



**Women in the  
service of Christ**

**Ellen White?  
You'd be surprised!**

**People of the Bible**

# **Women in the Church**





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I recall as if it were yesterday how about fifteen of us sat in an English class at college. Each of us had to make a presentation about a predetermined subject. I recall the heated discussions we had over some of the presentations. I especially remember the discussion about women in ministry in the Church. I recall my naïve passion as I opposed the motion. I could not at that time conceive of a woman preaching or baptising, much less ministering to me as a church member. This was notwithstanding the very obvious fact that for many years most of the leaders in local departments had been women. It wasn't until I entered ministry and was privileged to work alongside a superb female local elder that my opinion changed. She was obviously cut out for being an under-shepherd of the Church. What a blessing it was to work with such a deeply committed and caring person. Where would the Church be today without such loyal and able people?

On the other side of the pendulum is the decreasing number

of males in the Church and what appears to be a corresponding unwillingness to undertake leadership. Should we do as some believe and take the men who are unwilling and place the leadership upon them or do the logical thing and recognise that our women folk have the skills and commitment to God and his Church to carry the responsibilities of leading the Church?

This issue of  addresses some of the issues surrounding women in the Church. You will read about the experiences of women at different levels of church leadership and throughout different periods of history. We'll uncover the biblical position, plus a surprising take on Ellen White's views. We'll also feature the perspectives and views of some of you guys.

I hope that this issue will produce much debate in your churches and youth groups and maybe help to inform you as you formulate your own opinion on the subject.

Enjoy and feed back to us what your thoughts were after reading this issue.

Have a fun but safe summer!

• Des



# Save the date

## Easter 2011

**The largest gathering of Adventist youth in the British Isles. It's finally happening. Will you be there?**

More to follow soon . . .





## What's missing?

Some time ago I saw a wayside pulpit (notice board) outside a local church with a very interesting message that read:



The plain fact is that we are missing too many of our young people, and their absence is hurting the worldwide church, the local congregation and individual families – and it is time to be intentional in addressing the situation. We want them to return, we need them to come back, and I believe deep down that many will do so.

These are not empty words. Recently I heard that a church group from Aberdeen went onto the streets to sing Christian songs one Sabbath afternoon. The choir formed in the local town square and as they sang others mingled with the passers-by. One young man stopped and remarked that he used to hear these songs sung by his mother. He recognised the Christian heritage in his background and became very interested indeed, encouraging others also to listen to the beautiful words. There is power in warm memories, roots and identity.

### Paul Tompkins



#### Warm memories, roots and identity

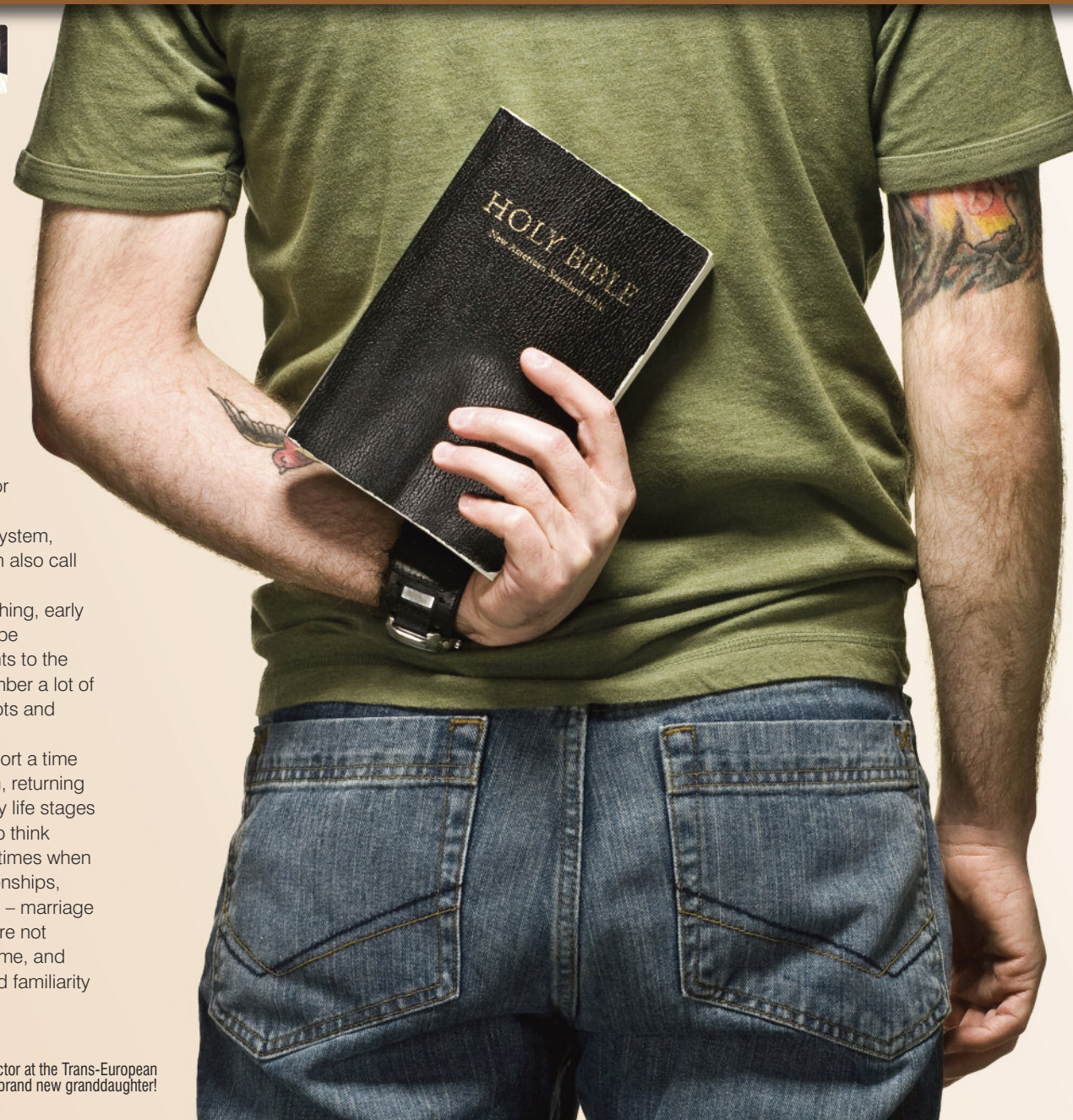
I recently conducted a pilot study among those who were no longer attending a local Seventh-day Adventist church. I contacted as many as possible from a list supplied by the local youth pastor, and from this group 50% responded that they might come back to church again one day. Also 99% indicated that they were still definitely Christian, and 100% still had family members who attended.

This is a positive legacy of familiarity, and the search for identity is not static. Just as in the teenage years the search for identity is something that pushes young people to challenge their parents' belief system, so, too, the reverse search for identity can also call them back.

