

**SEC**

# COMMUNICATOR

July 2017 #03

## STEWARDSHIP

Why Stewardship Matters  
Christian Economics  
Debt & Setting Smarter Goals  
Financial Tips for University  
Students  
Environmental Issues &  
Christian Responsibilities

## MANAGING THE CHURCH

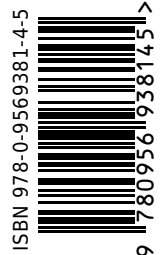
## CHARDONNEA DESLANDES

A Cut Above the Rest

## SEC NEWS

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# MANAGING OUR LIVES RESPONSIBLY!



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

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# Editorial

When Donald Trump confirmed America's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change on 1st June, it prompted a chorus of angry reactions from world leaders and climate activists. It dealt a blow to the concerted efforts of nations in preventing environmental damage to our planet. The Paris Agreement was a sensible cooperation of nations to tackle the ever-increasing damage humans are causing to the environment.

The duty of care and management of the world God created for Adam and Eve's use was intrinsic in the responsibility He gave them in the garden of Eden. "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." Genesis 1:28.

When God formed Adam and Eve from the soil of the earth, He had already accomplished the creation of the earth with all its elements that would be necessary for life on our planet. The visible physical elements and all that comprise the invisible, such as X-Rays, Gamma Rays, Radio waves, ultra-violet rays etc., were all in place for our discovery and conscientious use. The Psalmist says, "The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness. The world and all those who dwell therein." Psalm 24:1.

In principle, we can only be caretakers of God's generosity for our lives on earth. However, the proliferation of greenhouse gases and subsequent climate change and global warming are all indications that we have failed as good stewards of what God has entrusted to us. Human selfishness may be at the core of the indiscriminate use of Earth's resources, which has contributed immeasurably to the predicament we now find ourselves in. Governments have a role to play, but so do individuals like you and me. We

have a shared responsibility for the management of our planet.

Our Christian responsibilities to one another and to God must compel us to be much wiser in our use of the earth's resources at our disposal. For example, what actions am I taking to reduce water wastage in my home? Do I tend to leave lights on when I do not need them? Am I careful to avoid food wastage, even though I can afford it? We ought to be champions of the environment in word and in habit.

God has entrusted to us both tangible and intangible gifts, such as talents and time. The featured articles in this issue are meant to highlight significant aspects of our Christian duties in relation to our stewardship obligations. How is poor stewardship impacting your finances? Do you struggle with debt, your time, your wealth, your health, your relationships? How do you reciprocate the generosity of God with regards to your giving and the management of your life for eternity?

"In the realm of Christian life and service, the question of stewardship occupies a large and vital place. Every Christian believer is deeply and continuously concerned. Our recognition of the sovereignty of God, of his ownership of all things, and of the bestowal of his grace upon us, is included in a proper understanding of the principles of stewardship. As our comprehension of these principles grows and expands, we are led into a fuller understanding of the way God's love and grace operate in our lives." (Counsels on Stewardship 5.2)

The question is, should our stewardship obligations as Seventh-day Adventists compel us to a greater level of responsibility than we have presently?

### OUR COVER



Cover Photo: Cathy Boldeau



**SAM O. DAVIES**  
Editor

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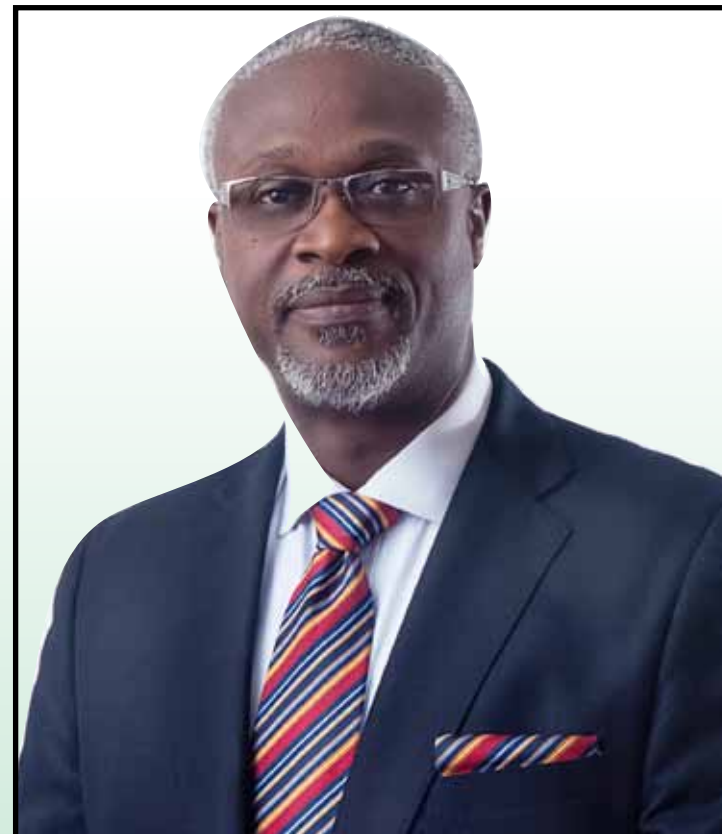
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# The President's Desk

## DR EMMANUEL OSEI | SEC PRESIDENT



This morning, I sit here shocked by the news of the bombing in Manchester, as twenty-two young people have lost their lives in a possible terrorist attack. World leaders have tweeted condemning this horrific act and sharing their sympathies with those affected. As an office family, we are numbed by the news as we sit together in worship. I think of the words of Jesus in Revelation 22: 7, 12, 20, who on three occasions says, "Behold, I am coming soon." I concur with the write of Revelation when he pens, "Amen. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

However, I have been encouraged by the response of congregations reaching out to their local authorities and identifying the needs of their communities. During this second quarter, some churches have already discussed on their church boards the different needs in their communities and consequently selected their ministries. I urge all our churches to get involved in ministry. Every member is a minister and can do something for the Lord. Our overarching theme for this quadrennial is Evangelism, Everyone, Everywhere. However, in practical terms, our strategy for this year is:

- First Quarter - Local churches approaching their local authorities to discuss the challenges of the community.
- Second Quarter - Prayerfully discussing on your church boards the different challenges and selecting one or two of the community needs as your ministry.
- Third Quarter - Getting involved and engaging with the community in ministry.
- Fourth Quarter - Opening your church doors and inviting community members into your churches.

The Lord has very recently opened a wonderful opportunity for the South England Conference to own a Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) radio station license. At our Executive Committee, this project was thoroughly discussed and the proposal was voted through. We will be partnering with the General Conference in establishing our Adventist Radio London studio here in the SEC office. This is an awesome opportunity for us to be broadcasting 24 hours a day. We will be presenting the Three Angels' Messages to the millions in the city of London each day. People in London and beyond will be able to hear our unique messages of hope of the soon coming of Christ on their mobile devices, at home, and in their cars. I want to solicit your prayers as we proceed with this venture. There are several obstacles that we need to surmount for the Adventist Radio London to come into fruition.

Having met with the Youth Director of the SEC, I have shared my burden for our young people and I have

initiated a special consultation, which we have called 50x7 and will take place on 16th and 17th of June 2017. Over the course of the two days, we will be inviting 50 leaders from across the conference, 50 parents, 50 Baby Boomers, 50 ex-members, 50 Gen-X, 50 Millennials, and 50 teens to come together to begin a dialogue on how we can work together. It is one thing to bring souls into the church but another to keep our members within the fold. I would like to see a stop to the haemorrhaging of our young people from our churches. I recognise this will not happen overnight, but we must begin dialoguing and working together on this problem. I have also met with the Associate Youth Director who is responsible for the teens in our church. I have shared my concern about some of the disturbing material on social media and Netflix. The "game" called "The Blue Whale Challenge/Game" has called on many teenagers to complete a list of 50 challenges, with the last exercise being for them to commit suicide. To date, 130 teens have lost their lives due to this game. Although this game began in Russia and claimed many lives, schools in the UK have sent warnings to parents and pupils alike. As a church, we must warn and keep our teenagers safe from these terrible social media groups and games.

I want to join with our Children's Ministries Director in encouraging our churches to invest more in our children. We should make more effort in ensuring our children are part of our Sabbath worship services. Some of our churches are doing very well in this area. I would like to encourage all our churches to take this seriously. If we give our children a solid foundation, there is more likelihood of them remaining active and engaged during their teenage and adult years.

COVER  
STORY

## A CUT ABOVE THE REST

Catherine Anthony Boldeau interviews 18-year-old Chardonnea Deslandes on her recent acceptance to the world-renowned Harvard University, where she will attend in the coming academic year. She attended the Kingsmead School in Enfield. Chardonnae is a member of the Tottenham Holcombe Road Church in London.

**Q: Chardonnea, I believe that congratulations are in order. Tell me, what is the exciting news that everyone is talking about?**

**Chardonnae:** In March this year, I found out that I had been accepted into Harvard University. And while Harvard wasn't the only university that I'd applied to, it was a total shock to me that I had been accepted. I was speechless when I wrote the acceptance letter and still can't believe it.

**Q: What made you apply to Harvard in the first place?**

**Chardonnae:** I've always felt like a bit of an "all-rounder," and the UK education system almost forces you to choose subjects from the age of around 14 that pigeon-hole you in a particular academic or vocational area. I wanted greater choice and flexibility so chose to apply to Harvard, Princeton, Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, among others, to give myself greater options for career choices.

**Q: What other universities did you apply for in the UK?**

**Chardonnae:** I applied to Oxford, LSE, Warwick (2 courses) and Birmingham and was accepted by Warwick and Birmingham.

**Q: So, what you will you major in at Harvard?**

**Chardonnae:** The first year, I will take a number of subjects, and then in my second year I plan to major in Government and Politics, minor in Social Anthropology and take electives in Spanish to develop my language skills.

**Q: How many GCSEs did you take and what grades did you receive?**

**Chardonnae:** I took 11 GCSEs and received 5 A\*s and 6 A grades.

**Q: What A Levels have you completed?**

**Chardonnae:** I completed AS Sociology in Year 8 and an A2 Level in Year 9 and gained an A both times. I have just completed an Extended Project, which is an A Level, entitled "To what degree did Australian state policies constituting the removal of children result in cultural genocide?" And I have just taken my Maths, Economics and Government and Politics to add to this.

**Q: Where does your determination come from? To have completed an AS and A2 exams before most students have done their GCSEs is inspirational.**

**Chardonnae:** I lost my dad when I was 6. I believe that he died of a heart attack. My mum suffered with multiple health conditions and two years later, I lost her too. I am an only child and was sad for a long time. But losing them taught me a big lesson. I

realised that if I wanted anything in life, I needed to do it for myself. There were no parents to back me up, no siblings for support, so I must work for the betterment of my own life. Life was put into perspective at a very early age.

**Q: How have you managed to stay focused despite growing up in the urban area of Enfield?**

**Chardonnae:** By staying focused at all times and in all circumstances.

**Q: When you have completed your studies at Harvard, what next?**

**Chardonnae:** I would love to work as an ambassador, or for the United Nations or in some area of international diplomacy.

**Q: Who are your mentors?**

**Chardonnae:** Three of my teachers, Mrs Richardson, Mr Jokobic, and Miss Samuels, mentored me and even wrote references for me to Harvard. Mr Jokobic taught me how to work smart. At my church, Tottenham Holcombe Road, Aunty Althea and Aunty Kathy have taken me under their wing. Aunty Althea is a great listener who doesn't judge and Aunty Kathy makes me laugh. Staff at the Sutton Trust taught me how to apply to US universities.

**Q: What advice would you give to young people who are making educational choices about a future career?**

**Chardonnae:** Focus on bettering your immediate future and you will automatically have a brighter future. Steven Furthick says that "if you're not dead, God not's done using you. God had a plan for your life even before your own existence. Keep going—don't stress about what you can't change and what you don't know. It's vital that you start to trust God with decisions and plans and listen for His direction."

CHARDONNAE MICHELLE ELECTRA

# DESLANDES





# WHY STEWARDSHIP MATTERS

TODD FRIAS

Stewardship & Trust Services Director

Every time I visit a church, I usually start my presentation by asking those in attendance, "What comes to your mind whenever you hear the word 'stewardship?'"

There are a variety of definitions that can help us. If we ask Google, we find that stewardship is "the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property." Paul G. Smith, in his book *Managing God's Goods*, defines it as the "wise and unselfish use of life." The SDA Encyclopaedia presents it as "man's responsibility for, and use of, everything entrusted to him by God—life, physical being, time, talents and abilities, material possessions, opportunities to be of service to others, and his knowledge of truth."

These definitions show us that stewardship involves our whole life. Being a steward is another way of talking about our ministry and our accountability to God for what we do with what

He has entrusted to us.

An excellent example of stewardship is found in Genesis 39:1-9. Joseph was made manager of Potiphar's house, and this included everything Potiphar possessed. Genesis 39:6 says, "So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!" (NLT)

Like Joseph, we are not the owners, but we have been trusted with resources and the care of everything that pertains to life— creation and environment, gifts and talents, money and treasures, time, relationships, the Gospel, wisdom to facilitate new technologies, and the supervision of the most delicate, complex, and powerful engine ever created—our human body. This is all for the sake of God's purposes in this world.

All of us are responsible for doing what God desires, and we are accountable to Him for the life that we are living now. Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we recognise the source and the ultimate goal of life, believing that we are God's stewards commanded to care for the people in our lives by being good managers of our resources, gifts and talents, and the grace of God (1 Peter 4:10).

As Christians, we understand stewardship as managing God's creation, for His glory. As the Scripture tells us, "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it..." (Psalm 24:1, NLT) It is an honour and a serious responsibility to look after God's resources and reclaim that divine assignment given to humanity, when God said to Adam and Eve, "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth." (Genesis 1:28, The Message)

Once we catch this idea of stewardship and allow it to saturate our "body, soul and spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:23), it then helps change our perspective and purpose in life. This understanding flows out to every aspect of our being, from the way we handle every decision we make, to the influences we leave on our family and friends, and to the legacies we build for our future.

God's appeal to all of us is this: "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it." (Romans 12:1, 2 The Message)

# CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS



Minister of Greenwich Church London

SIMEON ESSON

At its heart, economics is the management of limited or scarce resources, making choices about their allocations in pursuit of happiness or at least an improvement to our existential situations. Paul A. Samuelson (1905-2009) has been credited with the statement, "The ultimate goal of economics is to improve the living conditions of people in their everyday lives."<sup>1</sup>

Biblical stewardship seeks to prepare people for life in the New Earth. Ellen G White wrote, "We should never forget that... none can enter heaven whose characters are defiled by the foul blot of selfishness. Therefore, God tests us here, by committing to us temporal possessions that our use of these may show whether we can be trusted with eternal riches."<sup>2</sup>

## Etymological link: Economics & Stewardship

The history of economics as a socio-political science is rooted in the Greek word *oikonomikos*, from which we get the word "stewardship." Its original meaning was the management of a household or family and their resources.

John Houghton states, "How we manage our money is without doubt a spiritual issue."<sup>3</sup> Another commentator remarks, "It is not to be supposed that because religion is a wholly spiritual power, it has no bearing on material things. Our religion is a mockery unless it affects the way in which we spend our money, as well as all other concerns of life."<sup>4</sup>

## From Micro to Macro

Economics also involves making decisions about how to allocate limited/scarce resources for the benefit of the community. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit took control of the community of believers, and a new kind of economics was born. The new Christians began to band together not only for worship and fellowship but for the economic well-being of the community (Acts 2:44,45; 4:33-35). Each individual [micro] began to organize his or her personal resources in the interest of the community [macro].

Micro to macroeconomics is also in the Old Testament. When Malachi 3:10 refers to "meat in the Father's house," this is indicative of the church's responsibility to the community. The church can't feed the people if there is no "meat" (food) in the Father's storehouse.

The larger community includes,

1. Gospel workers who need to be nurtured and nourished (1 Cor. 9:13,14; Num. 18:21);
2. The needy in the church who must be cared for (Act 6:1-4); and
3. The physical church plant, for its construction and upkeep (Ex 25:8; 36:2-7; 1 Chron. 29:1-7).

God has an economic plan to see to all these needs—tithe and offerings. Default in any of these areas, and the Bible calls it robbing God. Robbers are cursed. Givers are blessed (Mal 3:8-12). It makes practical sense to begin to practice God's economics.

Economics is also about making daily choices to achieve our goals. It is "about humanity's struggle to achieve happiness in a world full of constraints."<sup>5</sup> In this struggle for happiness, we make personal choices which of necessity must consider the community. Some refer to these choices as "trade-offs."<sup>6</sup>

This means that God's stewards must practice better economics. They must make better decisions in managing their health, talents, and time, as well as their wealth. This will enable them to be a blessing to others. Seventh-day Adventists must practice communalism and by this, lay up treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19-21).

