

# SEC COMMUNICATOR

JULY 2021 # 20



# GENDER

# INEQUALITY

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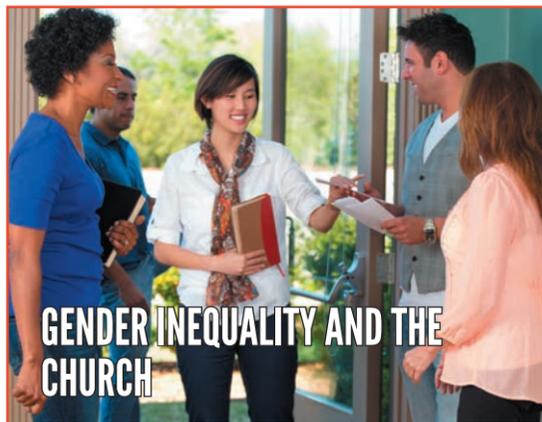
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CHURCH

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# Editorial

In this edition, we direct our attention to the repercussions of the abduction of Sarah Everard, a 33-year-old marketing executive who disappeared in South London, England, on the evening of 3 March 2021. She went missing after leaving a friend's house near Clapham Common to walk home. A police officer was later arrested, accused of murdering her. The arrest sparked a national outcry in the United Kingdom over violence against women and further eroded public trust in authority figures like police officers.

The case touched a nerve, mainly because violence against women is not just a problem in the UK. According to BBC News, the World Health Organization recently published a report saying that **one in three women globally, around 736 million, have been subjected to physical, emotional or sexual violence in their lifetime.**

WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said violence against women is “endemic in every country and culture”, and has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

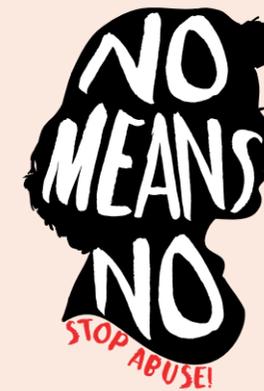
Acts of violence against women can be attributed, at a basic level, to gender inequality and they create anxiety and fear in society generally. As a Church, we have not stayed silent when it comes to calling out violence against women. Hence, initiatives such as END IT NOW, created by various departments working together at the General Conference, have been put in place and will continue to raise awareness and help to prevent the problem escalating inside and outside our church.

Sarah Everard's abduction and murder have raised the issue of violence against women to a new level, and highlighted a range of issues linked to gender inequality. However, a lot of work still needs to be done to change ingrained attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality in Britain and in societies around the world. As a Church, we need to continue to be proactive in dealing with these issues and the damaging effects of gender inequality in our church and in societies around the world.

Part of the reason for gender inequality in our churches could be related to how we interpret selected portions of scripture which appear superficially to give permission and power to the men who perpetrate such inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. If these views are allowed to prevail, we would all be losers, since women are probably the most underutilised resource the church currently possesses.

Contributors to this issue share their thoughts on various areas of concern, and also the positive impact women make to our world and to our ministry as a church.

“In Joppa, there was a disciple named Dorcas; she was always doing good and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36).



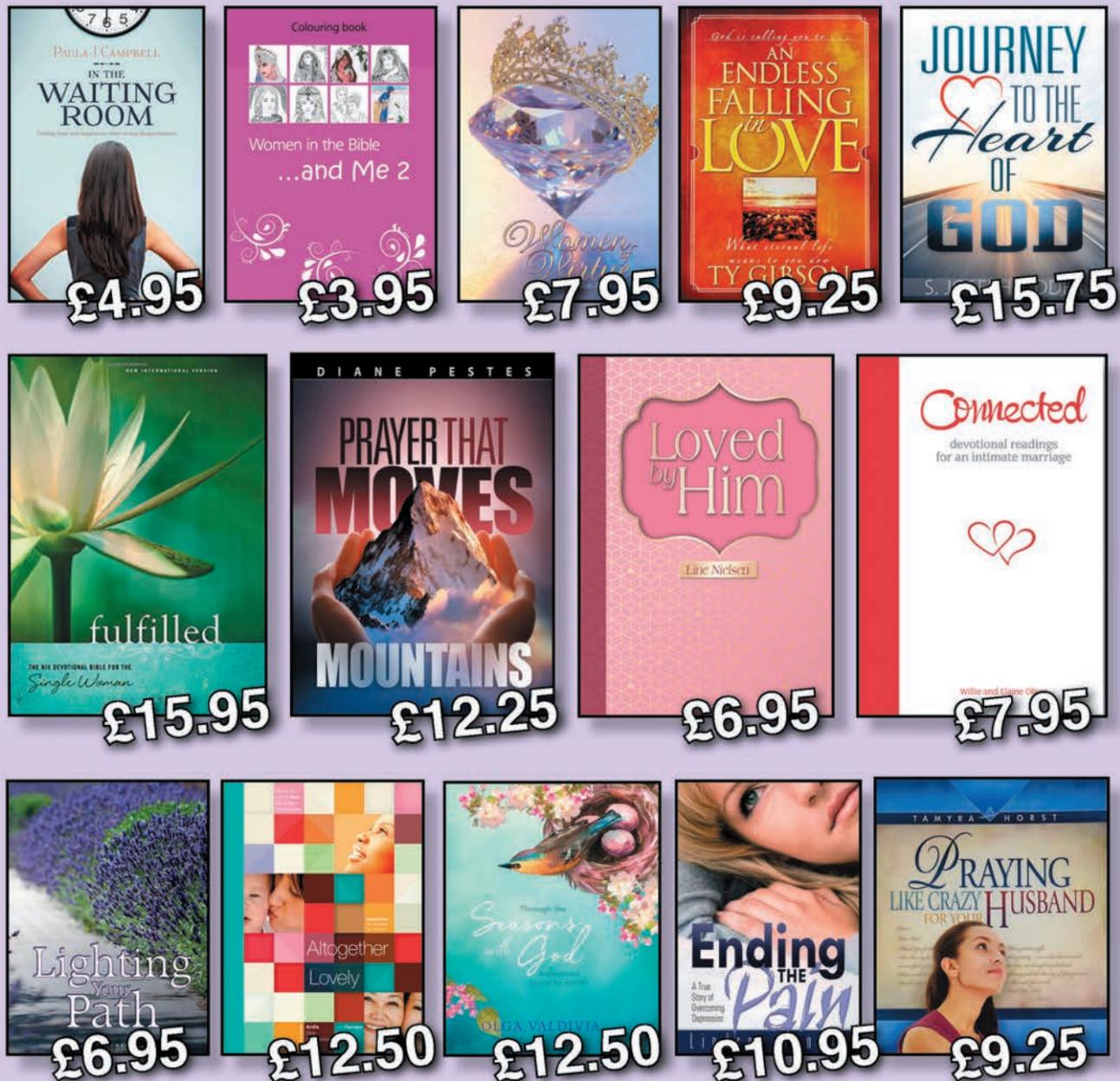
## OUR COVER



SAM O. DAVIES  
Editor

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## the President's Desk

DR EMMANUEL OSEI



### Gender Inequality

The media was flooded with reports over the disappearance and the death of Sarah Everard, a 33-year-old marketing executive. According to investigative reports, Sarah left a friend's house at 9:00pm on the 3rd March 2021 and did not make the short distance to her home. Tragically, she was murdered; and her death sparked outrage across the world, once again drawing urgent attention to, and bolstering the fight for the safety and equal protection of women and girls in public spaces.

It raises the question, 'How safe are women in our public spaces?' While the church is clear in its condemnation of violence, the gender inequality that plagues society, is proving to be a struggle within the church as well. Could our young women, like Ms Everard, be similarly abducted while leaving a church service? Can we do more to protect our sisters and promote gender equality?

Wikipedia defines Gender Inequality as "the social process by which men and women are not treated equally. The treatment may arise from distinctions regarding biology, psychology, or cultural norms prevalent in the society. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded while others appear to be socially constructed."

Research has shown that around the world, women still have less access to education than men. A large percentage of females do not complete basic education at school. There is also a lack of employment equality in some

countries. Then, there is the issue of job segregation, where there is the belief that men are simply better equipped to handle certain jobs. Most of the time, those jobs are better paid. This discrimination results in lower income for women.

According to research from the World Bank, over one billion women do not have legal protection against domestic sexual violence or domestic economic violence. Both have a significant impact on women's ability to thrive in freedom. There is also a lack of legal protection against harassment in the workplace, at school and in public. Sadly, this has also been noted in the church. Furthermore, gender inequality and racism have been closely linked. It affects what types of jobs women of colour are able to get and how much they are paid.

As a Church we can do more to ensure that there is gender equality in the way we 'do' church, especially in light of the Lord's blessings shared through spiritual gifts in these last days. In Joel 2: 28-29, He says,

- 28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.
- 29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

From God's standpoint, equality in ministry is promoted, especially in this critical time in Earth's history. As a conference, we embrace the priesthood of all believers. God is no respecter of persons. He pours out His Spirit on both males and females. Therefore, as individuals and as a collective body of believers, let us endeavour to lift one another up. Let us be one another's keeper and strive for gender equality in whatever we do.



# HOW DARE YOU!

## A Word to the Men

My 18-year-old Baby walked down the street with my 'niece'. These two beautiful young ladies were just about to spend a few hours together in the park after literally not seeing each other in person for months. The sun was out, and they were excited just to be together.

As Hubby and I drove away, two guys in a white van drove past them, slowed down, whistled and shouted some flirtatious nonsense out of the window to my Baby and my 'niece'. All the blood in my body began to boil, as the Mama Bear in me sprinted to the surface. Rage became my new best friend.

'How dare the!' My words stumbled over each other, landing in a dishevelled heap on the floor of my fragility. Hubby tried to calm me down and the girls (who by now I had alerted to this travesty of inequality) assured me that they were big enough and bad enough to handle such situations.

I left them, reluctantly, Sarah Everad on my mind – Sarah, the 33-year-old marketing executive, who, while walking home on the 3rd March 2021, was kidnapped, raped and murdered by off-duty policeman Wayne Couzens. The plea hearing is

scheduled for the 9th July with a provisional trial date in late October.

Every day, women up and down the country are subjected to street harassment known colloquially as 'catcalling'. Catcalling often starts with a loud whistle, accompanied by a comment or gesture of a sexual nature by a man or group of men to a passing woman. It can also involve honking horns, vulgar gesture, self-exposure, and even inappropriate grabbing.<sup>1</sup>

I have worked in educational institutions where girls are literally terrified to go into the college dining area or to walk alone on the college grounds for fear of street harassment. Even little old me, as teaching staff I have experienced some raw and vile street harassment from students. I had to put these young men in their place and let them know how disrespectful I found their comments, not only as a teacher, but as a female and someone who could be their mother.

Often when we speak of equality, we forget that street harassment is extremely intimidating and often targets a lone woman by a group of men. Imagine, a

dusty evening. Three young men, standing on a street corner; a young lady walks past. It's three to one. They call out to her, stop her in her tracks. She is very uncomfortable. Their behaviour feels threatening. She's terrified. She could be the next Sarah.

Unfortunately, we only seem to take action in the face of tragedy.

Gentlemen, it is imperative that you stand up against street harassment. Don't participate in it. Don't encourage it. Stand up against it. Be a man that treats a woman, not only as your equal, but as a precious gift from the Father. Crude sexual remarks must never be entertained. Teach your sons to treat women with respect. Mentor young men to advocate for gender equality.