The positive effect of past church teaching, early roots and warm memories, should never be underestimated. As one of the respondents to the pilot survey stated; 'I still carry and remember a lot of what I was taught with me every day.' Roots and identity are a powerful combination.

Allied to this, no matter how long or short a time someone has been away from the church, returning is always a possibility. There are some key life stages where young people may be influenced to think again on spiritual matters. These include times when things go wrong – financial, health, relationships, and so on – and also when things go well – marriage and birth of children. Such occurrences are not respecters of age and can occur at any time, and then the same issues of roots, identity and familiarity will most likely play a significant role.

**Dr Paul Tompkins** is the Youth and Family ministries director at the Trans-European Division. He is married with two daughters and a brand new granddaughter!



### Coming home

We need to realise that just as youth left at different times and for differing reasons, in reality they will also come back in different ways and at different times. Put simply, not all people leave for the same reasons and not all returning youth will come back in the same way.

Reclamation is one of the key strategic themes of the Seventh-day Adventist Youth department. This is important because just as the prodigal 'came to his senses' (Luke 15:17b) and set out for home, so too will many modern-day lost sons and daughters. It may not be easy, and not everyone will return immediately but when they do, our task is to make sure they meet the Father first, rather than the elder brother, on their return.

To do this I believe the Church must become a place of refuge for our youth. Just as God appointed cities of refuge<sup>1</sup> for his people, so today must the Church fill this role.

Ellen White comments; 'The cities of refuge appointed by God's ancient people were a symbol of the refuge provided in Christ.'<sup>2</sup> She also adds: 'The church is God's fortress. His city of refuge which he holds in a revolted world.'<sup>3</sup>

In Numbers 35:15 we read that refuge was extended to 'Israelites, aliens and any other people living among them.' They had somewhere to go and the same concept of protection, strategic placing, sanctuary and long-term care still needs to be there for our young people. At one time or another many will seek this refuge.

Interested? The Church of Refuge initiative has recently been launched both internationally and also in Britain, and in the next issue we will look further at what it entails and how it is being applied in ministry today.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers 35:9-15; Deut. 4:41-43; 19:1-9; Joshua 20:8-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 516.

<sup>3</sup> *Acts of the Apostles*, 11.



## Youth, Prayer & Faith Conference II

The seemingly uncivilised yet calming breeze of the countryside with little or no signal for our mobile phones looked like trouble already. Yet the remote Chantemarle Christian Resources and Education Centre in Dorset truly set the stage for a Spirit-filled experience during half-term week, 15-19 February 2010.

It was the Thames Valley Youth Federation (Area 5) annual Prayer and Faith Conference 2010 with guest speaker Dr Andrew Ewo of the Netherlands Conference.

This year again the second Prayer and Faith Conference definitely delivered a spiritually uplifting programme for the diverse group of young people from Ipswich, Aylesbury, Oxford, Reading, Bracknell, High Wycombe, Slough, Basingstoke and London and also our non-church friends.

Our journey began at the Newbold College campus and we arrived in Dorset to be treated to some delicious Jamaican rice and jerk chicken with vegetarian options, topped with a tasty salad on the side to provide a healthy well-balanced meal. (Mmmm.)

From the tasty food we moved on to be fed with the bread of life as delivered by the Holy Spirit through his servant Dr Ewo, who led us in an in-depth study of the book of Daniel and in the evenings preached on how we can have a sweet and a real relationship with Jesus and many more subjects relevant to us youth.

We were given the opportunity to write down any pressing questions, issues and prayer requests anonymously, which Dr Ewo would answer and pray for at the end of each presentation.

The week also provided reminders of God's amazing grace and love for us, strengthening our faith; we spent a lot of time on our knees in prayer. Each morning and evening a marvellous sound echoed through the centre as well over 150

young people lifted their voices to sing praises to God.

We were blessed with very helpful weekday afternoon empowerment workshops. These were led by Elder June Thompson who focused on our purpose in life. Malika Bediako talked about relationships and purity, always an interesting and heart-racing topic for youth. Pastor Sam Ngui looked at the pressing issue of peer pressure and finally Elder Paul Thompson spoke about stewardship and how this affects us even as young people.

We were able to relax through a variety of exciting recreational activities such as swimming, volleyball, badminton, snooker/pool, table tennis and football in the afternoons.

On our final night the Holy Spirit filled the room and many gave heartfelt testimonies on surprising issues that you might not expect young people to be going through. Many are struggling with addictions, street crime, bullying, health and family issues. Dr Ewo performed an anointing service for those who had chronic addictions and needed a divine breakthrough: all such persons prepared for this ordinance by fasting on the Thursday and then were anointed in the evening after the service with the pastors and elders. On this night all the young persons present consecrated their lives to God and were appreciative of having loving parents.

Asked for feedback, one youth said that it was 'really really good. Worship is lively and the atmosphere is great, I'm really enjoying it.' Chris added, 'Well, this

### - Tatenda, Chisola, Rumona & Juliette

whole God thing has been hitting me hard, making me realise a lot of things, and it's definitely got my mind churning.'

As we departed from site on Friday, one message was clear, that God had brought each and every one of us here for a purpose.

Each of those present had a blessed time at the event, but now it is our responsibility to go out day by day and live for Jesus. This was one of the best five-day experiences which we will remember for the rest of our youthful lives. Plans are already in place for next year's retreat.

Prayer and Faith Conference is organised by the SEC Thames Valley Youth Federation (Area 5) during the February half term each year.

Please visit [www.tvyf.org](http://www.tvyf.org) or call 07817384850 for further information.



## Aberdaron Youth Camps

Glan-yr-Afon, Aberdaron,  
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### Junior Camp 9-12

1-8  
Aug '10



### Earliteen Camp 13-17

8-15  
Aug '10



15-22  
Aug '10

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## Making our way home The 2010 Three Missions Easter Retreat

Every year youth from churches in Wales, Scotland and Ireland meet together over the Easter weekend. This year it was the turn of the Welsh to host. So around 100 came to Hebron Hall, a Christian centre near Cardiff, to have fun together and be inspired through worship.

Leading out in worship was TAG band (The Afterglow Band), youth from Swansea church. They did an excellent job of setting the atmosphere: one of joyful and also intimate worship.

The main speaker for the weekend was Troy Fitzgerald, associate pastor of the Walla Walla University church in Washington. His theme for the weekend was 'Making our way home'. Using different stories and illustrations, he focused on the importance of discipleship and spiritual discipline.

On Sabbath morning Troy spoke about the Israelites' reluctance to leave Egypt and head for the promised land. Taking a cup of hot water and a teabag, he proceeded to show us all how to make a cup of tea! 'We've got to choose to start the journey home,' he said, dipping the teabag into the water. Immediately withdrawing it, he held up a weak-looking brew before making his final point: 'But we've got to stick with it. We have to stay with Jesus long enough for the message of freedom to sink in.'