1. Samuelson, P.A. (1947) *Economics*
2. White, Ellen G. (May 16, 1893) *R&H/CS* p.22
3. Houghton, J. (1987) *Handling Your Money*
4. *Pulpit Commentary*, 23 volume set (1990). Edited by H.D.M. Spence & Joseph S. Exell. Vol. 7 p.70.
5. Antonioni, P. & Flynn, S.M. (2011). *Economics for Dummies*, 2nd edition
6. Davies, R [2015]. *Economics: making sense of modern economy*, 4th edition; Antonioni, P. & Flynn S.M (2011) *Economics for Dummies*, 2nd edition

**About the Author:** Pastor S Matthias Esson, BA, MA, MBA, holds an Advanced Cert in Christian Counselling and is the pastor of Greenwich Seventh-day Adventist Church and the coordinator of London Area 6B. He has served for 38 years in the IAD and TED. He is married to Pauline Alexandrine and is the father of Malaika





# DEBT AND SETTING SMARTER GOALS

**DEBORAH HARRIS**

**B Eng ACA MIOd MAFNED**  
Central London Church, Advent Centre

I felt a tap on my shoulder as I sat in a social event. It was one of the hosts and a pastor, and a young lady in obvious distress was in tow. "This is Emma", he whispered quietly. "She needs help. Please share some of your stewardship advice with her." I sat with Emma for over two hours and she shared her story. I heard how this faithful church member had made decisions leading her to the brink of bankruptcy and emotional distress. Her anguish clearly showed in her clenched hands, tearful responses to gentle questions and prompts, and her slumped position—shoulders bowed in defeat as if the world weighed heavily on her.

### Reasons we get into debt, even when we know we shouldn't

As Emma shared her story and responded to the questions I asked, she became aware that over the years she had made spending to "look good amongst my friends, work colleagues, and family community" a

priority. Emma got into debt because she spent more than she earned, and like most people she was also dealing with the emotions that came from trying to impress work mates, covering the cost for that expensive meal out, and being able to impulse-buy the clothes, shoes, or city break holiday.

Emotions push us to make bad money decisions. "If I buy it, I'll feel better," we may think. (You won't!) The role of our emotions, not simply advertising, is why today's level of consumer debt is so rampant. If we learn effective stewardship first over ourselves, we can become masters over every aspect of our lives.

### Sorting Personal Debt: You can do it!

I am constantly asked how people can sort out debt, and how they can do it quickly, and if possible, without any pain. That is such a difficult question to answer because usually the ability to do so is based on personal skills and experience, individual

preferences, and the type of debt one may have. The last issue might be the most pressing, as the high priority debts like mortgage arrears will need to be addressed first—or you really do risk losing your home. When I was young, my mother taught us all a short poem: "If you take what is not yours, a sugar-lump or a pin, or copy from your school friend's test, what name is given to that sin?" (Exodus 20:15)

But you can do it (Phil 4:13). Let's look at two steps to help sort personal debt.

### First Step: Own up to it. All of it. It's your creation, after all.

No matter what we read in the press or see on TV, there is no one to blame for your personal financial status and consumer debt, but... yourself. Harsh words, I know. (Looking for a nice, comfy read? Please turn the page to find a different article!) The first step to sorting debt is getting a complete and honest list of every unsecured debt, small family loan, quick £50 from a friend—everything you owe. (For a free printable and other information that can help you with this step, go to [www.bit.ly/flphelps](http://www.bit.ly/flphelps))

### Next Step: Get "Financial Literacy" Educated

Paying off my debt and learning how to save effectively changed my outlook in the use and application of money. Gaining financial literacy helped shape my approach to financial stewardship.

As a nation, we are £349 billion in debt. However, it is easy to develop the habits to stop getting into unsustainable consumer debt. It is also possible to develop the right system to learn how to save money for set activities and life dreams.

*Steps to financial health on Page 23*

# FINANCIAL TIPS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



**Chief Financial Officer**  
Newbold College of Higher Education

**ABIGAIL WRIGHT**

If you are a student who is looking to attend university this coming academic year, you are in for an adventure. With your new found independence comes different responsibilities, and one of the most important of them is learning how to manage your finances.

To help you maintain an effective control over your finances, here are a few tips you can adopt to ensure that your finances don't become a constant source of worry.

### BUDGETING

As a starting point, identify all your sources of income and expenditure and include the date you will receive your income and the dates that your bills are due.

### INCOME

Maintenance loan, money from parents, scholarships, bursaries and wages from a job, if you decide to work.

### EXPENSES

This can feel endless and overwhelming. Therefore, make a list of all potential expenses starting with your catered or self-catered accommodation, and for those who will choose to rent, include monthly rent and all utilities, such as electricity, gas, water, TV licence, mobile phone and internet bills. Don't underestimate the cost of the weekly food bill. Food can often be a large and quite surprising bill for students, especially eating out or takeaway. It is possible that you may have to pay for books and/or equipment for your course, including stationary. You will also need to allocate funds for clothes and personal hygiene. Don't forget transportation costs if you are commuting to and from university, and include money for other social activities. You need to budget for personal and entertainment expenses, as well as practical expenses, ensuring that you have a balanced life.

### TIPS FOR MINIMISING YOUR EXPENSES

- Share a room or flat to reduce your accommodation costs. Having a roommate or flatmate might also give you an opportunity to share your lifestyle and faith.
- Take the time to research all discounts available to university students for shopping, transportation, entertainment, etc and take advantage of them.
- Shop with a list to prevent impulse buying.
- Buy the supermarket's own-brand food.
- It's okay to ditch the name-brand clothes and accessories for other unnamed quality ones.
- Buy current secondhand books for your study course.
- Learn how to cook simple, nutritious, low-cost food in bulk and freeze it. This will also allow more time to be used for studying.

Review your budget on a weekly and monthly basis to ensure you are staying within it, and if you find that you are not staying within budget, it might mean that you need to cut down on your entertainment for a few months or not buy clothes for a while.

Finally, if you ask, God can help you develop a disciplined financial life, and He will ensure your income covers all your expenses.





# OUR STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**WAYNE ERASMUS**

Senior Pastor,  
Newbold Church

As a “Kingdom People,” we are often caught between two poles of thought and practice.

We have the words of the Apostle Peter that tell us “the heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare” (2 Peter 3:10 – 12), and the words from Revelation in which the Angel with the Seventh Trumpet declares that God will “destroy those who destroy the earth” (11:18).

The first text seems to suggest that what we do with the environment does not matter, while the second leads us to conclude that we have significant responsibility.

You may have come across an infographic produced in 2012 by science writer Tom De Chant that has made the rounds on social media. It portrays the work of the Global Footprint Network (GFN), who since 2003 have been trying to map the ecological effect humans have on the planet. While the work has its critics, it remains helpful in understanding that the lifestyle of Western and other developed nations is taking too much of the world’s resources.

But perhaps we don’t need an infographic to tell us something that, with a little thought and reflection, is as plain as day. Ponder this: “If everyone did as I do, would the world be a better place?” It is a great question to consider at any time, but it is especially pertinent when it comes to the way I think about the resources at my disposal.

And when it comes to those resources, we tend to tell ourselves three lies:

- 1. There is enough for us all to “have it all.”
- 2. If I can afford it, I can have it.
- 3. Everything I have is “mine” and I may do with it what I please.

Together, these simple little lies drive us toward a very self-centred and self-focused experience of life. Life is simpler when I do not have to consider the inequities and grave imbalances that are

part of our communal lives. I can sleep easier at night when I can imagine that everyone who shares life on our planet can have (at least) what I have.

If that is true, then the second lie falls into place: “If I can afford it, I can have it.” Why shouldn’t I have something if it is within my means to afford it? If I can afford it, why shouldn’t I buy the new iPhone? My choice to spend my money is entirely my own business, is not connected to my faith, and is an entirely private matter.

This attitude is one small step away from the thought, “Everything I have is mine and I may do with it what I like.”

An example of how insidious these lies are—even for those of us who think of ourselves as “Kingdom People”—is artist Chris Jordan’s project “Running the Numbers: An American Self Portrait.” In particular, his artwork “Cell Phones” confronts us with our spending and throw-away habits. It depicts 426,000 cell phones, the number of phones “retired” on a daily basis in the United States. You do the math.



There are many questions to answer, and while I may not be able to change the spending habits of my neighbours, I do at least have a measure of control over my own. And so the words of Peter challenge us: “What manner of persons ought ye to be...?” (2 Peter 3:11)

Are we so settled into the way things are, that we cannot see the implications of our way of life? Having given my tithe and marked off my offering, am I free to be wilful in the use of the remainder? Of the things, the assets, the resources that are “mine”? Is God interested in the consequences of my spending habits?

The short answer to that final question is “Yes!” For stewardship is more than tithing our income. It is far more than planning our giving. Stewardship, when spiritually discerned, understood, and lived as a worldview, will shape how we think about our resources and how we use the resources of our world and of its people. It becomes the careful and thoughtful premise from which we proceed as God’s Kingdom People.

Our stewardship of the environment is a spiritual issue.

# A DANGEROUS KIND OF STEWARDSHIP



Member of the  
High Wycombe Micklefield Church

**SUJOYA PAUL BULLOCK**

## IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT SAVING MONEY!

To really be the stewards God intended us to be, we might need to radically rethink our lives. The meaning of “radical” is to “get back to the root.” So, at the root of creation, what was God’s plan for us and our environment?

In answering this question, I will touch on a few points that might ruffle some feathers! Yet I hope that they will at least plant seeds that will grow into a changed and better way of life.

I used to work in a renewable energy social enterprise and trained various agencies on alternative energy and sustainable living. Until then, I hadn’t realised that everything I did had a knock-on effect, not only for the planet, but for my body, my family, and the next generation. This experience helped me to realize that money is not the only area in which we are called to be good stewards.

Here are just five areas where we can be godly stewards:

### Agriculture – Be Aware!

How food is grown is crucial. If harsh chemicals, pesticides and genetically engineered elements are in our food, these are what will go into us. Caring for agriculture means being aware of the unnatural growing methods of big multinational corporations. Rallying alongside protestors may even be a necessary step.

Washing produce may reduce chemical residue; however, some pesticides are systemic (within the plant). For example, research Roundup, the potent herbicide produced by Monsanto; it will send shivers down your spine. Therefore,

it is better to choose local and organic produce where possible. Grow your own—even if it’s on a windowsill. If you have space, grow from and save organic seeds, and plant purple flowers like lavender to encourage bees.

### Our Bodies – Make Them Fast!

Let’s do “fast food” the way Jesus did! We can fast from food and really benefit. Giving ourselves a rest every Sabbath is a given, but do we think to give our digestive systems some respite? Once a week, miss breakfast and lunch, then have a good meal in the early evening. Try eating more simply (just fruit, vegetables and plant protein), and reduce your sugar intake. Fasting for at least 12-16 hours has a plethora of benefits and is easier than you think. Having done this for over a year, I would highly recommend it.

### Our Health – Support It!

When you are unwell, support your natural immune system; don’t suppress it! In our fast-paced lives, we’re encouraged to get back to work pronto. By using over-the-counter medicines, we suppress the outward symptoms and push illness deeper until it recurs in a different form. Antibiotics kill not only the bad bacteria but also the good, wiping out the body’s natural way of fighting disease. Their overuse and misuse has led to a rise in antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Let antibiotics be used for extreme cases. Research preventative medicine to support your health and make or buy unpasteurised kefir, raw sauerkraut, and quality probiotic supplements. These replenish the good bacteria in your gut.

Home Sweet Home or Home “Sick”

Home?

We need to work with nature when it comes to hygiene and cleaning. The number of chemicals in our shampoos, deodorants, toothpastes, and washing powders/liquids is toxic to the planet and us. For example, sweating is the body’s natural way of excreting toxins and heat. Antiperspirants actively inhibit this and can cause serious damage to tissue.

Instead, benefit your pocket as well as your health and the environment. Try rubbing lemon under your arms straight after a shower; it can neutralise odour for a day. For other cleaning needs, use bicarbonate of soda and vinegar as effective and non-toxic cleaning agents.

### Wi-Fi is another issue.

Its safety has not yet been proven. The onus for this should lie with the manufacturers, not with the public, and many dangers have been associated with Wi-Fi.

Small steps to reducing your exposure could be turning Wi-Fi off at night, installing LAN cable, limiting iPad and mobile use (especially for children), keeping your phone away from your body, and using speaker and airplane mode more.

### Our Souls – Be Still!

Instead of the jam-packed Sabbaths that we sometimes schedule for ourselves, take a leaf out of Jesus’ life and go out into nature, fill your lungs with sweet-smelling air, and feast your eyes on God’s creation and your heart on Scripture. “Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

So, what now?

The root of the issue: God created nature—and us—to function in certain ways. We ignore, interrupt, and impede these natural processes at our peril.

It’s not easy. It can totally change many aspects of your life. However, wasn’t going against current norms what Jesus often did?

Taking the dangerous, difficult, and alternative route might be exactly what we need to do. Attempting to be radical stewards in this polluted earth might make us some of the sharpest and interesting witnesses God uses to expand His kingdom.

Now, that’s a stewardship goal worth aiming for!

Sujoya studied history, and is a qualified teacher, musician and author. She is passionate about prayer and sharing Jesus. She home educates her three children.

1. The ‘Big 6’ pesticide and GMO companies, BASF, Bayer, Dupont, Dow Chemical Company, Monsanto & Syngenta, are so called because they...own the world’s seed, pesticide and biotechnology industries. ETC Group, ‘Who Owns Nature? Corporate Power and the Final Frontier in the Commodification of Life,’ Nov 2008
2. Pesticides, Food Standards Agency, food.gov.uk
3. Roundup, used internationally, contains glyphosate plus ‘inert ingredients’ such as POEA which have been found to damage embryonic, placental and umbilical cells at all concentrations. Study by France’s Committee for Research and Independent Information on Genetic Engineering. ‘Weed-Whacking Herbicide Proves Deadly to Human Cells.’ Scientific American, June 2009
4. Best Plants for Bees, gardenersworld.com
5. ‘The Power of Intermittent Fasting,’ Dr. Moseley, bbc.co.uk, August, 2012
6. Antimicrobial Resistance is an increasingly serious threat to global public health, WHO, 2016
7. Probiotic (‘pro-life’): Antibiotic (‘against life’). Probiotics are live active cultures of good bacteria that can help prevent and treat a variety of ailments. ‘Why Sauerkraut is Good For You,’ theguardian.com, 2013
8. Parabens and Sulphates are chemical preservatives that have been linked to hormone disruption
9. 27 ways to Clean with Baking Soda, thenewhomemaker.com / Clean Your Whole House With Vinegar, Baking Soda and Lemon earth911.com / Suggestions for better washing powders are: Bio-D and Simply Sensitive Non-Bio.
10. ‘Wi-fi: Dangerous to Children and Pregnant Women,’ Karolinska (Nobel Prize) Institute, Dept. of Neuroscience, Sweden, 2011



# WHEN “TIME” BECOMES AN ISSUE

**JAZ RODNEY-SARGEANT**

Stewardship Leader at Bedford Central Church

Time management is a hot topic for businesses and human resource professionals, and is found making a frequent crossover into church life too.

“Why is the service so long?”

“Why can’t they manage time better?!”

Whole organisations have grown, stagnated, or died to the ever-ticking clock of “Time Management.” But what, if anything, has time management to do with our role as good stewards? Is the management of our domestic and business time to be judged differently to our Christian time?

The true test of time stewardship is not about doing more things, but doing the right things, in the right order. It is about asking ourselves, “What is my life purpose in Christ?”

Here are five key principals to be wise stewards of our time:

## **PRIORITISE**

Check in with God first. Every morning before your day even begins, remember Matthew 6:33: “Seek first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” In your morning devotion, ask God how He might want your day to go.

Ephesians 5:16 tells us to make the most of every opportunity. Ask for guidance on how to use the gifts and talents He has blessed you with.

## **PREPARATION AND PLANNING**

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.” Benjamin Franklin. The Bible likewise states, “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty” Proverbs 21:5 (ESV). Spend time thinking about what makes sense to do first and how those priorities are to be executed. This is not difficult; things frequently fall into “Important/ Urgent” categories, and everything else can fall in behind these priorities. Ask yourself, what is important and urgent? This significantly helps take the difficulty out of the decision you make as to what to do first and when to do it.

## **ORGANISATION**

Why not ask the Lord to help you remove the clutter from your life, the people or things that detract and pull you away from your God-given purpose and goals? For many, social media makes a huge dent in our ability to organize and is a great distractor. Why not take the challenge to check just how

much time you spend on “virtual distractions,” such as email, social media, and internet browsing. How much better might your time be spent for God?