James Borland, writing for Crossway magazine, states, '...Jesus' regard for the full intrinsic value of women is seen in how he spoke to the women he addressed. He spoke in a thoughtful, caring manner... thereby

according them a spiritual status equal to that of men'.<sup>2</sup>

And men, you who say that you want to emulate Jesus, YOU need to fight against the derogatory practise of catcalling.

1 <https://www.silive.com/news/2019/04/catcalling-why-men-do-it-and-what-women-should-do-about-it.html>

2 <https://www.crossway.org/articles/how-jesus-viewed-and-valued-women/>



**CATHERINE ANTHONY BOLDEAU**

*Editorial Team*

# Beliefs, Behaviours and Perceptions

As a child growing up in an Adventist home, I realised from an early age that gender differences existed, especially in the way males and females conducted themselves at church. Of particular note were the lists of 'Dos and Don'ts' applied to women, but not to men. Among the many stipulations was the theory that women should not speak out on certain subjects, as it was for the men to decide what was best.

Even in public presentations, there were "guidelines". So, for example, on the very rare occasion that a woman was permitted to preach a sermon, if her voice was raised, she would be criticized for "aggressive preaching", whereas a man presenting at twice the volume was "preaching with power!"

Fast forward almost 50 years. What has changed?

In an article published by "Christianity Today", commenting on a Poll of 8,000 people (reported by The Fawcett Society), journalist Hannah Mudge writes:

*"While the Church has not always been a natural ally of the feminist movement, a commitment to equality and egalitarian theology remains important for some churches, campaigning groups and many Christian organisations. However, it could be said that in some churches, an outward commitment to equality isn't necessarily reflected in appointments and attitudes – something that needs work if [we], as 68 per cent of women polled, believe that more needs to be done to bring about equality."*<sup>1</sup>

A brief reflection on our beliefs, behaviours and perceptions may determine whether much has changed over the years.

## Beliefs

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

- 1 Corinthians 11:3-6, Headship and deportment in worship
- Ephesians 5:22-24, Wives' submission to their husbands
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Women remaining silent in church
- 1 Timothy 2:11-15, Women as learners only, not teaching over men.

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

- Have our beliefs helped to nurture and grow the membership of our church, or have they harmed and hindered its progression?
- Are women respected and valued in our local churches?
- Are their 'gifts' acknowledged and utilised, as an integral aspect of ministry?

## Behaviours

Clearly, the impact of our beliefs influences our behaviours. This was evidenced in the testimonials

that women shared with me about the way they are being treated, either as church members or working as employees of the church. Here are 3 of the most common experiences:

'When I put forward a point, it is often overlooked. However, when my male colleague presents the same point, it is viewed as a "good idea".'

'I notice that my requests are often denied, whereas my male counterparts are granted the same requests.'

'My voice is not "heard" when my male associate speaks.'

## Perceptions

*"Reality doesn't bite, rather our perception of reality bites" – Anthony J.D'Angelo*

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

Nevertheless, having emerged from a 'conservative' upbringing and a very traditional church life, I have subsequently challenged perceptions (mine and others), realising that the outcomes of specific viewpoints and ideologies can be detrimental.

Instead of debating who is right or wrong, or whether gender inequality is prevalent in our churches, a serious deliberation would instead focus on what inequality does. This would be both sobering and impactful. Research verifies this, as shown in a study on 'Women, Inequality and the Church', from SAFER

- A domestic and family violence resource for the Australian church:

*"The evidence is in: Inequality, fixed gender roles and patriarchal teachings can help create church environments where abuse of women can thrive."*<sup>2</sup>  
*This is unacceptable.*

At creation, both male and female were made in the image of God- (Genesis 1:27). That makes us 'equal' in His eyes. Does God differentiate? The Apostle Paul, in Galatians 3:28, provides a fitting summation:

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.". And I say Amen to that!

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

2 [https://www.saferresource.org.au/women\\_inequality\\_and\\_the\\_church](https://www.saferresource.org.au/women_inequality_and_the_church)



**SHARON PLATT-MCDONALD**

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

#ChooseToChallenge (2021) #EachForEqual (2020). For many, these two hashtags will mean nothing or it may ring a bell. For a few, both are linked to a significant month – Women's History Month, March. Yet, the tragedy and shaking that took place in March 2020 and March 2021 hold significant weight as they mirror each hashtag for the respective year. March 2020 saw the murder of Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old woman killed in her home in the US state of Kentucky. Abducted, raped and killed, 33-year-old Sarah Everard, who was found dead in Kent, England, in March 2021. In response to their deaths was a global cry for justice and a legacy that ought to be remembered.

The lives of both Breonna Taylor and Sarah Everard were interrupted and silenced in places where they should have been able to safely exist. Both were killed by authority figures (police officers) whose duty was to protect them. Although their role is often thought of through the lens of the commonly quoted mandate, "protect and serve", police also have a mandate in many countries to use force. Criminologists Jerome Skolnick and James Fyfe note, "The use of force is a hallmark of policing but becomes problematic when excessive force is used". The debates surrounding women's ability to trust the police have raged for years. This has not been helped by the recent findings that, of the 594 complaints of sexual misconduct made against Metropolitan Police employees, only 119 were upheld. Having considered the 2 hashtags against the backdrop of both murders, I have to ask: Am I asking too much to feel safe and believed? Am I asking too much by wanting my life and my truth to be recognised as equally valuable?

Disturbingly, parallels can be drawn between the aforementioned murders

and the emotional and, in many cases, physical departure that women are making from what ought to be a safe community: church. Eboni Marshall Turman writes in her 2019 article Black Women's Faith, Black Women's Flourishing, "Male power and sexism in the church have induced gendered violence against women". Marshall Turman goes on to list various practices that operate within many church cultures that are damaging and oppressive to women. Such women who sit in our pews or behind the screen of zoom often carry the painful weight of disposals from positions following marital breakdown, disregard of their gifting and calling, and dehumanising disrespect from abuse and sexual objectification, as they continue to serve their community while internally dying or just surviving.

In this "expected" safe space of the church community, the powerful concept of "muting" individuals has been active far longer than we have been operating on Zoom. Claudia Allen asserts that "Church is where Black women are spiritually manipulated into silence, submission and service"; and to Allen's list I would add stifled. The truths shared by women would prompt the question, are women protected and served within our "safe" space? It often seems we are not outraged enough to collectively challenge and seek justice. This real yet sad imagery is contrasted by Genesis 1:28, where Adam and Eve are instructed to "Be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth".

In that moment they (Adam and Eve) were called, collectively. They were instructed, invited to be heard and their voices were both valid and had authority. God, who has dominion, authority and power, did not need

to use force to achieve the desired outcome. Not only were Eve's ideas encouraged, but Eve's contributions and voice was requested along with Adam's. Do we see this within our safe spaces, or is this early Edenic experience the antithesis of what many women live today. Eve (woman) was valued; Eve was seen and heard; and Eve was believed in. So, in answer to my earlier question: No, I am not asking too much when I expect to be safe, seen, heard and valued in spaces considered to be community. I am walking in God's intended desire.

The Garden of Eden was a space that hosted community. A standard was articulated and honoured there. It could be argued that very few spaces uphold the legacy of the standard outlined in Genesis 1:28. I would like to suggest that the instruction, "Be fruitful and multiply", also speaks to God's intention for collaboration between both men and women, producing ideas, creating opportunities and leading plans that bring life and not death; that empower and offer good news; that demonstrates and reflects the beauty of God's ideal. This should not just be the case in the month of March, or on Women's day. Nor should efforts only peak during times of tragic inequality against women. This should be our constant. Our mandate is to give life to all and love one another as Christ has loved us.



**ABIGAIL WRIGHT STEPHENSON**

*Policy Officer, Member of Luton Central Church*

# IS PROVERBS 31

## A Lesson in Feminism or Repression Narrative?

I was working at my standing-desk. Suddenly, I remembered I was supposed to drop my daughter's cello at school during my morning walk. Her lesson was 2 hours ago. Once again, I had got wrapped up in work and neglected something my child needed. She was gracious about it, but for me, it was more evidence of my failure to balance home and work.

For as long as I can remember, the Proverbs 31 woman has been a problem for me. This woman juggles more than I do, and she NEVER drops a ball. Like most women, I can't measure up to her awesomeness and ability to be all, do all, and have it all. I want my children to rise up and call me blessed. I want my husband to be praised because of me. I want to have a great career while being an amazing homemaker. I want to work early in the morning and late at night, and still have a smile on my face.

The reality is that I struggle to manage my home; my career feels like an uphill struggle; and my family barely get their dinner on time. They are not clothed in purple. They just about have enough clean clothes to cover them in all seasons, because the laundry is piling up. Needless to say, the utility room door needs to be kept shut at all times!

Where am I going wrong? I have asked myself this question for over 20 years. I don't have an answer, but I do have another question: Who says I need to have it all or be it all? What does Proverbs 31 even mean? I suspect Solomon was aiming deeper than what a woman achieves in her home, work or community.

Have we been reading the chapter superficially all this time? External measures are easy. Cooked dinner on time? Tick! Got a promotion at work? Tick! Kids not lost at the shopping centre? Tick! Contributed to school or community activity? Tick! Husband pays you a compliment? Tick! Interest earned on investments? Tick! We can wear ourselves out ticking all the boxes, but I suspect that this is not what Proverbs 31 is pointing to. The heroine in Solomon's poem is deeper than her actions. He calls the woman 'Khayil' which cannot be translated in a single English word. It means that she is mighty

(like a warrior), fearless, wealthy, excellent, morally righteous, has substance and integrity. She possesses the wisdom that Solomon talks about in his opening chapter of Proverbs (see Proverbs 1:2-7).

Married or not, with children or without, employed or unemployed, this kind of woman has a superior mindset. She knows God personally. He directs every aspect of her life. She honours God anywhere she has influence. She trusts Jehovah Jireh to provide in all seasons. She gives generously. She does not fear. She smiles genuinely. She uplifts others. She gives and accepts help. She avoids complaining. She speaks with love and wisdom regardless of what life throws at her.

I challenge us to respond differently to our mistakes today. Instead of beating ourselves up, let us lean in, to hear what God says about us. Our achievements do not determine our value. Jesus proved at the cross that you and I are worth far more than rubies.

Practically speaking, this lady demonstrates that it is okay to accept help from others (verse 15). Community is a God-given gift as we try to balance the roles we are called to. This same gift-giving God wants to lead and love us personally. Step away regularly to hear from God. He will show you what is important and what is not. With God as the source of your strength, you are free to be the 'khayil' person He created you to be. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there IS liberty! (2 Cor. 3:17)



**XOLI BELGRAVE**

*Clinical Researcher, Speaker, Wife and Mother*



# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP -

## Continuity of Leadership

### Continuity of Leadership

Since its inception, women have played a crucial leadership role in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The important role of Ellen G White is well documented. Although her prophetic contribution was unique, her contribution as a woman leader was not.