Another of his illustrations was a hilarious story about the boy who 'wet the horse'. There isn't enough space here to go into the details, but it was a classic, and a great way of illustrating the grace of God who comes alongside us and covers our shame.

Troy also led out in two workshops: 'Discovering God's will' and 'Forty days wild', both of which were full of wisdom about spiritual growth and discipline. David Wright's workshop, 'What a coincidence', looked at chance and probability, and evidence for the truth of Jesus in the way he fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. In Sam Neves' workshop ('Spiritual sex') he inspired the youth to save sex for marriage because of its power and beauty as illustrated in the Song of Solomon. The youth from Swansea looked at creativity and its role in worship with workshops entitled 'The heart of worship' and 'Six? – creative life, creative church'.

As well as inspiring worships and workshops there was time for making friends and seeing the places around Cardiff. A trip to Cardiff Bay, to the Museum of Welsh Life and a *twmpath* (a Celtic barn dance) on Sunday evening all added to what was a great weekend.

• Jeremy Tremeer



Jeremy is the Youth Sponsor for Wales; he likes football, squash and skiing. His passion in ministry is helping people to know what it means to be a child of God.

## Brain health

There is no greater or more complex system than the human brain. This collection of neurons weighing approximately 4 pounds controls all our thoughts, emotions and behaviour.

Research indicates the following facts

- ⊕ The brain benefits from good nutrition and regular exercise.
- ⊕ Environmental input such as aerobic exercise changes the structure and function of the brain.
- ⊕ Daily mental stimulation improves the efficacy of the brain by increasing learning capacity, recall ability and long-term memory.
- ⊕ General good health encourages the development of brain reserves that may delay the onset of neurodegenerative disease.

When we think about staying fit, the usual emphasis is from the neck down. However, the health of our brain plays a critical role in almost everything we do: thinking, feeling, remembering, working and playing – even sleeping. If not properly protected, the brain is potentially exposed to permanent damage from everyday activity.

### You are what you eat

Two thirds of the brain is made up of fat. Foods we eat provide building blocks to make these essential or 'good fats' called lipids which are crucial for effective brain function. However 'bad fats' (trans fatty acids and animal fats) can adversely affect the brain, causing difficulties from reduced learning ability to motor function problems and impaired mobility.

Advice:

- ⊕ Reduce animal products
- ⊕ Increase fresh fruits and vegetables
- ⊕ Eat foods rich in omega 3 and B vitamins (nuts, seeds, pulses, wholegrains, plant protein)

### Use it or lose it

The brain is a muscle that requires exercising in the same way as other body muscles.

Although the brain is fully grown by age 6, activities such as reading, learning or processing information will cause new synapses to develop. Research suggests that an unchallenged or inactive

• Sharon Platt-McDonald



mind may actually cause the number of synapses to decline. The number of synapses is closely linked with intelligence.

Tips for daily mental stimulation

- ⊕ Engage in a crossword, jigsaw or other puzzles and letter writing.
- ⊕ Step up your practice if you play a musical instrument.
- ⊕ Commence a new creative activity or regularly engage in a favourite hobby.
- ⊕ Engage in board games when you have family time together or when visiting friends.
- ⊕ Complete a book in the next two weeks.
- ⊕ Regular physical exercise increases the blood flow to the brain.

### Play it smart

Avoid head injuries. Activities such as cycling, equestrian sports and skating have the potential for serious accidents or damage to the brain. Wearing a helmet can prevent this. Studies on contact sports like soccer have shown decreased cognitive skills where repeated blows to the head have occurred.

### Drug alert

Many drugs have a damaging effect upon neurotransmitters, the chemicals which convey signals between nerve cells particularly in the brain. Abusing drugs can kill brain cells. Alcohol and smoking have also been shown to have a negative impact on brain cells.

### Sleep on it!

A number of research studies show the power of adequate sleep to impact brain efficacy positively during periods of learning new skills and studying.

### Facts

- ⊕ Hours of sleep gained before midnight are twice as valuable and restful to body and mind as the hours after midnight.
- ⊕ An hour of work in the morning is twice as productive as an hour of work late at night.
- ⊕ Eight hours of sleep are essential to enhance learning and for the retention and retrieval of information.

Sharon is the BUC Health Ministries director and also the Disability Awareness co-ordinator. She is married and is passionate about empowering individuals to make positive, health-enhancing choices.



## Yippee or yawn?

### The General Conference Session is about to happen!

The biggest ever get-together of Seventh-day Adventists is soon to happen in Atlanta, Georgia, in the USA. Is it worth my enthusiastically shouting, 'Yippee!', or should I just stifle a yawn and think it is nothing to do with me?

Well if you can go, jump at the chance! It is an unforgettable experience! I can remember the first Sabbath service of the General Conference Session (GC Session) five years ago. I turned round and stopped singing, and just let my eyes and ears drink in the sights and sounds of thousands and thousands of people singing; they believed as I believed; we were related, if you see what I mean. It was awesome! Many were in national costume; some were so far away their faces appeared as tiny dots, but my brothers and sisters believed, loved and sang their hearts out. What an experience!

But what if you are not a delegate, or even an observer? What does the GC Session mean to us today? Will it make any difference? Will the actions taken by people elected to represent me and church members worldwide have any impact on the way my local church works? Or is the Session an extravagant and irrelevant experience on the other side of the Atlantic?

#### What are the reasons that we hold the GC sessions?

We get together, among many other reasons, to show in words and actions that we are one people. The way we do church, how we run services and meetings, elect officers; and how meetings held in, for example, the little church in Ystrad Mynach in Wales is pretty much the same as how it is done in the vast congregations of the two Loma Linda campus churches.

It is a time of reviewing and planning. Decisions taken at the Session and plans laid will filter through to your local church and could have major consequences for how your church functions for the next five years. For it is at a Session that the 'rules' that govern how our Church operates (The Church Manual) are reviewed and changed. It is only at a GC Session that this can be done.

**Paul Clee** is the Communication and Health Ministries director at the Trans-European Division. He is married with two sons and four grandchildren. His wife, Barbara, is an elder at their local church.

• Paul Clee



It is a showcase for other churches and the world community. Press from all over the world make reports on these gatherings. Other church leaders send messages or representatives to the Session. It makes us part of the global village.

It shows the world what we are: a world Church. Many other denominations are national entities, but we are a world organisation, with a rich heritage gained from each other. A Session clearly demonstrates this.

We all can be part of this. Many news websites and feeds will keep us all up to date with what is happening. Never before have there been so many chances to see and hear things almost as quickly as they are happening.

It is a time when ordinary men and women (lay delegates) can make their voices heard and in a major way can influence or challenge decisions.

It is a time when church leaders are elected or the previous ones are re-elected and voted by the representatives from the whole world church family.

