha Walkingshore and the PM Department led the event. In spite of the London Marathon dominating the headlines, over 150 people attended. Special guests included Islington Mayor, Dave Poyser, who delivered an address before cutting the ceremonial ribbon. Highly impressed by the work at Haven Café, Poyser commended the church for its active work in the community.



Subsequently, the Pathfinder Drum Corp marched through the neighbourhood in efforts to promote the day and inform the community of the Café's presence. The natural progression was entry to the Church for guests to participate in various activities. These included massage therapy, a healthy drinks stall, a prayer booth, healthy eating presentations, career advice, stress therapy and health checks.

Hermine Davis stated, *"The intent was to practically meet the needs of the local community through a variety of health-related activities, both physical and mental"*. This intent was fulfilled in bittersweet fashion, when a man in attendance collapsed. On route to his hydro- therapy session in one of the church rooms, he lost consciousness. However, a doctor and nurse were among the volunteers, resulting in readily available medical attention. An ambulance was subsequently called to administer further treatment. Later in the day, the man stated his thankfulness and pleasure for the service received and was determined to return in order to give his testimony during a Sabbath service.

On hand to give medical guidance was Dr Audrey Tstotesi, a practitioner of obstetrics and gynaecology for ten years and a GP for over forty years. Motivated by the desire to help people amend their lifestyles to prevent disease, Tstotesi is a member of Hampstead Church, but regularly gets invited throughout the SEC region to participate in Health Days. Her consultancy method stems from the M.E.E.T model (Missionary Education



and Evangelistic Training), whereby Tstotesi firstly assesses each person's personal profile including BMI and goals in order to advise on remedial lifestyle actions they can take. Tstotesi became an advocate of lifestyle medicine after her participation in the course saw her arthritis reversed within 2- 4 days.

The Health team also included Tracey-Ann Evan-Smith and Rose James. James, a nurse of over 40 years' experience, had been at the Church since 9am and patiently saw 18 people. To her, however, this was simply an extension of her normal weekly commitments at the church and at work.

Also, the Prayer Team were well prepared. Since 9am, Charity Uhuka, Esther Nwanga, and their team members had been at the Church, preparing with prayer. Their presence at the Open Day was a culmination of 8 weeks organising, meditation and prayer. The group stated that their highlight was praying with a man in his 40s who was in a season of despair and agony. However, after several minutes of prayer, his countenance lifted dramatically. The team enthused that it's never possible to know the hurt people are facing, but simply offering to pray with them can be life changing.



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The Healing of the Nations

*It's hard right now.
Sweat drops from our brow
From morning till night,
Though we toiled with our might.*

*And never personally did we,
Expect pain, illness and disease to be,
That by which we would be consumed.*

*This world will not be our resting place.
In spite of it all, we press forward by God's grace.
For though on earth, many our afflictions will be,
Yet, still, we look for a land and glorious city*

*Where death and sickness will be no more,
And we will be renewed, and all things pure.
Where the tree of life will take her stand.*

*And her leaves will be for the healing of every nation.
Yes, each month a fruit for us she will yield,
and we will be rid of every sickness and disease.*

*At last my brother, my sister, my friend,
It will be well - with mind, body, spirit and soul.*

Eileen G Philip
Hackney SDA Church



DOES GOD CARE? *devotional*

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8, KJV).

This text seems to say, "ask for anything and you'll receive it," making answers to prayer seem automatic. It's marvellous when our prayers are answered, because we know God is listening to us. We "ride on the high places of the land" (Deuteronomy 32:13), with our feet barely touching the ground, for we are so happy and have a great testimony to share.

Meanwhile, there is someone sitting quietly in the corner, struggling to join in the "Amen", because their experience is very different. Their fervent prayers seem to go unanswered because the pain is still there, the issue that has plagued them for so long is no better and seems worse than ever today. Surely, the promise of answered prayer should apply to everyone. Have you ever wondered: "What is 'wrong with me?'; 'Is it that I don't have enough faith?'; 'Have I failed God in some way?'; or 'Why am I still suffering after all this time?'"

However, there are people of great faith in the Bible who had a long wait for an answer to prayer, and some never received the answer they hoped for. The obvious example of someone with a chronic health problem is the apostle Paul "... [T]here was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me" (2 Corinthians 12:7-8, KJV). Paul's description of "a thorn in the flesh" is so apt for a chronic illness, with insistent reminders of deep-rooted pain that cannot be removed.

Paul's "thorn in the flesh" is thought to have been a problem with his eyesight. He rarely wrote his own letters, using a secretary, then just adding his signature (2 Thessalonians 3:17). However, some think that Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was depression, as there are indications that Paul took occasional time away from

his missionary work. The uncertainty about Paul's "thorn in the flesh" means that, whatever your "thorn", you can learn from Paul's experience and apply it to yourself.