## **BE BRAVE!**

Being brave means getting rid of things (or people) which are not in keeping with your God-given priorities or plans. Many bemoan their cluttered lives and disorganisation to be primarily a result of “unexpected intrusions,” but courage can help us address these issues.

**GOD FIRST** – Rely on God’s wisdom. If you question how to manage whatever occurs, or when something should be done, go to the Lord for wisdom on the matter. Remember John 14:14: “If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” Speak to Him as you would a friend or any advisor. As you plan projects or break down large goals into specific tasks, ask the Lord, “Is this in the right order? Is my priority, preparation, planning, and organization in keeping with your plan for my life?”

As you learn to be a better steward of time, claim His promise in John 10:10 and embrace an abundant life!



Minister for Edmonton and Enfield Churches

**DR DES BOLDEAU**



What is a talent? One definition says that it is an innate or inborn gift for a specific activity, either allowing one to demonstrate some immediate skill without practice, or to gain skill rapidly with minimal practice. Michael Hertzell, a motivational leader and entrepreneurial business person, lists on his website over 110 different talents or gifts of which public speaking, writing, self management, networking and critical thinking are but a few.

We are introduced to the concept of talents in the Biblical account of Matt 25:14-30, where it is clear that God gives out talents for investment and there is an expectation of “returns.” The more you use them, the more they multiply!

As a boy, I don’t remember having any

particular talent. Even in my earliteen years, nothing jumped out at me by way of talents. It was not until I became a Christian in my mid teens that I began to experience a transformation. What was a “latent talent” began to emerge from its cocoon-like state. As I began to discover and use my talents in and for the ministry of our Lord, He caused my skills to blossom and multiply and be employed in the work of the church. According to the definition, individuals can be born with or develop a talent. I began to enjoy working with young people as a result of being mentored indirectly by my youth leader, who cared very much for the young rebels of our local church at that time!

There are some in the church who believe that only certain people have

been gifted to be involved in the life and ministry of the church. That is so far from the truth! Whatever talent or gifts you have, whether innate, acquired or developed, they can all be used for the ministry and building up of the church. That is where the “returns” on the investment becomes evident.

Sometimes, parents and teachers have been responsible for either the nurturing or discouraging of our talents. Notwithstanding this, we must honestly recognise, acknowledge, and have confidence in our talents/skills, and employ them competently! The concept of talents is not just related to finances or leadership, for example, but also to everyday abilities. Each of us should seek outlets for our giftedness to be utilised in our church. The church is desperately in need of such talented individuals. Ultimately, the giver of all good gifts in the Lord Himself (James 1:17)—all the more reason why our talents should be used to support and further the ministry and influence of His church.

As for me, in time I learned how to speak publicly and preach. I discovered how to use my weird sense of humour even in the pulpit. I have learnt that God is interested in using my personality to interest and draw people to Him. I discovered also that I have the gift of administration which helps me to be more effective in my ministry.

Could I see all this back then as a boy? Categorically not! But with the passing of time, God has developed me into a person strong in my faith, a husband, father, pastor, leader, administrator etc. What about you? Wouldn’t you like to give what you have to be used by our Lord for His kingdom?







# STEWARDSHIP OF HEALTH

**DR CHIDI NGWABA**

**Dr Chidi Ngwaba, MB, BS is  
SEC Health Ministries Director**

# GOD'S MANIFOLD GRACE

**BY PATRICK BOYLE**

Many years ago, while living in Germany, it was my usual routine to head to the local gym in the morning. I found that this was not only a healthy way to start the day, but also a great opportunity to meet the local people and practice my language skills.

I made some pretty good friends there, especially a weightlifter called Rudi. We constantly shared ideas on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. But one day he said something that I just couldn't quite believe. He told me that a friend of his, Ralph, ate so poorly that for the last six months his diet had consisted only of Mars bars, Diet Coke and Beer!

"That's impossible!" I declared confidently. How could anyone survive on such a toxic diet? All three ingredients are terrible for health. Finally, Rudi convinced me that this was true, and that I could meet Ralph if I wanted. I thought to myself, "This is probably going to involve a hospital visit, as Ralph must have all sorts of problems with such a diet".

That evening we went to meet Ralph. On the way, I was trying to rehearse the right, encouraging words to use to help him get his health back: "It's never too late to change," "Once you get used to it, drinking water's actually ok," etc.

The moment came when we finally met... and it was not at all what I expected! He looked fitter than me! How? How could someone who constantly consumes Mars bars, diet-coke and beer still look so good?

This continued to baffle me for days, weeks, and months after the meeting. Surely this went against everything that I had learned. Then, one day, it hit me. Why should I be so surprised? I was thinking of the human body as though it was machine or gadget. Yes, if you put the wrong fuel into a car, boat or plane, regardless of how expensive, that machine will stop working immediately. However, the human body is put together in such an amazing way that we can, like Ralph, give it the "wrong fuel" for months,

even years, and it will still continue to function.

"Well", I hear you ask, "what is the point of having the 'right fuel,' eating the right food, and doing the right things if our bodies can cope anyway?"

The answer is that the body, as wonderfully made as it is, can only take so much punishment. It will eventually have to stop working so hard to keep us well. That's when disease rears its ugly head. That's when the new battle to defeat disease has to start. Thankfully, it does not have to be like this. Those of us who are healthy have the opportunity to "invest" in our bodies. That means doing the right things today that will ensure a better tomorrow. Let's not "gamble," destroying today what we will need for tomorrow. We know it is not easy to stick to the "narrow way" that leads to good health. There are so many temptations to enter the "broad way" that leads to destruction.

If we were like machines, so that we stopped working immediately after doing the wrong thing, or had a heart attack after just one puff of a cigarette, imagine how disciplined we would become. Nobody would be smoking today. It's only because our bodies give us "grace" that we continue to abuse it.

Therefore, being stewards of our health calls for self-control or discipline.

Remember: "Our lives possess two main weights: the weight of Discipline and the weight of Regret. Discipline weighs ounces; Regret weighs tons."

Let's not look back with any regrets; rather, let's look forward to the great, healthy future God has for us.

The word "manifold" is used by the apostle Peter to describe our stewardship of God's grace (1 Peter 4:10). This is not a word frequently used in Christian conversation today, but it is a lovely word that bears thinking about. Several modern translations find different words to make its meaning clear. Some translate it as "many sided grace," "magnificently varied grace," "different grace," "caring grace," or "infinitely varied grace."

God's grace is not only many sided, but it is given in different ways to every Christian. It is given for use, not to be put in a box under a bed or preserved in a refrigerator. God's manifold grace is given to energise Christian life and to bring glory to God through Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Manifold grace is a powerful blessing put into the hands of every Christian—a power to make things happen in our lives. When we lay hold of it, it creates energy, life, action, movement. Things happen with manifold grace. That is the point Peter wants to make. If our eyes are open to the possibilities of manifold grace, life becomes filled with surprises.

The story of the feeding of the five thousand can teach us an important lesson about how such grace works in our lives.

"Send the people away to buy food for themselves. There are so many of them!" say the disciples.

"No," Jesus replies. "Give me what you have." As a result, a multitude is fed.

Just like the disciples in the story, Christians often feel and think themselves to be powerless. When we think like this, we can become discouraged, and there is nothing the devil enjoys more than a discouraged Christian. One discouraged Christian is like a contagious disease—it rapidly infects others. Nothing interesting or exciting happens in the life of a discouraged person. However, everything

can be changed when we understand how God's manifold grace can give us the power to do amazing things for the glory of God, for our own life, and the blessing of others.

God not only gives His grace; he also supplies the strength to put it into operation. This multicoloured grace is seen best when it is put into action by loving, happy Christians. As we can see in the story of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-36), the acts of grace that Jesus describes can be done by anyone. Do we need a high level of education or wealth to give someone a glass of water? How talented do we need to be to give a sandwich to a hungry person? How qualified do we need to be to visit a lonely person and read God's word to them? Is it very difficult to visit the sick and comfort them?

These simple acts of kindness are manifestations of God's manifold grace. They can be performed by any ordinary Christian and they do not require any special qualifications or skills to do them. Such simple acts glorify God.

As Jesus' story illustrates, there are many ways we can be stewards of grace. Think of hospitality, for example. It is easy to invite a church member, a friend, or a neighbour to share a meal. Any of us can do it. When we have open hearts and eyes to see, the opportunities to become agents of God's manifold grace are endless and all quite simple.

As Christians today, we are richer on average than our parents were, yet we can fail to use our resources to bless others. The difference between those represented by the sheep and the goats in Jesus' parable is how they see other people. Both groups are surprised at the way Jesus views simple acts. How could a glass of water, a slice of bread, or passing on an article of clothing qualify us for entry into the Kingdom of God?

It is simply because the kinds of people who will live in God's eternal kingdom do these things. They are not careless, unfeeling, and indifferent to the needs of others or the manifold grace of God.

There are some wonderful things we can do for the glory of God, but often they do not happen. The reason? Many of us are like the fellow in Pilgrim's Progress; we are looking down in the rubbish, hoping to find something of value, and all the time an angel is holding a golden crown above our heads, offering it to us. We don't see the crown because we are looking in the wrong place. All too often, it may be an iPod, TV screen, or a mobile phone which compels our attention, instead of the needs of our neighbours or the glory of God. It is time to change things.

Here is a suggestion which could kickstart the stewardship of manifold grace in our lives. After we have returned our tithes and offerings, which is our duty, we could put aside a percentage of our money for the purpose of doing good to others. It is wonderful how small amounts regularly put aside in this way increase. Then, when the need of a fellow believer or a friend arises, we have some resources which we can use to meet that need. Doing this simple act helps us to be mindful of one possibility for doing good when it is needed.

It is every Christian's privilege to grasp hold of God's manifold grace and the various gifts it gives to us, and to use them in manifold ways to honour God and bless others, leading to a life of happiness and interest.

**Patrick Boyle is a retired minister who continues to be an active support of others, and for much of 2012-2017 was the BUC retiree's chaplain/coordinator.**





# STEWARDSHIP TO THE 3RD AND 4TH GENERATIONS

DR AUGUSTUS LAWRENCE

Family Ministries Director

Central to the principles of stewardship given to every family is the fact that children are entrusted to parents as highly valuable gift from God. With these treasured possessions come the responsibility of caregiving. Thus, to see children as a gift from God and to understand that each parent is accountable are among some of the challenges of stewardship.

What is the meaning of stewardship, anyway? According to Webster's dictionary, "Stewardship is the responsibility of managing some assets or affairs or property of another person." Essentially, stewardship is managing something that is not your own. The key word in that definition is the word "management." The word "steward" means "manager." If you are a parent, you are a steward for your child and are called to act on the treasured principle of individual responsibility.

We share collective responsibility for the community in which we live. This is particularly relevant when it comes to the relationship between parents and their children. Stewardship calls parents not only to teach their little ones, but also, in a deeper and more purposeful sense, to assess what they do and how they live as it has an impact on the future to the third and fourth generations.

Furthermore, as parents, what we do today will influence the future of the third and fourth generations. Our current social crises tell the story. For example, some of our institutions and moral codes are beginning to dissolve. Marriages are fading. Families in and around our communities are dismantling.

In a study called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)<sup>1</sup>, it is reported that children who are maltreated or who grow up in homes with problems such as domestic violence, substance misuse, or criminal behaviour have poorer educational and employment prospects and suffer more behavioural and health problems than those who are not exposed to such adversities. Additionally, children who are exposed to ACEs can

have difficulty controlling their emotions and can suffer from problems such as attachment difficulties, low levels of trust, and low self-esteem. These characteristics can affect their performance at school and lead to communication problems, difficulties forming healthy relationships, and vulnerability to harmful behaviours such as substance abuse, risky sexual activity, and overeating.

What makes these developments so tragic is that individuals have forgotten the biblical truth that what we do does not affect us alone; it affects our children to the third and fourth generations.

Is there any hope? Absolutely! First and foremost, a study edited by Shonkoff and Phillips<sup>2</sup> shows that the single most important component of a child's healthy development is the presence of an enduring, loving, healthy, caring relationship with an adult. Adults who are mature and committed to one another, and who model and pass on good moral values, are needed within our community and faith groups.

Second, our youth evangelism and child ministry should take into consideration the importance of making the church a place where children and youth can be appreciated and invest themselves and their talents. This is the power of "belonging," allowing the church to live out its collective responsibility of stewardship.



Third, according to the Hard Wired to Connect<sup>3</sup> report, neuronal regeneration is possible given the right environment. What this means is that when the church improves its social interaction or environment, it can have a positive behavioural influence on those around.

Finally, parents should never underestimate the power of God's love in assisting them to successfully fulfil their responsibilities to influence the third and fourth generations. Negatives can be changed to positives, and through this God can still show "mercy and steadfast love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:6). The charge of caregiving to which stewardship calls us is possible through the love of God.

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2. National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000) From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.  
3. [http://nurturingparenting.com/images/cmsfiles/hardwired\\_to\\_connect.pdf](http://nurturingparenting.com/images/cmsfiles/hardwired_to_connect.pdf)

# THE STEWARDSHIP OF GIVING



TED Stewardship Director

DAVID NEAL

"I Think He's on to Something" During the recent General Conference Spring Council, Elder G. T. Ng (Executive Secretary) made a presentation with the title "No More Room," based on the words of Malachi 3:10.

"Put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (ESV). Reporting on 2016 tithe contribution to the General Conference from across all world divisions, Elder Ng saw a principle that perhaps we have missed in recent times, one that is clear and simple:

Raising tithe income is not about requesting more money from members, but about raising faithfulness. I think he's on to something! So much so that I began to wonder about my home conference (SEC), with its huge mission from Redruth in the West, to Lowestoft in the East, and all the many towns and cities in between. This vast, highly-populated territory is the largest conference in the Trans-European Division, blessed with close to 25,500 members.

Then I thought about the faithfulness of South England members. Every pound and penny returned to the Lord is a story of faithful members

permitting Him to manage their lives for the better, one which causes me to offer thanks to the Lord, and to you, Communicator reader. With a conference tithe income of £14,697,586 for 2016, a 4.6% increase over 2015, I see blessing upon blessing, as members return to the Lord what is His, recognising His ownership of their lives, and at the same time, visibly supporting the message and mission of the church. The precise percentage of SEC members who return a faithful tithe is not easy to find, but in the spirit of Elder Ng, I would like to invite you to consider what the total tithe income could be:

- If the total SEC tithe income during 2016 was contributed by only 50% of the membership, with all members returning a faithful tithe in 2017, the potential tithe income by year end could be £29,359,172
- If the total tithe income during 2016 was contributed by only 30% of the membership, with all members returning a faithful tithe in 2017, the potential tithe income by year end could be £48,931,953. I have attended many SEC sessions over the years, and witnessed more than one delegate stand at the microphone and earnestly request the administration to provide more pastors for the field. The predictable and

typical answer was "Sorry, limited resources." Elder Ng's premise of "faithfulness potential" invites us to consider that this need not be so, with the heart of the matter about "raising faithfulness." Let me challenge you a little with some "tither" pictures; see if you recognise yourself. The term may be an unfamiliar one, first used by the Stewardship Department of the South Pacific Division. I use it with caution and grace to describe—not to label with judgement.

• **The Faithful Tither**  
The member who returns 10% of their income consistently to what the Bible describes as the "temple treasury." The Seventh-day Adventist Church applies the "temple treasury" principle to the local conference.

• **The Part-Tither**  
The member who returns a percentage of their income as and when they choose.

• **The Reluctant Tither**  
The member who returns tithe through obligation, and feels put upon by the Lord and the Church.

• **The Tithe Diverter**  
The member who gives tithe in many ways, all seemingly legitimate. They would never use the term "divert," but what is meant to be personal tithe return ends up at 3ABN, ADRA, "the church back home," and even the short-term mission project (to name but a few examples).

• **The Double Tither**  
This member is like Jim, who desperately needed a quality job. For months, his job offered just the minimum wage and a Zero Hours contract. To support his family, Jim urgently needed a job with a living wage. After putting the matter before the Lord, a few weeks went by, and he found the

perfect job. Jim was so thankful to the Lord for leading him to the new job that he tithed 1/3 of his first month's salary!

Is your relationship with the Lord growing or stagnant? Are you experiencing the answer to Paul's prayer: "I pray that you... together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love" (Ephesians 3:18)? Are you at the point in your life when your "faithfulness potential" is the one simple action of inviting the Lord to manage your life—all of it?