It is also a time when the previous church leaders tell the representatives what they did during their period of office and how the church's financial resources have been used – the delegates can then decide if it was a good use of the resources or not.

Above all, it is a time of spiritual re-commitment. We can all share in this experience by being in Atlanta or watching proceedings unfold over the internet.

#### So what can I do here in Europe, so far from the action?

I can pray for our delegates and leaders, that the discussions will be in harmony with God's will for the Church.

I can pray that God will direct the election of the world church leaders, and other decisions being taken during the Session.

I can check out the reports and bring them to the notice of my local church.

I can support the decisions made by encouraging the implementation of these plans in my local/regional areas/church.

## Women in ministry

Women serving as pastors is a subject that never fails to ignite a passionate debate in Adventist circles. Some churches, such as the Methodists and Lutherans, dealt with the subject years ago and for them it is no longer an issue, though individual members here and there may still have some concern. Adventists, like the Anglicans, are still wrestling with this matter. However, the Anglicans in several places do ordain women as priests, while the church in other areas, such as Wales, is still debating the legitimacy of female priests.

The position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on women in ministry is somewhat complex. As far back as 1881 delegates at a General Conference Session **'Resolved that females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of Christian ministry'** (*The Review and Herald*, 20 December 1881, page 392). However, no further action was taken. It appears that the officers of the General Conference at the time did not favour the ordination of women and consequently failed to act on the resolution that was passed at the General Conference Session.

Between 1975 and 1990 much study was done by our Church on the subject, culminating in an action by the 1990 General Conference Session that women be given **'wide participation in all church activities, including soul winning and pastoral duties'**. The action stopped short of ordination, for fear of dissension and disunity arising in the Church.

In 1995 the North American Division requested the General Conference in session to allow its female pastors to be ordained. This was rejected. However, the General Conference subsequently agreed to the commissioning of female pastors. Commissioning affirms the female pastor's call to ministry and allows her to do most of what is done by her ordained male colleague, with two exceptions: The first is that the authority of an ordained pastor is global while the authority of the commissioned pastor is restricted to the Union in which she serves. The second is that the commissioned pastor is not permitted to ordain other pastors. She can, however, ordain elders, deacons, deaconesses, baptise, conduct weddings, and organise new congregations.

Women have played and are playing an important role in Adventist Church leadership. The rapid growth of the church in China is being led by women. In fact, the largest Adventist

pastorate in the world is in China and is led by a woman. The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is embroidered with the deeds of several female leaders, the best known being Ellen White.

There are those who genuinely believe that women should have no part in church leadership, based on the writings of Paul. Then there are those who genuinely believe that in the ministry of the Church there is no difference between male and female, except in the spiritual gifts they have been given, based on the writings of Paul.

Some of Paul's statements give the impression that women should not have a voice in Church and thus cannot be leaders. The passage in 1 Cor. 14 is written in the context of order and decorum in church: *'Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.'* At the same time there are other passages written by Paul that demonstrate that both male and female spoke in church and that was acceptable: 1 Cor. 11: 4, 5: *'Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head – it is just as though her head were shaved.'*

Most Bible Scholars will admit that Paul's writing on the role of women in the church, as outlined in 1 Corinthians, is not very clear, and so must rely on other passages in Scripture to help them form a view on the subject. One of those passages is Gal. 3:28, 29: *'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'*

The debate on the role of women in ministry will rumble on in our Church for several more years. In the meantime there are thousands of women in different parts of the world who are serving the Church as elders and commissioned pastors. Their work is no less valued than the work of men. When all is said and done, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. God is using women as much as he is using men to proclaim the Gospel to the four corners of the earth, in preparation for the coming of Jesus.

**Don McFarlane** is the president of the British Union Conference. He is married with three children and one grandchild. His wife, Mary, is a social worker.

• Don McFarlane







## Ellen White? You'd be surprised!

• Cindy Tutsch



Ellen White gets it! She understands the twenty-first-century heart cry to know and experience God, to do something meaningful and enduring in life, and to grapple with issues of poverty, alienation, health, education, diversity, inclusiveness, integrity and eternity.

Yet she's dead.

No, I haven't been channelling Ellen White. I'm only trumpeting the good news that the principles she championed transcend time and are more pertinent and applicable today than ever. I categorise her principles and theories as progressive because she promoted a fresh approach to old truths, because she empowered an inclusive spiritual movement, and because she condemns as conservative those who refused to examine new understandings of Scripture.

In an era of high-speed communication, terrorism, global commerce, AIDS, and family disintegration, our world may seem to have little similarity with Ellen White's world. Young people, therefore, may be tempted to toss her writings into the attic of irrelevance. Yet it is perhaps because of the accelerating changes in our world that we need reminders to cultivate a calm trust in God in the face of life's stressors. The prophetic gift helps us to keep Jesus and the significance of the Cross constant.

I choose to work at the White Estate because I think Ellen White has something really important to say to young people about their spiritual journey – about discipleship and about their relationship and response to Jesus. I personally became re-acquainted with the Jesus of my childhood after reading *Steps to Christ* in my early 20s. I have discovered Ellen White to be a real person, with real spiritual struggles, who nonetheless was used by God to deliver messages from his heart to ours. I want to challenge you as young people to read your Bibles and to also understand that Ellen White's writings are a gift



from Heaven to help you know and serve Jesus better.

Recognising that sometimes youth get 'hung up' on the nineteenth-century language that Ellen White used in her writings, we have prepared paraphrases and adaptations of her writings that are available on our website ([www.whiteestate.org](http://www.whiteestate.org)) in both written and audio formats that can be downloaded to MP3 players.

I believe that reading Ellen White's writings (while never neglecting the Bible, our first source of truth) could have a significant impact on your choices as young Adventists, inspiring you to both compassionate action and a deepening commitment to Jesus Christ.

Ellen White helps us understand that the commission of Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 does not exclude youth, women or minorities. Through the tutelage of the Spirit, the feeblest can (and must) carry his message!

### Examples:

'It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God.' *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, page 322.

'There are women who should labour in the gospel ministry.' Manuscript Releases (Silver Spring, MD.: Ellen G. White Estate, 19900, 5:325, 326).

'Let the overseers of the church devise plans whereby young men and women may be trained to put to use their entrusted talents.' *The Adventist Home*, page 487.