### Early Role Models

As the church has grown, so has the role of women in leadership: sometimes catching the headlines, more usually as unsung leaders in a local church. Early examples include Annie Smith<sup>1</sup>, sister of Uriah Smith, who was an accomplished writer, editor and artist, working alongside her brother and James White; and Pioneer missionaries, like Mimi Scharffenberg who helped found the Church in Korea<sup>2</sup>. In the 1880s there were two female General Conference Treasurers, Adelis Patten Van Horn and Minerva Loughborough

Chapman. The contribution of women was affirmed by the establishment in 1995 of the Women's Ministry department. There are countless women from these early pioneers up to today whose stories create rich and varied patterns of leadership.<sup>3</sup>

### First Leaders

The first leader that a child growing up in the Church will encounter is likely to be a woman. Visit any church, and look at activities for children under the age of 12, and you will find that Sabbath School teachers and activity leaders are predominantly women. It is all too easy to dismiss this as not *real* leadership, but this is the time when children form their picture and understanding of God, His Church, their role and mission.

When trouble or tragedy comes to the church family, often women are the first responders, modelling

Christ's compassion by being His ministering hands and feet. These may not be the headline leadership roles, but they are nonetheless very important.

### Prevalent Skills

There are countless leadership books, as well as lists of skills and qualities that should be exhibited by a good leader. Although no leadership characteristic belongs exclusively to one group or another, some seem to be more prevalent or stronger in women leaders:

- Effective communicators
- Good emotional intelligence, for example, compassion
- Listening
- Strategic Vision
- Humility<sup>4</sup>

When looking at nurture and retention of membership, 25% of those who leave cite a lack of compassion. Many of the other causes could be mitigated if people felt that they had someone who listened and understood their challenges.<sup>5</sup> As we begin to come out of lockdown, start interacting with others and welcoming new friends and members back to church, these are skills we need to capitalise on.

### Maximise Resources

At a time when, inside and outside the Church, there is a desperate need for leaders, I would like to offer three challenges:

- First, how can we expand our understanding of leadership? Many times, leadership is defined as those who are "at the front". Yes, it is those who stand "at the front", but leadership is far more than that. Look around, identify and affirm the unsung leaders in your church. Each person is a leader in some sphere of their life. How can we enhance their leadership?

- Second, we are very good with the stewardship of our financial resources, but not always so good with our human resources. Stop and reflect – how can we encourage our daughters as well as our sons to live up to their full potential?
- Third, make the most of every opportunity you have. Strive to be the best you can be in every situation. Grasp every opportunity with both hands. Knock on every door and go boldly where God leads you.

1 [https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=AA69&highlight=Annie | smith](https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=AA69&highlight=Annie%20smith) (accessed 31 May 2021)  
 2 [https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=BHBL&highlight=korea |](https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=BHBL&highlight=korea) (accessed 31 May 2021)  
 3 Many interesting biographies may be found in the online Encyclopaedia of Seventh-day Adventists [encyclopedia.adventist.org](https://encyclopedia.adventist.org)  
 4 Lowen, Linda. "4 Important Qualities of Women Leaders." ThoughtCo, Aug. 26, 2020, [thoughtco.com/qualities-of-women-leaders-3533957](https://www.thoughtco.com/qualities-of-women-leaders-3533957). YEC Women, "Eight traits every powerful female leader possesses <https://www.forbes.com/sites/yec/2017/10/03/eight-traits-every-powerful-female-leader-possesses/?sh=7071f3f3608f>  
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/7-characteristics-hugely-successful-female-leaders-jerome-knyszewski>  
 5 Presentation given by David J Trim at the TED Nurture and Retention Summit in 2017. The full presentation may be found at: [https://www.adventistresearch.org/sites/default/files/files/NR2017TED\\_3.pdf](https://www.adventistresearch.org/sites/default/files/files/NR2017TED_3.pdf)



**AUDREY ANDERSSON**

Executive Secretary of the Trans-European Division



# THE 80:80 PRINCIPLE -

## A loving solution for balanced marriages

In God's original plan, men and women were equals – made in His image, but different to each other – just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are different, with different roles, but with shared and overlapping responsibilities.

When sin broke the original plan for loving mutuality, it didn't change God's original intentions for married couples. His description of their broken relationship was not a command for how they should be, but a sad statement of how their relationships would often be lived out in the broken world.

Jesus came to restore men and women to their original positions of mutuality, and to lift women up with His kindness, compassion, respect and forgiveness. He set an example of sacrificial love, that would happily choose to bend down, wash feet, and do the most simple and menial tasks to bless the other person.

Ben believed that God had made him head of the home. This meant that everyone was expected to obey him, otherwise they were being disrespectful to God and to him. He had to win every argument and have his own way all the time. His wife, Megan, began to suffer from depression and anxiety. His sons copied their dad and became the toughest bullies in the school. Eventually Megan could no

longer bear the way that Ben abused her emotionally and spiritually, quoting scriptures to defend his right to hold all the power in the home. One day she left home with their children and went to live with her parents.

David read the Bible and discovered that God created men and women to be equal partners. He saw that God's intention had been misunderstood and abused through the ages. He noticed how often God protected vulnerable women, and how Jesus was gentle, kind and respectful in His interactions with women, regardless of their social status, age, ethnicity, or behaviour. He read Ephesians carefully and saw that Paul encouraged husbands and wives to submit to each other, and for husbands to love their wives as sacrificially and deeply as Jesus loves His church. David grew up in a home where his father was definitely the boss. So, David and Michelle learnt how to have a different kind of marriage and family life. They read good Christian books to help them develop a marriage based on mutual support, respect and affection, and on developing Christ-like character strengths in their lives.

David and Michelle decided to have an 80:80 marriage. "At the beginning we tried a 50:50 partnership, because that seemed to be fair. But,

when we tried to live that way, we each had different perceptions of how much of our time and effort equalled 50%. If we felt that either of us hadn't quite hit the mark, there was always an annoying gap in the middle, and we'd end up feeling disgruntled and resentful...

"Then we decided to try for an 80:80 relationship. This means that both of us are putting more than our share into the marriage and the family! Although that sounds like hard work, we are much happier in the end, because we notice each other's effort, we get more done, and everyone seems to flourish!"

In Romans 12, Paul gives us an overview of how to have balanced relationships: we are all part of one body, so we need to take care of each other; we are all differently gifted, and these gifts are to be used generously and lovingly to bless each other; and then we need to learn how to live lovingly, harmoniously, hospitably, respectfully, compassionately and joyfully with each other. We can spot Paul's relational wisdom whenever he tells us to do something for "one another". And that's where the secret of generously balanced relationships lies, in our mutual responsibility to do these "one another's", on an 80:80 basis, in the home and in our churches.

Ellen White writes: "Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control. Do not try to compel each other to yield to your wishes. You cannot do this and retain each other's love. Be kind, patient, and forbearing, considerate and courteous. By the grace of God, you can succeed in making each other happy, as in your marriage vow you promised to do" (Adventist

Home p. 118 – see the whole chapter on 'Mutual Obligations' for more wisdom).

God uses marriage as a symbol of the incredible love and sacrifice that Jesus shows for His bride, The Church. The questions for each married couple are: "How does our marriage help people to see and experience Jesus' love for His Church? And what can each of us do to make our marriage a clearer picture of God's gracious and generous love?"



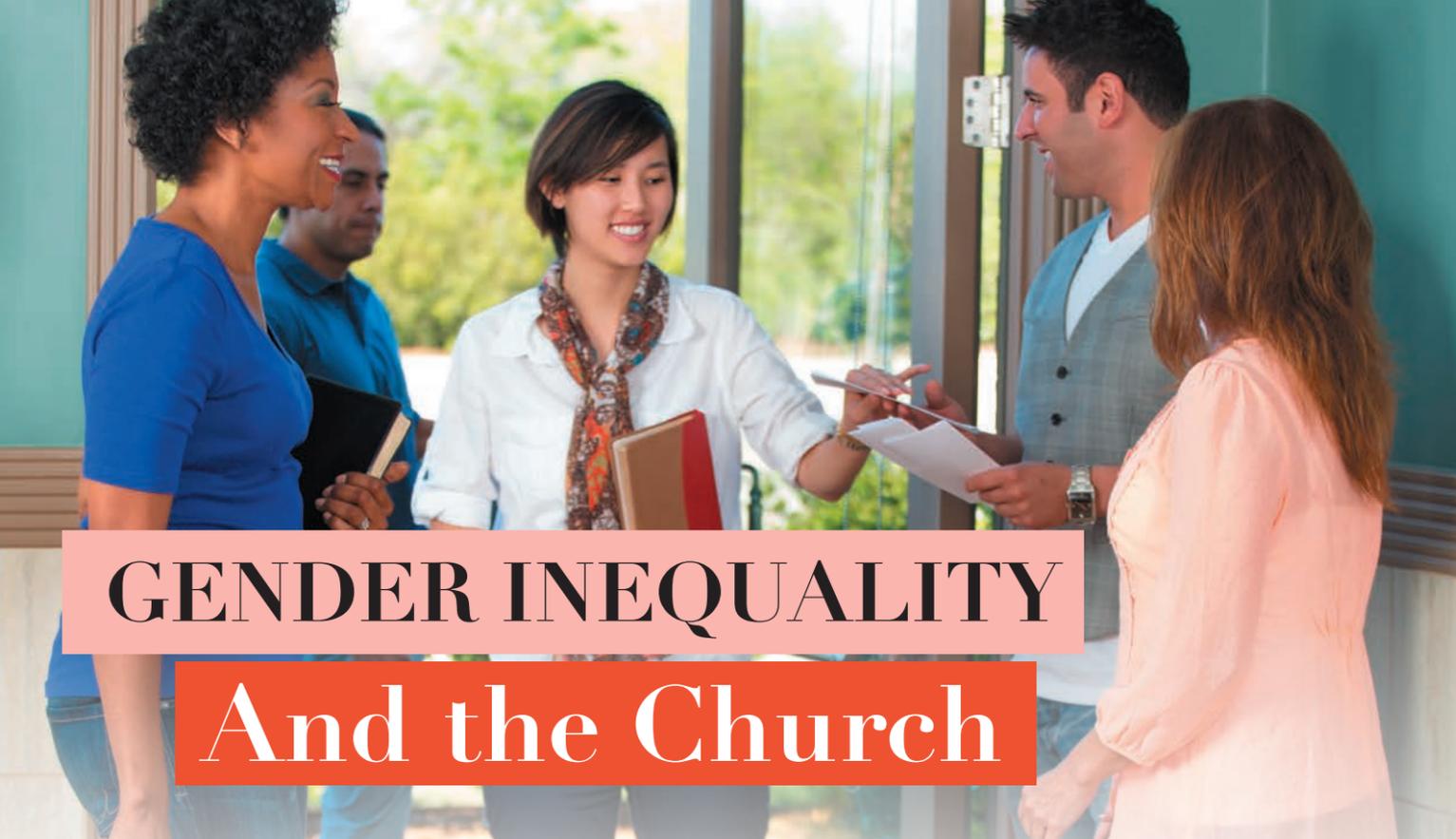
Download "Toucan Together" – a free app for couples designed by Christians. One partner downloads the app and then invites the other to join them in a fun, creative and practical learning experience that is like a marriage retreat in the palm of your hand.



**KAREN HOLFORD**

*A qualified Marriage and Family Therapist, and the Family Ministries Director of the Trans-European Division*





# GENDER INEQUALITY

## And the Church

The Bible clearly states that men and women were made equal in God's eyes and that they complement each other. In order to do justice to this topic, I will begin with a historical overview on the position of women throughout time.

In Mosaic Law, women were allowed to own or inherit property and, except for slaves, could not be sold. The ideal woman of Proverbs 31 is concerned with her household, but the Scripture also shows how she functions with confidence in the public sphere, in buying and selling land and goods (Proverbs 31:16, 18, 24).