Imagine that it is January 2018, and all the 2017 year-end tithe reports from every church in the conference are logged. The SEC Treasurer calculates the total tithe return. A warm smile appears on his face as he sees a total return of £30,000,000. He immediately offers a prayer of thanks to the Lord for every faithful member. He runs along the office corridor to share this news with the President, and the Executive Secretary. The cork pops as they open a bottle of Shloer Celebration Rosé, they clink glasses, and there is pure joy and thankfulness. Because for 2018, this means an increase in the pastoral team, including more funds for outreach and mission across South England. The days of "limited funds" are over, and God's Kingdom can be further advanced.

As I said earlier, I think Elder Ng is definitely onto something!

"Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this, and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you, and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams." (Malachi 3:9-10, The Message).





# MANAGING THE LOCAL CHURCH

**GODWIN BENJAMIN**

Advent Centre  
Manager

When many of our members joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they saw themselves as members of a local congregation committed to fulfilling the Gospel Commission. However, at the same time they became part of a worldwide church that has a presence in at least 216 countries. On joining the church, there are many questions the new member may have about the church, such as:

- How does their local congregation conduct its business?
- How is this local congregation linked to the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- How does this global organization function?
- Where and when are decisions made, and by whom?

To assist our members in understanding how their church works, we need to educate them about the building blocks of Seventh-day Adventist Church

structure, then show how these various pieces of organization work together. They also need to be shown how and by whom decisions are made in the church, and how they can participate in the decision-making process.

One of the most interesting features in any organization relates to how authority is exercised. Who has it, and how is it used? In some religious organizations, final authority resides in an individual; however, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, final authority resides in a group. While it is true that various leadership positions are given considerable authority, such authority must be exercised within the context of a leader being held accountable by a group. This feature is sometimes described as “authority ascending to a group.” It means that the highest degree of authority is held by a group of individuals rather than by a single individual. Unfortunately, many of our members are not aware that this is how “their church” should operate, and as a result, many decisions are taken unilaterally without the input of a group, i.e. the church membership.

The highest level of authority granted to each level of denominational

organization resides in the constituency meeting—the delegates in business meeting. Various officers may be elected and vested with a degree of authority, but ultimately each officer is accountable to a group such as the church board. A church board is elected by the church members to “govern the day-to-day running of the church” through policies, constitution, and the church manual. However, the church board is ultimately accountable to the church membership at a business (constituency) meeting of the local church.

An important element of the authority principle in denominational life is that no group or individual has more authority than the group that appointed it. For example, the church board does not have more authority than the church business meeting. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual outlines in considerable detail the authority, responsibility, and relationships that pertain to the operations of a local church.

Many of our members would do well to acquaint themselves with the Church Manual and the governance and procedures of the church so that they can make wholesome contributions to the running of their local church.

# MAKING A WILL



**BUC Trustees  
Services Director**

**ALAN HODGES**

## Why is it important to make a Will?

Fifty-three percent of the population in the United Kingdom do not have a will. That amounts to 27 million people! Are you part of those statistics?

By making a will, you can decide what happens to your property and possessions after your death. Although you do not have to make one by law, it is the best way to make sure your estate is passed on to family and friends exactly as you wish. If you die without a will, your assets may be distributed according to the law rather than your wishes.

Preparing a will is an act of good stewardship, as it enables the individual to extend management of those God-given resources beyond his or her lifetime. Psalm 24: 1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.” What we “own” is a trust from God, and each Christian should exercise wise stewardship over these possessions. A Christian will is an instrument of life.

## There are many good reasons for making a will:

1. You can decide how your assets are shared—if you don’t have a will, the law says who gets what.
2. You can show love to your family and provide for their needs, both

financially and for Christian nurture and instruction. 1 Timothy 5:8 says, “But those who won’t care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.”

3. You can make sure you don’t pay more inheritance tax than necessary.

4. You can provide a plan and clear direction to follow up your stewardship responsibilities to your loved ones and the Lord’s work beyond your lifetime here on earth. Hebrews 11:4 says, “It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel’s offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith.” Likewise, our example can continue to speak to others.

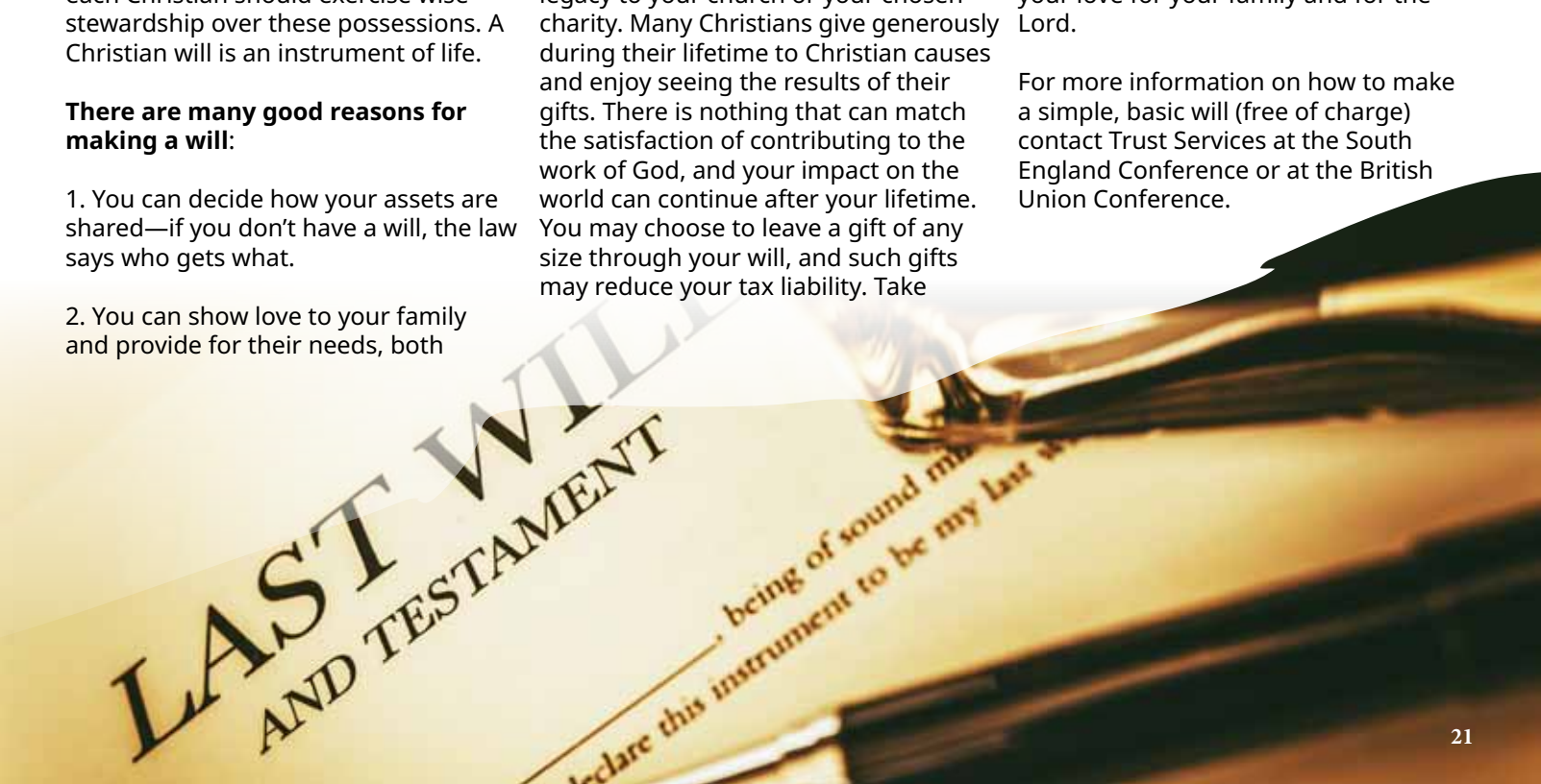
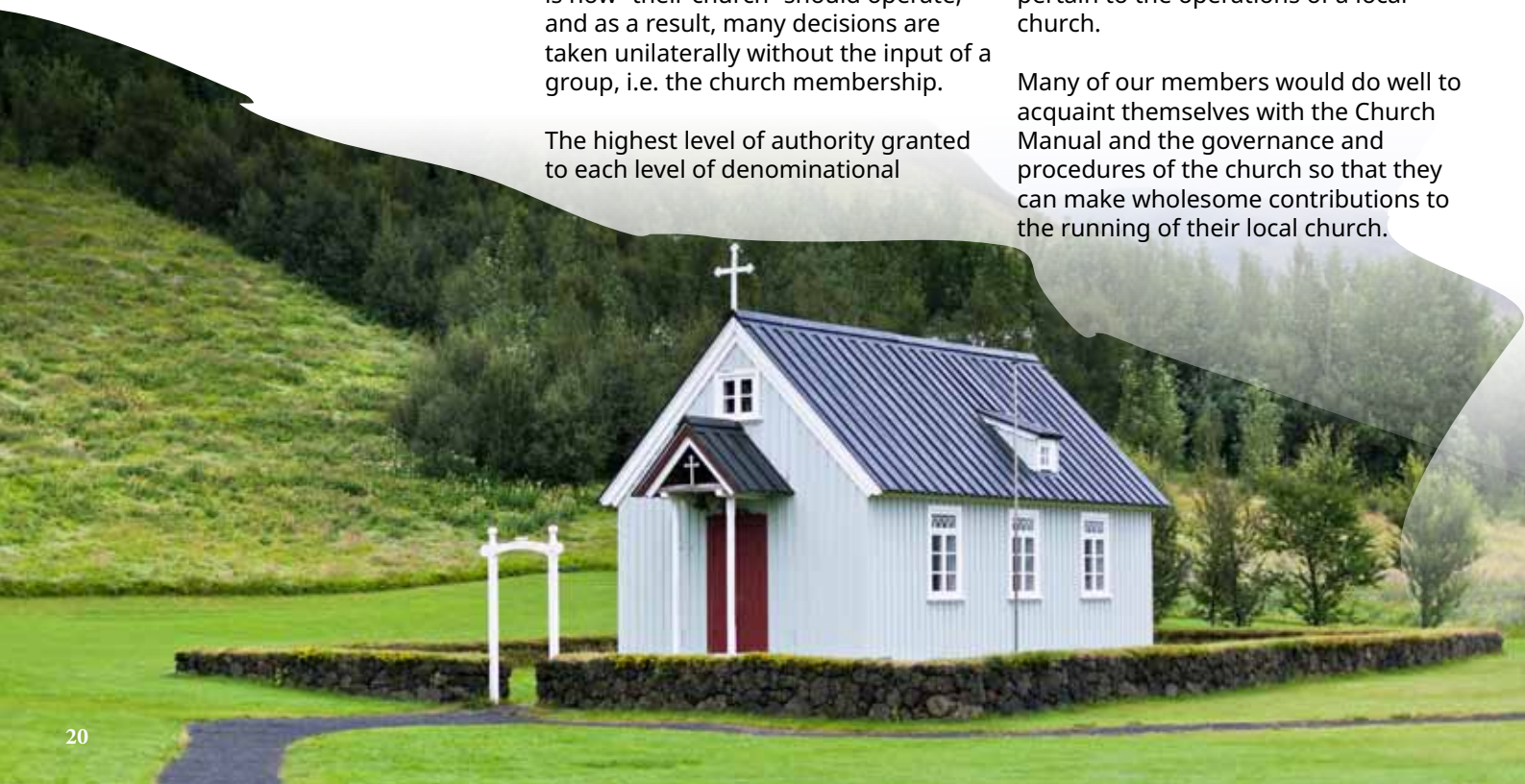
5. You can save on tax by leaving a legacy to your church or your chosen charity. Many Christians give generously during their lifetime to Christian causes and enjoy seeing the results of their gifts. There is nothing that can match the satisfaction of contributing to the work of God, and your impact on the world can continue after your lifetime. You may choose to leave a gift of any size through your will, and such gifts may reduce your tax liability. Take

time to prayerfully educate yourself concerning the ministries that are close to your heart, and then give a gift that really counts. Great satisfaction comes from aiding a cause in which you truly believe. With planning, you can maximize the benefits for all concerned.

6. Having a will is especially important if you have young children, because it gives you the opportunity to designate a guardian for them in the event of your death. Without a will, the court will appoint a guardian for your children, and it may not be the person whom you would choose to love and educate your children.

As well as being an act of stewardship, your will is also a witness, in a sense. What you say and provide for in your will can have eternal consequences. You can include words of personal witness; you can seek God’s guidance and follow God’s principles in distributing your estate and choosing those who will act in your place; and you can demonstrate your love for your family and for the Lord.

For more information on how to make a simple, basic will (free of charge) contact Trust Services at the South England Conference or at the British Union Conference.





# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GIFT AID

**KERRI-ANNE ANIM**

Gift Aid Administrator



## What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid is a government scheme that allows tax to be claimed on all donations to a registered charity. The extra money works out as an additional 25p for every pound given.

There is also the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS), which enables the weekly local church offerings to be gift-aided as well.

## How is this money allocated?

40% of Gift Aid goes to churches purchasing grants and building projects throughout the SEC.

15% goes to the local area or district.

45% goes to the local church. A higher percentage than this is available to local churches for specific building projects.

## Why is Gift Aid important?

The potential funds that can be claimed from Gift Aid are tremendous!

This money helps to boost the total from the tithes and offerings that are given, so it is essential that we take advantage of this scheme and get the maximum for our churches, where possible.

## Who can sign up for Gift Aid?

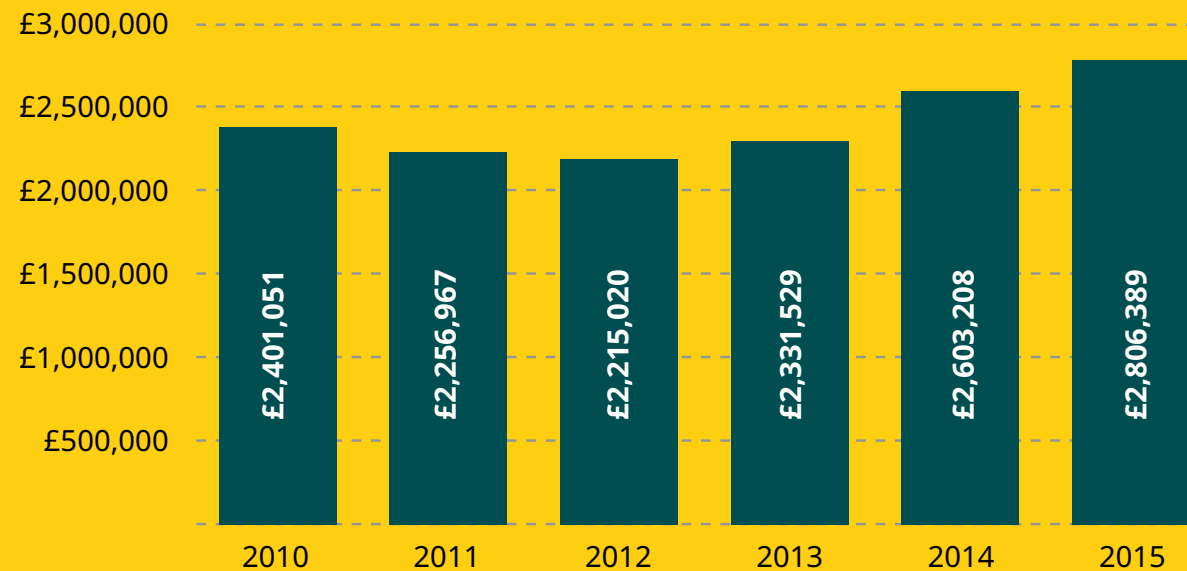
If you are a UK taxpayer, you are eligible to be part of the Gift Aid scheme.

Non-UK taxpayers can make donations, but these are not eligible for tax reclaim from the HMRC.

It is important to make note of any changes to the tax paid. The total tax paid per month must cover the donation that is made so that the church does not claim back more tax than it is entitled to.

Gift Aid can be backdated up to 4 years, so it is important to tick that box on the declaration if this applies to you.

## GIFT AID FIGURES 2010-2015



# THREE STEPS TO FINANCIAL HEALTH

B Eng ACA MIOd MAfNED  
Central London Church, Advent Centre

**DEBORAH HARRIS**

## It's never too late to start setting SMARTER™ goals

Hands up if at any point in your life you have complained about the state of your finances: "My money looks funny this month," or "There's more month left at the end of my money!" It doesn't matter what profession or business we're in. Our age doesn't matter, or our gender. Most people are affected by their limited financial literacy.

But you can be financially savvy (Phil 4:13). Let's look at three steps to help start you on this amazing and life-rewarding journey.

### First Step: Have SMARTER™ goals.

You only have one life, so live it well! Are you asking, "So, what is a SMARTER™ goal then?"