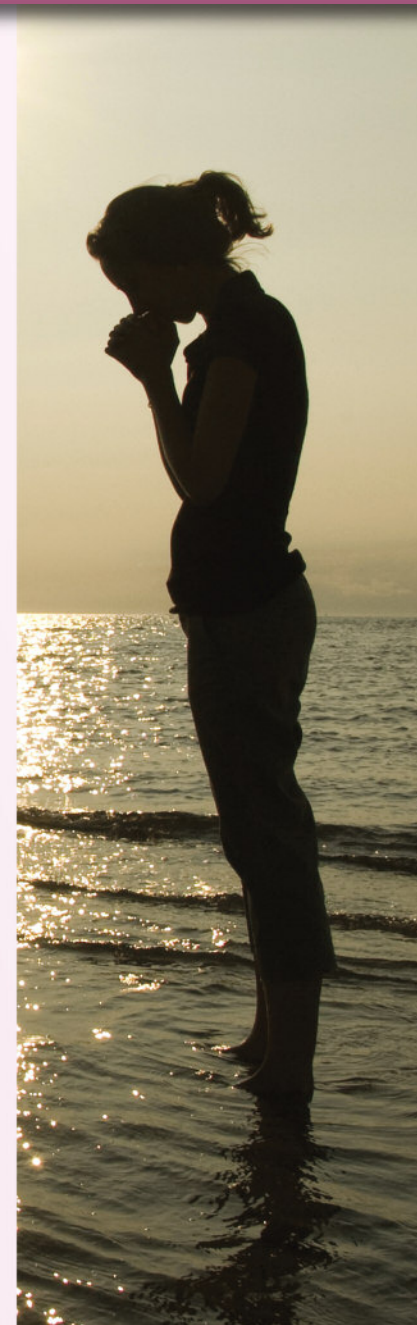
'Never, never feel the slightest disturbance because the Lord is raising up youth to lift and carry the heavier burdens and proclaim the message of truth.' *The Retirement Years*, page 73.

**Cindy Tutsch** is currently an associate director of the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Her position includes promoting an enthusiasm for and understanding of Ellen White among youth and young adults worldwide. She has been a featured speaker at inter-generational convocations in 55 countries.

## Called to serve

It was yet another perfect day; as the sun shone from a clear blue sky, things were great. I felt so fulfilled, so exhilarated as I praised God for the way that he was leading in my life. I had always known that one day I would go away to serve as a missionary abroad: Mum had brought us up as home-grown missionaries going door to door selling *Focus* magazines, sharing the joy of salvation. But now I was in Majuro, a little Micronesian island, teaching and preaching, walking the dusty streets, singing songs and telling stories of Jesus. It was a truly amazing experience, but I was coming to the close of my second year and it would soon be time to return home to the UK. What would I do then? As I sat in deep thought asking God what next, it was then that he said, 'Study for the ministry.' The very thought caused me to shudder. Do what? All the contention and opposition came flooding to my mind. I had heard all the arguments and as far as I was concerned it was the last thing I wanted to do. I preferred a more peaceful life.

It wasn't long before I returned to the UK having pushed this thought to the back of my mind. I decided to pursue a career in teaching and so began applying for relevant courses. But God would not give up. He sent people to me admonishing me to enter the ministry, but I kept on saying no, until one day Mum came and said, 'Patricia, I have a strong impression that you're meant to be studying for the ministry at Newbold College. Why don't you apply? We'll pray about it and see what happens.' Reluctantly I agreed. At the interview I knew



• Patricia Douglas



for certain that God wanted me in the ministry and so I decided to follow his will.

God has taken me through five years of study. He has been with me every step along the way as I now approach my eleventh year in ministry. God has blessed my ministry, I've witnessed cold, disillusioned churches become transformed into warm, vibrant churches. I've witnessed God breathe life into dying churches as members have become actively involved in evangelism. I've had the privilege of blessing babies, of laying a number of saints to rest, of comforting those who mourn. The sick have been healed and, praise God, the lost have been saved.

God has blessed me with his deep abiding love and has enabled me to share this love with others. I met a resident in a nursing home who was depressed. We ministered to him through song, the Word and prayer. The following day he left his room for the first time in quite a while, such is the power of God. As for my fears, they were founded because there are those who oppose me as a minister due to my gender. But I take courage from the fact that Christ was rejected, the apostles were also persecuted for the Gospel's sake. It is quite humbling to suffer in such a manner for God. If God has called you, he will sustain you. Simply be sure to follow his lead every step of the way.

**Pastor Patricia Douglas** is a commissioned minister, currently serving within the North England Conference. She is married to Pastor Carlton Douglas who is also a serving minister within the North England Conference. They have two sons James and Nathaniel and a daughter Rochelle. Pastor Patricia Douglas has recently returned from maternity leave and is awaiting a permanent assignment.





## Women in the service of Christ

• Hanna Norheim

### Filled with the Spirit, they sought to influence and change the course of the history of the Christian Church.

Did you think that the Christian Church leadership was all made up of men? That was my impression until recently. Paul and Peter, Augustine and Jerome, all the popes, Luther and Calvin, the General Conference presidents – all men! Imagine my surprise when I started digging beyond the obvious and discovered that church history is filled with stories of women, some of them deeply influential. Through my studies, I realised that in the development of the church, women have been important. However, their stories have generally been neglected, perhaps because they were just *women's* stories, not important enough to make the history books. When women as a group are overlooked by history, they as a group are disqualified from having had significant influence on the Christian Church. We live with the consequences of this disqualification. Because we do not know our history, we may believe that only men really matter. However, as Christians become more and more aware of the legacy of women in the Church, our stance on their role in the Church will change.

I would like to share with you a few stories I came across in my studies. These were stories of women who had two common denominators: first, they were filled with the Holy Spirit who gave them a sense of mission and dignity; second, they were not afraid to face any obstacle or enemy.

### Christina of Markyate

Consider Christina of Markyate (ca.1096-ca.1166). Her baptismal name was Theodora, but she renamed herself out of her love for Christ. At 13, she promised herself that Jesus would be her only 'husband'. Medieval England believed that for a woman, staying a virgin was an essential part of being a truly spiritual person. Consequently, Christina wanted to keep her virginity and live only for God. Her parents thought otherwise. They did everything they could to get her married. They locked her into her room hoping she would change her mind, they bribed the bishop to talk some sense into her, and they let a man (to whom they had forced her to become engaged) into her room in the middle of the night to rape her. Three times. The first time, Christina sat him down and almost talked him into joining a monastery. The second time, she escaped by hanging onto a nail behind the window curtains. The man could not find her. The third time, she escaped over a high fence outside her room where the man could not follow. In no way was she going to marry him or anyone else. She was even ready to carry a red-hot iron in her hands to prove her determination.<sup>1</sup> After all of her parents' efforts failed, her mother swore that she would not care who



'deflowered' her daughter provided that some way of deflowering could be found.<sup>2</sup>

Christina 'out-proof-texted' every clergyman who tried to persuade her to obey her parents' wishes by quoting from the Bible. Locked in her room, she had no one to support her but God. Filled with the power of the Spirit and through continuous prayer, she was able to resist and to live life the way she thought it should be. 'The freedom Christina enjoyed to name herself, to resist father, husband, bishop, flowed out of an obedience to God which was a love affair.'<sup>3</sup> This love and friendship with God moved her beyond any self-doubt or fear to be herself and to become a person of authority and power. Christina eventually escaped her family and moved into religious seclusion in Roger the hermit's cave. He became her spiritual director and friend. When he died, she moved out and started her own public ministry, leading men and women to God and directing them in Christian life and practice. She became famous across Europe for being a holy woman.