The Old Testament has numerous examples of women taking leading roles. My favourite female character is Deborah whose leadership as judge, prophetess and military commander alongside Barak in Judges 4 and 5, demonstrates equality and respect for strong female leadership.

Queen Esther displayed remarkable courage and leadership when God enlisted her as an agent of deliverance for her people as they faced the king's proposed genocide. In 2 Kings 22:14, the young King Josiah sought divine revelation from the prophetess Huldah, a chief religious authority whom he recognised during a time of intense religious revival.

In the New Testament, church leadership is recognised by the church body in the form of spiritual gifts, given by the Holy Spirit to fulfil necessary functions in the church. The gifts are given to all of the body of Christ, with no class or gender qualifications (1 Corinthians 12:7). By the command of Jesus, those accepting leadership roles among Christians are not to "lord it over" others, but to serve (Matthew 20:25, 26). Paul concurs with this, referring to himself and other Christian leaders of both genders with terminology such as "serving" and "fellowship" (1 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 1:1, 4:3; Romans 16).

Although Jesus did not include women among the twelve disciples, women were integral to His ministry. Mary, Joanna, and Susanna are specifically named in conjunction with the twelve, as being with Jesus throughout His ministry. They were even present at His death, in contrast to the twelve who were absent at His crucifixion and burial. Jesus first revealed Himself to these women after His resurrection (Matthew 28:9, 10; Mark 16:9-11) and sent them to reveal the truth of His resurrection to the unbelieving eleven (Luke 24:9-11; John 20:18). These women are listed in Acts among the 120 who were joined in constant prayer (Acts 1:14) and filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). Paul also refers to women among the leaders and workers for the Church. Nine women are named in Romans 16, Phoebe, Priscilla and Junia being three who seem to have had particular leadership roles.

This conceptualisation of leadership in the New Testament presents a very different trajectory for the development of leadership from that of the surrounding Greco-Roman culture, where only males of the Senatorial class governed the provinces, and the nature of authority was hierarchical "over" citizens and people of the provinces. In the New Testament, Christ is the only head of the church, the only High Priest. All other priestly roles are shared by all believers.

I find no evidence in **Ellen White's** writings as to whether she believed that the concept of male headship could restrict ministerial positions available for women. She emphasised the need to provide a good, solid education in our schools, and exhorted Ministers, Sabbath School teachers, and college teachers to do their best to "unite heart and soul and purpose in the work of saving our youth from ruin".

She further stated that the standard of education should not be lowered because "when suitable men are wanted to fill

*various positions of trust, they are rare; when women are wanted with well-balanced minds, not a cheap style of education, but with an education fitting for any position of trust, they are not easily found".* (Fundamentals of Christian Education. P117-118)

The 21st century legislative definition of equality means, to have the same access to rights and opportunities irrespective of one's gender. However, to be equal does not mean that men and women are the same as each other. More women of faith are redefining leadership in their place of worship, providing important role models for young congregants and pushing to transform gender inequality from within their religious traditions. The Church of England's General Synod decided to allow women priests in November 1992. The first female priests were ordained into the Church of England in 1994. In 2015 the first female became a bishop.

Many large churches today are led by women. For example, the largest Adventist church in the world, Beiguan Church in Shenyang, China, has been led by a female pastor since it started in her home in 1985. In our North American Division, one of the largest conferences in membership and tithe return is led by a female pastor. Yet our church as a whole remains deeply divided and unequal in its position and treatment of women and female pastoral leadership, which I have witnessed first-hand. This raises serious questions about how we raise our boys and girls in the church and prepare them to stand shoulder to shoulder as equals in leadership for the world ahead.

I find puzzling the current practice of inequality in our church's treatment of female clergy, as it is compounded by the fact that it permits women to be ordained as elders but not as pastors. This effectively gives an ordained female elder more authority than a licensed or commissioned female pastor. How can our church reconcile this in the twenty-first century? It is no longer defensible, on biblical and theological grounds, to restrict women's leadership in church. In all four gospels, Jesus, after his resurrection, appears first to women. How is it possible that the Scriptures say one thing and the church leadership, for thousands of years, have said another? How is it possible that some are still arguing over whether women should be ordained, or whether they have the authority to teach the Bible and preach the holy Word?

Women, seeking a career in Adventist ministry, will face double discrimination. For example, women of colour will have to navigate their way through gender and race barriers, in fulfilling their pastoral roles. Discrimination will not only come from peers, but a significant amount of hostility will be directed from members, many of whom are also women.

Nevertheless, it is encouraging when we can see women in roles of leadership, doing good work, because this, over time, has and will continue, by God's grace, to change people's perception of women being confined to limited-visibility roles within the church. The historical contributions



and leadership of women in religious communities are of significant value in the ongoing fight for women's equality; and there remains much room for progress. Women faith leaders are defying the limitations that society has historically placed on them in houses of worship, politics, activism and, more broadly, in society. Moving forward, women will continue to rise in all areas of public life and in faith communities in particular, as an integral part of the rising tide of women's leadership and the continuing fight for gender equality.



**JUDY CLEMENTS OBE**

Children's Ministries Director

# Will the Real You PLEASE STAND UP

'158 million'. The figure refers to the number of individuals affected by narcissistic abuse, according to an article published in 2017 by Psychcentral.com. However, that figure only pertains to the USA. The true scale of those around the globe who are affected by this insidious abuse? We can only shudder to think.

'Narcissistic Personality Disorder', according to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), 'part of the cluster B personality disorders, is a pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy.' Please note: few individuals are actually formally diagnosed with this disorder. However, there is an incalculable

amount of people who have narcissistic traits to varying degrees. Narcissism is on a continuum: a *spectrum*.

With that being said, to name a few behaviours, have you experienced any of the following?

- Gaslighting
- Manipulation
- Coercive control

Recovering from narcissistic abuse can seem almost impossible.

If you have experienced narcissistic abuse, or any other emotional abuse, then you will know that your real, true self can and will be so damaged that you no longer recognise yourself.

How did you get like this? How will you find your way back to you – your true identity?

Firstly, be courageous, and, like so many others, put a stop to the abuse. Prayerfully implement (if possible) an exit strategy. See 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

Then take time to identify what actually happened; retrace your steps.

Subsequently, when something is in need of fixing, manufacturer. take ourselves allow His love and be a healing

In my own strategies as talking researching sessions writing and

when something is in need of fixing, manufacturer. take ourselves allow His love and be a healing experience, varying have had their place, such with a trusted friend, and attending counselling with a Christian counsellor, down my memories, thoughts feelings, even starting a new hobby. However, what I have found to be the most effective in moving from the maelstrom of madness that was my life, to a more peaceful place, was spending time with God. During those times, I read the Bible, prayed, listened to God and personalised the promises found in the Scriptures. The significant component was the Word.

In the well-known biblical story of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41), Jesus gives the important instruction, "Let us cross over to the other side." Within this command was a promise that they would cross over to the other side. Note, He said "Let us" which meant that it was assured, guaranteed, a certainty!

Oftentimes, we are so caught up and befuddled in our own circumstances that we forget that Jesus is with us, as in this story. He is in the boat. Since Jesus is with us, we too can cross over to the other side.

The other side, where deliverance would take place; the other side, where a woman afflicted for 12 years would be made whole; the other side, where a 12-year-old girl would be raised from the dead. These miracles took place on the other side.

Today, begin the journey with God to the other side – back to the true, 'wonderfully and fearfully made' you. Then, when someone calls your name, you will stand up with certainty, confidence and composure so that the real you can be seen.

How can The Other Side help you?

If you or someone you know has been impacted by narcissistic abuse or a toxic relationship, you need not suffer in silence. I have written a 10-step recovery guide, using the Scriptures and my own experience to help others recover from the tormenting pain of narcissistic abuse.

To get your free copy, go to The Other Side and use the discount code, SDA100. This code, exclusive to SDAs, will be valid until 31/8/21.

Come and join me! Start your own journey from pain to empowerment, as you cross to the other side to your own healing.



**DIANE LEE**

Educator and blogger. MA, BA, P.G.C.E.



# ASNA - CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

ASNA is 20 years old this year. To celebrate this milestone, ASNA launched a series of activities and campaigns under the theme '20 Years and Counting'.

The celebrations started in January with an online **ASNA20 & Impact Survey**. Respondents included carers, volunteers, supporters and leaders. 99% of respondents who care for someone with a disability expressed how their engagement with ASNA changed their life for the better.

One respondent wrote 'ASNA have encouraged me to keep pressing forward. I have since become a member of the SDA church. They have provided much-needed family and carer's breaks, and I have met with like-minded people.'

Another family wrote:

*'ASNA expanded our knowledge by helping us to understand that there are resources out there that can enhance our son's experience. It also improved our perception as SDA parents with a special needs child; we were better able to improve his experience in the church and outside of the church, living day to day as carers and parents.'*

When asked about a memorable or inspirational moment at an ASNA events, an attendee wrote: 'The most memorable experience came to me at the London para-Olympics of 2013. Participants were called to attention for the start of their event. There was one

participant who was starting out, having obstacles of visual impairment, aphasia, impaired mobility and needing the aid of a walker. However, this participant was strongly connected with audio and vibratory sensations. The experience that will always remain with me was this: As soon as the signal to go was given, I saw the participant take off in the spirit of a champion – prompt determined, resolute. The cheering crowd kept the momentum high, and the experience was electrifying. This, to me, was one of the enduring highlights of ASNA. It was the opportunity it was able to give to people who otherwise would not have been able to experience the thrill and wonder of life at its most cooperative, willing them on to do their best.'

Another remembers how attending a workshop run by ASNA left her inspired.

*'One special experience that has left an indelible mark on my mind is one*



*that was shared by a mother and son at one of our workshops. The mother battling mental illness and was suicidal, but God came through for her, and her son who now is a preacher.'*

Volunteer experiences included the following comments:

*'The work of ASNA has been inspirational for many individuals. As a*

*volunteer, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work alongside passionate and caring people with the same vision. My time with ASNA as a volunteer was somewhat short, but worth every moment. I wish I was able to have given more time over the years!'*

ASNA has changed my life. As a result of developing and setting up this charity, I have developed leadership skills I am able to use in my personal and public life.'

Other encouraging comments:

*'Sophia encouraged me to share for the first time in public, my experience as an adult with Asperger's, since I have sought opportunities to share with families who may be struggling.'*

*'On my very first encounter with ASNA as a non-Christian, I was not judged. My boys and I were immediately accepted into the family.'*

The ASNA respite weekends have provided training and awareness for disability coordinators and church members. One attendee commented:

*'I attended a retreat and was impressed by the relaxed atmosphere - and particularly enjoyed the way a young lady with down syndrome was jumping and dancing around the room throughout the praise and worship session. She*

*danced and sang and was just at ease. This experience has always remained with me. It was obvious that she felt loved, safe and happy during the retreat. I look forward to seeing how we can replicate this to our home church experience.'*

*'I recently invited the ASNA Director to speak at a work event. She really helped me to understand better how God can take our struggles and turn them into a blessing which can help many people'*

During February, up until June, ASNA ran a series of live conversations on their social media platforms under the '20&' theme. Sophia Nicholls answered live questions on the weekly **'Ask a Scary Question'** ASNA Facebook page.