We've all heard about SMART goals: goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and with Time limits. But what about the "ER" bit? As Christians, this should be the "emergency" part of goal setting for any financial or life goals.

E = Ethical

First, ask yourself, "Is my goal or target ethical? Will it land me in jail? Damage the reputation of my family or those connected with me? Will it be something I am not ashamed to talk about with my mum, or my young

children?" If the answer to any of these questions is a "No," then stop and do something else.

R = Righteous

Second, ask yourself, "Is this goal going to allow me to contribute in my God-given unique way to the gospel movement, or will it hinder me in that part of my life?" Again, if the answer is "No," then quit. Through your daily devotion (and a supported study of your personal and spiritual gifts), try to discover what you know God has planned for your life; pursue it, and then your goal will work.

I often say that no matter what we read in the press or see on TV, it is never too late (or too early) to start pursuing your life goals. If we start later, it just means that more effort must be taken to make your goals a reality, as time is not on your side. But time is fair to everyone - we all get 24 hours in a day!

### Second Step: Own up to your responsibility. "If it is to be, it's up to me."

Harsh words, I know. (Looking for a nice, comfy read? Please turn the page to find a different article!) Getting a

(continued from Page 10)

completed and SMARTER™ list of every financial goal you want to achieve in the short, medium, and long term is a critical first step.

(For a free printable and other information that can help you with this, go to [www.bit.ly/flphelps](http://www.bit.ly/flphelps))

### Third Step: Get "financial literacy" educated

Whether it's paying off debts, building a better business, running a self-sustainable project or ministry, or learning how to save effectively, our level of financial literacy will shape the approach we take to financial stewardship.

It is just as easy to develop good habits as it is to nurture poor ones. It takes between 21 to 29 days for an action, if repeated, to become a habit. It is possible to learn and develop the best systems to save money for set activities and life dreams. Begin today. In a year from now, you will wish you had started today! Be one of the SMARTER™ believers!





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# THIS IS MY STORY

**LAURA OSEI**

**Ministerial Spouses Association**

Many of our members often believe that as wives and husbands of ministers, we are clones of our spouses—or trophy spouses, perfect homemakers, excellent cooks, marvellous singers, great preachers, and amazing storytellers, who are always happy and bubbly!

Sadly, this is not a true reflection of who we really are. We are real. We hurt. We cry. We may “bawl.” We suffer silently, and many times we are close to breaking down and throwing in the towel. But God lifts us up and puts us back on our feet.

We are support for our spouses, waiting for hours for that church board to release them, or for that intense conversation with a member to conclude, trying to be calm and keep the children occupied while the church meeting goes on towards midnight!

We are ordinary human beings, just like you, with feelings, emotions, and hang-ups. Yes, we even have the ability to laugh till our belly hurts, to tease, to joke, and to be silly and frivolous at times.

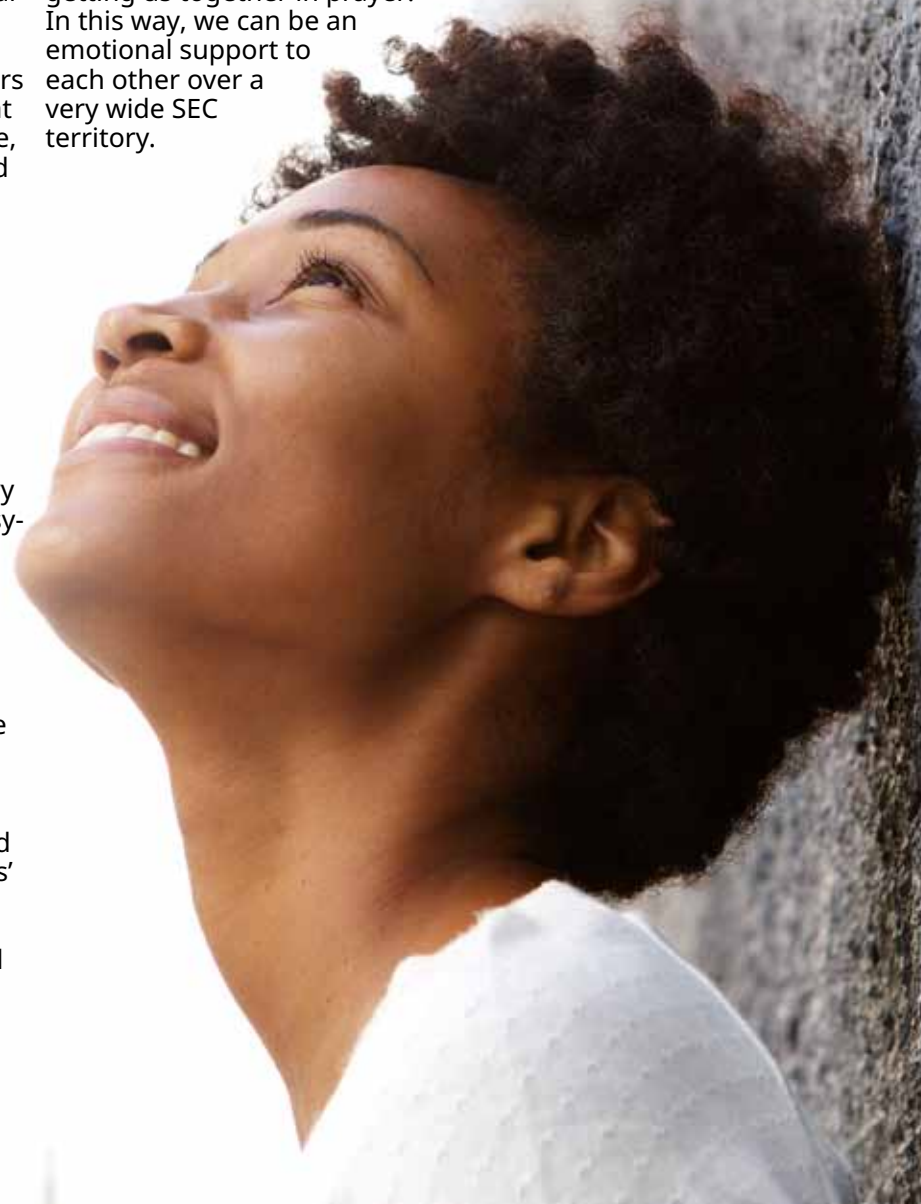
When our “perfect PKs” behave imperfectly, we drag the little blighters to their seat, whispering threats all the way as we nod and smile like every good ministry spouse should, with our hats topsyturvy, our clothes covered in grubby jam fingerprints, and carrying everything but the kitchen sink in that voluminous minister’s spouse’s bag.

Yes, we are real, and we are kindly asking you to treat us that way. Let us and our children feel your love and not your disappointment when we can’t live up to those heavenly expectations you have of us.

One way that we can really let our hair down and be ourselves is at our annual Ministerial Spouses’ Retreat. Many of us have been attending this for over 20 or 30 years. It happens over the first weekend of the Autumn Half-Term holidays, and it is always a delight to get away from home, family, and spouse for a weekend where we can sleep in a king-size bed alone and be pampered with massages, saunas, facials, manicures and pedicures.

It is a time to relax and to catch up with other ministerial spouses that we haven’t seen over the year, other than perhaps fleeting glimpses and a quick peck on the cheek. It is a time to eat good food, laugh, and joke. Above all, it is a special time to listen to well-presented talks and to meditate on the love of Jesus, a time to pray, a time to sing, a time to read the Word and discuss ways to make it applicable in our lives. In all honesty, it is a real time of refreshing. We need it and we love our MSA weekend!

The MSA committee’s role is to support the Ministry spouses and families by putting on events, organising trips, dinners, and getting us together in prayer. In this way, we can be an emotional support to each other over a very wide SEC territory.



# HOPE ON THE HIGH STREET

**by NATASHA MIRILOV**



“When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.” Psalms 34:7. This is the Bible verse that comes to mind when I think about Andre Best and Barbara Lawrence, who are making a difference in their community as founders of Mums-in-Action and the charity shop Hope.

About two years ago, wife and mother Andre found out she was to be made redundant. Disheartened, despondent, and depressed, she felt useless and spiritually weak, her only prayer to God being “help me.” During this period in her life, she daily turned to 2 Timothy 1:7: “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

One day, while she read her Bible and prayed, she was drawn to Job 1. Andre knew that this was her sign from God, telling her that whatever she went through in life, good or bad, she must always trust and praise Him. From that day forward, her attitude changed because she knew that she had nothing to fear; God had a plan and purpose for her life.

For over a decade, Andre and her friend Barbara had been talking about opening a charity shop, which seemed an impossible dream at the time. Now,



Andre shared her experience of God’s assurance to her heart with Barbara, and in August 2015, the two mothers teamed up to achieve their fourteen-year-long dream of opening a not-for-profit charity shop for pre-loved items on St Albans Road in Watford, called Hope. They make sure they offer selected high street fashion items, and good-quality clothes, accessories, and designer items at affordable prices.

“I want Hope to become a hub within the community where mums can not only purchase good-quality clothing, but can also pop in for a chat over tea or coffee and make new friends,” said Andre, who is mainly in charge of the retailing aspect.

However, it is not what can be seen from outside the store windows that makes this charity shop unlike any other. It is the carefully designed room in the back of the shop that brings meaning to this mission store and really drives these two mothers to pursue the next step of their project. This back room is used for training and practical support to local parents and families.

“We plan to offer formal and informal training courses, such as parenting, healthy eating on a small income, family budgeting, CV writing, and employability skills,” explained Barbara, who is responsible for the community projects.

The store owners are full of excitement about their plans for how the training area of the shop premises is to be utilised. Andre and Barbara look forward to seeing how God accomplishes His purposes in the community of Watford through Mums-in-Action and Hope.



For information on how to donate to Hope, get support or receive information on the forthcoming training courses, please contact us at [info@hopecharity.org.uk](mailto:info@hopecharity.org.uk)  
Hope address: 146 St Albans Road, Watford, Herts, WD24 4FS  
Hope website: [www.hopecharity.org.uk](http://www.hopecharity.org.uk)

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# SHOULD CHRISTIANS DO YOGA?

To Stretch or Not to Stretch?  
A personal exploration of Yoga as a suitable  
activity for Christians



Communication  
& Media PA

NATASHA MIRILOV

Mind, check... spirit, check... body, not so check. Between my busy schedule of work, wedding planning, and church commitments, not being a committed gym user, I knew there was no way I was going to keep up with my body.

I knew I would feel more motivated getting into some form of activity led by a qualified trainer. It would have to be something straight to the point. I wanted to feel relaxed and stretch my muscles, so I decided to take up yoga. But I remembered people at church warning me of specific spiritual focuses associated with yoga.

Mark Driscoll in his article "Christian Yoga? It's a stretch" says,

"There is nothing wrong with stretching, exercising, or regulating one's stress through breathing. But when the tenets of yoga are included, it's by definition a worship act to spirit beings other than the God of the Bible. By way of analogy, there is nothing inherently wrong with intimacy, sex, and pleasure. But when the tenets of adultery are included, it's a sinfully idolatrous worship act."

Wow! I remember thinking, No way! Yoga is not THAT deep to make such an analogy. Yet yoga (which means "union") is central to Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. It includes traditional elements of focusing on positions intended to keep the body fit, calming one's breathing, and stilling the mind through meditation and spiritual viewpoints.

The final goal of yoga is to accomplish freedom, or Moksha, from all worldly suffering, and Samsara, which is the cycle of birth and death. With this mastery over the body, mind, and spirit, the Yogi reaches an enlightened state and experiences a blissful "union of the individual atma, soul, with paramatma, the universal soul" (ibid).

As I studied the issue further, I was finding articles and research online stating that the Warrior pose, which

strengthens the shoulders, arms, legs, ankles and back, is actually derived from the son of the Hindu god Shiva. Or that the several animal poses in yoga allow you to take the postures and attributes of that animal. Even the final relaxation pose, known as the Corpse pose, is meant to mimic death—which is considered by Hindus to be the highest moment in life—and helps you prepare for it.

Still, I was not convinced that there would be an issue in doing yoga if the spiritual aspect was taken out of it. In the end, wasn't it all about muscles and breathing?

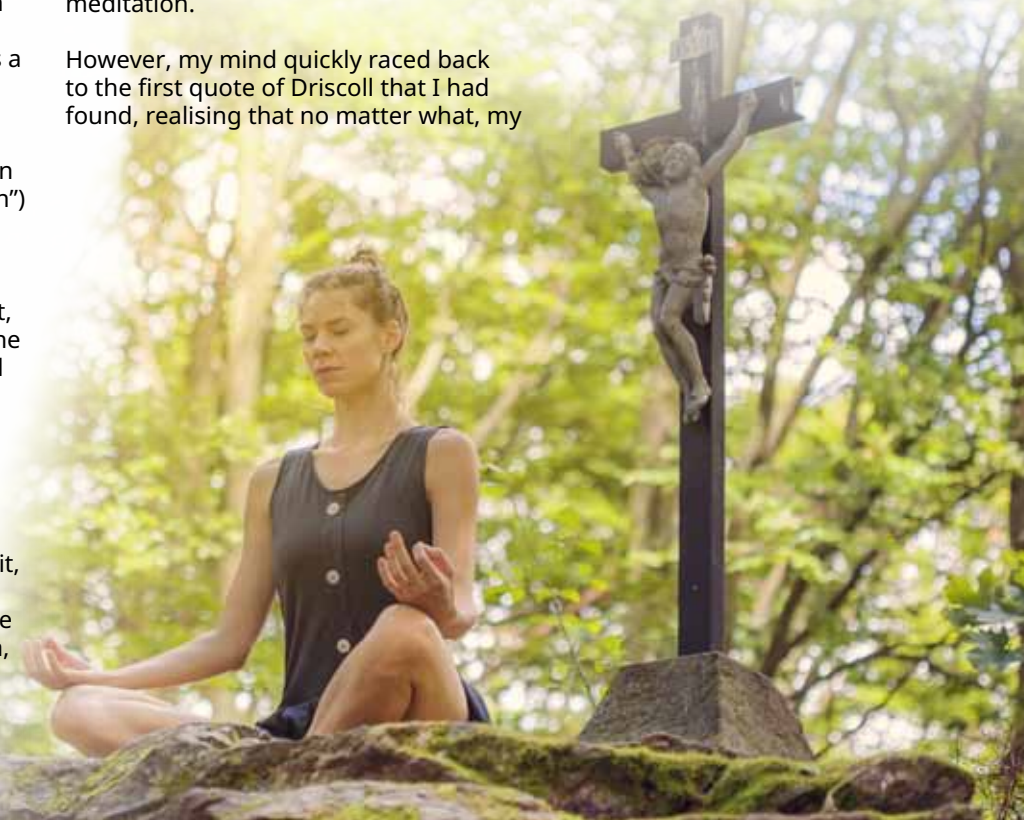
I came across the Holy Yoga community (HolyYoga.net), who seemed to share my initial belief in the practise. Holy Yoga claims they found a method of connecting one's body, mind, and spirit with God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This group uses yoga as a witnessing tool, comparing the activity to breathing and moving in Christ, and a spiritual discipline, much like a prayer or meditation.

However, my mind quickly raced back to the first quote of Driscoll that I had found, realising that no matter what, my

meditation and prayer must always be in tune with God's Word. I read in the Bible that my body is the temple of God and is a living and holy sacrifice to Him (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 6:19), not to the 330 million Hindu gods and goddesses.

Even Rajiv Malhotra, a Hindu yoga practitioner and scholar, agrees with Christian scholars about the incompatibility between Christianity and yoga, arguing that "the idea that the body is a vehicle for reaching consciousness with the divine is fundamentally at odds with Christian teaching.

In the end, I realised that although it is important for me to exercise, I should never adopt a practise that goes against my Christian beliefs. So, no yoga for me! Instead, I found Pilates and light dance, or Zumba, to be a perfect alternative, focusing on linking breathing and body movement. One thing I know for sure: my body is a gift from God and it is my duty to take care of it.