### Katherine Zell

Then there's Katherine Zell (1497-1562), one of the most outspoken women of the Reformation. When she was in her twenties, she married a man nearly twice her age, and they really did live happily ever after.<sup>4</sup> Her husband was a Catholic priest turned Lutheran preacher. Together, they made a team working for the Reformation in Strasbourg where they lived, and for peace between Catholics and Protestants. Some of the Reformation's opponents spread vicious rumours about the couple, saying that the husband cheated on Katherine with the maid. Instead of fuming quietly, Katherine published a letter through which she told everyone in the city that she never had a maid and that their highest wish as a couple was to die side by side on crosses, each cheering the other on! Katherine was not afraid to tell people her opinion. She lashed out against her opponents who wanted her voice silenced: 'You remind me that the Apostle Paul told women to be silent in the church. I would remind you of the word of this same apostle that in Christ there is no longer male or female, and the prophecy of Joel: "I will put forth my spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy."<sup>5</sup> She carefully ended her statement in humility but also with not a little sarcasm: 'I do not pretend to be John the Baptist rebuking the Pharisees. I do not claim to be Nathan upbraiding David. I aspire only to be Balaam's ass, castigating his master.'

Katherine was not afraid to work hard for what she believed in and do what others were afraid to. She hosted meetings between Catholic and Protestant church leaders. She

organised food and shelter for 3,000 refugees who came to the city after the Peasants' War. She cared for one of the city leaders who got sick with leprosy. She compiled and published hymns in pamphlet form to inspire lay people to focus on God in their everyday life. And, as her last work in life, she performed a funeral for a woman whose faith was not the same as the local Lutheran minister's, and the minister would conduct the service only after publicly denouncing her for denying the Lutheran faith. The city council wanted to reprimand Katherine duly for her transgression, but she fell ill and died before anything could be done.

### Elizabeth Hooton

Here is one last story about a courageous Christian woman. Elizabeth Hooton (1600-1672) was the first Quaker convert and the first female Quaker preacher in England in the seventeenth century. As a Quaker she believed that all women and men were equal before God, and so she did not hesitate to challenge priests on doctrinal matters or refuse to kneel before King Charles II.<sup>6</sup> She was beaten and imprisoned in England several times for her conduct and beliefs, but oppression did not stop her activities. Elizabeth was a woman of 'boundless stamina and perseverance.'<sup>7</sup> She went where the Spirit led her. When 61 years old, she went to New England as a missionary, even though she knew persecution awaited her there. The Massachusetts Puritan authorities were so adamant against receiving any Quakers that they had passed a law forbidding ship captains (under penalty of a £100 fine) to deliver Quakers to the port of Boston. And so Elizabeth had to get off the boat in Virginia





and start walking. As soon as she came to Boston, she was put in jail. The governor decided that she was too great a danger to stay, even in prison, so she was forced to walk two days into the winter wilderness where the armed guards left her to die among bears and wolves.

Elizabeth eventually got back to England, but she stayed only long enough to get the King's permission to buy some land in Boston in order to build a house. She was very practical and thought that Boston needed a place where harassed Quakers could stay. But Boston authorities did not care about the King's order. When Elizabeth arrived in Boston, she was chained to a cart and forced to walk to three towns. In each place, they stripped off her clothes down to her waist and whipped her with a three-corded whip. After this punishment, she once more was sent deep into the wilderness to die. For all her missionary efforts in New England, she received three imprisonments, nine severe whippings, and two banishments into the wilderness. But Elizabeth defied the inflicted banishment once more. She came out of the wild alive and went on a mission trip to the West Indies. A few days after she reached Jamaica, she died peacefully, far away from her home village in Nottinghamshire. The love that she bore for humanity made her willing to undergo every affliction she faced.



## Ellen G. White

We Adventists have our own heroine, Ellen White. She was rather young when she said Yes to God's calling and let herself be filled with the Spirit. The sense of divine mission gave her courage to resist people who rejected her and tried to make her work hard. In an age that did not encourage women to be religious leaders, Ellen White wrote and preached and travelled and led the Adventist movement for more than fifty years. Where would the Seventh-day Adventist Church be without Ellen White? It's not even certain

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that the Church would have existed had it not been for her. One historian claims that only one other woman has contributed more to religious life in America than Ellen White – Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian Scientists.<sup>8</sup>

Ellen and the other women mentioned are great examples to us of what can happen when someone totally dedicates her life to God. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Freedom from fear. Freedom to live life to the fullest.

## References

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- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 114.
- <sup>4</sup>See Roland H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation: In Germany and Italy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1971), p. 55.
- <sup>5</sup>See Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1987), p. 183.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 227.
- <sup>7</sup>Elaine C. Huber, "A Woman Must Not Speak": Quaker Women in the English Left Wing," in Ruether and McLaughlin eds., *op. cit.*, p. 165.
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## Vox pop Crieff Seventh-day Adventist church youth


With thanks to Yvonne Bauwens for collating the responses.

1 What roles do you believe women can have within the Seventh-day Adventist Church?


2 Are there any roles that women cannot or should not do within the Church?

3 What is your opinion about the ordination of women (elders/ministers, and so on)?


4 How easy do you find it to relate to a female minister/elder/leader rather than a male leader? Why?

- 
- 1 Challenging male-dominated church societies.
  - 2 Not applicable
  - 3 It is good for them to have a chance – go for it!
  - 4 Depends on the person. Why: I don't mind.


**Fidra Sym • age 14**

- 
- 1 I believe in full equality, women should be able to have any role they wish.
  - 2 No. However, positions that deal with the youth should have both male and female members so as to relate to the youth.
  - 3 I am open to it.
  - 4 I find it just as easy.


**Joel Holford • age 17**

- 
- 1 Deaconess and any roles they want to.
  - 2 Just the things God says not to do.
  - 3 It is fine if women become pastors.
  - 4 Maybe it would be the same because they mostly know the same things.

**Seanee Bennett • age 13**

- 
- 1 I believe women in the church can have any role they want.
  - 2 I don't think so, because God treats women the same as men.
  - 3 I think that women should become ministers, because they have different views on the Bible from men.
  - 4 I find it very easy, because they probably have been through the same thing before.

**Amber Fairlie • age 14**

- 
- 1 Any role they want.
  - 2 No.
  - 3 I think it is a brilliant idea.
  - 4 I don't know, I've never heard a female minister.