A season of the **20 Days of Prayer** (20DoP) took place for 20 days leading up to the first virtual respite weekend where families met for support and to stay connected. The ASNA prayer tree also received many wonderful prayers and congratulations for the work of the charity.

**ASNALeader20** is a series of 20 informal conversations with 20 influential and impactful leaders in this area of ministry and in ASNA's ministry. Leaders have included Pastor Ian Sweeney (BUC President), Pastor Sam Davis (Former President, SEC) Tim



Wood (CEO, Through the Roof Charity), Trudy Young (ASNA Volunteer Coordinator and long-standing councillor), Sheryl Malcolm (ASNA Trustee), Dr. Larry Evans, (GC Lead for Possibilities Ministry), Dr Michael Townsend (Chair of trustees for Torch Trust - Charity for the Blind in the UK) and Pastor Patrick Johnson (TED Lead for Possibilities ministry and Discipleship).

Elder Ted N. C. Wilson, General Conference President of the SDA Church joined Sophia and Nigel on 22 May 2021 for 'ASNALeader20'. Expressing his vision for the ministry, Elder Wilson stated that 'all people are valued and appreciated because they are sons and daughters of God'. He went on to say that 'all are part of the body of Christ and therefore have a part to play in the mission of the church'.

Elder Wilson endorsed the work of ASNA saying 'Praise God for what you are doing (through ASNA). Thank you, Sophia and Nigel, for what you are doing. It is amazing that God has placed this upon your hearts, and you are doing something'

During the conversation Nigel expressed the blessings of the birth of Matthew Nicholls, the inspiration behind the ministry, and how ASNA is a 'positive

reflection of what the Lord has done through the life of Matthew'.

Elder Wilson went on to express his vision for the leadership of the church to embrace the work of ASNA and to catch the vision for its work in the efforts to resource, educate, raise awareness and address issues of exclusion and isolation for people within the church and local community, living with neurodiversity and additional needs.

Emphasising the strategic plan of the world church, 'I Will Go', Elder Wilson



encouraged Sophia and Nigel and congratulated them for the work of ASNA, as it continues to make SDA churches and the local community places of belonging and empowering all people to be a part of the great commission to make disciples.

Follow this link to hear the full conversation and other interviews and activities: <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialASNA/videos/485546525992304>

ASNA trustees would like to thank the many volunteers, supporters, encouragers and leaders for making the work of the charity possible over the last 20 years. Directly serving an average of over 200 people, running an average of 5 seminars / workshops a month, providing one-to-one support to an average of 20 families a quarter gives an indication of the lives ASNA has changed in 20 years since its formation in 2003 up to 2020.

To conclude in the words of a supporter, Burns Masanu: 'Well done ASNA for remaining true to the original ideals when you formed the organisation – to provide a platform and the means to advocate for better care and support systems for those living with disabilities of any kind. You have modelled the best of what true Christian service is about. You started off from a personal experience, but 20 years later, you are

changing one life at a time for so many. Your fearless dedication to making a difference in the lives of those without a voice, makes fighting for this cause worthwhile. God bless your efforts.

Burns Masanu (Elder, SDA Church, MacMillan Project Manager)

ASNA Trustees express thanks to God for the honour to serve in this ministry, some for the full 20 years. They would also like to encourage church

leaders and the administration to continue to support this ministry as it moves into the next 20 years, creating regional Centres of Support and resourcing the newly established ASNA Academy for Music and Art and Training and Awareness.

The aim of these regional hubs will be to further develop the skills and ministry of people living with disabilities and special needs in leadership and spreading the gospel.

The newly developed SPARCS book club in partnership with the Stanborough Press will work to address loneliness and isolation through the medium of the written word.

Please continue to support ASNA through your time, donations, and prayers.

To support ASNA efforts for sustainability and ministry, please visit the website to see how you can take part in the ASNA 20& yearlong activities, linked to the theme of 20.

For further info visit [www.asna.info](http://www.asna.info)



**SOPHIA NICHOLLS**

ASNA Director, ASNA UK



Walk a mile, maybe 2,  
walk any distance you can do  
join the challenge today!

# WALK FOR ADRA

Walk the globe twice with us.  
Collectively we can walk **50 000 miles**  
to raise **£50 000** for ADRA.

[www.adra.org.uk/walkforadra](http://www.adra.org.uk/walkforadra)

 or please join our dedicated FB group  
[www.facebook.com/groups/walkforadra](https://www.facebook.com/groups/walkforadra)

1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE –  
31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2021



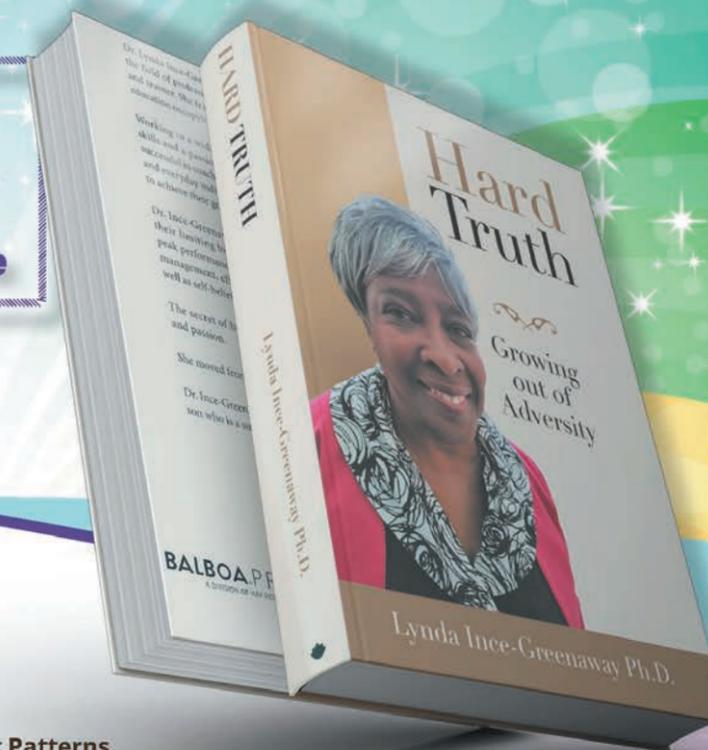
FAMILY MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT, SOUTH ENGLAND CONFERENCE

## ATTACHMENT MATTERS

*Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*

A two-part seminar on the relevance of attachment for childhood and adult relationships

by **Dr. Lynda Ince-Greenaway**



FRIDAY 16 JULY  
7.00 - 8.30 PM

SABBATH 17 JULY  
3.00 - 4.30 PM

 **967 4163 8050**  
Passcode **974687**

 **LIVESTREAM**  

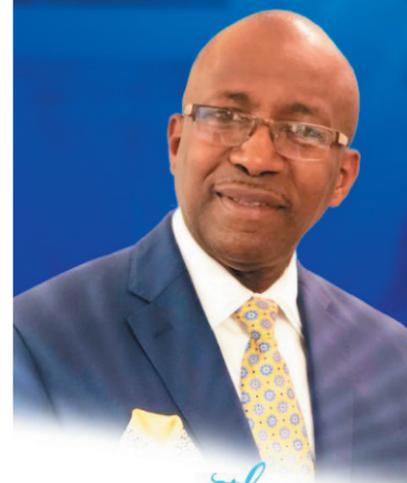

- The importance of Attachment during Infancy
- The impact of Trauma Separation and Loss on Attachment Patterns
- Implications for Adult Relationships
- Kinship Patterns of Attachment among African and Caribbean Families

All participants must register by email with full name. Contact Ligia Buzac: [lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:lbuzac@secadventist.org.uk)



South England Conference  
FAMILY MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

**24<sup>th</sup>**  
JULY 2021



## HOW TO DOUBLE

The Happiness In Love and Marriage

**7PM - 9PM**

with  
**Dr Curtis Fox**

 **YouTube**  
LIVE STREAM

**SEC media**

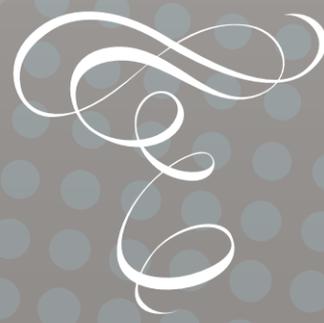
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**960 1366 3069**  
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**205980**



## SEC DEPARTMENTS

# Reports & Articles



### Stewards' Leap of Faith

Faithful stewards recognize and affirm every blessing and experience they have encountered with God. Their daily walk and connection with God strengthen their whole being. Taking to heart every promise of God in His Word (John 14:12-14) helps each steward to live their lives in sweet anticipation of the blessed hope, reminding them that life in this world will be in constant challenge, and crisis inevitable.

In gratitude to their Creator and Saviour, stewards offer a sacrifice of praise to God (Hebrews 13:15), desiring each day to give back to God honour and praises, and loving service to fellow human beings in reflection of God's immeasurable mercy and grace. A generous steward's experience allows God's promised blessings and exhortation, in Luke 6:38, to transpire in their very own life: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Learning to give as Jesus gave, creates a deeper meaning and purpose for our lives. Jesus' example in giving His all and best for us, His coming to serve and not be served (Matthew 20:28), helps us to learn how to give our best to others in honour of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Faithful and generous stewards give to God the first fruit of their harvest or gain, not the leftovers. Good stewards always put God first in their 'list', giving their best gifts and talents and quality time for the service of the Lord. Remembering the story of Jesus at the temple, watching how people gave (Luke 21), affirms the

true essence of giving. Jesus told His disciples that the widow who placed two small coins into the treasury of the temple had given more than all the rest of the givers, because in "her poverty, she put in all the livelihood that she had" (Luke 21:4, NKJV). Her sacrifice truly resembles the sacrifices of Jesus.

Looking back on all the SEC Tithe Reports over the past 16 months (see table below from the SEC Treasury team), I can recognise God's generosity over His people in the SEC territory; that despite the significant damage caused to England and the world's economy by the pandemic, yet we can see how God's faithful stewards have been continuously supporting the cause of God, through the faithful returning of tithes and offerings, as well as their offering of time, talents and resources. The church

### SEC Tithe Returns Between January 2020 - April 2021

Month / Year	Tithe (YTD)	Change compared to previous year
January 2020	1,193,406	0.57%
February 2020	2,438,469	6.43%
March 2020	3,391,597	-14.80%
April 2020	4,262,228	-17.02%
May 2020	5,426,971	-16.02%
June 2020	6,516,187	-15.77%
July 2020	7,525,464	-15.92%
August 2020	8,653,282	-14.10%
September 2020	9,895,296	-13.09%
October 2020	11,441,576	-9.31%
November 2020	12,798,464	-8.09%
December 2020	14,641,180	-6.95%
January 2021	1,188,786	-0.4%
February 2021	2,338,927	-4.1%
March 2021	3,714,920	9.5%
April 2021	5,070,053	19.0%

has therefore been able to continue in its God-given mission of sharing the kindness and love of God to the community where God's people are present and serving. On this note, we can only give back the praises to God!

These figures are what I reckon to be the leap of faith for each steward who remained faithful in returning their tithes despite the unseen challenges ahead, putting their trust in God alone and depending on Him in every way. We are all so grateful to our members for their untiring support and trust in the ministry of our God. Sure, God's Word is true, even as it was penned by His messenger that, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us" (3 SM 162). I am encouraged as I look back and see the faithfulness of our members during good and bad times. Let us all move forward in our lives with confidence in our God, continuously creating opportunities for ministry, as partners with God on our end-time mission.