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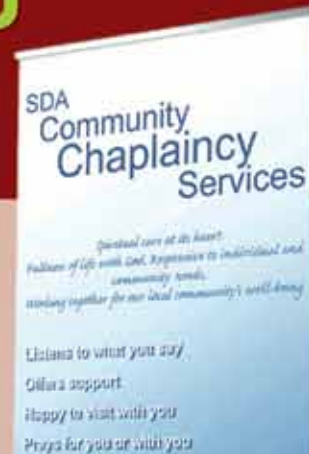
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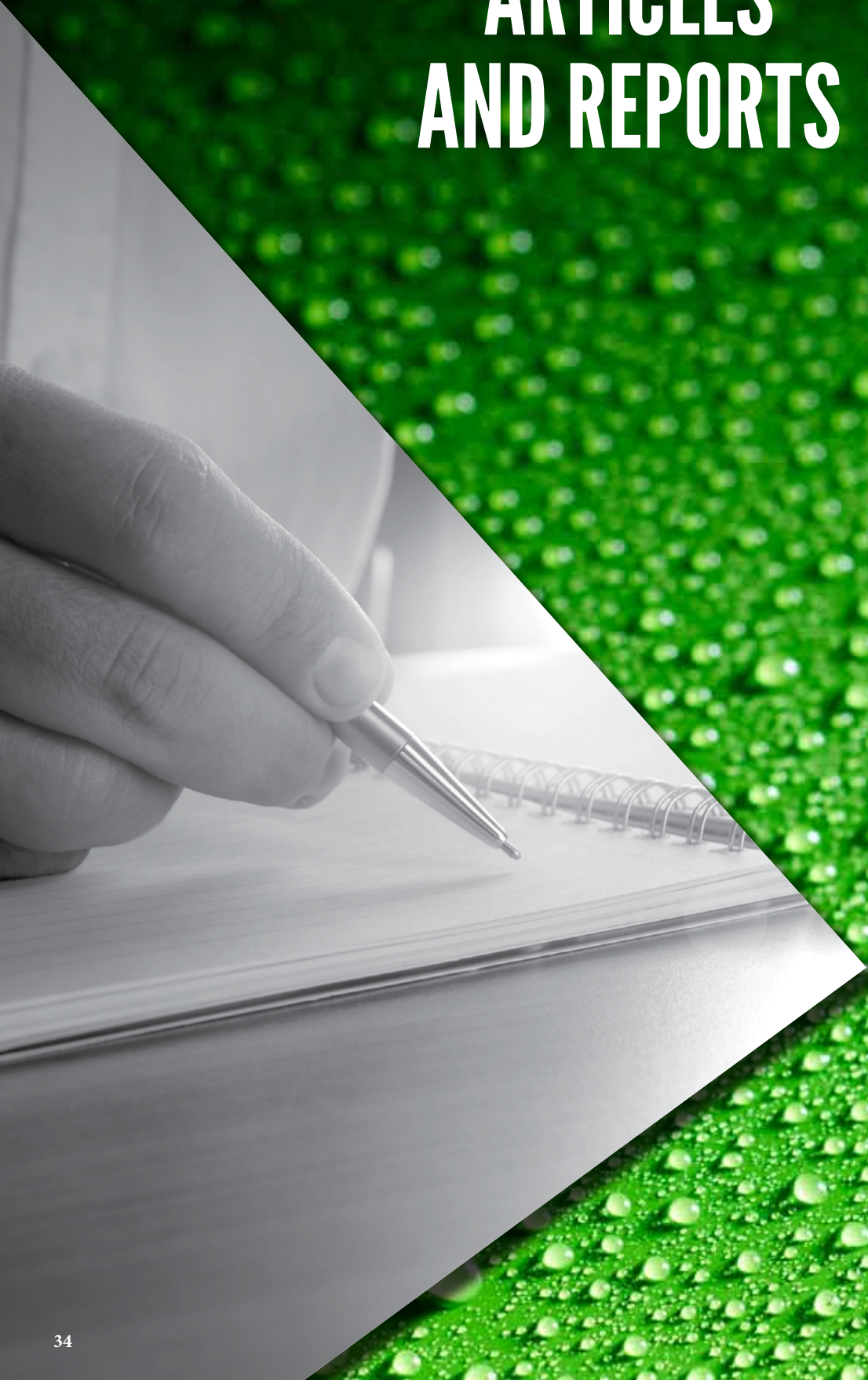
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Dr Wale Oladipo is the presenter for "You and your health" on "Blessed Hope Broadcasting Service" (BHBS). He is a Physician in General Medicine at the Luton and Dunstable NHS Foundation Trust. He is a medical doctor by training and holds a Master's degree in Public Health in the United Kingdom. He loves working for the Lord and presently, is serving as the Vice President for Cornerstone Bible Fellowship Association (CBFA) a registered Charity in the UK.

His ministry with his local Church family at Blessed Hope SDA Church Dartford, in London, includes serving as Health Ministries' leader, deacon, one of the youth leaders and a member of the Praise Team and Prayer Band. He loves to support others in their times of need. Dr Oladipo is a conservative investor with good business acumen. He says, "Above all things, I am a man of Faith." He is married to his lovely wife, Yewande, and they are blessed with two children: Oluwatoni and Oluwaloni

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# DEPARTMENTAL ARTICLES AND REPORTS



I remember a poster from my school days which was on the wall of the technical drawing classroom, and to which our teacher constantly drew our attention. On the poster were two words: “Plan Ahead.” Unfortunately, the person who had written those two words hadn’t done just as they said. As our eyes moved toward the end of the poster, we could see that the author had run out of room and the final couple of letters were crammed up into the top right-hand corner of the page.

Planning ahead is a large part of what we do in Secretariat. And a larger part of that is having the right information about our membership so that we can better inform those plans that are being made. As a conference, our purpose is to fulfil the Gospel commission—it is to reach out into every home in the SEC territory and share the good news of a Saviour. That can only be done if we effectively plan for both now and the future.

One of the tools that we use for planning ahead is the statistical data which is collected in our membership database. The analysis of such data allows us to identify where we are succeeding and failing, where we are growing and where we are declining. Last year, the British Union Conference, in conjunction with the two conferences, made the decision to move to a new membership database. We had been using the same database for over twenty-five years, and in that time, changes to data protection laws and the ever-present threat from cyber-attacks were taking their toll. At the end of

April, we stopped updating the old database, and in the middle of May all the data was transferred to the new Adventist Contact Management system. This is a new system designed and built by the General Conference for the Adventist Church. It not only brings the ability to keep our data as secure as we can, but will also continue to evolve as our needs continue to develop and grow.

After the summer, we will begin to roll out training to local church clerks on how to keep their congregation’s membership data up to date, how to electronically manage membership transfers, and how to submit their conference reports at the touch of a button.

Why is this important? Having up-to-date demographic information about our membership helps us to effectively plan for the present and the future. We can analyse trends in how our membership is growing and look to better manage the resources of our growing conference.

One of my favourite images in Scripture is found in Nehemiah 8. The children of Israel are gathered in front of the Water Gate in Jerusalem, and you would think that after 70 years in captivity they would be a broken and miserable people. But that is not what you see here. In fact, the passage says that they came together as “one man... men, women and all who could understand” (Neh 8:1-2). This was a group of people who stood before God together, as one people. Likewise, as we plan ahead, let us do it together, each one of us sharing the Gospel with the gifts God has given us.



PR DOUGLAS MCCORMAC

Back in 2014, news was leaked that the ultimate restoration project at the Louvre Art Gallery in Paris had begun. A team of highly skilled but nervous professionals apparently started the painstaking work of restoring Leonardo da Vinci's priceless masterpiece, the Mona Lisa.

Much to the relief of art lovers worldwide, the news turned out to be part of an elaborate hoax. Restoration of art is always perilous work, especially when it is for a priceless masterpiece. The risk of getting it wrong is too great. Just like endless prequels and sequels to the original Star Wars trilogy, some things are best left alone!

2017 is the Year of Restoration for the SEC. It is the theme of this year's camp meeting, the major theme for prayer across the conference, and it is driven into every aspect of the 4 EEE strategic priorities:

- A Spiritually Hungry Church
- A Nurturing Church
- A Relevant Church
- A Resourceful Church

God's church and His people are priceless masterpieces whose restoration must be handled with great care and precision. That is why God Himself needs to lead it. Restoration is not easy work; it involves moving beyond comfort zones. It often means healing past hurts, restoring relationships, and reconnecting

with mission. It could mean going to unusual places and doing unusual things, such as engaging with people we may not usually connect with.

Here are three things to consider as you think about how you will bring the Year of Restoration to life in your part of the SEC:

## 1. PRAYER

Anything to do with the mission of our church must begin with prayer. We can all prayerfully consider how we can make restoration happen in our part of the SEC. Without prayer, our efforts to restore will fail. We are reminded in Psalm 127:1 that "unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

## 2. KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO RESTORE

It is vital that you know where restoration needs to start. Identify the area or issue in which you are trying to make a difference. For example, how might you breathe life back into that once-thriving youth department? How might you re-energise efforts to reach the local community? Be clear on how these efforts align to the EEE strategic priorities.

## 3. SHAPING CHURCH CULTURE

Culture is one of those things that you get even if you do absolutely nothing.

Is the culture of your church, as you currently experience it, helping or hindering you from getting closer to your goals? How might you positively influence the culture of your church?

Church leaders are often unaware of the way in which they shape the culture in a church. What they don't say, what they say, and how they say it, as well as what they notice and what they reward, all contribute to what is considered acceptable or unacceptable. Their influence filters down throughout the church. Leaders should therefore be intentional. This often means modelling the behaviours they wish to see in all the members. For example, if conflict is an issue, how can church leaders model how to have the difficult conversation that leads to conflict resolution?

## And finally...

The EEE laboratory continues to go from strength to strength, helping numerous churches interpret EEE for their localities. If your church is a masterpiece in need of some restoration, and you would like help in understanding how adopting EEE might help, please do not hesitate to ask about bringing the EEE laboratory to your church.

Please continue to pray as we partner with the Holy Spirit to restore the SEC in 2017.

**AMR and its Working Methodology**  
Evangelism is a task which Jesus commissioned us all to undertake. This demands that our message should be Jesus-focused, our methods Spirit-anointed, and our motivation God-centred. Adventist Muslim Relations Ministry (AMR) has responded to this call by reaching out to the Muslim community and by working effectively among Adventist Churches.

The role of AMR is three dimensional. First, we seek to share Jesus and the story of salvation with Muslims. We then work within the Seventh-day Adventist church to raise awareness about Islam. Finally, we aim to create platforms where both Adventists and Muslims can have a shared spiritual understanding between them.

## God-Guided Evangelism

AMR is a ministry of transformation, which comes with certain challenges. Some of the main responsibilities of the AMR team is dealing with abuse and crises that come because of conversions. In working with Muslim converts, we support a group of people who have been rejected and hated by their communities, people who are suffering poverty (due to co-dependence and rejection by their families), and who often experience threats to their lives. This constant fear and pressure can be overwhelming and can exhaust anyone. Supporting converts in these kinds of situations is not easy; it requires a lot of experience, as it can test anyone's faith.

Reaching out to the emotionally depleted takes much more than a knowledge of psychology or counselling. It takes love and compassion. The AMR team tries to share the burden of these converts by providing them with a shoulder to cry upon (Rom 12:15). Muslim converts can also find themselves in situations where their resources

are low, and God can enable AMR to provide meaningful relationships and practical support in such circumstances, such as help with travelling, legal aid, finances, education, and accommodation.

## Educating the Adventist Church

The reality is that some of our youth have become targets of Islam and have been won over. This situation has created an urgent need in our church to understand more about Islam. AMR is playing a vital role here through informing the Church about Islamic history, ideology, sects, evangelism, culture and practices. Also, AMR seeks to educate Adventists on what Islam truly teaches to combat misinformation and false portrayals. If we act wisely by raising awareness and reminding ourselves of the importance of our SDA identity and of the Truth, then we will be able to counteract Islamic conversions of our youth.

## Developing an understanding between Adventists and Muslims.

As the two largest religions in the world, Islam and Christianity influence the thinking and values of over forty percent of the world's population. Many Muslims are not familiar with the Adventist Church. While we have theological

differences, some of which might be significant, there are nonetheless other important areas of belief that are shared by both communities: belief in Allah, or God; belief in revelation, in the prophets, the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospels; belief in the life hereafter, and belief in a divinely inspired moral code organizing and regulating human life during our earthly journey to eternity. Today, all believers in God are facing common dangers: atheism, materialism, secularism, and moral decay. The AMR team understands the need of working together with Muslims and living together as a community. AMR has training programmes to help Adventist brothers and sisters start different projects in Muslim Majority areas, such health projects, prayer groups, food banks etc. The main purpose of this is to help Adventists know their Muslim neighbours and for Muslims to know who we are as Adventists, so we can be good spiritual friends, preparing for the second coming of Jesus together.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/04/02/397042004/muslim-population-will-surpass-christians-this-century-pew-says>



ANTONIO BELGRAVE



FERGUS OWUSU BOATENG

Emotions play a crucial role in your daily life and are as powerful as your physical senses. They can be short-lived, insistent, compelling, intricate, and even life-changing. They communicate to you your likes and dislikes, motivate you to act in particular ways, and give you the resources you need to relate to others meaningfully. The highs and lows you experience can significantly affect your well-being, so be aware of and acknowledge your emotions. However, when your emotions control you, they can seriously affect your ability to perform and to think clearly in crucial situations. So, you need to manage your emotions rather than let your emotions control you.

### Why manage your emotions?

How many needless arguments have you engaged in? How many failed or strained relationships have you had? How many times have you overreacted? How often have you regretted your words or actions? How many times have you been caught up in miscommunications? How many times have you allowed anxiety or fear to paralyse your life? Countless times!

Experiencing emotions is an integral part of being human, and managing your emotions is essential for personal growth. Managing your emotions enables you to handle conflicts well, and helps you become a more effective communicator who can deal with work and relationships better. Being self-aware helps you to effectively manage your emotions.

### How to manage your emotions

Emotions drive your daily life. You laugh when you are happy, cry when sad. Your emotions dictate your thoughts, intentions, and actions. It is the extreme negative emotions, such as anger or envy, that you need to control, as they condition your mind in destructive ways.

So, how can you avoid functioning on the wrong types of feelings and master your emotions under the toughest of circumstances? Here are some tips.

- Identify the emotion. Is it anger, hurt, guilt, shame, fear or anxiety?
- Don't react straight away. Take deep breaths.
- Find a healthy outlet. Never bottle up your emotions.

Release them in a healthy way. Tell someone you trust. Keep a journal and transfer your feelings onto the paper. Exercise to release the pent-up emotions.

- Change your thoughts. At the core of your deepest emotions are the beliefs that



drive them. Change your thoughts and you change the way the way you see the situation.

- Replace your thoughts. Negative emotions bind you to automatic negative thoughts, creating negative cycles. Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
- Forgive your emotional triggers. Your emotional triggers could be your best friend, your family members, yourself, or all the above. When you forgive, you detach yourself from the harsh feelings within.
- Ask for Divine guidance. Faith is our saving grace in our darkest moments. Pray.

We often make wrong decisions when bad feelings filter through our mind without restraint. To avoid the regret of acting out during an emotional upsurge, take the simple steps above. When the moment has passed, you'll be grateful you were able to be the master of your emotions.

We will all be held accountable for the actions we take under the influence of our emotions. So why not learn to handle your emotions more effectively? God wants you to be a good steward of your life, and this includes managing your emotions.

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**THEMBE MAPINGIRE**

### Speaking Life in a Diverse World: A model for first conversations in ministry

I was recently asked what I did for a living by a friend I have known for several years and who has been involved with the disability ministry for some time. I explained my role in enabling our churches in the SEC to become safe places of belonging, where we can all be involved in mission and ministry. His response and the ensuing conversation reminded me of the story in John 4, where Jesus meets and has a conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well.

Jesus was tired, hungry, and thirsty, yet he saw an opportunity to "speak life" into a soul. He saw an opportunity to achieve His ultimate purpose on earth. His opening words to this woman serve as a model for us as Adventist Christian ministers, as we engage with people in our diverse communities. Christ simply said, "Will you give me a drink?" (John 4:6, 7 NIV)

This question made her feel valued and able to offer something that he needed. Coming to a knowledge and understanding of the true meaning of Jesus' mission sent her running into the village full of life, feeling valued, feeling she had a mission to share the good news. "Come see a man...!"

Do our words and relationships with church members and local communities give hope? Do we relate to people who are different from us in a way that gives life? Do we stop, pray and ask for words that will give encouragement? Words that will draw souls to the foot of the cross? Do we speak life through the love of Jesus, who soothes yet quickens us, and brings a realisation of sin and a need for change?

Our ministry as Adventist Christians in a diverse society, reaching the community and developing relationships, is to speak life, not death—to speak hope, not dejection—to speak value into the souls of those we meet so that they can be drawn to the One who will give eternal life.

The conversation with my friend ended really well. He wanted to know more about this "Good News" of the coming of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15), and of Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection to restore people's relationship with God. He felt a sense of belonging because of his experiences with the church through the disability ministry, and he felt valued for who he was and not for what he was.

Let's speak life!



**SOPHIA NICHOLLS**

Fletewood, established in 1919, is a unique inner-city Adventist school attached to the Plymouth SDA church. Gina Abbequaye (GA), Education Director, talks to Rachel Gray (RG), the Head Teacher.



effectively an inner-city school, we have limited concreted space. An improved playground will assist with the well-being of our students.