**Che Bennett • age 16**





## People of the Bible!

- Dr Jan Barna



'People of the Bible!' Yes, that's how the early Adventist Christians liked to see and call themselves. Why? Because they had this conviction that the Christian Scriptures, the Bible, was able to provide good and relevant answers to their questions. They did not want to hear answers from the church fathers or contemporary authorities. All that mattered to them was what the Bible said. Does it matter to us today what the Bible says concerning such a relevant question as the role of women in the Adventist Church? I think it should matter. So here is one proposal for how we can go about letting the biblical story provide some answers.

**The story of the beginning.** The Bible story begins with depicting three key moments. The creation of the human race in God's image, implying equal value, blessing and commissioning ('subdue and rule') of both sexes (Gen. 1:26-28); the creation of woman from the side of man which further confirms such equality (Gen. 2:20b-23); and the arrival of sin which disrupted the initial equality (Gen. 3:16). There is full equality at the beginning, but the curse of inequality kicks in as we leave the first scene.

**The story of Israel.** As we read on, the second scene is largely the curse prediction playing itself out: 'He [man] will rule over you [woman]' (Gen. 3:16). While women's roles in Israel included sharing the blessings and some key responsibilities of the covenant as mothers, teachers, judges and prophetesses (Deut. 31:9-13; Prov. 1:8; Judges 4:4 and 2 Kings 22:14), it was men who were shaping more intensively the religious life in Israel. So as we leave the

second scene we see the curse of inequality is deepening disturbingly.

**The story of Jesus.** Opening the gospels' scene we begin to notice a radical re-direction in the plot-line. In scene three we find women not only being travelling companions of Jesus and actively supporting his mission (Luke 8:1-3) but also portrayed as brave disciples who follow Jesus until his last moments and even serve him 'beyond the grave' (Mark 15:41, 47-16:1, 9). They are the first missionaries of the good news of his resurrection, too (Matt. 28:7-10). Jesus' acceptance of women and their service to him mark a striking u-turn in the biblical story.

**The story of the New Testament church.** From the very beginning of this scene we see women fulfilling vital roles. They were co-workers of apostles, they supported the church with their means and practical gifts, they served as deacons, teachers and prophetesses (Acts 1:12-14; 9:36-42; 16:13-15; 17; 18; Rom. 16; I Cor. 16:19; II Tim. 1:5; 4:19). The New Testament church advanced in the new direction set in the previous scene. 'There is neither . . . male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Gal. 3:28.)

**The story of the Adventist Church.** This chapter is not in the Bible, yet it is part of the previous scene. How do we find out what the Bible says on the role of women in the Church to us today? Find out what the overall direction in the Bible story is. Discern the trend!

**Dr Jan Barna** is a lecturer in Systematic and Biblical Theology at Newbold College in Berkshire. He's recently completed a doctorate in the area of women's ordination in Adventist theology.



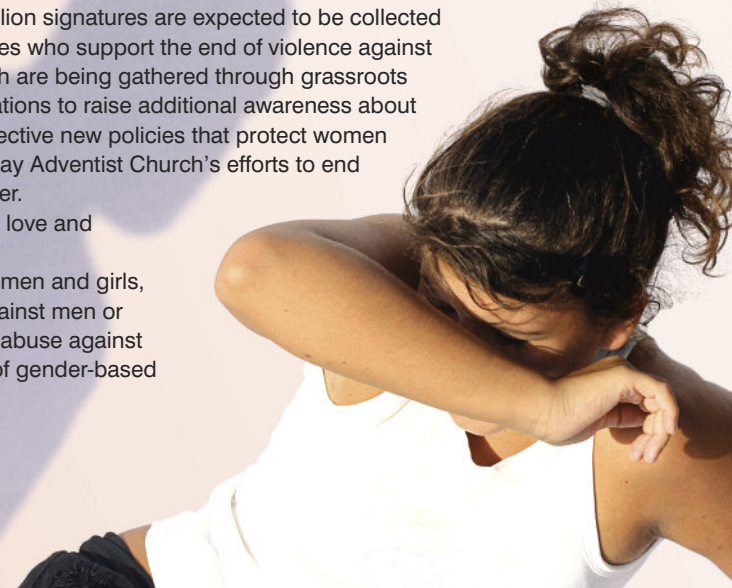
# enditnow®

## Adventists Say No to Violence Against Women

- This global campaign, to raise awareness and advocate for the end of violence against women and girls around the world, was launched in October 2009 in partnership between ADRA and the Department of Women's Ministries.
- It is the most important stand the Seventh-day Adventist Church has ever taken regarding violence against women and girls. Through this campaign, more than 15 million Adventist church members – men, women and children – are expected to create a global movement that will be mobilised within their own communities, where each person will actively work to create awareness and share solutions on ways to end this global problem.
- Seventh-day Adventists affirm the dignity and worth of each human being and decry all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. It is a call to action for all Adventists and supporters to stand up and put into practice those principles we hold true.
- Comprehensive information about enditnow is available at [www.enditnow.org](http://www.enditnow.org), including downloadable electronic resources, advocacy ideas, and ways for groups and individuals to get involved.
- During the initial phase of enditnow, 1 million signatures are expected to be collected from individuals in more than 200 countries who support the end of violence against women and girls. These signatures, which are being gathered through grassroots efforts, will be presented to the United Nations to raise additional awareness about the issue, advocate for the creation of effective new policies that protect women and girls, and make public the Seventh-day Adventist Church's efforts to end violent practices against the female gender.
- enditnow seeks to extend God's vision of love and compassion for all his children.
- While the focus is on violence against women and girls, abuse of any kind should never occur against men or women. This campaign aims to highlight abuse against women, because the majority of victims of gender-based violence are indisputably women.

## enditnow.org

or register your support via the Facebook page (search: [enditnow](https://www.facebook.com/enditnow))





## Incarnational leadership

Des Boldeau



**'Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.'**  
(*Last Day Events*, 39.2.)

Is it possible for young struggling Christians to catch a glimpse of the character of Christ in this world today, especially from their leaders? In much the same way we as preachers illustrate the love of God by citing the beauty of a white lily emerging from a dirty and cluttered pond, even so it must be possible for leaders to emulate and exemplify the character of Christ in their daily lives.

In John 1:14 we read: **'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory . . . as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'**

**The Word became flesh.** That is the essence of Christianity, is it not? Christ in me, the hope of glory, says Paul. I am crucified with Christ, yet I live, not I but Christ in me. . . . Is this not the idea and principles of Christianity being lived out in the lives of those who say they believe and follow 'the way'?

Matthew, the gospel writer, reminds us that the Old Testament prophet Isaiah declared that his name would be called 'Immanuel' which means God with us.

So what is incarnational leadership and how do we apply it to youth ministry in the twenty-first century? It is Christ living out his life in each person who allows him, on a daily basis, to transform them through his Holy Spirit; and in turn, as a leader, being able to reflect his character to others.