TODD FRIAS

# CORNERSTONE COUNSELLING

## Helping Children Overcome Anxiety



Anxiety has become one of the leading causes of ill-health in children, and it's also affecting more parents than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded what was already an accelerating problem. There has been a sharp rise in self-harm, suicide ideation, sleep problems and eating disorders.

### What is anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion characterised by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical symptoms, such as heart palpitations, shaking and chest pain. In children, it may present in various forms, like separation anxiety, social phobia, generalised anxiety, panic disorder with or without agoraphobia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Child anxiety disorders are associated with a range of negative consequences in social, scholastic and personal adjustment (Strauss et al., 1987; Messer and Beidel, 1994).

### How to recognise anxiety in your children

Most children may exhibit various behaviours and different reactions. Some symptoms may include refusal to go to school, feelings of anger, being worried about numerous things, being fearful of playing or integrating into groups, feeling sick, refusing to do

homework for fear of not being good enough, inability to sleep or crying and feeling stressed.

### Where does the anxiety come from?

The parents' emotional stability and home environment have a huge impact on children's mental wellbeing. If the parents are anxious, they will pass on their anxiety, unintentionally, to the children. Family conflicts and arguments can also make children feel insecure and anxious. The school, social environment and community around the child can also be a source of anxiety.

**Perfectionism** puts pressure on children, causing feelings of anxiety when they cannot reach their parents' expectations. They become fearful that they are not loved, accepted or good enough. If not dealt with, children will carry these cognitive misinterpretations throughout their adult life.

**Controlling and overprotective** parenting can be another source of anxiety. This can be unhelpful as it prevents children from making mistakes and learning from them. Over-protecting or over-controlling children, sends a wrong message that implies the child is incompetent and incapable.

Social media is another source of anxiety for children. Spending too much time in front of Facebook, Instagram, or television causes anxiety, especially in young girls. This impacts their self-image and lowers their self-worth. It is also another cause of eating disorders.

### How to help children reduce anxiety

The most important thing is to **talk to your child about their anxiety** or worries, reassuring them that you understand, and that you are there to support them through it. If they are old enough, explain to them what anxiety is.

In most cases avoidance is the biggest anxiety reinforcer. For example, if the child refuses to go to school because they are anxious, and the parents give in, it feeds the avoidance which works for a short period. Help the child through the process instead of criticising them.

**Help the child develop social skills.** Connection is a universal need. Building relationships with other children enables them to overcome anxiety and not perceive the world as dangerous. Practising a sport or outdoor games helps to increase brain function and reduce anxiety.

**Helping others** will make them feel good about themselves as a valuable member of society.

**Teach your child to recognise signs** of anxiety in themselves.

**Teach and encourage your child to manage their anxiety** and ask for help when they need it.

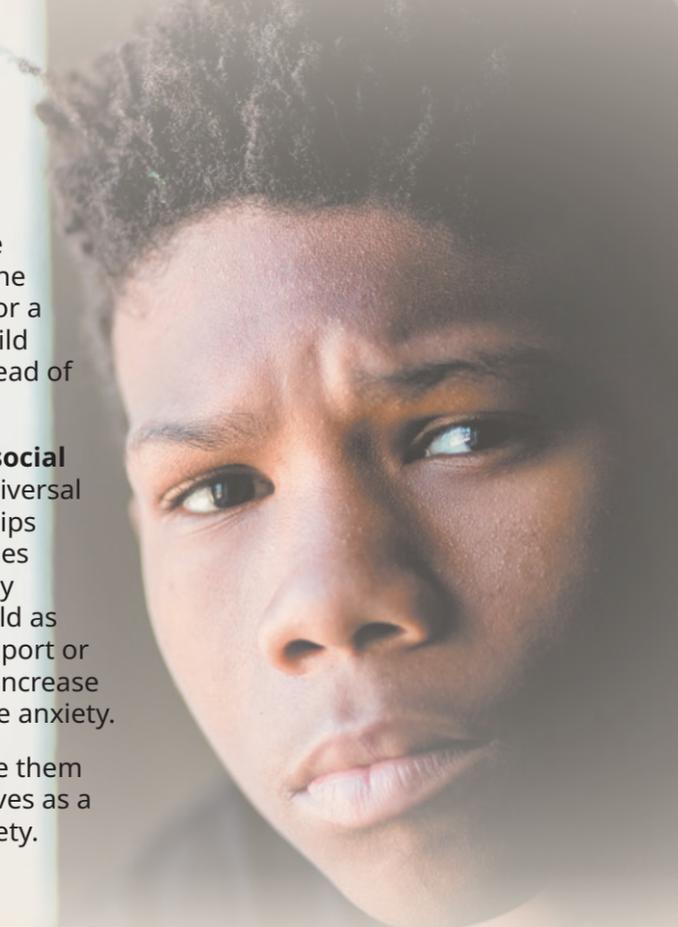
**Stick to a regular routine** where possible, as it brings reassurance.

**Prepare your child** for any known coming changes, like moving house.

### When to get help

If the child's anxiety is severe and interferes with their daily life, it is time to get help. Contact your GP and the school if it is impacting their school life. Counselling can be arranged through the school; or the parent can directly contact a counselling service that works with children.

CCS has qualified children's counsellors. 0207 723 8050. <https://www.ccscounselling.org.uk>



Young Minds also has a free parent helpline: 0808802 5544. <https://youngminds.org.uk>

In conclusion, as a parent, being aware of what is going on in your child's life is a positive step towards helping them overcome anxiety. It is important to remember that avoidance maintains anxiety and increases its symptoms.

Written by  
Diana Gaga



**THEMBIE MAPINGIRE**

## Oh! She is the Pathfinders strong!

While ministering in a local church, I wondered what I should preach for their Women's Ministry Sabbath. In my research, my eye fell on the details of Jesus' genealogy as recorded by Matthew. This family tree was different to that of Luke's, because four women were mentioned in the line-up.

What is significant about these women, is that they were not 'leading ladies' with social stature, but rather insignificant members of their society. In fact, apart from Ruth who has a book attributed to her, these women were given small lines in the Biblical play.

Looking a little deeper, I realised, rather, that these women had in fact played a very significant role in the development of the Biblical narrative, and, through inspiration, the Son of God wanted to name them as a part of his valuable family line.

Now what does this have to do with Pathfinders? On its surface the Pathfinder movement is synonymous with the Scout movement. In fact, the idea was inspired by a former Scout who incorporated spiritual aspects into the programme. As a result, one might be forgiven for associating the nature of the Scout or Pathfinder club to very male style activities. Reading through the curriculum and honours, the programme is replete with activities like, camping, fire building, knot tying, furniture building, hiking, and the like. In fact, the history of the Pathfinder Club records the story of Joselita who started a club in the 1960s in Northern Brazil. She was told that this kind of activity was not proper for her to do.



**CLIFFORD HERMAN**

I dug a bit deeper into Pathfinder history, and I made some genealogical discoveries of my own. And so, in the inspirational spirit of Matthew, I would like to highlight a few individuals. I discovered that the Pathfinder movement owes its expansive and exciting ministry to the following few women –

The first is Flora Plummer. In 1907 Flora, who was Sabbath School director, developed the Missionary Volunteer idea in the department. The success of her work, and her focus on young people for service and spiritual growth, led the church to realise that young people needed a department of their own. They appointed Milton Kern as the director.

Kern employed an assistant, Matilda Erickson, who was given the task to develop a programme and material for Juniors; and so Junior Missionary Volunteers was born a few years later. Erickson is particularly credited with selecting texts for the devotional reading concept called 'The Morning Watch'.

By 1917, a lady called Ella Iden-Edwards assembled and compiled material into the first Administrative Manual for Juniors.

By 1920, Harriet Holt was added to the staff to work with Arthur Spalding, a former Scout, who added outdoor education into the programme. Harriet was given responsibility to care for the junior-aged children in the church. Having an adventuresome and creative nature, she developed the 'Friend' and 'Companion' classes, and later the "Comrade" and 'Master Comrade' programmes.

By 1927 camping became popular, and a lady called Irene Walker from Michigan initiated the phenomena by having the first girls' camp. As a result, a rich dame called Clair Marie Hodges-Wolfson was so impressed by what she witnessed that she donated a large

piece of land to 'camping purposes for the Mission Scouts'.

History has shown us that the work of Pathfinders spread like wild-fire and inspired the 'Joselitas' of this world to start their own clubs. Joselita, although she was despised by those who thought it improper of her to be doing these 'boyish' things, continued to lead Pathfinders in Brazil for the next 45 years.

Pathfinders is still growing and inspiring young people around the world. While we may have seen only male Conference, Union and World directors, statistics in the world records indicate that we have more women Pathfinder and Adventurer directors than men, leading their local clubs across the world. In the United Kingdom and Ireland this is very much the reality.

Therefore, to all the women Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders in the South England Conference and the world, I salute you. Thank you for keeping the Pathfinder vision alive. Keep inspiring and growing our children for the kingdom.



L. Flora Plummer

## Gender inequality and the Church

Growing up as a child, I remember being treated very differently from my brother and male cousin, who were around the same age. The little distinctions made between us, made me resent being a girl. There were constraints of what I had to wear and when, what games I was allowed to play and with whom, and what interests I was encouraged to pursue within the remit of what was considered befitting of a young girl. Life to me, at the tender age of nine, seemed very unfair, and it has continued to be so, not just for other nine-year-old girls in Zimbabwe, but for everyone discriminated against because of their gender.

Discrimination is not a new phenomenon. People around the world have been victims since time immemorial. That being noted, imagine my surprise when I walked into the church to find some Bible-believing church members holding discriminatory attitudes similar to that of the people outside its four walls.

The question of how and why sexism is an issue within the Seventh-day Adventist Church thus presents itself. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church has made its standpoint clear, holding that 'discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity', the church is only as strong as its congregants. While there has been a change in gender

attitudes in the Seventh-day Adventist Church over time, this change has been more reflective of the changes in our wider society, as opposed to the church leading the way in the area of equality, the way it should be.

One doesn't have to look far along the pews to find someone, usually a brother, who will argue that gender inequality isn't an issue anymore, even though most attendees at our church are women, and the majority of people in leadership positions, men. It beggars belief that members of a church, whose pen of inspiration was held by a woman, to write about a Saviour who first revealed His resurrection to a woman, would have a problem with women taking their place as equals alongside their male counterparts. Some attendees of our beloved church profess to be Bible-believing Christians, but struggle to appreciate equality as a core tenet of our faith.

'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28).

The problem of gender discrimination in the church is multi-faceted. Granted, this has been the case for some time; but it does not absolve us of the responsibility to address the

matter. We must ask ourselves why our church has such a gender imbalance. Why is it that more women attend church than men? Is our evangelism effort more feminocentric? Do we not want a leadership team that is more reflective of church membership, so that views from both genders can be weighted accordingly? If we modernise and lead from the front in this area, will we have something to lose or something to gain? Do people believe there needs to be a change, or are we happy with the status quo?

Everyone must do some work to address this, but we must first believe that a change needs to occur. To address a problem, one must first name it.

Written by  
Kimberley Christian



**JACQUELINE OTOKPA**

# FAMILY MINISTRIES

## Aquila and Priscilla: Supporting Kingdom's Agenda

*"Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." (Romans 16:3-4)*

Married Couples can draw valuable lessons for discipleship and building communities from Aquila and Priscilla's examples in advancing and supporting the Kingdom's plan.