Fletewood School is soon to have its 100th anniversary in 2019. Our most recent Ofsted inspection has proven that Fletewood School continues to be a strong school for the local community, with outstanding qualities in the personal development, behavior, and welfare of its children. This is something I intend to build on and, with God's help, will take the school from strength to strength into its next 100 years!

I would like to thank Mrs Rachel Gray and her staff at Fletewood School. Your contribution to Adventist education in the Devon area fulfils the charge "to be a beacon in our community!"

School's website: [fletewoodschool.co.uk](http://fletewoodschool.co.uk)

**GA: What is it that first drew you to the world of Adventist education?**

**RG:** My father, John Martin, was the Head Teacher at Fletewood for many years, and I think it was probably his energy and enthusiasm when I was a pupil there that drew me into teaching. My mother Anne also worked at Fletewood, and I and my siblings also attended the school. I graduated in 1999, securing my first teaching post in a primary school in Boston, Lincolnshire.

Approximately six years ago, my husband and I decided the time was right to return to Plymouth. I went through some of the most difficult times of my life during those six years, and at times struggled to understand why certain things were happening to me. Looking back, I strongly believe that God had a guiding hand in directing me towards Fletewood School. It became my life-line at that time. I joined the school officially as a Teaching Assistant in September 2013. Not long after, a vacancy opened for an Early Years teacher. Sometime later, I was given the opportunity to apply for the post of Headteacher, the post my father had been successfully filling for thirty years!

**GA: What makes Fletewood unique?**

**RG:** When showing prospective parents around, the thing they notice most is

the "family feel." Fletewood's small size (65 pupils) is perfect for children to grow in God's family without hindrance. It is also this factor that enables us to show the children how God's love can touch other people. A few months ago, the school raised £1700 in a fortnight to help a local homeless charity.

We have an open-door policy at Fletewood School, something that our parents greatly appreciate. It gives us the opportunity to get to know our families, and this encourages our parents to recommend us to others.

**GA: How do the alumni regard the school?**

**RG:** It was never more evident to me how much impact a school and its staff could have on a community than during the planning of John and Anne's retirement. Unbeknown to them, the school arranged a party, inviting as many past and present pupils as possible. I don't think my parents realised how much they had touched people's lives and how many fond memories these people have of Fletewood School. I now teach some of the children of the pupils who were my peers at school.

**GA: What positive changes, if any, do you envision taking place over the next three years?**

**RG:** Although Fletewood School is part of the Adventist community, we currently only have one Adventist child on roll. It is because of this that I feel it is even more important to ensure strong links between the church and the school. I have recently helped to set up the school's very first Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) and am looking forward to working with them to find ways to bring the church and school even closer together.

Another aspect of school life that I would like to see improve is the school's playground! As we are



Navigating the digital world is an adventure! It is like knowing you will run into a storm and that there is no chance of escaping it, although you wish there was no storm.

SECmedia had to go through a storm and came through it stronger and more prepared to face the challenges presented by the media ocean it must navigate. Indeed, it was better prepared not only to navigate the unsettled digital ocean, but to save those who are about to sink in it.

In recent years, data collected from local churches and other Adventist media entities across the world suggest that in the absence of conventional distribution channels, such as satellite or cable TV or FM Radio, social media becomes the primary platform to share the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Britain finds itself in such a position where we need to creatively establish new communication channels for our media production.

The most affordable solution is through using YouTube, Vimeo, and Facebook. These new media have become the preferred distribution platforms and therefore the production must comply with it. Almost half of a century ago, Marshal McLuhan coined the expression "the medium is the message," and his words remain as relevant today as they were back in the 60s. In other words, the distribution platform and the message must be a perfect match to produce the expected results.

That is why the most recent episodes of our productions "FULLishness" and "Women Unwrapped" are shortened on Facebook, and the total length of the full episodes on YouTube do not exceed 10 minutes.

"FULLishness" is a made-up word. We have chosen this name for the biblical preaching programme to emphasise the edgy flavour of the messages. The first series focuses on the book of Mark and it presents the gospel in a modern way, engaging primarily with Millennials and Generation X.

"Women Unwrapped" is a programme for women, presented by women. It is real talk, funny, and deeply spiritual. The topics discussed are based on the Bible and the aim is to encourage women to live up to their calling. The positive feedback was overwhelming and the bar has been set high. This is definitely a programme which has been long-awaited by Christian women.

A similar approach using social media has been implemented in one of our other productions, "Biblios," which is a programme designed to encourage its audience to think biblically and engage in conversation with the hosts and the guest. Youth who watched the programmes said that they felt they could be part of the conversation and that "Biblios" encouraged them to think for themselves.

The last two new programmes launched by the department are "Dark Room" and "Children's Corner."

"Dark Room" features musicians using their gifts to bless others through singing and playing instruments. It is in popular demand and our aim is to release one new music video every week.

"Children's Corner" features stories in a video format, which are written and illustrated by Adventist authors.

"60SECnews" and "SEC Rewind—A Month in Retrospect" are the programmes you do not want to miss. They are produced to inform, inspire and engage you with the life of Adventists in our territory.

If you would like to learn more about SECmedia, don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel. You can also "like" the Seventh-day Adventists in the South of England Facebook page or find us on Vimeo.

Our motto is found in 1 Corinthians 9:22: "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." The SECmedia team is engaging all possible means so that ultimately, we might be able to contribute to the salvation of some.



**VILI COSTESCU**

# Ministerial Association

## MANAGING MINISTERIAL PRIORITIES

The biblical axiom “but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt 6:33) is the priority of every Christian. However, the purpose of this article is to call attention to the issue of managing ministerial priorities. Ellen White summarises ministers’ role to include “all branches of the work...” (Testimonies Vol 5, p. 375).

Therefore, the first and most obvious hurdle that ministers must overcome if they are going to bring all “branches of the work” under control is the prioritisation of time management. To prioritise is to give our utmost and undivided attention to something in the face of competing choices. Prioritisation is key to getting organised and making the most of a person’s time. It is easy, in the hustle and bustle of ministry, to become a reactor responding to everything that comes up, the moment it comes up, and give it undivided attention until the next item comes up. This habit is, of course, a recipe for loss of control. Difficulties can arise in several areas of ministers’ lives when they do not set priorities, and it may lead to simply following the path of least resistance.

The Apostle Paul is an appropriate case study of managing ministerial priorities. He had first-hand experience of yielding to the path of least resistance. He writes, “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practise; but what I hate, that I do” (Romans 7:15 NIV). Here, Paul was not on top of issues. He understood that making priorities is something that is very important and must be dealt with before other things.



**EBENEZER JONES-LARTEY**

## COMPETING ALTERNATIVES

Competing alternatives for prioritisation is not a challenge exclusive to ministers. Setting priorities is unavoidably a human dilemma. Many people may face challenges in knowing how best to organise tasks, follow directions, remember every necessary thing, and complete assignments on time. If any issues in these areas are not managed appropriately, they may morph into a lifestyle. The common problems associated with this lifestyle are a poor working memory, poor organisational skills, poor time management, poor working performance, inconsistency and indecisiveness, and inability to complete tasks. Vecchio, in the book Organizational Behaviour, has observed that a failure to manage time can result in over-commitment, a lack of planning, and missing deadlines (p. 512).

## MANAGING PRIORITIES

One way that ministers can gain greater control is by structuring their day, so that time-wasting alternatives are blocked or eliminated. For example, not being accessible by phone or Facebook for an hour or two in the morning provides a block of uninterrupted time during which one can read the Bible or plot a sermon.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul indicates that we can do something about the competing alternatives. He provides a deep insight to managing priorities. First, he admits having difficulty staying focused on a task. He anguishes about his plight thus: “Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24) Finally, he provides an effective “panacea” to managing ministerial priorities through submitting to Jesus Christ (Romans 7:25). As we bring the competing choices demanding our attention to God, He will give us wisdom to prioritise. A mind submitted to Jesus Christ through prayer and intentional practice is the surest way to manage ministerial priorities.

# Music Ministries - Aeolians on Tour

As part of a UK tour, the Oakwood University Aeolians (2012 World Choir Games Champions) will be performing several concerts under the direction of Jason Max Ferdinand as they head to the International Music Eisteddfod in Llangollen, North Wales. On July 1st, they will take part in a Sabbath worship service at the Brixton SDA church, along with other SEC music-makers, followed by a concert at St. Pancras Church at 8 pm. On Sunday, July 2nd, they head north to Birmingham for a concert at the Church of God of Prophecy in Aberdeen Street. Finally, they will celebrate Independence Day on July 4th with a concert at Peel Hall on the campus of the University of Salford in Manchester.

The Aeolians, which is in its 70th year, is composed of university students ranging in age from 18 to 23, who are also ambassadors for Oakwood University. Seeing them

perform and sharing their experiences has encouraged students to attend Oakwood University. The 50-strong choir has several UK members who will be “coming home” as part of this trip.

This is a rare opportunity to witness one of the finest music representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I’m delighted to assist them on their journey to Wales. We are also pleased to welcome Courtney Fadlin, renowned saxophonist, as part of the tour. These events will also give the Music Department a chance to showcase some of the SEC music family, including the London Adventist Chorale, Total Praise UK, Daniel Costin, the Advent Quartet, the Levites, HACS Millennium Brass, and Marie Jo Lapuz.

In April, I had the opportunity to attend the Oakwood University Alumni weekend and witnessed part of the performance that will be coming to the UK. I can guarantee that you will be impressed. If you missed the Gala Gospel Concert back in December, please do not miss this event. These young adults are coming to “our home”—let’s turn out and give them a warm welcome and encouragement for the competition in Wales.

All tickets are £10 each and proceeds will go towards helping the choir cover the cost of the trip. Full details of the tour and how to purchase tickets can be found on the website at [www.aeoliansuk.org](http://www.aeoliansuk.org)

The poster for the Aeolians 70th Anniversary UK Tour features a purple and orange color scheme. At the top, it says "The Aeolians" in a cursive font, followed by "70th ANNIVERSARY UK TOUR AND HOMECOMING FOR". Below this, there are three circular portraits of women: Jeharna South and Naomi Parchment. The tour schedule is listed in three columns: London July 1st (Brixton SDA Church and Ruach City Church), Birmingham July 2nd (Church of God of Prophecy), and Manchester July 4th (Peel Hall - University of Salford). At the bottom, there is a photo of the choir performing in front of a waterfall. Contact information includes a phone number (07757 816 316), website (www.aeoliansuk.org), and a note to purchase tickets on Eventbrite.



**MICHAEL JOHNSON**



The note said, "Call this number as soon as possible!" It got my attention; I thought it was a parent with a Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) issue that they needed my help in resolving. The number was that of a school teacher responsible for child absences.

In a very abrupt manner, she stated that she would allow Adrian Childs to go on the trip to the USA, but it would be marked on his record as an unauthorised absence. I was just happy that she was allowing the child to come!

It was clear from our conversation that she was not happy with Adrian coming to the PBE final testing in the USA, and that the approval was given with great reluctance. But rather than leaving the teacher with a negative picture of PBE, I sought to change her perceptions about PBE.

As our conversation continued, I could sense a change taking place in her responses, moving from hostility to genuine interest. Maybe she could sense my enthusiasm as I shared my experiences of how PBE had affected the lives of the children that had been involved over the past few years.

I moved to the subject of school work. I spoke about how the children had applied the methods and techniques they used to study the Bible to their school work, and as a result their grades had improved significantly, so much so that

some children who attended extra classes no longer needed to attend those classes. Their attendance also improved.

Then I gave her the challenge: "Go check Adrian's attendance!" Her response was, "I most certainly will!" The phone was silent for what seemed to be half an hour, but she was only gone a few minutes. On her return I asked, "What is Adrian's attendance?" In a quiet and subdued voice, she responded, "97.6%!" In my mind, I shouted, "Hallelujah!" The evidence, in a very practical way, confirmed everything I was saying. Her response was a desire to know more about PBE.

Sometimes we forget that another aspect of stewardship is time, and one of the many benefits of PBE is learning the stewardship of time. It often goes unnoticed how Pathfinders must restructure their time to study for PBE, and that restructuring has a natural effect on time management in other areas of the life of the Pathfinder.

Our children spend time on computers, using mobile phones, sending messages on Facebook and Twitter and other forms of social media, and spend a much smaller amount of time studying their Bibles. Much of the time spent on social media can be viewed as "wasting valuable time," but when our children are good stewards of time in studying for PBE, not only do they increase their Bible knowledge, but they develop a relationship with Christ, form better relationships with each other, and make positive contributions to church life.

The psalmist writes, "My times are in your hands..." (Psalms 31:15). Here he makes a positive statement, which infers security and comfort when we place our time in God's hands. God gives us time and expects us to use it well, but He still gives us the freedom to use time how we please. However, we will have to give account for the way we choose to use our time.

Food for thought:

"Your time is in God's hands, whether you acknowledge His sovereignty or not. How can you live being more mindful of God's control over all that happens in your life?"



KEVIN JOHNS

## MANAGING YOUR SPIRITUALITY FOR EVANGELISM AND MISSION - PART 1

Acts 13:47— "For this is what the Lord has commanded us: I have made you a light for the gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

The statistics are undeniable—the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom is made up primarily of immigrants. A casual look around in our congregations on any given Sabbath would confirm this. We can run from this fact, hide our heads in the sand like the ostrich, or confront this reality and do something about it. Effort belongs to us; success belongs to God.

Milbank (2009) stated that the United Kingdom has traditionally been united by culture, not ethnicity. Immigration has started to threaten this identity because of racism, lack of forethought, and ill-conceived multiculturalism. Kumar (1983) suggested that it is important to understand something of the background of multiculturalism in Britain.

In many ways, Britishness is historically very flexible; it is much less racially defined than the identity of any other European nationality. Milbank (2009), in support of this point, stated that successive waves of immigrants have come into Britain and become British in a very short time. He thought this was partly because British identity is associated with certain attitudes of mind that immigrants rapidly assume. It is also about an imperial legacy that involved England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland being swallowed up in a bigger project that transcended ethnicity or local cultural identity.

Since the SDA Church in the South England Conference and the British Isles consists mainly of immigrants, one of the main things the members must do is develop a missionary mentality. Every SDA immigrant in Britain should study the life of a missionary. When a missionary arrives in a strange land, they first look for a sponsor. I do not mean the organization that sent them; their sponsor could be the first person that smiled at them, or invited them for a meal, or wanted to talk, or it could be some

important person in the village etc. A sponsor is that person who is willing to identify with them and whom they can identify with. This is important to solve the issue of credibility and trust.

How do we translate this to our situation? Our sponsors should be every local council, institution, and organization in our communities who are willing to partner with us to address the social, moral, educational, and spiritual needs of our society. For this to work, we need a spiritual attitudinal transformation in the majority of our members. Church cannot be like "back home." Let us be frank and honest here; the "back home" mentality is inappropriate as we seek to befriend and cater spiritually for a society that does not share some of our values, "culture," and attitude to God. The members of the SDA Church here in the British Isles need to stop focusing on their own comfort zones and listen to the voice of a missional God who inspired the Apostle Paul to write the following:

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

Once upon a time the White British were the majority Seventh-day Adventist; now the immigrants are. Who should reach our world (Britain) with the Gospel? Is it our predicament or our responsibility?

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KIRK THOMAS



# Prayer Ministries - In Conversation with God



Do you lack the eloquence and poise of those whose prayers sound like a poetic masterpiece? Have you ever felt you can't pray or shouldn't pray? Does the supremacy of God and feelings of being unworthy conflict in your mind and present a barrier to relating with Him in prayer? Do you attempt to get it right by applying suggested formulas and words, yet things remain the same?

Prayer may seem daunting, but it is more about our relationship with God than following a prescribed format. Having a relationship with Him encourages expectancy in our heart as we eagerly wait to catch glimpses of His character and encounter God's goodness in life. With a desire to be known by us, God describes how we may get to know Him. When Moses went to talk with God, the Bible says the Lord would speak to him face to face, "as a man speaks with his friend" (Exodus 33:11). Jesus called His disciples "friends" (John 15:15). In the book Steps to Christ, prayer is described as "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend" (p. 93). Prayer is a privilege given by God so we can communicate together in Divine friendship.

Prayer is not solely about God. He is keenly interested in our personal lives. "Come let us reason together..." we are told (Isaiah 1:18). This invitation extended by God

implies we are accepted and welcomed in His presence. Therefore, talk with God when in need of His help. Express gratitude and praise to God for what He does. Have a heart-to-heart with Him about how we feel and what we think. Ask for God's forgiveness and the ability to forgive when we are offended by others. If ever there comes a time when we are lost for words, the Holy Spirit is willing to help (Romans 8:26). Plus, there are many prayers in the Bible for all occasions, which can be helpful for guidance to know how to talk with God and what to talk about.