If the world is waiting to see the manifestation of the character of Christ, then is it not about time that we show them the real thing in the person of Jesus Christ through our leadership, relationship and just the way we love, respect and affirm each other?

Incarnational youth ministry leadership is about ordinary people learning to surrender every day to become extra-ordinary in the life and works they do as followers of the Saviour.

**'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,'** says Paul to the Philippian church (Philippians 2:5). What is this mind? It is an attitude that shows that I am guided and influenced by God and his Word. It is the degree to which I am prepared to allow him to rule (and over-rule) in all the affairs of my life. It is living to love and serve others, irrespective of their ethnicity, religious persuasion, their cultural identity or philosophical viewpoint of life. He was the fullness and essence of God.

I believe that it is time to stop making excuses for the absence of the evidence of God's character and his power manifested in our lives and time to really challenge our Father to assist us to

become effective instruments in his hand so that people can catch a glimpse of the extravagant love of God seen in action in my life and yours.

People may not see, encounter or experience what the people of twenty centuries ago saw in Christ, but the way we live our lives may be just enough to make the difference between staying around in the Church and walking away. I'm sure you will agree that for Christianity to really make an impact and a real difference in the lives of people, they need to be able to see that it actually works for us. That it has transformed us and, in turn, we are able to model it as a viable, workable and effective philosophy for living in the twenty-first century.

Just like the previous article in this series, my appeal to youth leaders is to be transparent in the way we interact and work with young people. This article is an appeal to live out or to personify the gospel message in our lives.

If youth ministry at the local church is to become more effective and sustainable, we must heed the call and the challenge to incarnate the message to the youth in the culture where we live and practise our ministry. So let's stop hypothesising and theorising about the virtues of Christianity. Let's catch a glimpse of Jesus, not only as a baby or even as a young person, but as a caring, compassionate and self-giving person who lived out the love of God.

This is part two of a four-part series to appear in e during the course of the year.

Des Boldeau is the Youth and Pathfinder director at the British Union. He is married and has three children and one granddaughter. His wife is a lecturer and freelance writer.





## • Shae Samantha Eccleston

• 01 June 2010

Dear Diary

My car has broken down, so I am doomed to get on the 77 route bus until I can afford to get it to a mechanic.

I hate that route! I leave work at 4, just in time to get all of the school-aged brats playing their music so loud that I think I am in a rave! I now know every word of Lady Gaga's 'Let's Dance' and I have only been using the bus for one day!

Perhaps I ought to look at leaving work earlier? Hmmmm. . . . We'll see.

I'll decide tomorrow. . . .

• 02 June 2010

8am

Dear Diary

As of tomorrow, I am definitely going to stagger my working times, so that I don't have to travel with these inconsiderate children! \*Growl\*

Who dragged them up? Not a care in the world, and yet they act like hooligans, spitting out of windows and shouting obscenities!

Oh, good! My stop!

4.30pm

Dear Diary

I'm on the bus. . . . I just witnessed a young girl being bullied by her peers. She did her best to ignore them until they got off at their respective stops, but now she is just sitting at the front of the bus looking numb.

From their taunts, I could make out that her name was Siân. A beautiful name for a beautiful young lady, but I get the feeling she does not feel that way.

I craned my neck to hear more of the conversation, hoping to catch something that would enable me to step in and help her, but I knew that if I opened my mouth her fate would be sealed:

'Ha, ha – Siân, you got some old woman standing up for you!' I can hear it now. . . .

She can't be older than 14. From her uniform, I can tell that she goes to St Anne's, a private faith school. Her parents pay for her private schooling, perhaps expecting that she might have

a better chance at a good education, but how can she, when a group of her peers appear to be making her life hell?

Perhaps I should go and sit next to her; talk to her. . . . Oh, my stop!

Getting off the bus now. . . .

• 03 June 2010

Dear Diary

I feel so bad about not having spoken to Siân yesterday. I keep telling myself that the reason I didn't step in was to protect her, but that's just an excuse to protect myself from having to step out of my comfort zone. Would my kind deed have made Siân feel better? I didn't even have to put myself in danger. I could have spoken to her after they were gone; attempted to help her. . . . So what if I missed my stop! What if her home life was no better? What if this was the last straw for her?

I think back to the story that I read on *makesmethink.com*:

'Today a 16-year-old girl hanged herself. She did so after telling her Mum that she had gotten drunk at a party the night before and had been raped by a stranger. She left a note that said, "I wish you had believed me." '

I think of my little sister, Naomi, and the teen pregnancy she went through last year. She had me. Who does Siân have?

I can't write anymore tonight. I feel too bad. . . .

• 04 June 2010

Dear Diary

Siân was not on the bus today, either on the way to or

from East Village. I did, however, see the bully-ringleader. Her mother was punching her and telling her just how stupid she was. I couldn't see a reason for the tirade of abuse she was suffering but it was over the top, to say the least.

It became so clear to me that the actions we display as adults are being passed down to our children. The bully was bullied and so, in turn, she bullied. What were Siân's role models like? Did they sweep things under the carpet? Who would Siân become?

I was so angry that at lunch time I began, as I always do, to question our roles as young adults.

- Why do we always seem to forget how hard it was to be young; to be misunderstood?
- Why do we forget just how vulnerable self-esteem is when it is in development?

- How can we not read between the lines and hear the cries for help that our children, brothers, sisters, friends display?

- Why don't we do more to befriend and understand, rather than to judge?
- Why do we put ourselves before EVERYONE else?

I don't have any of the answers to those questions, but I know that if just one person had read between the lines and assessed that my self-esteem was failing, something I was unable to do when I was 14, it could have made a lot of difference.

I understand that I don't have to feel helpless, but that when I do, I can pray. If it was too much for me to approach Siân, I could have silently sent a prayer up for her.

I realise now that the lines between what we see as being a teen's reality and what is truly a reality for them can be blurred when we perceive it in adult-coloured black and white. So this is my prayer:

- I pray
- for all of the girls and boys that may be in situations like those I witnessed;
- that I may, in future, work hard to see things in an unbiased light;
- that with God's help I will become a kind, understanding and less judgemental person;
- that I will find a way to put myself in other people's shoes;
- that I will find the strength not to look the other way when I shouldn't;
- that I will not always put myself first;
- that I will finally understand my role in these matters;
- that I will open my ears to hear God's voice leading me in all of these things.

This is my prayer, in Jesus' precious and holy name.

Amen.

Night, dear diary,

Sharon x

**Letters from a troubled soul** is a fictional piece written with the intention of allowing us to identify with the human in us all. Everyone knows how to take things for granted and how to attribute our success to our own steam, rather than acknowledging the real power: God.

Throughout time, Sharon's letters will hold and reveal secrets that we all share. The joys, the pain, the triumphs and the shame. Sharon is not the only person struggling with everyday situations. The devil doesn't just focus on the huge – his expertise is in the small things that can easily pass under the radar.

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