Aquila and Priscilla were a married Christian couple who sacrificed their lives for the Kingdom of God. Not only did they give their lives entirely to the Lord, but they shared their home with Paul and became partners in Ministry. Also, Apollos was one of those with whom they shared the Good News of salvation. They used their home as a safe place of worship and praise. But more importantly, their home became a space for those who desired to pursue a genuine intimate love relationship with the Lord. Affirming their Ministry, Paul referred to them as those 'who laid down their necks' for him – such was the depth of their sacrifice for the love Kingdom agenda.

Aquila and Priscilla make relevant the conversation which married couples can buy into – that oneness, 'we-ness', can be elevated as examples of how couples can serve the Lord faithfully and consistently. Here are a few examples:

Firstly, Aquila and Priscilla were teammates (Acts 18:1-4). Aquila was a Jewish Christian in Corinth, a tentmaker and a friend to Paul. Banished by Claudius from Rome along with all Jews, this couple became actively involved in proclaiming the Gospel. In

five of the six times that they are mentioned in Scripture, Priscilla is listed first. This implied that she was more prominent and dominant in the Ministry. Without a doubt, Aquila supported her entirely and wholeheartedly, playing a secondary role. Hallelujah! How else can I stress the importance of this teamwork in which a husband plays a secondary role? Most men would not be second to a woman; no, they wouldn't. But why not? Yet, let it be heard and known that those who love God, and are willing to follow Him, will also submit to His plan and purpose for their lives and do so with exceptional joy and gladness.

Being led by the Holy Spirit, Paul came to Corinth, and it was here that he met Aquila and Priscilla. This couple shared their home with Paul and worked together as tentmakers, enjoying the comfort of a warm, Christian living environment. Such kindness on the part of this fine Christian couple made it possible for Paul to have a place to live and work, and at the same time allowed him the opportunity to visit the local synagogue every Sabbath to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Aquila and Priscilla were transformers (Acts 18:24-26). The 'oneness' and 'we-ness' which

Aquila and Priscilla employed in their teamwork allowed them, under the Holy Spirit's power, to be vehicles of transformation. It is mentioned that Aquila and Priscilla heard Apollos. Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria, a learned man, well-versed in the Scriptures. During the temporary absence of Paul, he was taught the 'perfect' way by Aquila and Priscilla. Aquila and Priscilla gave Apollos Bible studies. This couple was committed to Kingdom's plan and were focused on the mission. Even though well-educated and eloquent, Apollos was limited in a crucial aspect. It is written of Apollos, "whom when Aquila and Priscilla

had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God most perfectly." What Aquila and Priscilla did looked simple, but was crucial; they welcomed Apollos into their home with kindness and courtesy, and shared Jesus, correctly and appropriately, with him.

Finally, Paul gave tribute to Aquila and Priscilla and affirmed their Ministry, hoping that others, especially married couples (in my opinion), would emulate them. Paul desired other couples to follow and to know their

faithfulness, fruitfulness, and fearlessness as married couples who support Kingdom's agenda. Will you?



**DR AUGUSTUS LAWRENCE**

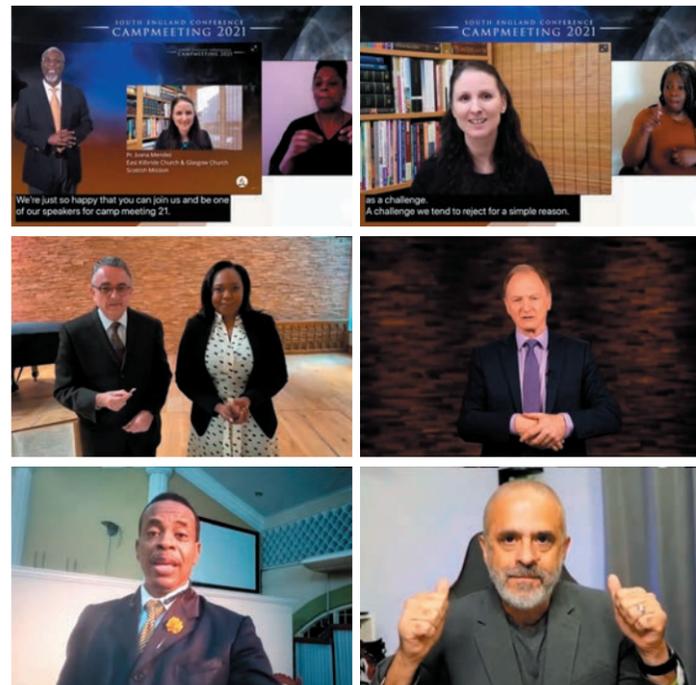
## SEC CAMP MEETING 2021 REPORT

(Author: Don Roberts)

SEC Camp Meeting 2021 concluded on Sabbath, 5th June. The virtual event attracted almost 100,000 views worldwide for the 6 days it was held. During the week, the 9 keynote speakers based their presentations on different aspects of the theme, Making Disciples, Building Communities.

Conference, in South Africa. The presentation entitled, 'Celebrating His Presence' was the last in Papu's 'In His Presence' series, which focused on "how to connect with God" through prayer.

Sabbath School was led by Croydon Church. It live-streamed its weekly interactive study, which has gained popularity within the SEC and internationally since its inception at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Host Elder Johny Saul and Pastor Royston Smith facilitated the study on The New Sanctuary, with contributions from a virtual panel, and viewers who submitted their comments via text and online chat.



Pastor Roger Hernandez, the Ministerial & Evangelism Director for the Southern Union Conference, USA, presented the sermon 'The Remnant' for Divine Service. Using Revelation Chapter 7, he examined the characteristics of "the saved" - who will be "standing before the throne and before the Lamb."

The late afternoon speaker was Pastor John Bradshaw, President of the international media evangelism ministry, It Is Written. His sermon on "Mission and the Local Community" followed a touching message to retired SEC pastor David Cox, who had baptised Bradshaw and whom he credited for cultivating his early spiritual growth.

A Sabbath evening concert showcased singers and musicians from across the Conference and included

memorable performances featuring guest artists, such as Songs of Praise Gospel Singer of the Year finalist, Tara Goddard.

The final sermon, 'Can I Get a Witness?' was delivered by Pastor Steve Riley from Trinidad, in the South Caribbean Conference. Riley's appeal was for the church to open its doors and be witnesses to all people, and to "take the stand for Jesus" - making disciples and building communities.

After the success of last year's inaugural virtual event, organisers this year made changes in the week's schedule to better represent the experience of the traditional physical camp meetings, widely enjoyed before the current health pandemic. A notable addition was the virtual Communion Service on Friday, which was conducted by SEC President, Dr Emmanuel Osei, and Pastors Sophia Peart and Terry Messenger. Another innovation was the new SEC Media BSL YouTube channel, which provided British Sign Language and subtitles for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

From Monday to Friday, Zoom workshops were run by various SEC departments, including Church Growth and Community Services; Cornerstone Counselling Service; Family Ministries, Possibilities Ministries; Prison Ministries; Sabbath School; Stewardship and Trust Services, and Women's Ministries.

There was also a daily health presentation by the Chronic Pain Specialist and Anaesthesiologist, Dr Anthony Espinet, based in Australia, but familiar to congregations across the SEC through his health seminars and his previous office as the NEC Health Director.

Camp Meeting 2021 will be particularly remembered for its varied keynote speaker line-up. Along with those featured on Sabbath, the start of the week saw Director of Asian-Pacific Ministries of the North American Division, Pastor ViLouis Arreola III, explore 'The 3 Ingredients for a Successful Church'. On Tuesday, Pastor Ivana Mendez from the Scottish Mission examined the character of doubting Thomas. Isle of Wight pastor Adrian Peck's thought-provoking presentation on Wednesday considered "what a church community should be like" as found in Philippians 1:27-2:16 and challenged the audience to view Paul's admonition - "to work out your own salvation" - in the context of the community as a whole and not just as individual believers. Pastor Donnette Blake, of New Dimension church in Brooklyn, New York, spoke on Thursday about the 'Community of One'. On Friday, 'Playing with Darkness' was the sermon title of Dr Eric Walsh from California, the Physician and Healthcare Administrator who previously served Presidents George W Bush and Barack Obama as an advisor on HIV/AIDS.

Throughout the week, a recurring theme in the positive comments and feedback expressed on social media, was the good utilisation of SEC pastors at the Camp Meeting. In addition to Wednesday keynote speaker Pastor Adrian Peck, local pastors presented the Morning Devotion at 9 am. On Monday, it was shared by Pastor Sorin Petrof, who used a Jewish Hasidic tale to illustrate "The Treasure that is Jesus Christ". Subsequent presenters for this time slot included Pastors Nerine Barret, Steve Thomas, Mathew

Herel and John Melki. Pastor Robin Lewis, from Area 8's Colchester, Ipswich and Clacton district also led a 5-day Bible study series called, 'The Importance of Our Identity in Christ,' focusing on how we can learn "who we are from God's perspective."

In his votes of thanks at the close of Camp Meeting 2021, SEC President, Dr Emmanuel Osei commended all the speakers, presenters, and everyone involved in making the event a success.

Although many are longing for a time when Camp Meeting will return to its pre-COVID physical form, feedback during this event has further demonstrated how "God's Spirit can indeed move and bless virtual audiences."

## MAYOR OF HOUNSLOW HAS THE 'NERVE TO SERVE'

(Author: Mark Morgan)

A bright, sunny but chilly morning greets another Sabbath of service at Chiswick SDA Church food bank. Iris Sutherland-Foster - as she always seems to be - is all smiles, chatter, and enthusiasm readily adopted by her band of volunteers. Iris' vision, drive, and hard work has helped create this unique environment. The sorting, stacking and heavy lifting are carried out with a carefree spirit as volunteers with "a nerve to serve" prepare for the arrival of their guests. Just before the doors are opened, Iris informs her team, "We may have a visit from a special guest."



The announcement that the Mayor of Hounslow Tony Louki would be in attendance is recognition of the profile

of Chiswick's community ministry, as well as providing Iris with another pair of willing hands.

People from the community arrived in need and left under the strain of overloaded bags full of essentials - with the real winners being those shrewd enough to bring a trolley.

The Mayor, in full civic regalia, arrived in the middle of service. After a guided tour, he was keen to mingle with both guests and volunteers, and it wasn't long before Iris put him to work on the fruit and vegetable section, where he teamed up with a 15-year-old volunteer named Antonio. The mayor dubbed them "the two Tonys" and they set about serving up fun and laughter along with fresh produce. Mayor Louki commented on how pleasing it was to see the commitment made by the congregation of Chiswick SDA Church; but what was most gratifying was the partnership that the service has struck up between the church members and volunteers from within the local community.

## SPOTLIGHT ON HAMPSTEAD CHURCH'S FIONA PACQUETTE

(Author: Darell J Philip)

For six years, Fiona Pacquette has been Director of the Area 6C East London School of Music (ELSOM), based in the Clapton Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Hackney. A professionally trained pianist, organist and cellist with over 25 years teaching experience, Fiona has been sharing her love for classical music with her students, letting them know that music is for everyone and not just an elite few. "Often there is a perception that classical music is just for an elite few - usually those who are white, middle-class and with money. Here, at the East London School of Music, we challenge those perceptions everyday by creating opportunities for the wider community to access a genre of music they might not have considered before," says Fiona.