Prayer should be about anything and everything. Paul states we are "to pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Ephesians 6:18). There are even times when He is asked to provide a suitable parking space, and He does! Gloria Mosha, from Milton Keynes SDA church, tells about an occasion when her family were down on rent and they prayed. Miraculously, God provided the rent from people they had not even approached, and it was the exact amount that was required for that month. God says to us, "Call on Me and I will answer you and show you great and marvellous things you do not know" (Jeremiah 31:3). Remember, God chooses how to respond to our prayers. It is His prerogative. He can be trusted to do what is right and best on our behalf. Initially, feelings of displeasure and dissatisfaction may arise when we don't get what we want. The greatest way to manage those feelings is to accept God's best. Should the need to complain persist, talk to Him about it and discover He is an avid listener.

God pays attention when we respond to His prompting to talk with Him. Spend time in conversation with Him today; share with your Friend all your cares and needs, for He deeply cares about you (1 Peter 5:7).

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures quotations are from the New International Version.



VERONICA WILLIAMS

# Teens Department



**Nurturing:** This entails the preparation of spiritual activities for teens.

**Empowering:** This involves the workshops, seminars, and materials.  
**Socialise:** This includes how to organise games nights and similar activities.

**Training:** This is the evangelistic part of the training, as it explains how to include the above in the mission of the local church and encourages the trainees to go to their local churches, districts, or areas and train others.

The Teens Department is currently discussing or working on a variety of other projects. This includes the creation of a PK's Association, whose aim is to support our pastors' kids and to have special activities with them. Another project is a teens devotional book. Besides this, we are working towards consolidating the Adventist Student Association. We have already started working towards having teen representatives in all our areas; by the grace of God, these will be the leaders that will be helping us with the NEST project.

It has been a beautiful and very busy month. I am so thankful to all of you, to my superiors in the SEC, and to my wonderful staff, without whom none of this would be a reality. The challenges our teens are facing in this century require that we feed them spiritually to strengthen them and train them for the battle, and that is our primary objective. Please pray for us as we serve our teens.

My journey as Teens Director began with preparations for an activity called the Prayer and Bible Conference, also known as PFC. Although I was going to take office on the 1st of March 2017, I thought it was necessary to meet with the staff as early as possible. So, on the 12th of February, I had the honour to meet them and discuss the preparations for PFC, among other topics. That was one of eleven meetings with different members of the staff that took place from the first week of February to April 13th.

PFC took place from the 13th - 16th of April. It was blessed by the Lord, and thanks to His grace and a wonderful, hardworking staff, the conference was attended by about one hundred and fifty people, twenty of whom decided to follow Jesus and be baptised. Special guests included our president Pastor Emmanuel Osei and our youth director Pastor Anthony Fuller, to whom I am very grateful for their support.

As soon as PFC was over, preparations for camp-meeting began, and a dialogue with Cornerstone counselling services took place throughout the week after PFC. We would like the Teens Department and Cornerstone counselling to work together to integrate workshops and seminars for empowering our teens to deal with the life issues that are challenging and sometimes even threatening them. It follows that at camp meeting we will be having workshops dealing with issues such as teens and self-esteem, self-harm, and suicide, among other workshops.

On Sabbaths, Teens Department is on the go! So far, we have visited one church in London, one church in Greater London, and one church in the provinces. Now we will go back to London and start the cycle over again. On those Sabbaths, I share the Word in the morning, and we have Bible games and an interactive seminar/workshop in the afternoon. Although the programme is primarily for the teens, all members are welcome to join in, which results in a lot of fun.

One of the main projects of Teens Ministries is to have ongoing training throughout the year and the facilitation of materials for both the staff and for those who work with teens in the local churches. The training programme which will soon be launched is called NEST, which stands for:



JUAN CARLOS PATRICK



# Women's Ministries Department

According to Luke's account in Acts, a woman named Tabitha (Dorcas) was famous for her kind deeds to the poor; she used all her talents, natural abilities, and gifts to benefit others with a needle and thread. She lived in the small seaport town in Joppa.

It is likely that a Christian church was established in Joppa through Philip, the evangelist, and perhaps this is how Tabitha came to know Jesus Christ. Tabitha caught a vision about how she could practically use her skills to reach people through sewing. She was passionate about her ministry and in time it blossomed. Who would have thought that a little needle & thread could turn a city upside down? Tabitha perfected her craft until she developed a personalised ministry to widows in her community. She made her garments with love for those whom society tended to forget.

Luke tells us that Tabitha fell sick and then she died. The community was devastated (Acts 9:37). As they mourned for her, they told their stories about the impact Tabitha had made in their lives. It would seem to me that Tabitha could not have known the powerful influence she had on her community. There is a lesson here for us: we should not discount nor downplay any gift, any skill or talent that God has given us, as we never know what impact we may have.

As the community of Joppa struggled to deal with Tabitha's death, someone mentioned that Peter was

in the neighbouring town of Lydda; they had heard of his good deeds there (Acts 9:33-34). So, they sent two individuals to Lydda to convince Peter to come to Joppa, but they didn't tell him why except that he should come quickly (Acts 9:38). Why did they do that? I would like to suggest that the people of Joppa did not call Peter so that he could conduct Tabitha's funeral—no, they called Peter to prevent it. It was only when Peter arrived on the scene that he fully realised that someone of great importance to that community had died. As Peter listened to their stories and saw the people wearing Tabitha's garments, Peter was touched to the heart (Acts 9:39).

Peter showed no fear in deciding what to do next; he simply ordered everyone to leave the room while he knelt and prayed. He turned to Tabitha and said, "Tabitha, arise!" (Acts 9:40) God not only resurrected Tabitha, but because of her story, many more individuals decided to accept Jesus—a lovely ending for the Church at Joppa.

How many of us may be sitting on some as-yet undiscovered or untapped skill or ability? If you are doing all you can with what God has given you, I commend you. But if not, then Tabitha's story challenges us; there may be a Tabitha waiting to come out in us, or a dormant skill waiting to be rediscovered.

The Women's Ministries Department has just started its first Easy Sew Sewing School at the Balham Church. We are hoping to reach out to our local community and have scheduled two classes to run on a Sunday 10am to 4pm and Tuesday 7pm to 9pm over four and five sessions, for those who want to learn to sew or revisit their skills.

If you are a seamstress or tailor we would love to hear from you. Please pray for the success of this project. (Further details can be accessed on our website [www.adventist.org.uk/sec/departments/womens-ministries](http://www.adventist.org.uk/sec/departments/womens-ministries))



MASLIN HOLNESS

SEC Family Ministry Department  
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## SEC Pathfinders win First Place at Division Level PBE

Eight SEC Pathfinder teams travelled across the North Atlantic Ocean to participate in the North American Division (NAD) Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE). Teams are tested on their knowledge and application of certain Bible books, this year focusing on the books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy, including the SDA Bible Commentary introduction to each book. Any team that gets more than 90% of the answers correct receives first place. All eight SEC teams gained first place.

SEC Pathfinder Director Kevin Johns would like to see this programme expand locally, as pathfinders in the British Isles, including the North England Conference and the Irish mission, are the only clubs in Europe that follows the PBE track. Even the Pathfinders see tremendous benefits in systematically studying the Bible.

“When I’m reading by myself, I get to take in everything and I get to see how I can apply it in my daily life and how it impacts my daily life,” said Julia Cabral, Filipino International, FIC Osprey Team 1 Amethyst member. She admitted that PBE was one of the most memorable experiences of her life.

When it comes to the test preparations, it becomes somewhat of a whole-church experience. Gene Clapp, NAD PBE co-ordinator, said that many parents and churches have praised the PBE track, as it has changed their church environment. By helping the children prepare, the whole church learns with them. He also explained that many children have personally changed due to PBE.

“It has changed them, because they have found that not only do they learn Scripture, but they learn how to study. When they study that means they get better grades in school,” said Clapp.

Next year, PBE will focus on the books of Daniel and Ester. Get in touch with your local Pathfinder leader to see how you can be a part of PBE.



## Friendship Banquet

Over 140 eligible ladies and gentlemen from as far as Birmingham and Manchester dined and fostered friendships at the SEC’s Family Ministries first Friendship Banquet in April. From a conference perspective, it was the first event of its kind, and Family Ministries Director Augustus Lawrence is on a mission to change that.



The inspiration behind this initial event was to bring people together who have the same passions at heart, so that no one in the church feels left out, but rather feels worthy and obtains self-worth. The director emphasised the issue of our surroundings, that “within the church for every 12 females you have 1 male.” Yet this programme was not about matchmaking; it was about coming together and getting to know people with similar mind-sets and at similar stages of life.

In the future, Lawrence would like to see a whole ministry dedicated to single adults, where they can be accepted regardless of their background, promoting self-worth and independence. By creating a platform for these individuals, sometimes for fun activities and sometimes for more formal meetings, the department would like to erase the myth a person cannot be truly valued or oneself if he or she is not connected to anybody.



## ADRA Annual Appeal

Our conference can already associate April with ADRA ingathering season. Some decide to have a bake sale, some members even offer Zumba classes, and someone went skydiving. The SEC Personal Ministries department also pulls its weight. It facilitates the ADRA Fun Run for people who are ready to walk, jog, or cycle a certain number of miles in return for sponsorship to fund ADRA. In April this year, over 300 people, including non-Adventists, met in Crystal Palace Park for this purpose.

“The great thing about the people of England is that they have a heart for charity, for giving, and causes... people really want to give and support,” said PM Director Pastor Kirk Thomas.

The director explained that for the first time, a percentage of the money that usually all goes to a global project will stay in England to help support local growth.

During the Fun Run, you could already see Thomas collaborating with Health Ministries Director Dr. Chidi Ngwaba to think big for next year. With the large turnout of non-Adventists joining the Fun Run, the goal is to target the community specifically when advertising for next year’s Run. The plan is to collaborate with bigger sponsors, such as Nike, and create a day event for the community, providing health tips and checks, and to promote other community-oriented events.

“Next year is going to be bigger and better, with more participation with the entire family, the young people, those who love sports, those who love health, and those who want to participate in health check-ups,” said Thomas. “Please plan to be there next year, via local churches, radios, and newspapers.”

This year the South England Conference gathered a total of over £200,000 for ADRA to date, with many more reports to be submitted



## Southend-On-Sea

At Southend-on-Sea’s local night shelter, 1,869 beds, with up to 25 guests in any one night, were filled within a 17-week span. The Community Church, along with other Christian groups, has grown to support this shelter.

With 4,449 meals provided by the church plant, including Sabbath lunches, invitations to Bible studies, and shelter for 128 homeless people, it was calculated that the entire

operation would have cost £75,000 if the adult minimum wage was paid to those assisting with the programme. However, volunteers decided to follow Jesus’ footsteps and feed the hungry and house the homeless.

Church plant leader, Dr. Colin Gordon, shared the story of his experience with Boots, a rough sleeper who walked a lot. Boots was found sleeping on the concrete floor outside of the church.

“We prepared a bed for him in a dry, warm church hall and invited him in. He accepted the offer. As he laid himself down on the church floor, I knelt beside him to hear his stories of homelessness. He then took me by the forearm and said a sincere prayer of thanksgiving for me and our services. I felt like I was kneeling at the bedside of my own child saying a prayer for me. It brought a moisture to my eyes and a lump to my throat. I will never forget that moment,” shared Gordon. It is stories like these that the SOS church cannot wait to share!

## London Asian Church

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound” sounded through the halls of the London Asian Adventist Church’s local Folkstone Nursing Home during Holy Saturday, better known as Easter Eve.

The church decided to use the international holiday as a witnessing tool and spread the word of salvation to those in their community, specifically focusing on the elderly in the area. It was important not to miss the opportunity to share a poem to everyone in the building about the sacrifice and commitment Jesus gave to us. It explained the real cost of salvation and served as a reminder of the importance of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Members also organised singing, socialised with the elderly residents, and shared Easter eggs with the staff on site.

Of course, the elderly were thrilled to see young people well-rehearsed in their songs, and even joined the choir for the better-known hymns. But the walls didn’t feel anything until even the staff members joined in and made a full chorus consisting of church members, residents, and workers! Organisers reported the day to be a success, as pleased staff thanked the team for their visit and requested another visit soon. What a joy to share the love of Jesus with others!



**CORRECTION:** In our April Issue, under the title “Taking Control Over Your Diet” we inadvertently referred to our interviewee as Kerry Welly. Her correct name is **Kerry Wellington**. Her vegan Company name should have read “**VDelicious**” and Website: [www.vdelicious.co.uk](http://www.vdelicious.co.uk)

# A DEVOTIONAL - Using Our God-Given Abilities Wisely

BY ISRAEL WILLIAMS

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus shares another parable regarding the kingdom of heaven. He tells of a land owner who was going away, leaving his estate for a considerable amount of time. The owner divides up his assets between three of his trusted servants and gives them the responsibility of developing his assets.

It would seem that he knew them well, because he gave to each one according to their capability. As much as it was a challenge for each of the servants, the master knew their capabilities and treated them fairly in that respect.

He was gone for a long time, so the servants had ample time to complete their tasks. The first two got straight to work and eventually doubled their assets, while the third servant took a different approach to the task and made no effort to make an increase with

the asset entrusted to him. He hid what was given to him and blamed the master for being inconsiderate towards him. And what a feeble excuse for not making the effort to finish what seemed to be a simple task!

Have we been entrusted with talents, gifts or responsibilities where the Master is expecting a fruitful turnover? What is our response to the challenge of the assets we have been given? I am certain that our aim is to be the best steward possible. Let us use our time well, manage our resources to avoid waste, avoid blaming and making excuses, and make time for prayer, Bible study, and devotion. Then the outcome of how we use our talents, and the response of the Master, will be positive.

“Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Matthew 25:21)



Pastor Israel Williams is the minister for Ashford, Canterbury and Folkstone Churches



# DR EMMANUEL OSEI, SEC PRESIDENT

Dr Emmanuel K. Osei was voted to serve as the President of the South England Conference on April 9th 2017 by the trustees of the South England Conference, after serving as acting president for nearly a year.

Emmanuel was born in Accra, Ghana and joined his family in the UK at age six, receiving the rest of his schooling in London. He studied Electrical Engineering and received the call to ministry just after completing this first degree.

He then taught Mathematics and Physics at John Loughborough School, Tottenham for about a year. However, having felt the call to the ministry, he studied at Newbold College of Higher Education, gaining an MA in Theology. He has since completed an MA in Mission Studies at Birmingham University and a Doctor of Ministry degree at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Chicago, USA.

Osei served several churches within the London area and functioned as chair of the London Area Advisory Council before being asked to serve as Ministerial Director at the South England Conference, a position he held for eight years. He has also taught courses in Adventist tertiary institutions, including Newbold College, both at undergraduate and post-graduate levels, as well as summer courses at Valley View University, Ghana.

A gifted and sought-after speaker, Emmanuel has conducted evangelistic campaigns both here in the UK and throughout Africa, the USA, and the Caribbean. He brings a wealth of experience, having worked in ministry for the past 30 years.

Responding to the call to lead the South England Conference, Osei expressed that he feels humbled by the invitation because he is “aware that this is a milestone in the experience of the SEC.” He said that in coming to the ministry, he “came to serve” and that he sees this appointment as another area of service. He added that in doing so, he would like to solicit everyone’s continued support and prayers, and particularly the support of his family, as he seeks to lead out in this area. He concluded that he would strive to do his best to discharge the duties of the office of President.

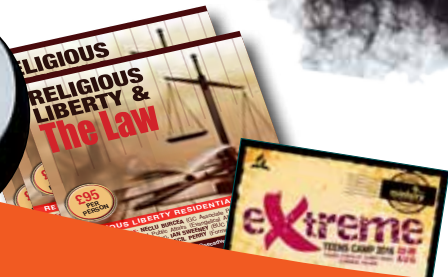
He is married to Laura Osei, a Head Teacher, and they have been blessed with three adult daughters, Naomi, Danielle & Leah, along with two grandchildren, Rhianne & Aaron.

In his down time, Emmanuel enjoys playing dominoes with his friends, staying healthy and fit with regular walking, and has a real passion for travelling and seeing the world.



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My time at Newbold so far has been very exciting both spiritually and academically. There are a variety of activities and events that encourage spiritual growth – my personal favourite being the Friday night vespers service which provides a light and fun atmosphere with meaningful songs and messages. The College offers a Business Studies programme that gives us access to high-quality lecturers who are always available to help, as well as providing the opportunity to travel and to participate in summer internships at various companies. Newbold is the place for anyone who wants to succeed and is determined to work hard to get where they want to be in life.

*Christian Fischle – Business Studies*



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