First, Paul asked the Lord to remove the problem - and he asked repeatedly. So, keep praying for healing, while remembering that God wants to give us the best. Our opening text continues: "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matthew 7:9-11, KJV, emphasis supplied). Prayer is a matter of faith, believing that God is willing and able to answer, and trusting that He will answer as He knows best for each of us.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 records the answer Paul receives: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." He has discovered the power of Christ in his weakness and trials, "for when I am weak, then I am strong" (KJV).



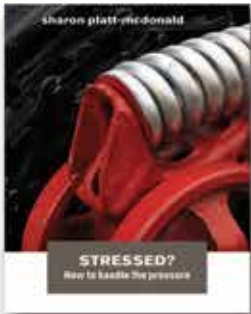
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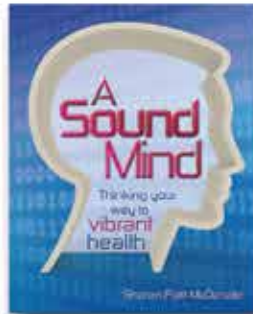




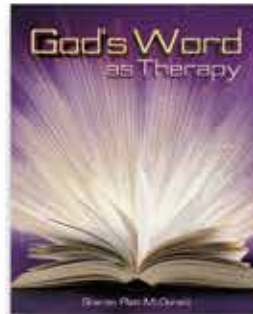
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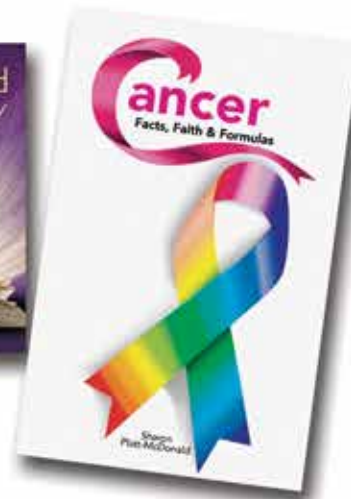
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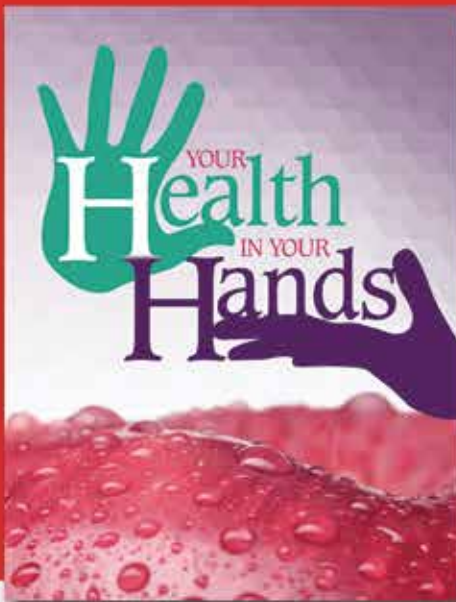
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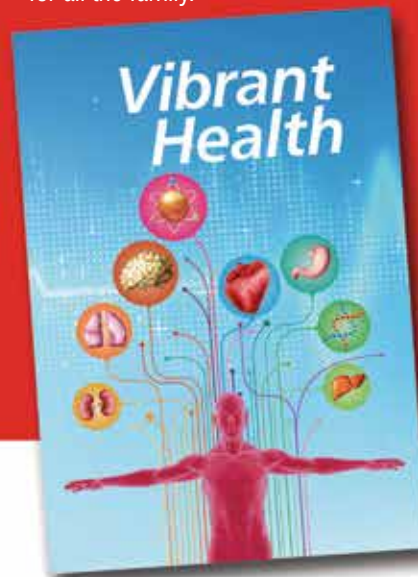


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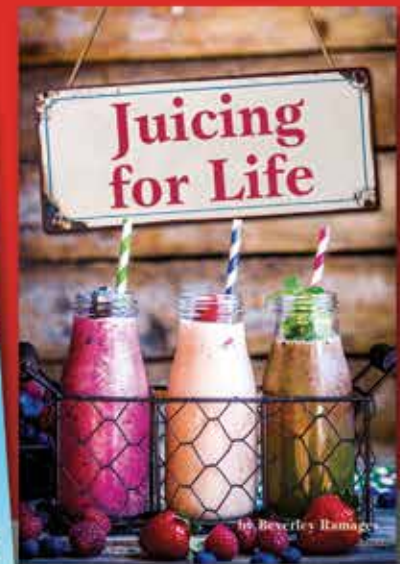


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