At just 5 years old, Fiona was taught how to play hymns on piano by her late mother - Mrs Leone R Pacquette - while her late father - Mr Jean Pacquette - bought Fiona her first piano at age 19. But it was not until much later, under the tutelage of the late John Prince OBE, that Fiona's passion for classical music was ignited.

"Mr Prince (a music theory and piano tutor) was my mentor as a musician and organ builder. He taught me how to tune pianos and I assisted him with the maintenance and tuning of the former pipe organ (removed in 1995) at the Hampstead Seventh-Day Adventist Church where I am a member. After he sadly passed away, I continued teaching piano and music theory for over 25 years until 2015 when I was appointed to manage ELSOM."

Now in its 6th year, ELSOM has grown in leaps and bounds under Fiona's direction, and she is keen for the steady progress it has seen over the years to continue: "After we first opened our doors to the local community in Hackney, we had 5 professionally trained music teachers and 15 students. Fast forward to today and we now have 10 teachers and 90 students - evidence that classical music is for everyone and not just the privileged few."



For more information on the East London School of Music please visit: <https://www.elsomonline.org.uk/>

## SPOTLIGHT ON BALHAM CHURCH'S MARK GREY

(Author: Darell J Philip)

For over 35 years, Mark Grey has been involved in film and theatre. The Balham SDA Church member, who celebrates his 60th birthday in June, is a multiple award-winning producer and writer who looks to add more to his growing list of accolades, having been nominated in the Best Lead Actor category in this year's International Christian Film and Music Festival for his leading role in 'The Convert' – a short film exploring the values of truth, purity, forgiveness and faith, when a clergyman tries to convince a prostitute to drop charges against his son accused of sexual assault.

Looking back over his chartered career within the creative arts, Grey is thankful to God for the journey; yet, for him, it has only just begun.

"My passion for writing stories alongside my curiosity in human relationships has been with me since childhood. Since the formation of my Agape Theatre Company in 1985, followed by the Carmel Greystone Film Company (named after my late mother) I set up in 2000, we have been going strong and have no imminent plans to stop – It may be 35 years, but we've only just begun," says Grey.

A graduate from West Indies College (now renamed the Northern Caribbean University) in Mandeville, Jamaica,

Grey, a British born Jamaican, cultivated his love for writing and the arts during his formative years in the beautiful Caribbean island, which later led to his study of writing for the stage & screen with Screenwise International, followed by the completion of Total Filmmaking workshops with the LA Film School. He has since gone on to produce 15 plays, among them "Asylum" and "End The Silence", which, after performing to sell-out crowds at the Waterloo East, Courtyard and the Omnibus Theatre (Clapham), was then performed, with glowing reviews, at the National Black Theatre in Harlem as part of a tristate tour of the USA in 2019. Not wanting to rest on his laurels, Grey is currently developing three theatre projects for post lockdown. The first, planned for October, is "Celebration to Scandal – The Windrush Story."

Also available on Amazon Prime is his latest feature film, "3 Women", which stars the esteemed British actress Judith Jacob. It is a powerful yet touching character-driven drama, examining the lives of three disparate women who battle domestic violence, the glass ceiling and street gang culture, as they strive to gain respect from their peers, family and employers in urban London.



"Often my work focuses on the complexities of human relationships and brings in elements related to faith and the challenges these pose, based on our personal beliefs and behaviour. It is these aspects with which I am most fascinated with, that I try to bring across in my writing for both the stage and screen, with the hope that audiences take from it something positive to reflect on in light of their own life experiences."

With 35 years in the arts and a 60th birthday to come, Grey has a lot to celebrate; and for that, he gives God thanks.



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# Devotional



It happened in the middle of Praise and Worship time. The church's front door opened, and in shuffled a shabby group of people from the worst part of town. They shrank under the frosty gaze of the well-dressed, middle-class congregation; but before they could turn around, they were ushered in by the enthusiastic young evangelist, William Booth. The congregation watched in dismay as Booth took the group to the front, seating them in the best pews where the wealthy would usually sit. This was unacceptable. If the poor ever did enter the church, they would slink in through the side door and sit behind a screen on benches without backs or cushions. They couldn't see the service, but what did that matter? After the service, Booth was confronted by the minister and church board. They insisted that the next time he invited such a group, he should follow protocol, keeping the undesirables invisible. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, went on to work in the slums of London's East End, ministering to many more who were considered "less than." Once, he took his teenage son to a rowdy pub that reeked of alcohol, tobacco and sweat. Noticing his son's appalled face, he whispered, "These are our people. These are the people I want you to live for and bring to Christ."

Although Booth's experience belongs to another century, human hearts

## WELCOMING the Undesirables

continue to wrestle with prejudice. Who are the "undesirables" in our churches today ... and in our own hearts?

Our biases may not be as blatant as was the case in Booth's church. Sometimes they can be so subtle that we barely notice. It's just a "normal" part of how we think. Yet even our subconscious prejudices contribute to issues of inequality. Who do we prefer, or put down? Perhaps someone who conforms to the lifestyle we think is correct; someone who has a more liberal, or conservative, viewpoint; or someone who comes from a certain background.

James had strong words for Christians showing partiality: 'How can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favour some people over others?... Yes, indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbour as yourself." But if you favour some people over others, you are committing a sin.' (James 2:1, 8-9)<sup>1</sup>

Frankly, that is uncomfortable for me to read! But God wants our hearts to mirror His own. What if those we

would naturally consider "undesirable" or "less than" are the very people God wants us to live for and bring to Christ?

Scripture repeatedly affirms that God does not show favouritism, and that we have equal standing before Him in Christ. "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28. Cf. Deut. 10:17, Matt 23:8-12, Acts 10:34-35, Rom 2:11, Rom 3:22, Col 3:11.)

This is good news! May we continually grow in our ability to reflect the generous, welcoming and impartial character of God.

<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations taken from the New Living Translation.



LYNETTE ALLCOCK

Stanborough Park Church Member

## The A Gender

Someone has an agenda  
Women make their way home but never arrive  
School girls learn to dress provocatively  
Means that many will click 'subscribe'  
Women killed weekly by men who never realised their worth.  
The Abused Gender

How does the church respond?

\*\*\*\*

Sabbath mornings  
Hairs standing up on the back of her neck  
No place to run  
Visceral loneliness in a communal setting  
Motherhood, fatherhood, childhood  
Bachelorhood, with its hordes of female admirers  
But spinsterhood?  
Woman of a certain age, deemed as damaged  
Unwanted, a threat  
Leering men who should know better  
With some wives blaming her for his roaming eyes  
Spinsterhood, a curse to be cleansed of

\*\*\*\*

He was an established church leader  
Much loved and respected – married  
Rumours of his past dalliances  
Always dissolved in an acidic solution of feigned respectability and denial  
She, one of the youths, decades younger than he  
But old enough to know right from wrong  
Her growing belly  
Undeniable evidence  
Solemn tears were cried and angry words said on behalf of the beloved  
Seduced leader

\*\*\*\*

A wedding – same script, different faces  
Glasses chimed; the newlyweds kissed  
A pious speech was given  
Praise for the bride who was rare for her gender - both beautiful and intelligent  
Women sat awkwardly, trying to be...rare

The wife was told to obey, and the husband admonished as the head of the home  
Their first fight would be from the misunderstanding of both roles  
Their last  
Was after her bruised, tear-stained body was comforted with sincere Christian counsel  
To pray harder and try more to meet her husband's needs

\*\*\*\*

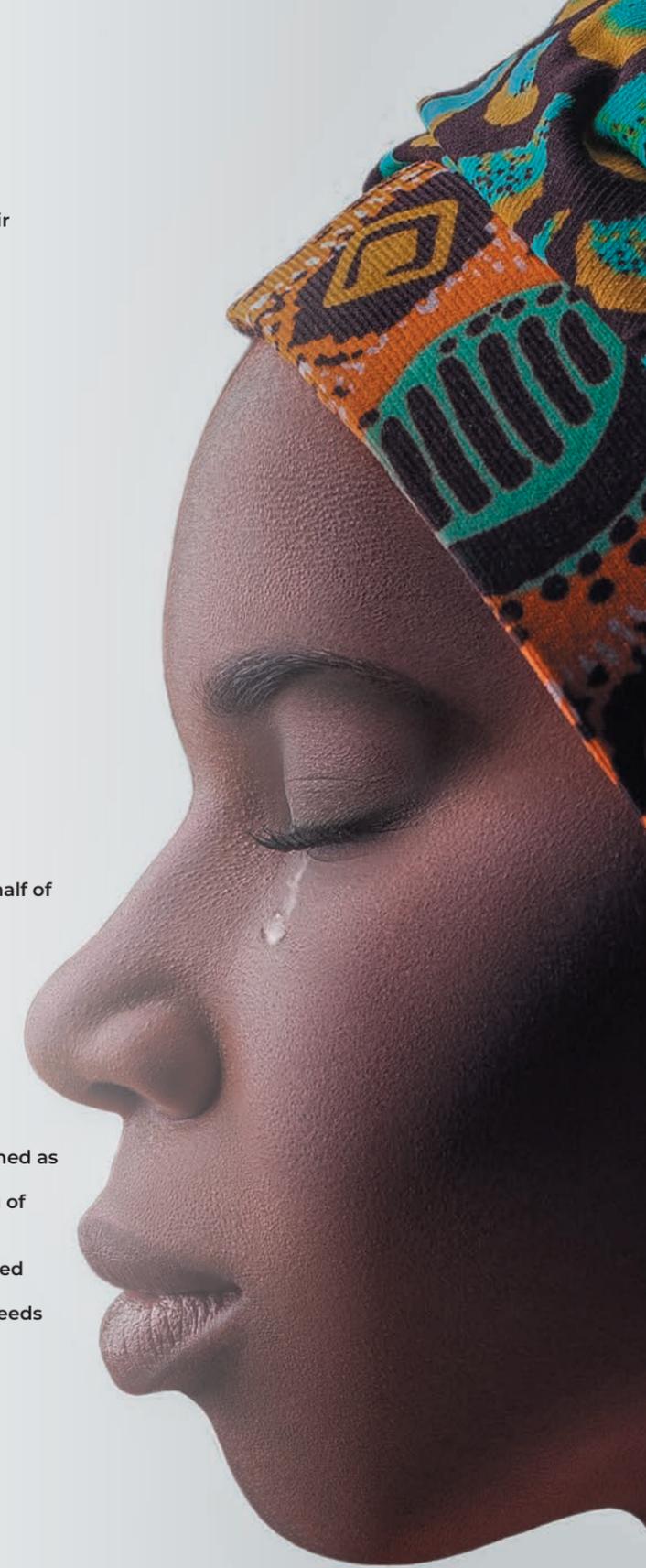
Headhunted for her executive job  
Highly educated  
Spiritual, dedicated, tithe paying, articulate  
Overlooked for roles in the local church  
Where her skills would be best suited  
Biblical precedent or a gender bias?

\*\*\*\*

Confident and insistent voices repeat  
'God made man first'  
'Women should be silent in church!'  
'The serpent beguiled Eve...'  
'Women obey your husbands.'  
Learn the full context before using a pretext  
Whose agenda is it anyway?

In the image of God, He created them  
Male and female  
#Restore the image

#Restore the image



Poem by Anthea Davis Barclay  
July 2021



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it happen.**  
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